

EASTERN



REGION

NIGERIA

# Eastern House of Assembly Debates

**OFFICIAL REPORT**

**SECOND SESSION**

**FIRST MEETING**

*11th March to 11th April, 1958*



EASTERN HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY  
ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS

(Returned at the General Election held on the 15th of March, 1957)

A			
Abangwu, Mr C. A.	...	...	Nsukka Division.
Abengowe, Mr W.	...	...	Aba Division.
Achara, Mr S. O.	...	...	Okigwi Division.
Afiah, Mr O. U.	...	...	Abak Division.
Agba, Mr J. A.	...	...	Ogoja Division.
Agbasiere, Chief G. N.	...	...	Orlu Division.
Agim, Mr D. S. A.	...	...	Orlu Division.
*Ajegbo, Mr M. O.	...	...	(Attorney-General).
Akilo, Mr D. E.	...	...	Udi Division.
Akpabio, Mr H. U.	...	...	Uyo Division.
Akpabio Mr I. U.	...	...	Ikot Ekpene Division.
Aligwekwe, Mr D. O.	...	...	Okigwi Division.
Alo, Mr S. N.	...	...	Abakaliki Division.
Amachree, Mr S. J.	...	...	Degema Division.
Amaefunah, Mr P. U.	...	...	Awka Division.
Anaba, Mr J. W. E.	...	...	Obubra Division.
Anoke, Mr R. O.	...	...	Afikpo Division.
Anu, Mr D. O.	...	...	Udi Division.
Apreala, Mr N. L. P.	...	...	Brass Division.
Arikpo, Mr O.	...	...	Obubra Division.
Awgu, Mr M. C.	...	...	Awka Division.
Azikiwe, Dr N....	...	...	Onitsha Division.

*\*Appointed Attorney-General by the Governor by virtue of the powers conferred upon him by section 60 of the Amending Order.*

C			
Chidolue, Mr E.	...	...	Onitsha Division.
Chikwendu, Mr A. O.	...	...	Bende Division.
Chime, Mr E. A.	...	...	Udi Division.
E			
Efiong, Rev. O., C.B.E.	...	...	Calabar Division.
Ekpe, Mr A. J.	...	...	Opoobo Division.
Emole, Mr E.	...	...	Bende Division.
Enyi, Mr U.	...	...	Afikpo Division.
Eronini, Mr E. U.	...	...	Owerri Division.
Etuhube, Mr J. A.	...	...	Ikot Ekpene Division.
Etuk, Mr M. U.	...	...	Uyo Division.
Eyo, Mr E. O.	...	...	Uyo Division.
Eyo, Mr J. E.	...	...	Abak Division.
I			
Ihekwoaba, Mr J. O.	...	...	Orlu Division.
Ikoku, Mr S. G.	...	...	Enyong Division.
Imeh, Mr I. U.	...	...	Abak Division.
Imoke, Dr S. E.	...	...	Afikpo Division.
Ito, Mr Eyo	...	...	

Manu, Mr O. C.	...	...	...	...	Ahoada Division.
Masi, Mr S. O.	...	...	...	...	Ahoada Division.
Morphy, Chief I. I.	...	...	...	...	Ogoja Division.

### N

Nalelo, Mr O. B.	...	...	...	...	Ogoni Division.
Nnaji, Mr D. A.	...	...	...	...	Udi Division.
Nwankwo, Mr V. A.	...	...	...	...	Abakaliki Division.
Nweze, Mr N.	...	...	...	...	Abakaliki Division.
Nwodo, Mr J. U.	...	...	...	...	Nsukka Division.
Nwoga, Mr P. O.	...	...	...	...	Owerri Division.
Nwuke, Mr J. H. E.	...	...	...	...	Ahoada Division.

### O

Obayi, Mr M. U.	...	...	...	...	Nsukka Division.
Obonna, Dr A. N.	...	...	...	...	Owerri Division.
Ogon, Mr M. E.	...	...	...	...	Ikom Division.
Okafor, Mr C. A.	...	...	...	...	Orlu Division.
Okeh, Mr J. O.	...	...	...	...	Ahoada Division.
Okeke, Mr G. E.	...	...	...	...	Onitsha Division.
Okeke, Mr P. N.	...	...	...	...	Onitsha Division.
Oketa, Mr O.	...	...	...	...	Abakaliki Division.
Okeya, Mr G. C.	...	...	...	...	Owerri Division.
Oko, Mr G. I., M.B.E.	...	...	...	...	Awgu Division.
Okoya, Mr E. P.	...	...	...	...	Brass Division.
Okpara, Dr M. I.	...	...	...	...	Bende Division.
Okpokam, Mr K. J. N.	...	...	...	...	Ikom Division.
Okwu, Mr B. C.	...	...	...	...	Awgu Division.
Onubogu, Dr W. N.	...	...	...	...	Onitsha Division.
Onukogu, Chief S. E.	...	...	...	...	Owerri Division.
Onwe, Mr P. A.	...	...	...	...	Abakaliki Division.
Onwudiwe, Mr N. O.	...	...	...	...	Okigwi Division.
Onwuma, Mr M. N.	...	...	...	...	Aba Division.
Onyeri, Mr V. K.	...	...	...	...	Port Harcourt Division.
Onyiuke, Chief A. N.	...	...	...	...	Awka Division.
Opara, Rev. M. D.	...	...	...	...	Owerri Division.

### U

Udonkim, Mr E. W.	...	...	...	...	Opobo Division.
Ukuta, Mr R. O., M.B.E.	...	...	...	...	Nsukka Division.
Umoh, Mr A. G.	...	...	...	...	Enyong Division.
Umolu, Mr J. O.	...	...	...	...	Port Harcourt Division.
Ururuka, Mr P. O.	...	...	...	...	Aba Division.
Uzoigwe, Mr L. O.	...	...	...	...	Aba Division.

### Y

Yowika, Mr M. N.	...	...	...	...	Ogoni Division.
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EASTERN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT  
MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

PREMIER—Dr the Hon. Nnamdi Azikiwe.  
MINISTER OF PRODUCTION—Dr the Hon. M. I. Okpara.  
MINISTER OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS—Hon. I. U. Akpabio.  
MINISTER OF FINANCE—Dr the Hon. S. E. Imoke.  
MINISTER OF TOWN PLANNING—Hon. E. Emole.  
MINISTER OF TRANSPORT—Hon. P. O. Ururuka.  
MINISTER OF INFORMATION—Hon. B. C. Okwu.  
MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT—Chief the Hon. A. N. Onyiuke.  
MINISTER OF JUSTICE—Hon. R. O. Iwuagwu.  
MINISTER OF COMMERCE—Hon. J. U. Nwodo.  
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE—Hon. P. O. Nwoga.  
MINISTER OF EDUCATION—Hon. G. E. Okeke.  
MINISTER OF HEALTH—Hon. E. P. Okoya.  
MINISTER OF WELFARE—Hon. E. A. Chime.  
MINISTER OF WORKS—Hon. O. U. Afiah.  
ATTORNEY-GENERAL—Hon. M. O. Ajegbo.

OFFICE OF PREMIER AND MINISTRIES OF GOVERNMENT

**Premier's Office:—**

Premier: Dr the Hon. Nnamdi Azikiwe.  
Parliamentary Secretary: Hon. J. O. Umolu.

**Ministry of Production:—**

Minister: Dr the Hon. M. I. Okpara.  
Parliamentary Secretary: (vacant).

**Ministry of Internal Affairs:—**

Minister: Hon. I. U. Akpabio.  
Parliamentary Secretary: Hon. J. H. E. Nwuke.

**Ministry of Finance:—**

Minister: Dr the Hon. S. E. Imoke.  
Parliamentary Secretary: Hon. A. O. Chikwendu.

**Ministry of Town Planning:—**

Minister: Hon. E. Emole.  
Parliamentary Secretary: Chief the Hon. S. E. Onukogu.

**Ministry of Transport:—**

Minister: Hon. P. O. Ururuka.  
Parliamentary Secretary: Hon. D. O. Anu.

**Ministry of Information:—**

Minister: Hon. B. C. Okwu.  
Parliamentary Secretary: Hon. S. O. Masi.

**Ministry of Local Government:—**

Minister: Chief the Hon. A. N. Onyiuke.  
Parliamentary Secretary: Hon. M. U. Obayi.

**Ministry of Justice:—**

Minister: Hon. R. O. Iwuagwu.  
Parliamentary Secretary: Hon. D. O. Aligwekwe.

**Ministry of Education:—**

Minister: Hon. G. E. Okeke.  
 Parliamentary Secretary: Hon. L. O. Uzoigwe.

**Ministry of Health:—**

Minister: Hon. E. P. Okoya.  
 Parliamentary Secretary: (vacant).

**Ministry of Welfare:—**

Minister: Hon. E. A. Chime.  
 Parliamentary Secretary: Hon. C. A. Okafor.

**Ministry of Works:—**

Minister: Hon. O. U. Afiah.  
 Parliamentary Secretary: Hon. R. O. Anoke.

**Law Officer's Department:—**

Attorney-General: Hon. M. O. Ajegbo.  
 Leader of the House: Dr the Hon. M. I. Okpara.  
 Leader of the Opposition: The Hon. S. G. Ikoku.  
 Government Chief Whip: The Hon. M. E. Ogon.  
 Government Whips: The Hon. W. Abengowe.  
                                   The Hon. N. L. P. Apreala.

**COMMITTEES****Committee of Selection**

The Premier ( <i>Chairman</i> )	The Minister of Education.
The Minister of Production.	The Minister of Health.
The Minister of Internal Affairs.	The Minister of Welfare.
The Minister of Finance.	The Minister of Works.
The Minister of Town Planning.	The Attorney-General.
The Minister of Transport.	Mr M. E. Ogon.
The Minister of Information.	Mr K. J. N. Okpokam.
The Minister of Local Government.	Mr N. O. Onwudiwe.
The Minister of Justice.	Mr A. G. Umoh.
The Minister of Commerce.	Mr A. J. Ekpe.
The Minister of Agriculture.	Chief I. I. Morphy.

**Standing Orders Committee**

Mr Speaker ( <i>Chairman</i> ).	Mr J. A. Etuhube.
Mr Okoi Arikpo.	Mr C. A. Abangwu.
Mr M. E. Ogon.	

**House Committee**

The Minister of Welfare ( <i>Chairman</i> ).	Chief G. N. Agbasiere.
Chief I. I. Morphy.	Mr V. K. Onyeri.
Mr O. B. Nalelo.	Mr S. N. Alo.
	Mr J. O. Okeh.

**Committee of Privileges**

The Minister of Town Planning ( <i>Chairman</i> ).	Mr S. O. Achara.
Mr Eyo Ita.	Mr K. Kiri.
Mr O. B. Nalelo.	Mr O. Oketa.
Rev. O. Efiang, C.B.E.	Mr M. C. Awgu.
	Mr P. U. Amaefunah.

## COMMITTEE—*continued*

### Public Petitions Committee

The Minister of Health ( <i>Chairman</i> ).	Dr A. N. Obonna.
Chief I. I. Morphy.	Mr D. E. Akilo.
Mr S. J. Amachree.	Mr O. C. Manu.
	Mr J. O. Okeh.

### Statutory Corporations Committee

The Minister of Commerce ( <i>Chairman</i> ).	Mr G. C. Okeya.
Mr Okoi Arikpo.	Mr O. Oketa.
Mr A. J. Ekpe.	Rev. M. D. Opara.
	Mr P. A. Onwe.

### Public Accounts Committee

Mr A. J. Ekpe ( <i>Chairman</i> ).	Mr J. W. E. Anaba.
Mr M. U. Etuk.	Mr S. E. K. Iwueke.
Mr M. N. Yowika.	Mr M. N. Onwuma.

### Standing Committee on Finance

The Minister of Finance ( <i>Chairman</i> ).	Mr G. I. Oko, M.B.E.
Mr A. G. Umoh.	Mr K. J. N. Okpokam.
Mr J. A. Agba.	Mr P. N. Okeke.
Mr R. O. Ukuta, M.B.E.	Mr N. O. Onwudiwe.
	Mr J. M. Ito.

## OFFICERS OF THE HOUSE

The Speaker:	Hon. E. N. Egbuna.
The Deputy Speaker:	Hon. C. A. Abangwu.
Clerk of the House:	Mr A. E. Eronini, M.B.E.
Clerk Assistant:	Mr L. O. Okoro.
Editor, Official Report ( <i>Hansard</i> ):	(Vacant).
Assistant Editor, Official Report ( <i>Hansard</i> ):	Mr S. B. C. Melifonwu.
Secretary-Typist:	Mrs M. A. Biss.
Serjeant-at-Arms:	Mr B. O. Ajumogobia.





## EASTERN HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 11th March, 1958

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

## PRAYERS

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

## ANNOUNCEMENT

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Members, pending the arrival of His Excellency the sitting of the House will be suspended. I would ask Members, when His Excellency has delivered His Speech, to remain in their seats until His Excellency has departed to take the Royal Salute.

*Sitting suspended at 10.10 a.m.*

*Sitting resumed at 10.20 a.m.*

## GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

*His Excellency The Governor having entered the Council Chamber in procession was pleased to make a Most Gracious Speech from the Throne as follows:—*

*Mr Speaker and hon. Members, four months ago in this House, Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal delivered the message with which Her Majesty the Queen marked the grant of self-government in regional matters. It is now with us, Mr Speaker and hon. Members, to ensure that the dignity and purpose of that occasion remain with us and continue to inspire as one task succeeds another.*

*In effect the Region had become self-governing in matters within its constitutional competence on the 8th August, 1957. Since then, because of the wide measure of agreement reached by all the Delegations at the London Constitutional Conference and notwithstanding that formal amendment of the Constitution Order in Council has yet to be completed, we have been operating the Government in the spirit of the new Constitution.*

*the United Kingdom. Under the Scheme an entitled officer has the option to remain in the Public Service of the Region or to retire immediately or to freeze his compensation with a view to subsequent retirement. Under the Agreement an overseas officer in the pensionable establishment of the Region can apply to be transferred to a Special List of Officers of Her Majesty's Overseas Service and will be liable to secondment to this or any other Government or public authority.*

*Of the 220 entitled officers in this Region, 60 have opted to retire, 4 have decided to apply for transfer to the Special List, whilst 156 have chosen to remain in the Public Service of this Region. On the recommendation of the Executive Council, the Standing Committee on Finance of the House have voted £350,000 to pay the compensation due to the entitled officers who have opted to retire immediately. My Government has been advised that it will cost this Region in the neighbourhood of £1 million to discharge its obligations under the Lump Sum Compensation Scheme.*

*In January this year, the strength of the senior Public Service Establishment was 1,204—consisting of 333 expatriate and 614 Nigerian officers, that is, posts with a minimum basic salary of £540 per annum. Then there were 257 vacancies, prominently in the following Departments: Administration 45 out of 193; Education 44 out of 179; Medical 42 out of 245; Public Works 30 out of 170; Audit 18 out of 44; and Agriculture 9 out of 67. In certain Departments the recruiting position is particularly serious because of the highly competitive and restricted nature of the specialist market, for example: there are 6 vacancies out of 12 posts in the Survey Department; there are 8 out of 15 in Forestry; there are 5 out of 9 in Secondary Industries; there are 4 out of 6 in Fisheries.*

*The added burden thus laid upon civil servants in positions of responsibility is heavy indeed. My Government and I hold constantly in mind the need to do all in our power to sustain and encourage both the Nigerian officers who are now called to take the increasing load and those of their expatriate colleagues who choose to carry on in the service of the Region.*

has thus been stunted. It is the hope of my Government that the usual channels for recruiting senior staff may be able to cope with this problem, otherwise it might become necessary, as a long term policy, to widen the periphery of the employment market whilst actively scouting for potentially competent Nigerian officers in the lower segment either for promotion to the posts for which they may be suitable, or for training under the Public Service Scholarship Scheme.

The Public Service Commission has now been reorganised to consist of three full-time members, including the Chairman. In the spirit of the new Constitution, it is now virtually an executive body. My Government is determined to insulate the Public Service from political influence. At the Constitutional Conference it was agreed that it should become a criminal offence to interfere or to attempt to interfere with the Public Service Commission or for a Member of the Commission to compound or to be a party to such interference. It is, therefore, expected that public officers should not only feel secure in their tenure and conditions of employment, but my Ministers hope that they would discharge their duties conscientiously and efficiently in order to justify the high hopes on them as a machinery for the implementation of Government policy.

There is a process of reorganisation in the structure of the Ministries as a result of the coming into operation of the new Constitution. The Administration has now been transferred from the Deputy Governor's Office to the Premier's Office. Pending the completion of plans for accommodation, the Oversea Communications Office will be finally transferred to the latter office. Nigerians are being trained to man the Intelligence and Security branch, which is also in process of being transferred. In the meantime, plans are on foot to integrate all the Departments into the Ministries so that the cabinet system would operate smoothly.

It is with regret that my Government has observed the growing tendency to disclose official secrets. Public officers are forbidden by law from revealing official secrets. Some of them are specifically enjoined to subscribe to an oath of secrecy. Whilst in the past the Criminal Code has not been applied against those who are suspected of contravening this law, my Ministers

enforced in the future. My Government further have under consideration the amendment of the Criminal Code so as to make punishable the unlawful possession and also the unlawful publication of an official secret by a person who is not a public officer.

The Office of the Commissioner for the Eastern Region in the United Kingdom has functioned well and justified its creation. It has now moved into its new address at Northumberland Avenue, in London, along with those of the Federal Commissioner and the Commissioner for the Northern Region. After careful consideration, it has been decided to establish a Students' section. There are now well over a thousand and some hundreds of students from the Eastern Region studying respectively in the United Kingdom and in the United States of America and Canada. The welfare of our students in these territories has called for our immediate attention and a statement in respect of my Government's policy towards students in North America will be published in due course.

Preliminary arrangements have been completed with a world-famous firm of British architects for the planning and construction of the buildings of the University of Nigeria at Nsukka. Since the enactment of the enabling law, two of my Ministers had undertaken an Education Mission to Europe and North America in order to obtain expert advice and to solicit the co-operation of authorities in this specialised field of education. Since then there have been visits from interested British and American organisations. I refer particularly to the Inter-University Council for Higher Education of the United Kingdom, and the International Co-operation Administration of the Department of State, Washington, D.C. We are expecting another visit from representatives of these two organisations in the immediate future.

A model of the University of Nigeria has been placed in the corridor of the House for the information of hon. Members. The Ministries of Town Planning, Works, and Local Government as well as the Federal Department of Geological Surveys, have co-operated with the architects for which my Government is grateful. A White Paper on this subject, giving relevant facts and figures of the proposed organisation, administration and finances of the University will be published.

*A Bill will be introduced at this meeting for the establishment of a Provisional Council of the University. This Council shall have power to do all things which appear to it to be requisite and necessary for the establishment of the University in accordance with the provisions of the University of Nigeria Law, 1955.*

*As a result of widespread demonstrations against certain modifications of the Universal Primary Education, the security Committee under my chairmanship, advised the Governor-General of the Federation to proclaim the Emergency Regulations in fourteen Divisions. There were sporadic attacks on the Police and other peaceful and law-abiding citizens by women and men who were armed with all sorts of weapons. Private houses were destroyed and Public buildings were ransacked and looted. On two occasions the Police were forced under extreme provocation to open fire. In all, four men were killed, not five as previously reported, and many sustained injuries. As a result of these acts of lawlessness and violence, 274 people have so far been convicted.*

*I need not remind hon. Members of the great harm incidents of this nature do to our reputation both in Nigeria and abroad. In spite of appeals by both the Premier and myself, the demonstrators had the audacity not only to flout the constituted authority but also to open fire on the Police, seven of whom sustained serious injuries. I must reiterate what my Premier said in a wireless broadcast recently: that my Government will always be willing to consider representations made by the people of this Region in a proper and constitutional manner, but it will certainly not tolerate the enthronement of anarchy and violence in this Region. With this in mind, and with the object of removing all possible doubt there may be of determination to maintain law and order, my government has under consideration the amendment of the Collective Punishment Ordinance so as to facilitate and expedite the collective punishment of communities who take the law into their own hands.*

*The use of commissions of inquiry to ascertain facts for official purposes is well-known. In view of recent developments in this Region, my*

*reliability of evidence and the credibility of witnesses appearing before such public commissions. In order to discourage false witnesses from perverting facts before commissions of inquiry, it is intended to amend the Commissions of Inquiry Ordinance, 1940, by providing that only evidence which is admissible in a court of law will henceforth be admissible in a tribunal appointed under this law. This amendment will be in line with the United Kingdom practice and a Bill for this purpose will be introduced at this meeting.*

*Consistent with the agreement reached at the Constitutional Conference, my Government is actively engaged in considering the establishment of a House of Chiefs in this Region. The House will consist of about 60 members, comprising First Class Chiefs, Second Class Chiefs and Special Members. Recognition of First Class Chiefs and Second Class Chiefs, all of whom will be members of the House, has yet to be determined. A Bill to amend the Recognition of Chiefs Law, 1956 will be presented to the House in due course.*

*My Government attaches great importance to the proper definition and understanding of the privileges and responsibilities of members of the Legislature and holders of parliamentary office. It is intended to introduce a Legislative Houses Bill to replace the Eastern House of Assembly Law and to provide therein for both the Houses of Assembly and the House of Chiefs.*

## AGRICULTURE

*In the field of agriculture the policy of diversification of cropping and reaching out to the people will continue. Every effort to teach by demonstration and precept will be made. Particular attention will be paid to the planting of cashew in the interests of soil conservation, the development of rice cultivation in the riverine areas and to the increase of productivity directly both by means of fertilisers and by reducing the toll of pests and disease. Work on Amazon Cocoa and Robusta coffee will be continued.*

*It is appreciated, however, that not only must the extension staff be increased but also a research organisation must be built up to feed the extension staff with more material for*

citrus, cocoa, the application of fertilisers and pest and disease control to all crops. Soil surveys are also required to develop our growing plantation industry.

The Umudike Farm is now to concentrate on training and research. The development of the new Agricultural Stations at Abobiri, in Brass Division, and Nekede, in Owerri Division, will be continued. There will be close co-operation with the Federal Research organisation, the Institute for Oil Palm Research, and other international organisations. Our experimental farms are also the spearheads of extension work nourished by Umudike and in turn nourishing the field worker and the farmer by making available at cost or less improved varieties of oil palms, citrus, rice, cassava, cocoa and other crops and better cattle and poultry strains. Work on the quality of Palm Oil and Cocoa will continue.

The Forest Department will continue to protect the forest estate of the Region and to encourage its controlled exploitation. This is estimated to produce £12,000 in revenue next year. The Forest Department will also secure the future by restocking exploited areas.

The Veterinary Service has four principal objects, two of which make incalculable contributions to the national wealth and two of which are revenue earning. It will, to the limit of its restricted capacity, continue extension work throughout the Region and to use, to the maximum advantage, its research organisation at Examegbo, which, it is hoped, will be built up to strength in the coming year. On the revenue side there is the collection of the Horse and Cattle Taxes and the administration of the Hides Inspection Service which is so important if this Region is to maintain its credit in the world leather market. It is hoped that not only the use of the humane killer in the ritual slaughter of horses will quickly become universally accepted, but that it may not be long before the custom itself is finally discontinued.

Operating mainly under the Development Plan, the Fisheries Department will continue its successful "Earn-as-you-Learn" Surf Fishing Stations and will experiment with cheap powered surf boats with a view to adopting one design. It is also proposed to build a large fishing craft

that this experiment will be the foundation of a new industry. It is also proposed to establish a pilot co-operative fish marketing scheme if at all possible. Thus the principal effort in this field will be directed to the sea but the development of inland fishing either by the construction of artificial ponds or by the development of natural waters will not be neglected but will be continued to the limit imposed by the executive capacity of this branch of Government.

## COMMERCE

It is the intention of my Ministers to continue the existing policy of attracting overseas industrialists and capital, and to enter into partnership with these overseas interests, with a view to developing the resources of the Region. The Ministry of Commerce is particularly interested in exploiting the Lead-Zinc deposits and in the manufacture of Glass, Plastics and Metal Windows. In fact negotiations have been completed with a British firm for the immediate setting up of a window factory at Port Harcourt. It is anticipated that this factory will produce 300,000 tons of metal windows and doors a year—a figure which exceeds the country's annual consumption by 50 per cent. Another pottery factory has been built in Enugu which will produce plates, teacups and saucers in commercial quantity within the next six months.

Hon. Members will be happy to learn that the Nkalagu cement industry which is run on a partnership basis between this Government, the E.R.D.C., the Federal Government and a British firm was opened last December by His Excellency the Governor-General. The factory is now producing at the rate of 100,000 tons of cement a year. The effect of this production has been to lower considerably the market price of cement in Nigeria.

As the financial resources of this Region are insufficient to enter into partnership with all overseas industrialists who may wish to establish themselves in this Region, it is proposed, as soon as any industry has been established successfully, to offer for sale to the general public the Government shares in the company so that Government can finance still further industries.

One of the functions of Government is to mobilise domestic capital. No development is

possible without money and the public will be encouraged to make savings, both to finance their own business and to invest in development projects. It is intended to continue the policy of assisting farmers and traders generally through the Department of Trade and of Co-operation, and to encourage the establishment, by Nigerians, of small industrial undertakings either as limited liability companies or as co-operative societies.

The training of Nigerians in technical and managerial skills to enable them to take a dominant position in the direction of industry, will be pursued with vigour.

My Ministers are desirous of transforming the African Continental Bank into a State Bank of the Eastern Region. Following the advice of the Regional and Federal Attorneys-General, contact has been made by the Ministry of Commerce through the Colonial Office with a reputable firm of United Kingdom banking accountants and auditors to give expert advice to my Government on matters relating to the acquisition of shares of the other shareholders of the Bank. As soon as the negotiations are concluded, a Bill for a Law to nationalise the African Continental Bank and transform it into a State Bank will be introduced to the House.

### EDUCATION

For the coming financial year, the total cost of education has been limited to £5.2 million, which includes the cost of maintaining the Ministry and the Department, in addition to the amount payable by way of grants-in-aid to Voluntary Agencies and Local Government Councils. This compares with the corresponding figure of approximately £5.9 million in the estimates for the current financial year, which also includes expenditure partly reimbursable from Colonial Development and Welfare funds amounting to just over half a million pounds. Such a reduction reflects a major change in Government policy relating to education, which was foreshadowed in the speeches from the Government bench in last month's debate in this House and later reflected in the decisions promulgated in connection with the re-introduction of assumed local contribution into the grant formula for primary schools.

It is estimated that if the Universal Primary

the total amount required for grants-in-aid—primary, secondary and teacher-training—would be just under £7 million, and if it is assumed that the cost of maintaining the Ministry and the Department were to remain at approximately the present level, the total cost would be of the order of £7.5 million which represents no less than 62 per cent of the total estimated ordinary revenue of approximately £12 million. This is a proportion which no country in the world can afford to spend on education and remain solvent.

It has, therefore, been decided that in order to achieve a more realistic balance of expenditure within the budgetary frame-work, local communities must be required to assume responsibility for a substantial proportion of the recurrent cost. This will be spread over the three main grant-in-aid sub-heads, namely: primary, secondary, and teacher-training and some modification will also be made to the Regional Scholarship Scheme.

In primary education, it is intended to revert to the policy in operation in the years immediately preceding the introduction of U.P.E. when the local communities were required to help considerably towards the total cost. In the coming financial year, it is estimated on the basis of the rates of assumed local contribution recently announced that those communities will meet just under 38 per cent of the total cost. Even with this very considerable reduction in the proportion of education expenditure to be met from ordinary revenue, the East Regional Government will still be spending 43 per cent on this service, which is considerably higher than is being incurred by any other country in the world today.

My Government intends to appoint a committee to investigate the system of education in this Region. It intended that its terms of reference will include the following:

- (1) To investigate the organisation, administration and management of Education in the Eastern Region;
- (2) To investigate the arrangement of the curricula of the primary, secondary, teacher-training, commercial and technical institutions in the Region;
- (3) To investigate the adequacy of the method of examination and certification in all the educational institutions of the Region;

- (6) To investigate the operation of the Universal Primary Education scheme and its effect on the budget and finances of the Region;
- (7) To consider whether any changes are desirable in respect of Paragraphs (1) – (6) of these Terms of Reference;
- (8) To make its findings and recommendations.

## FINANCE

The Financial policy of my Government is to limit public spending in order to give the revenues a breathing space and allow them to recover from the heavy drain resulting from the experiment in Universal Primary Education carried out in 1957. This experiment, which was spread over the last quarter of 1956–57 and the first three quarters of 1957–58 and, to a considerably reduced extent, the last quarter of 1957–58, has caused an expenditure of nearly £10 million on education grants-in-aid in two financial years, when account is also taken of over £1 million in salary increases for Voluntary Agency teachers paid from Government funds earlier in 1956–57.

This very heavy expenditure has not been achieved without some depletion of the General Revenue Balance, and it has been necessary to re-introduce in 1958 an Assumed Local Contribution in all primary school classes except Infant Classes in order to stop this drain. The policy, therefore, in the next year or more must inevitably be to restore the General Revenue Balance by curtailing expenditure until the revenues have replenished the balance and in themselves expanded sufficiently to permit of a modest expansion of expenditure.

In terms of the level of expenditure in 1958–59, this means that no expansion is envisaged in general above the level of expenditure reflected in the Approved Estimates for 1957–58, either on education or in all other Government expenditure. Since there is a natural tendency for public spending to expand to a small degree every year, if only because of increased costs, the necessity to defer any expansion this year means in effect that there will be a slight curtailment in most services.

The year 1958–59 will be the third year of the operation of the Finance Law, 1956. Many

trained Nigerian Income Tax Assessing Officers capable of making fair and proper assessments. For this purpose a fully experienced Training Officer will be employed to train men "on-the-job".

Income Tax Surveys will be intensified so that by the close of the year very few tax evaders will have escaped the net. As more full-time assessing officers become available it will be possible to relieve the heavily-burdened part-time Administrative Officer of some of his tax duties and to devote more time to accurate assessments of the wealthy traders and professional men who at the moment appear to get away very lightly.

## HEALTH

During the past year, good progress has been made in implementing the policy of my Government to expand and co-ordinate medical services, in association with Local Government bodies, Local Communities and Voluntary Agencies, so as to bring medical facilities within the reach of all.

There has been a steady expansion and improvement of hospitals and training institutions at Aba, Arochuku, Degema, Enugu, Ikot Ekpene, Ogoja, Okigwi, Opobo, Owerri, Port Harcourt and Yenagoa, and it is proposed in the coming year to re-model the Nurses Preliminary Training School at Aba, and to provide a new out-patients department and other buildings at Calabar. Two more wards have been added to the Queen Elizabeth Joint Hospital, which is now recognised as a training institution for nurses and midwives.

The Rural Hospital programme continues to enjoy popular support. At the beginning of last year, Government assumed financial responsibility for two completed hospitals at Abak and Awgu, and a third is now functioning at Ahoada. Seven more projects are under construction and it is proposed, during this coming year, to expand some of the hospitals completed under this programme to units of about sixty beds. Considerable financial assistance has been given to Voluntary Agencies engaged in medical services and such assistance will continue in the year ahead.

The immediate aim of my Ministers in the field of health will be to give greater emphasis to preventive medicine. The work of the campaign

teams which so successfully combated Yaws in the Nsukka Division was extended to the Abakaliki, Awgu, Awka, Ogoja, Onitsha and Udi Divisions last year. Side by side with these campaigns, and as a corollary to the Rural Hospital programme the Rural Health Centre programme is now being implemented, again, in association with, and the full co-operation of, Local Government bodies.

These rural Health Centres are bases of preventive medicine from which medical facilities might be brought within reach of all. Good progress has already been made with an initial programme covering seven Divisions as a follow-up to completed Yaws campaigns, and a second programme for the remainder of the Region is being planned for the year ahead. The demonstration Rural Health Centre at Nsukka is now completed and this, together with the Rural Health School at Oji River, will train the personnel for this programme. In this work, the Region is indebted to the World Health Organisation and U.N.I.C.E.F. for valuable contributions in drugs, equipment and expert personnel.

Hon. Members will recall that, a year ago, this Region took the lead in repealing the old repressive Leprosy Ordinance, and the good progress which, it was noted then, had made such a step possible has been maintained. It is internationally recognised that the Leprosy Service of this Region is second to none in the world. This is a field in which the Missions have played so notable a part. Considerable financial assistance was provided for them last year and will continue in the year ahead.

### INFORMATION

Accurate information about the Region is earnestly sought after by the outside world and the Eastern Nigeria Information Service will be enjoined actively to prosecute the collection and dissemination of news about the Region within the financial limitations laid upon it. Whilst the need of the outside world for accurate information about this Region is appreciated, at the same time the equally pressing needs of the people in the divisions in the Region for similar information will not be overlooked.

### INTERNAL AFFAIRS

amount of overtime work. It is to be congratulated, however, on the rapidity with which it is able to produce documents urgently needed, such as Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1957 and Eastern Region Official Document No. 1 of 1958, in addition to its routine work. It had been hoped that the Printing Corporation would have been able to take some of this burden of work off the shoulders of this Department but this has unfortunately not yet been realised.

As regards Public Holidays, a Bill is now before the House for the celebration of 27th March as a Public Holiday throughout the Region to be observed as a Youth Day. This will enable Primary Schools' sports competitions to be held annually on that day.

During 1957, fifty-three organisations were granted permits to make Public Collections under the Public Collections Regulations Ordinance and so far this year fourteen renewals or new applications have been granted.

In course of the year, a comprehensive review was made of the question of lotteries, and Government policy as to whether to participate in foreign sponsored lotteries is yet to be crystallised. A policy statement on this subject will be made in due course.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs assumed responsibility for fire brigades in November, 1957 and, although the Thomas Report on the Future of Fire Fighting in Nigeria had been available since 1955, no clear-cut decision had been arrived at as to whether this should be the responsibility of Local Government Councils or the Regional Government. This again has been reviewed comprehensively by my Ministers and the proposals and recommendations, since there are vast financial implications involved, are now in process of being formulated as a Government policy.

My Government has approved in principle the creation of a Regional Census organisation, and steps have been taken to acquire the services of an officer experienced in Census organisation. This officer when appointed, will make a detailed report upon the organisation necessary, and undertake the training of staff who would man such an organisation. The broader question of a Regional Statistics Department has been agreed

During the last Constitutional Conference, representatives of my Government strongly advocated the independence of the Judiciary. To preserve this independence, it is proposed to set up a Judicial Service Commission under the Chairmanship of the Chief Justice with the Chairman of the Public Service Commission as one of its members.

In Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1957 my Government has had in mind the introduction to the High Court of the jury system. The practical implications of the application of the jury system in this Region are now under examination in consultation with the Chief Justice.

The new High Court building at Enugu houses the general office, finance and the Probate sections of the Judicial Department. It will now be possible for the Federal Supreme Court sessions to be held periodically in this Region. Hitherto, the Federal Supreme Court held sessions only at Lagos, Ibadan, and Jos. All the Judicial Divisions, except Onitsha, now have High Court buildings and it is proposed to build one there as soon as funds are available.

When the Constitutional Instruments are signed, the appointment of a political Attorney-General will be ratified. It is proposed also to appoint a Solicitor-General and Law Officers to assist him in the performance of his onerous responsibility. The office of the Director of Public Prosecutions will be created. Consideration is also being given to the creation of the office of Director of Public Defence with the object of ensuring that justice shall not be impeded by want of legal aid in the defence of accused persons.

The Customary Courts Law will be applied piecemeal in the Region. All the District Courts will be Grade A. The following is the order of introduction in the Divisions:

Udi, Awgu and Nsukka, Awka and Onitsha, Abakaliki and Afikpo, Ogoja, Obudu, Obubra and Ikom, Orlu and Okigwi, Bende, Owerri, Aba, Ikot Ekpene, Abak and Enyong, Uyo, Eket, Opobo and Calabar, Ahoada and Ogoni, Degema and Brass.

The introduction of these courts will necessitate changes in the present judicial system, and the position of chiefs in a judicial capacity will not be overlooked. The sitting fees of the court

will be abolished.

To ensure a speedy administration of justice, the membership of the County Court will be reduced. Any deficit in the running of the District Courts will be borne by the Ministry of Local Government, and any deficit in the County Courts will be borne by the Ministry of Justice. Provision has been made for the training of Registrars and the Presidents of the Courts at the Community Centre, Awgu. Accommodation at Awgu is limited. The order of training will conform with the order of the introduction of the courts.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Government proposes to make major changes in the local government field during the coming year. The most important of these changes will be the abolition of County Councils which have in general proved wasteful and inefficient and are not desired by the people. Seventeen County Councils have been set up in the Region and they will all be dissolved on the 31st March. The powers, assets and liabilities of these councils will be taken over by the District Councils in their areas. This will involve big changes in the work of those District Councils and will also pose problems in connection with the re-employment of County staff. Attempts will be made to find other employment for them but it will be a difficult task.

Many councils were due for re-election last month, but my Government will be presenting a Bill at this meeting for a law to extend their lives by six months. This will enable elections to be held under more peaceful conditions and will enable the single-member wards for those councils to be worked out in accordance with the policy to be decided by this House when it debates Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1957. The result of this postponement will be that during this coming year every Council in the Region will be due re-election either by September or before the 31st March, 1959.

The next major change proposed in the local government structure is the appointment of chiefs and natural rulers as ex officio members of councils and as Presidents of Local Councils and, in certain cases, of District Councils. It is proposed to implement the recommendations of



the Jones' Report in these matters, wherever these recommendations are genuinely welcomed by the people of the area.

A Bill to amend the Local Government Law will be moved at this meeting of the House. It will deal mainly with proposals to give the Minister of Local Government powers of compulsory transfer of local government staff. It will be necessary to introduce a further amending Bill later in the year if the proposals in Chapter VI of Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1957 are accepted by this House. The mere abolition of County Councils would not necessitate any major change in the Law since the two tier system of Local Government is already working in various parts of the Eastern Region under the existing Law. But it is proposed in that Paper to rename all the District Councils County Councils and this will mean redrafting much of the Law, and amending all District Council Instruments.

There is, I regret to say, widespread evidence that all is not well in Local Government treasuries. Many instances have come to light of Treasurers seriously in arrears with the posting of their cash books, and cash shortages are frequent. This is a serious position and results from a lack of supervision over the Treasurers concerned. It is proposed to remedy this by increasing the number of Executive Officers (Accounts) available for touring, checking treasuries for financial irregularities, and helping treasurers in keeping their accounts up to date, from the present strength of two, to nine. My Government regards the filling of these posts as of major importance for the functioning of Local Government Councils.

## PRODUCTION

The primary task of the Ministry of Production is to foster greater economic integration between Agriculture, the rapidly developing industries, and the increasing population in the Eastern Region. By having responsibility for the Eastern Region Development Corporation, the Eastern Regional Marketing Board and the Produce Inspection Services, the Ministry will co-ordinate more than ever before problems connected with production and increased output, marketing and improvement in the quality of our produce, and relate them to create the necessary incentive, by means of price mechanism, for the welfare of producers and consumers.

With the coming of the new Ministry the prices paid for certain grades of the produce have been

reviewed in favour of producers, with the Marketing Board reserves maintained at a level higher than before.

The Produce Inspection Services have continued to extend their activities into some of the remoter areas of the Eastern Region, specially in Ogoja Province where encouragement, in the interest of diversification, is being given to the improvement in the quality of Soya Bean, Bennisseed, Groundnuts and Cocoa. The results, so far achieved, are very reassuring.

The Produce Department has recently instituted a new system of nominated check-test which will have some considerable effect on the production of Special Grade Palm Oil, and it is hoped to eliminate the production of Grades II and III altogether, in the coming season. This will expand, for export purposes, the production of Special Grade Oil and Technical Grade I Oil, thus strengthening our position in the overseas market.

The Ministry will concentrate on the use of the E.R.D.C. as the chief instrument for increasing our agricultural and industrial output for export and internal consumption. Directions have been given for the extension of the existing plantations, for initiating new ones, and for the reorganisation of management to enable the projects to be run on a commercial basis.

Special attention will be paid to the production of short-term crops to strengthen the liquid cash position and to safeguard the overseas investment of the E.R.D.C. Every effort will be made to extend large-scale production evenly within the Eastern Region so that the Region, as a whole, is maintained as a balanced economic unit.

A promising new agricultural enterprise is the banana industry at Iking in Calabar Division. Already the first shipment has been made from Eastern Nigeria by an expatriate firm.

Hon. Members will be happy to learn that the first shipment of crude oil has left Nigeria. It will be some time, however, before it is known whether there is oil in commercial quantity.

Loans will continue to be given to industrialists and farmers for industrial and agricultural

improvement of the Eastern Region. As a break from the past, partnership between the E.R.D.C. and indigenous capital will be encouraged. Use will be made of Local Government bodies, Clans and Tribal Unions to preserve the traditional pattern of land ownership in any area of encroachment.

The existence of the new Ministry is regarded as a step forward towards the ultimate aim of separating the functions of research experiment so that the latter tested under operational conditions are translated into increased output.

### TOWN PLANNING

In continuation of the programme of ensuring the maximum benefit use of hitherto undeveloped Crown Lands, leases of some 720 plots have been granted during the past year for residential, commercial and industrial purposes, excluding those allocated to Government Departments for their requirements, and a further 550 plots are now being allocated. Arrangements are well advanced for the survey and development of more new layouts which will be capable of providing a further 870 plots during the coming year.

Government recognises that it has a fundamental obligation towards the people of the Region to do its utmost to ensure that the conditions under which they live and work are those most conducive to physical and mental health, happiness and prosperity and at the same time provide every scope for rapid and orderly expansion of commerce and industry.

To this end, consideration will be given to the appointment of planning authorities for a much greater number of urban and rural areas and to the setting up of a division of the Ministry of Town Planning which shall be competent to formulate in general terms, a town planning policy for the Region and to encourage, advise and assist planning authorities to make use of their powers to the best advantage in the interests of the inhabitants of the Region.

Rent Control Regulations have been introduced in the urban areas of Enugu and Aba. Consideration is being given to the introduction of similar Regulations in Port Harcourt and other urban areas in the Region.

### TRANSPORT

The Government has had a busy and successful year in the development of the roads of the Region. Eighty-five of the 314 miles of road which is being undertaken under the Road Integration Scheme (for the period 1955-60) have been completed, namely: Okigwi-Afikpo Road, ten miles; Abakaliki-Afikpo Road, thirty miles; Umuahia-Ikot Ekpene, ten miles; Obubra-Ediba, three miles; Ihiala-Orlu, thirteen miles; Obolo-Eha Amufu, one mile; Nnewi-Nobi-Ekwulobia, fourteen miles; Awka-Orlu-Owerri, four miles.

During the forthcoming year it is hoped more progress will be made and the programme will be substantially completed by 1960. Under the Colonial Development and Welfare Scheme, the Abakaliki-Obubra new road has been completed and a ferry boat placed on order, as also has a ferry boat for the Ediba-Itigidi crossing of the Cross River. The reconstruction and bituminous surfacing of seven miles of the Nsukka-Opi Road will be completed during the year. Work has already commenced by contracts for the Ekwulobia, Ndikelionwu, Amanze roads and bridges.

Some of the projects under the Colonial Development and Welfare Scheme have not yet been started because the Revised Estimates far exceeded the original Estimates. Detailed planning is proceeding and, depending upon the results, an approach will be made to Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom with a view to making the necessary adjustments, and every effort will be made actively to advance this project.

The directly financed special improvement scheme which was estimated last year to cost over £374,000 is within sight of completion. Permanent bridges have been completed at Ibagwa and Okpoha, the Port Harcourt-Elele-Owerri road has been rehabilitated, sixty-three miles of the Aba-Opobo road has been provided with a bituminous surface, and work is progressing well on the Obudu-Ikom road. Work is progressing on the Bende-Umuahia-Alayi roads and the Port Harcourt-Ogoni-Kono road and, during the forthcoming year this work, it is hoped, will be completed as also will the work of providing bridges and culverts on the Oko-Ufuma-Umanze road. The reconstruction of the Calabar-Arochuku road is progressing well from Calabar

and will provide an all-season road before the wet season to the Dunlop Rubber Plantations.

Government will continue in the coming financial year to ensure that the people, produce and commerce of the Region can move about safely and economically within the Region. The present highway system of the Region developed in a hurry without detailed planning, but will need to be replanned on modern lines now that the country has reached a turning point in its development. The road system needs to be converted from a medley of unco-ordinated road into a close-knit framework of modern communication essential to the viable economy of a virile community. This will take some time to achieve but in the following months work will start towards bringing this about.

In order to economise staff, and in order that Local Government may assume an increasing share of the responsibility for good communications the Ministry of Transport will delegate to Local Government bodies, who are able to develop the necessary organisation, the responsibility for maintaining the trunk roads lying within their respective areas. The Regional Government will continue, as at present, to make substantial contributions to the cost of such maintenance, and will, for as long as may be necessary, make available to such Local Government bodies the services, in an advisory and, if desired, a supervisory capacity of certain technical staffs.

During the period, the improvement of the many dangerous narrow timber bridges which abound in the Region, will be undertaken by a system of mass production and of the latest techniques which will enable speed to be allied to economy. The organisation for this will inevitably take some time to set up and the result will not become very marked this coming financial year. Work is also in hand on the construction of the Nkana bridge. This most important bridge is on the road which will ultimately connect Calabar with Arochuku and the main land.

On behalf of the Federal Government, the whole of the Trunk Road "A" system in the Region was maintained generally in a satisfactory manner, including resealing seventy miles of tarred surfaces. Work is in hand on the reconstruction of seven very difficult miles of the Enugu-Abakaliki road, at a cost of £22,000, as also is work on the Owerri-Enugu road

involving heavy earthwork, where the remarkable floods caused a marsh in September last. Everyone will be glad to know that the reconstruction of the Port Harcourt-Aba road is going well and when complete will provide a tarred road, 22 feet wide carriageway, on this most important route.

#### WELFARE

I turn now to the Ministry of Welfare. Through the agency of the Community Development Department and the Administrative Officers in the field, the impetus of community development has been fully maintained. Emphasis is being placed on roads and bridges to open up new areas of the Region for economic development. Four new Bailey Bridges, with a combined length of 500 feet, have been launched during the past seven months, and six others have already arrived in the country and should be launched before next rainy season. I would signal out for special mention the embankments for the Bailey Bridge at Umuajia in Okigwi Division. These are over half a mile in length and were built entirely by voluntary, unpaid labour.

An Inspector of Works is shortly to be appointed to the Community Development Department, and he will be available to assist Local Government Councils and communities in their larger projects. The Community Development Secretary has at present on deposit more than £27,000, paid over to him by various communities and Local Government Councils, who wish bridges to be ordered on their behalf. The Community Development Department orders the bridges and finally undertakes their assembly.

The Community Development Training Centre at Awgu, in addition to giving technical assistance and loans of engineering equipment, runs courses throughout the year for Local Government Councillors and staff. Two very valuable courses for Council Treasurers and another for Council Surveyors have been held recently in co-operation with the Ministry of Local Government and others are to be run during the coming year.

The amount of financial aid for Community Development has had to be restricted but the increased emphasis on technical assistance, which is often of greater value than direct financial

assistance, is producing notable achievements. Communities are often ready and willing to pay the entire cost of a project they really desire, but the technical skill to carry out the work is lacking. This is where the Community Development Department can help.

In the field of urban community development the Youth Organiser has assisted in the establishment of some forty Youth Clubs throughout the Region, and courses for youth leaders have been held on both a regional and local basis.

For financial reasons, the Social Welfare Department's activities have to be restricted to the Calabar Province. The work of the department, notably in connection with wives and children accompanying labourers recruited for Fernando Po, has shown a sharp increase. I should like to pay a tribute to Miss Belcher, the Chief Social Welfare Officer, who is shortly to retire after many years devoted work at Calabar.

A Children and Young Persons Law now awaits its Second Reading by the House. The Bill seeks to simplify the procedure for the Comittal of children and young persons in need of care and protection.

The Ministry of Welfare has circulated all Local Government Councils and District Officers inviting their attention to the traffic in children which undoubtedly exists in parts of the Region. The reports now being made, both in the newspapers and to the Ministry, about children rescued from slavery, show how effective has been the campaign against this social evil.

Labour is a concurrent subject and my Government has not therefore, attempted to enact separate legislation on labour matters. But it has considered and expressed its views on all the new and amended labour legislation enacted by the Federal Government. The wage levels of all classes of wage earner have continued to rise, and their number is increasing steadily as industrial expansion proceeds.

My Government's concern for the protection of Nigerian Labour seeking employment outside Nigeria has continued to receive attention. The recommendations made by the Parliamentary Delegation, which visited Fernando Po in November last year, are now the subject of

negotiation between the Federal Government and the Governor-General of the Spanish Province of the Gulf of Guinea.

## WORKS

An improvement in the number of staff available during the year made it possible for the Public Works Department to give more attention to maintenance, as well as construction work, and to make a start on overtaking the serious leeway in surveys and design for new works. It has also been able to accept a good deal of agency works for the Federal Government.

In the coming year, the policy of using contractors on all major construction work will be further pursued and the Ministry staff will, for most of the period, be engaged on completing the work already started. It is hoped that this will make it possible for work on the airports of Enugu, Onitsha and Port Harcourt to be undertaken when investigations, surveys and designs and contract documents are ready and the Federal Government releases the funds.

More attention will be given to the Rural Water Supplies of the Region. This scheme is badly behind schedule, largely due to the lack of Water Engineers and Inspectorate staff. During the year, work was done in Niger, Nsukka, Aba, Ngwa, Bende, Okigwi, Abakaliki, Ibekwe and Afikpo County Council areas, where a total of 123 wells and 40 spring improvements were completed as well as active construction in 52 other water points. However, my Government is taking measures to increase the staff required for this most important work and it is hoped the arrears of the programme may be made up. A revised programme of water supply based on the requests from the different County and District Councils is being prepared covering the whole of the Region. This will form the programme for future construction.

Considerable progress has been made in Urban Water Supplies during the last twelve months. A new water supply for Onitsha has been completed and is at work supplying nearly one million gallons of potable water per day, representing an increase of 40 per cent above the preceding years. The schemes for Calabar and Aba are well advanced and will be completed early in the forthcoming financial year. These represent great advances because, in the case

of Calabar, 600,000 gallons per day will be pumped to the people. This is nearly double the present supply. In Aba, the supply will shortly be upwards of 600,000 gallons per day, an increase of more than double the present supply.

My Government is also considering extending the Aba supply to embrace outlying areas. Plans are in hand to extend the Umuahia temporary supply during the coming year to provide 60,000 gallons per day, as against 28,000 gallons per day as at present. This moreover is a temporary measure. The final scheme envisages a very much more ample supply.

Owing to the speed with which Port Harcourt is growing in size and economic importance, resulting in part from work of the company exporting mineral oil from there, previous population forecasts, and therefore the water supply requirements, appear to be underestimated and the population of the town is at present, nearly what it was expected to be in 1965. In the coming year, Government will consider the proposals for revising urban water scheme approved in 1956, so as to provide 3.4 million gallons in 1970. The firm which is to sink the bore hole has arrived at Port Harcourt and has started work.

In Enugu where there have been complaints of water shortage, it may not be out of place to mention that the quantity of water now supplied is upwards of 1.2 million gallons per day, which represents a consumption per head greater than that of any other town in Nigeria. None-the-less, it is my Government's intention to augment this supply during the coming year by another 400,000 gallons per day.

Mr Speaker, hon. Members, the Constitutional Conference of last year will later this year resume to consider the Reports of the Delimitation, Fiscal and Minority Commissions. It is my earnest hope that in this part of Nigeria no less than in the whole, conflict of opinion honestly held may be honestly argued and honestly resolved: and that unity of purpose, so far from weakening, shall be strengthened.

Mr Speaker, hon. Members, I pray that Almighty God will guide you in all your deliberations. (Applause).

His Excellency then retired from the Chamber.

Sitting suspended at 11.30 a.m.

Sitting resumed at 12 noon.

## GOVERNOR'S SPEECH

### Motion for an Address

**Mr M. E. Ogon (Ikom Division):** Mr Speaker, I rise to move "That a Humble Address of Thanks be presented to His Excellency the Governor, for His Excellency's Most Gracious Speech".

Sir, it is barely twelve months ago since the Government Party was returned to power. During that time, at the last Speech from the Throne, we promised this Region self-government alongside with internal self-government for the Federation. I feel sure that everybody will agree that emotion aside, we have spoken sense and truth to the nation and we have achieved self-government for the people of Eastern Nigeria. Sir, that self-government has really proved one thing. It has proved that we are able to maintain a democratic state in the Region—a state for which we are able to maintain law and order in the face of provocation and I am sure that that will be an incentive for us to work harder in the future. The other issue, Sir, has been partly achieved. It will be remembered that this Region was one of the first Regions to put forward a programme for self-government for the Region and internal autonomy for the Federation. That hope has been fulfilled in the appointment of the first Nigerian Prime Minister and we are grateful that our Premier on behalf of this Region promised him co-operation and a willingness to work together. Sir, I feel all we must do at this stage is to congratulate the Premier of this Region for his statement of two years ago has proved adequate in that two years ago he said in this House that he was willing to serve under anybody on condition that we have independence for the whole of Nigeria. It is in that vein, Sir, that I still ask that our Executive Council should give support in whatever way they can to make self-government in 1960 a reality. Independence for this country has been a national issue, and for us, it is the biggest issue. I think, Sir, that we in this Region should give support to the idea of a National Committee being formed now to look

[MR OGOR]

into the problem that will face us when independence comes. If this is not done—a National Committee to have all the Regions together to agree on things like the National Anthem which will be above party, National Flag, things like accommodation for all the nations that will come—you will find that after the Federal Election whichever party is in power will find that there is no time for adequate consultation to have a National Anthem and National Flag that will be acceptable to all sections of the country. It is with that feeling, Sir, that I will ask that this Region should give all support to the Federal Prime Minister to usher in self-government for us in 1960.

Sir, the Speech from the Throne not only shows Government's achievements over the past year, but it is a brilliant piece that shows a lot of legislation that will come during the coming year. It is, as I said last year, a document for hope and progress. It is very difficult to go into all the aspects of Government's activities mentioned in the Speech from the Throne but there are certain sections of it which I would like to touch—things like the Civil Service, the University of Nigeria, House of Chiefs, oil discovery, Nkalagu Cement, Agriculture, Road and Fernando Po in which I am very interested.

Sir, speaking on the Civil Service, I must congratulate those who are Nigerian Civil Servants and the expatriates who chose to remain behind for the marvellous way in which they are carrying out the work of this Region. Sir, with all the vacancies here to be filled, it is known that the standard of administration in this Region is not below what we had in the days of British administration. Our Nigerians have increasingly borne this burden and borne it efficiently.

It is unfortunate that we had agreed in London to pay a very heavy sum of money as compensation but this is a matter for all Governments of the Federation ;so there is nothing we can do. It is regrettable that this Region has to pay out the huge sum of £1 million in spite of British claims to philanthropy in educating us in the art of self-government.

It is a serious issue that allegations are being made about the leakage of Government secrets

in the Public Service. We have always maintained that we want a Civil Service that is professionally inspired and politically neutral. In other words, any Civil Servant who is not willing to serve any Government chosen by the people—without political colour or personal bias—should not be in the Civil Service. We urge on the Government to take any measure they may deem fit in order to stop the leakage of official secrets.

Before I leave this subject of public service, I would like to say that this shortage of people you talk about in the Forestry, schools, etc., is due to the fact that Britain has got to supply all her Colonies with whatever little skilled and professional men at her disposal. They have not got enough qualified people. What shall we do then ?

I believe, Sir, that it is high time we had a multi-racial Public Service. The Public Service Commission should be able to travel anywhere to recruit staff who will come to work for us. They should be able to travel to India, Pakistan, U.S.A. and Ghana for this purpose. We are not interested in the political ideology of any one nation, but we are interested in a multi-racial Public Service that will suit our requirements. We have reached a stage when the Public Service Commission should be entirely Nigerianised. We have had six months of self-government. We are very grateful to the Chairman of the Public Service Commission for what he has done for us, but we believe that the time has come when at the end of his tour he should be replaced by a suitable Nigerian. We know that it is the job of the Governor to appoint such a man, but we are asking that with the evolution of time our views should be noted.

We must also congratulate the Government for a number of bold measures; for instance the University of Nigeria. Sir, I feel we ought to thank the Government fully in their effort to give university education in this country. It will not cost the Government from our public revenue at all. When the original idea was first mooted the Marketing Board laid aside the people's money for the building of the people's University. The question of money is not our problem. We have got this money set aside from 1955. The site of Nsukka is acceptable. The site is

owned by the people of Eastern Nigeria. It is the people's site. There is also no problem of efficiency in the University. We do know, Sir, that we in the East have been very particular regarding the high quality of education in the Eastern Region. I am very grateful that the Speech from the Throne mentioned two very notable organisations. As a matter of fact one of the organisations is managing the Ibadan University College through the London University. In other words, the question of management is secure. With this proper management why should we be afraid to give our people an opportunity to get education? My only warning is that it should be Nigerian in concept. Although the University College Ibadan has been meeting our requirements, it has been too colonial in concept and we want an education that will provide for our needs—not only for the people of the East but also for the people of the whole Federation.

With regard to primary education, I am grateful that the Premier is setting up a special Committee to look into the question of education. As a matter of fact, Sir, I could have wanted a wider Committee—a man power Survey Committee as in Ghana—that will go into our whole requirements over years. It will be able to go to the Ministry of Education and say this man is not fit to be in the Ministry of Education; he should go to the Ministry of Commerce.

I am passing briefly now to the House of Chiefs. I am not myself a believer in monarchy but as this is an issue which had been agreed to in London by all parties I will give the Government my full support. I would, however, sound this note of warning and that is that we should guard against some self-appointed Chiefs, particularly in Ogoja Province. Since it was agreed in London that there will be a House of Chiefs, no less than eight coronations of Chiefs have taken place in this Region.

The Chiefs of this Region ought to be grateful to the Government for giving them a proper status in society. We are doing for them what the British failed to do for them years ago. What the British did for them was to create them Warrant Chiefs, but we are making them more dignified.

Government should be very firm and make sure that when they go to places like Obudu and Ogoja they recognise Chiefs according to local custom and usage. Government should guard against young men who are not sure of succeeding through the popular vote and therefore make themselves punny Chiefs. I also pray, Sir, that the kind of tussle that took place between the House of Lords and the House of Commons should never take place in this House.

I want the Government to look into the question of giving independence and security to Magistrates and a section of the Judiciary in order that they can do their job without fear of being victimised.

I think, Sir, that all sides of this House will wish the Company prospecting for oil more luck in future. We are proud, Sir, that oil has been found in this Region and we are resolved that oil should be exported along the whole west coast of British West Africa. We wish them further discoveries in large quantity. As a matter of fact, we are not geologists to debate whether oil will be found in greater quantity or not, but we see in the Company's bulletin that the geological structure of the Nigerian coast line is like that of the American Oil producing areas. This shows that oil is off-shore.

I also want to say that we have attracted more foreign capital into this Region than any other Region in the Federation. The twenty-seven million pounds invested by Shell in this Region represents the highest investment so far and this is proof of the economic stability of this Region.

Again, it is in this Region that we have an indigenous cement industry in the country. The raw materials for this industry are produced in Abakaliki and we are proud of this.

We want to say, Sir, that we should give our Government more co-operation. Let there be more Economic Missions so that we shall have much more foreign capital coming into this country. It is a well known fact that we have not got the experience and the capital sufficient to manage and develop industries in this country. So, for a long time to come we have got to depend on foreign capitals and we are welcoming them with the best possible terms and security. Sir, I will even ask the

[MR OGON]

Minister of Commerce to help them more. When new industries come into this country, make sure that they have suitable sites for their factories with which to start putting money into the country, because it is only when we have development in this country that we can improve the standard of the people. So, Sir, I welcome that part of the Governor's Speech which said that we shall enter into partnership with foreign industrialists and capital, but when these industries are paying we should not sell back our shares to private enterprises. Sir, I am disputing that. I think private enterprise, alongside with public enterprise, working together at this stage of our development will save our economic situation. Now, Sir, my only quarrel is this: if the public have invested money in Nkalagu and Nkalagu is paying and there is profit, why sell those profits to my hon. Friends Mr Eronini on the left and Mr Chidolue? Why not put back those profits to social services? Sir, rather than sell these shares to private individuals, I would like the shares to be sold to Co-operative Societies. That would come very near to my hon. Friend, the Leader of Opposition's idea of collectivism. (*Laughter*).

Sir, where the public has invested and there is profit coming up we will like this profit to be diverted to social services.

I will not like, Sir, to waste a lot of time, but I would like to say that much as we like industrial development in this country, without agriculture the Eastern Region would not exist; and so, we are very grateful to this Government for creating the Ministry of Production (*Hear! Hear! from Government Bench*). We will pray that it should continue vigorously with the job of advising. We are very grateful for all the things this Government has done. A few years ago—1945-1948—there were few rice-growing areas all over the country. Right now, if you go to Abakaliki, farmers are becoming prosperous. Rice is being sent to Opobo to feed my hon. Friend opposite. (*Laughter*). We have yams; we have everything in Ogoja Province properly developed. Our trouble is not so much the production of food in Ogoja Province; there is a lot of food we cannot transport out to other towns. So, we would like the Government to carry out vigorously its road programme. We

are really grateful for what they have done. For the first time we are having our road being tarred to Ugep, so that Mr Arikpo's car can go safely to Ugep. Roads are being tarred to Opobo. In fact, in all the C.O.R. State areas, roads are being tarred.

Now, Sir, I will also warn that when we are building a road in the Region we should not allow partisan policy to govern us. A road constructed whether at Opobo or at Ogoja is for the benefit of all people in the Region as a whole. So that in building a road our policy should not be whether it starts in a C.O.R. State area or another area. I am sure that if the Government does that it will be a very good thing.

Finally, a word of praise, Sir. I am very grateful, Sir, that Government mentioned the Commissioner's Office in the United Kingdom. I think that without gainsaying, our Commissioner, alongside with other Commissioners, has done a very good job for this country, and when the time comes to expand facilities we will very much welcome a move.

In winding up, I would like to say that with a united people, with faith in democracy, with tolerance for others less fortunate than ourselves, this Region might yet grow into a strong and independent unit of the Federation.

Sir, I beg to move.

**Mr W. Abengowe (Aba Division):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*And under Standing Order 24 (2) the Debate stood adjourned. Debate to be resumed upon Thursday, 13th March, 1958.*

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Minister of Production (Dr M. I. Okpara):** Sir, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until tomorrow, 12th March at 10 a.m.

**The Minister of Transport (Mr P. O. Ururuka):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*



## ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

**The Pharmaceutical and Tourist Corporations**

**Mr E. O. Eyo (Uyo Division):** Mr Speaker, I have to raise an issue which affects the Pharmaceutical and the Tourist Corporations. If you go to Chalet No. 4 you will see an Expatriate Engineer who, I understand, was recruited in May last year. He stays there with his wife and has been lodging in the Catering Rest House since May last year. Now, the average monthly bill, Sir, is £60 and from the 13th May of last year till date no bill has been paid. I have made enquiry and I am informed that the Pharmaceutical Corporation employed this Engineer and applied to the Tourist Corporation for accommodation. Now, Sir, £60 a month over the last ten months works out at £600 and I am wondering when this bill of £600 will be paid. Now, Sir, I understand the Pharmaceutical Corporation has been suspended. But I hope what is now happening in Chalet No. 4 is not evidence to convince the people of this Region that the Pharmaceutical Corporation is still in existence. This is a very serious matter. Let the Corporation go to the aid of this gentleman and his wife. If there is no job for this gentleman, please arrange his passage back to Germany. Sir, you want to see this gentleman. I do not think he is very happy where he is and he simply does not know what to do. He remains there and walks about the Rest House. (*Laughter*).

I am very serious. If it were as funny as all that to the Ministers, I want them to understand that what is worrying me is what will finally happen to this gentleman and his wife, and also what will happen to the unpaid bills. I understand the Chairman of the Pharmaceutical Corporation has received all the bills but he has not made any attempt to give indication at least as to whether they will be in a position to pay these bills or not. I would like the Minister of Commerce first of all to ensure that all the bills so far have been paid. If there is

no job for this gentleman and his wife the Pharmaceutical Corporation should be good enough to arrange their passage back immediately. We cannot afford to allow this couple to remain in Chalet No. 4 at the expense of the Tourist Corporation. I feel that it is a matter for Members of the House to express opinion. I know very well the Minister may say that it is a matter affecting this Corporation or that, but the point is: are we prepared to allow this couple to remain indefinitely—eating—without any indication as to whether they are going to pay? (*Laughter*). Well, if that is going to be a concession I am sure Members will oppose it. So I want a statement from the Minister to say when these bills will be paid, for how long he expects this couple to remain in the Region and what arrangements are being made to repatriate them to Germany.

**The Minister of Commerce (Mr J. U. Nwodo):** Mr Speaker, it seems the hon. Member is very much interested in the Tourist Corporation. I do not know whether he is wishing to be a member or a Treasurer of the Corporation. It is a well-known fact that people who occupy Chalets in Catering Rest House must pay the necessary accommodation fees and other bills, and Mr Slowig is no exception to this rule. I want to say that the Pharmaceutical Corporation has now in hand a building scheme at Aba, a place which is supposed to be its Headquarters. Were these buildings completed and taken over by the Tourist Corporation, naturally, it would have been possible for Mr Slowig to occupy one of these buildings. I would remark that hon. Members are aware that the activities of the Pharmaceutical Corporation are at the moment being examined. It is intended when taking final decision on the future of this Corporation to consider also its financial commitments and decide on how they are to be settled.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Adjourned accordingly, at thirty minutes past twelve o'clock noon.*

EASTERN HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 12th March, 1958

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

PRAYERS

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

PETITION

**Mr S. O. Achara (Okigwi Division):** Mr Speaker, I beg to submit a petition signed by twenty-one members of the Moneylending profession. The petition, Mr Speaker, prays Government to reconsider the compulsory opening of bank account and payment by cheque, and proceeds to explain to the Government the implications of opening bank account and making payment by cheque. Mr Speaker, not all borrowers have bank account and not all borrowers too like the exposure which banking account—payment by cheque—will entail. We have here some people who are professional exchange men who deal in cheque. If a cross cheque is given to a man who has no bank account, he meets a man with bank account. Let us take it that the cheque is for £15. Well he says: "It costs me a lot of money to pay the bank for the upkeep of the ledger and unless you are prepared to advance some commission to me I will not find it easy to cash the cheque for you".

Mr Speaker, the petitioners also call the attention of the Government to the case of a person who receives a telegram on Saturday at 10 a.m. that he has lost his father and he desires £20 to go and conduct the funeral ceremony. He goes to a moneylender and succeeds in getting a crossed cheque, say at 11 o'clock, and before he goes back to the bank the bank has closed. All he has to do is to wait until Monday before he can cash his cheque and even then, he has to look for somebody who has a bank account. Banks do not normally accept your cheque from you only to cash it for you to go away. So that the difficulties which the Bill, if passed, will place on the humble petitioners are what this petition is intended to bring humbly before the Government and I think this petition, Sir, is a very humble one, worded in the most decorous language and it has brought out precisely what the original Bill has not taken into consideration. I commend it to the Government and I hope that it will be taken into consideration when the Bill to which it refers shall be debated.

Mr Speaker, I beg to submit the petition.

Ordered: *That the said petition do lie upon the Table and be referred to the Public Petitions Committee, when appointed.*

PAPER

**Mr Speaker:** During the Adjournment, the publication entitled "Annual Report of the Forest Department, Eastern Region, 1956" was distributed to all Members. This Paper is deemed to have been laid on the Table and will be entered upon the Votes and Proceedings of today.

Ordered: *That the said Paper do lie upon the Table.*

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Business Statement

**The Minister of Production (Dr M. I. Okpara):** Mr Speaker, I wish to make this Business Statement on behalf of the Government. I am sure you wish to give hon. Members some idea of the programme of Business for this meeting or some part of it. In the first place, I wish to apologise on behalf of the Government that copies of the Draft Estimates for 1958-59 were not sent to Members before they left their homes. The Estimates are still being printed and it is hoped they will be in Members' hands in about ten days time.

The Government proposes the following Order of Business to be transacted at this Budget Meeting:

On Thursday the 13th March, the debate on the Motion on the Address from the Throne commences. Four days are allowed for the debate and so we have the 13th, 14th, 17th and 19th for the debate, the 15th and 16th being Saturday and Sunday. The 18th March is Private Members' day. Several notices of motions have been received and some of them will be debated on that day.

On Thursday, the 20th of March, there will be a motion on the Self-government White Paper. It is anticipated that the debate on the motion may last about three or four days.

In the event that that hope is realised the debate will fold up on Monday the 24th of March. If it does not, then it will be on Tuesday the 25th, with the consent of hon. Members, since Tuesday is Private Members' Day. But if Members are not agreeable to give up Tuesday the 25th, then debate continues and ends on Wednesday the 26th of March. Whatever happens, Government proposes that the Second Reading of the Appropriation Bill shall be moved on the 25th of March. According to Standing Order 66, no debate on the motion will be conducted until the 3rd day, and as the 27th is a Public Holiday—the Youth Day—the debate on the Second Reading of the Appropriation Bill will commence on Friday the 28th of March, and end on the 2nd of April, that is three days. The 29th of March is a Saturday and the 30th is Sunday, Tuesday the 1st of April is Private Members' Day.

The Committee of Supply commences and sits for one day only, that is Thursday the 3rd of April, before the Easter holidays. Friday the 4th of April is Good Friday and the 5th is Saturday; therefore no sitting. The 6th is Easter Sunday and the 7th is Easter Monday; the House will therefore resume on Tuesday the 8th of April, to continue the Committee of Supply. Hon. Members will appreciate that the programme suggested above is tentative for the most part. The debate on the Appropriation Bill may commence much earlier depending upon the amount of time taken up by Members on the debate on the Self-government White Paper.

**Mr S. G. Ikoku (Enyong Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I much regret to announce the profound disappointment of the House on this sort of business arrangement, particularly about the arrangement being made as regards the Budget. I must say, Sir, that this is the first time in the history of this country that I have heard of any Assembly being summoned for the Budget Session and being told that the Estimates are still not ready. We have to hang about Enugu, Sir.

**Government Bench:** They are ready; they are being printed.

**Mr Ikoku:** What is holding you then? If they are still printing, then they are not ready.

The point, Sir, is that the whole Region and all the Members of this House were looking forward to a full-dress debate on the Budget, and what we expected from the Government was to supply these Estimates in good time to enable us to study them before even we arrive at this House. Now we have come, this is the second day of the new Session of the House, and we are told that we shall have the Estimates in another ten days. I must express the profound disappointment of this House at this sort of affair. Is it not a fact that the Estimates we have come to debate will become operative as from the 1st of April? Is that not a fact? Is it not simple commonsense that we should do everything in our power to pass these Estimates before that date? Now, according to this business arrangement, the 8th of April—one week inside the new financial year—will only be the second day of the Committee of Supply! I must say that this Government has taken this question of being planless too far. They seem to pride themselves in planlessness, and we are not going to stand any more of this sort of business in this House. They must make up their minds whether they want Parliament or not. If they want to keep on ruling this Region through Special Warrant and the rest of it, let them go and do so, and stop subjecting this House to this type of indignity. That is my point. The hon. the Leader of the House can make any arrangement he likes, but we pray him through you, Mr Speaker, to exercise a little commonsense in the planning of the business of this House.

**The Premier (Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe):**

Mr Speaker, I did not intend to speak, but in view of the points raised by my hon. Friend opposite, I feel too that the House deserves to have an explanation.

I will not agree with my hon. Friend that this Government is guilty of planlessness, but I will agree with him that it is the first time in the history of this Region that we have had a Budget Session and the Estimates are not distributed in time. Naturally, according to the Cabinet system, it is not for us to come here and explain that those who are responsible for the implementation of Government policy have led us into this embarrassing position.

I have, therefore, to apologise on behalf of this Government that the Budget was not

[THE PREMIER]  
 printed in time to be distributed to you. I personally took the matter up with the Ministry concerned. Various excuses were given and I was not satisfied; so I was obliged to remove the permanent official in charge of that particular Ministry. It is not for me to come here and mention names, or to discuss details, but I was not quite satisfied and I had to perform this painful duty.

Unfortunately, the official concerned happens to be a Nigerian and one can imagine the embarrassment of the Government. Members will recall that right on the floor of this House, in years gone by, we fought the former Governor to a standstill, because we wanted to create opportunities for our people and we wanted them too, to occupy policy making posts.

I know that my hon. Friends opposite appreciate that what I am saying is the truth, because they had also either severally or jointly joined us in such a struggle. However, that is past and I will assure hon. Members that it is not pleasurable for the Leader of the House to make this announcement, but it is a fact we have to face, that in our first year as a self-governing Region, we have found it necessary to make a drastic change among our permanent officials at this time. I, therefore, ask the House to accept our apologies.

#### BILLS PRESENTED

##### (1) Public Holidays

Bill to amend the Public Holidays Ordinance; presented by Mr J. H. E. Nwuke, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Internal Affairs; read the First time; to be read a Second time Today.

##### (2) Moneylenders

Bill to amend the Moneylenders Ordinance; presented by Mr J. H. E. Nwuke, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Internal Affairs; read the First time; to be read a Second time Today.

##### (3) Children and Young Persons

Bill to make provision for the welfare of the young and the treatment of the young offenders

and for the establishment of juvenile Courts; presented by the Minister of Welfare, Mr E. A. Chime; read the First time; to be read a Second time Today.

##### (4) Forestry

Bill to amend the Eastern Region Forest Law, 1955; presented by the Minister of Agriculture, Mr P. O. Nwoga; read the First time; to be read a Second time Today.

##### (5) Local Government

Bill to provide for the extension of the term of office of certain Local Government Councillors; presented by the Minister of Local Government, Chief A. N. Onyiuke; read the First time; to be read a Second time Today.

##### (6) Dogs

Bill to amend the Dogs Ordinance; presented by the Minister of Health, Mr E. P. Okoya; read the First time; to be read a Second time Today.

#### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**The Minister of Production (Dr M. I. Okpara):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move, That pursuant to Standing Order 71—Suspension of Standing Orders—paragraph (1) of Standing Order 4—Sittings of the House—be suspended until further notice so that the hours of sitting of the House on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays shall be 10 a.m. to 2.30 p.m. each day.

Hon. Members are aware of the extreme discomfort experienced in this House in the afternoon. Government therefore proposes that the House shall be air-conditioned in the very near future, probably, before the next sitting of the House. To avoid the enervating effects of this inhospitable climate especially in the afternoon, it is thought more reasonable to sit from 10 a.m. to 2.30 p.m. 10 a.m. has been chosen to allow the Clerk and his staff to prepare the Order Paper and the House for hon. Members.

The Clerk of the House assures me that 9 a.m. is quite inadequate to allow him to get the various papers ready for the morning sittings.

Secondly, Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries often have some urgent duties to perform

in their Ministries and a couple of hours each day during the sittings of the House is very useful to keep the machinery of the Government mobile.

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Transport (Mr P. O. Ururuka):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr E. O. Eyo (Uyo Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I rise to move the amendment on the Order Paper to *leave out* 10 a.m. and *insert* 9 a.m.

Sir, you have heard the explanation given by the Minister of Production. He began by saying that it is due to discomfort in the afternoon that we have to decide not to have two sittings a day.

Now, Sir, one would imagine that one hour earlier in the morning would further strengthen this argument because it is cooler at 9 a.m. than at 10 a.m. every morning.

I want Members of the House to realise that normally we have 6 hours sitting a day—10 a.m. to 1 p.m., and 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. If you accept the Minister's suggestion, that would mean sitting for 4½ hours and we would be losing 1½ hours a day.

Our suggestion on this side of the House is that we sit one hour earlier in order to put in 5½ hours a day. The Minister went on to stress that the Clerk of the House has the view that he and the members of his staff would not be able to get the papers ready before 9 a.m. I am afraid that we cannot accept that explanation because after all we do sit on Fridays at 9 a.m. How is it that the Clerk is able to get all his papers ready on Fridays to allow us to sit at 9 a.m. but finds it difficult to do so on Mondays to Thursdays.

The Minister of Production went on to talk about Ministers and Parliamentaries having some work to do in the morning before they attend to this House. Sir, I do not know what work the Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries have to do if we are going to sit here for another ten days only hoping that the Estimates would be ready. The Ministers

and Parliamentary Secretaries can go back to their offices after 2.30 p.m. to work. During 1954-55, I knew of a Minister who used to work from 5 a.m. to 6 p.m. everyday but unfortunately he is no longer here. Sir, I do not want hon. Members to treat this lightly.

What do you do for goodness sake when you get up before 7 o'clock in the morning? You sit in the house doing nothing and you do not want to come to this House until 10 o'clock in the morning. Do not mind the Minister's speech as he speaks at his own convenience, but what are hon. Members doing from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. May I say, Sir, that this question of 10 o'clock was decided and was accepted throughout the country as the time appropriate for the meeting of the House. Let us come to this House an hour earlier—9 a.m. After all, we do attend Village Council meetings. Do we not go to these council meetings as early as 6 o'clock in the morning? I would like to know from hon. Members, Sir, what time they got up in the morning during the election campaigns. (*Laughter*). When we do our election campaigns, we do not mind time. We campaign in the night and wake up at 4 a.m. to continue. But when we are voted into this House the climate becomes so inhospitable that we are not able to come to this House until 10 a.m.

I hope that the Minister will accept this amendment because we do not accept his proposal that we would be here up to next month.

Then the Minister is asking us to give up one and half hours every day; every day we are going to lose one hour and half, and if the House accepts the amendment we shall be losing only half an hour every day. I am saying that in the interest of the economy of the Region we should sacrifice some time to ensure that we are here in this House at 9 a.m. It is in the interest of the economy of the Region that I am putting forward this amendment.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move.

**Mr S. G. Ikoku (Enyong Division):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.—That the time proposed to be left out, be left out.*

**The Minister of Commerce (Mr J. U. Nwodo):** The only point I thought the hon. Gentleman has made is that we should start by 9 in the morning and that by sitting at 10 o'clock we might be losing one hour and half. He further stated that if the Clerk was able to get the Order Papers and Proceedings of the House ready before 9 a.m. on every Friday, there is no reason why he could not get all the papers ready every day at 9 a.m. I think that he is suggesting that we should over-work a willing horse, and he forgets that the Clerk prepares papers once a week before 9 a.m. I do not know how this argument holds, that the Clerk should be asked to prepare these papers every day before 9 a.m.—That is what he is suggesting to the House.

Again, he made a point that by sitting from 10 a.m. we might be losing one and half hours every day; but it was just right now that he has been quarrelling that the Programme of the Leader of the House was too long. We want to compensate for the one and half hours which you suggest we shall be losing by spreading Government business for longer period of days so that you have sufficient time to scrutinise them. I do not see why we should eat our cake and have it. I think, on this ground, the Leader of the House is justified by putting forward to the House the sitting from 10 a.m. to 2.30 p.m. You will not dispute the fact that the climate is so incongenial, and the Leader of the House has pointed out that it was intended to get the House air-conditioned. It has not been possible to do so yet.

Mr Speaker, I beg to support the principal motion.

*Question put and negatived.*

*Main Question put and agreed to.*

Ordered: That pursuant to Standing Order 71—Suspension of Standing Orders—paragraph (1) of Standing Order 4—Sittings of the House—be suspended until further notice so that the hours of sitting of the House on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays shall be 10 a.m. to 2.30 p.m. each day.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### (1) The Public Holidays (Amendment No. 2) Bill

*Order for Second Reading read.*

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Mr J. H. E.**

**Nwuke):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am directed by the Minister of Internal Affairs to move the Second Reading of a Bill entitled "A Law to amend the Public Holidays Ordinance". As hon. Members are aware, we have in recent years deleted August Bank Holiday and Empire Day from the Schedule of the Public Holidays Ordinance.

It had become the custom that the former Empire Day which fell on May 24th should be used as a day for Primary School Sports, which was popular and valuable as a means of developing our young athletes.

There is now a need for a Youth Day when all schools should have a holiday and Primary School sports should be held.

March is a month for holding meetings all over the country and it seems appropriate that we should set aside one day in the year which should be recognised as Youth Day and which would be used for Primary School sports competitions.

In consultation with the Education Authorities it has been thought wise to make it the twenty-seventh day of March in each year. The Bill before you will give effect to this and make the 27th March a Public Holiday and Youth Day throughout the Eastern Region.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Local Government (Chief A. N. Onyiuke):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Mr Speaker, may I comment that we are having too many public holidays in this country. I suggest to the Government to consider cutting down some. The Bill is acceptable to the House. It is only a pity that the Parliamentary Secretary acting under the Minister's instruction would not tell us the significance of this day: the 27th of March. He only said it was after consultation with the Education Department.

If the Eastern Region was granted self-government on the 8th of August, I think it is a more appropriate day of some significance that the 8th August should be celebrated as

Youth Day. We just want the Government to explain to us the significance of this 27th day of March because we hold the view that if we decided on a date to set aside for the Youth to celebrate as their holiday, we should be able to explain to them the significance of that day.

As far as I know, there is nothing significant about the 27th of March. If Government had decided on the 8th of August the Government could explain the significance of that date.

**The Minister of Information (temporarily holding the Portfolio of Education) (Mr B. C. Okwu):** Mr Speaker in rising to support this motion, I would like to point out that the significance of the 27th of March is not a matter which I think should engage the serious attention of the Opposition. The point is that if that day has no special significance the fact that it has been chosen as the Youth Day gives it that significance that my hon. Friend on the opposite side is looking for. Well, I think, Sir, what the authorities who proposed this day have in mind is the fact that during this period the season is conducive to sport activity and it is intended that on this day throughout the the Eastern Region, school children will be given ample opportunities to compete in games and sports. That was a very useful factor in training our youths in athletic activities and it was also thought that if a day was chosen after March there was the danger of running into the rainy season which would defeat the principal object of setting apart a day for the youths of the Eastern Region to enjoy as their own particular day.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** We have rain doctors.

**Mr Okwu:** I will also like my hon. Friend opposite not to forget that this Government has abolished the Bank Holiday and that whilst appreciating the fact that the fewer the holidays we enjoy the more days we have for work I am sure that before deciding on the number of public holidays we should have in the Eastern Region the Government has to take a number of factors into consideration. If you decide to abolish these holidays, workers will kick and if you decide to increase the number of holidays, representatives of constituencies will kick. So the point is to adopt a middle of the way policy which without denying workers the enjoyment of public holidays will not involve spending too much time on holidays. So I would like to end by

saying that this Motion is one which should not take much of the time of the House as I am sure it is to the best interest of the Eastern Region.

**Mr M. N. Onwuma (Aba Division):** Mr Speaker, there is only one important point I would like to make. That is, we anticipate independence for the Federation in 1960 and Members of this Government who represented us in the Constitutional Conference in fact specified a date—the 2nd of April. Between the 27th of March and 2nd of April there is little to choose. Therefore the Youth Day now put forward on 27th of March seems to me a day not really important. When the Federation becomes independent that is the important and appropriate date for real festive mood and public good faith. So that I am suggesting that Government should set this Bill aside and reconsider the date 2nd April so that when the Federation attains independence as we are all hoping and working towards, that will be better for school children and by that time most of the Amateur Athletic Association sports shall have taken place and there will be ample opportunity for us to get school children ready for athletics all over the Region.

The Empire Day has been abolished but if you call it another name, say the Youth Day, it really means the same thing. It looks like the old monk in a new hood. In fact there is a terminology Youth Day which is associated with imperialism. So that the 2nd of April every year after independence, Mr Speaker, is more appropriate a date for setting aside as a public holiday. If independence comes, we have 27th of March as a holiday; about seven days after that, we have another holiday, the 2nd of April. It seems to me that there will be too many holidays which is what we are trying to avoid. I recommend that Government reconsiders the date 27th of March and put it off for sometime at any rate.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*

*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee).

**The Chairman:** The hon. the Minister in charge, may I direct your attention to Clause

[THE CHAIRMAN]

(1)—Citation. I think you wish that we delete the word and figure "No. 2" in the Amendment forthwith. That is Amendment No. 1 of 1958.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Mr J. H. E. Nwuke):** Yes.

*Clause (1) as amended agreed to.*

**The Chairman:** At the back of the Bill you omitted to add Clause (2). It is a typographical error.

*Clause (2).*

**Mr Ikoku:** Mr Chairman, Sir, I beg leave to move that we leave out "27th March" and insert "8th August." It has been explained, Sir, that the main reason why the 27th of March must be regarded as a Public Holiday is the danger of rain. I must point out, Sir, that rain is not a danger to sports. Sportsmen all over the world do their athletics under any weather. It is important to point out that even in March we do have rain. If it is a question of running away from rain I would have thought that the Minister concerned would have chosen a date between December and February. Even in February we do have some rain. The important thing, Sir, is that we must collect these children, give them a field day and make them remember something. It is not just a question of running around. It has been suggested by an hon. Member that 2nd of April should be chosen. But unfortunately we have not yet got National Independence on the 2nd of April and I would like to remind my hon. Friend that we started the slogan "Self-Government for 1956" but it turned out to be August, 1957. The 2nd of April, 1960 is our target date for National Independence. We shall do everything in our power to achieve it, but who knows whether it will be agreed and then the Instrument will take another one year to sign. We can never be too definite about 2nd of April. But you know, Sir, that we are a Federation and this Region is one of the two Regions first to get full internal self-government and it is something we should celebrate. Whenever we attain national independence, I suppose that the date for celebrating will be a matter for the Federal House to decide. I do

not see anything wrong in our remembering the day we came of age and at the same time remembering the day the whole of Nigeria came of age. So the point now, Sir, is that if we don't have any fixture for the 8th of August, the only thing to mark the attainment of Regional Independence may be a broadcast by the Premier or probably the Governor. This is too dull a way, Sir, of celebrating the attainment of self-government. We are suggesting seriously that 8th of August should be the day for all the young people in this Region to go to their play fields and rejoice in remembrance of the attainment of Regional self-government. I would like to add this, that the hon. the Premier, in his broadcast ushering in self-government, was so touched that he used this phrase that "it was a great and memorable day" in his life. Now, he is an old campaigner; he has been in politics for very many years but that day had been a great and memorable day for him. What about these children who have no idea of what it is all about? We want to tell them that the 8th of August is a great and memorable day and I think, at least, you will give hon. Members the chance to show that they brought about this self-government. 27th of March is a dry day; it has no significance whatsoever and this House should reject this attempt by the Civil Servants to think for us. You see, a Civil Servant sitting down in his office with his magnificent furniture around him is a very abstract man. He does not bother to find out how the people in the country feel. He is not interested in sentiments. He simply looks at his calendar just as he looks through a telephone directory. And a telephone directory is a most un-inspiring document. You don't know whether the first man is the hon. the Premier or the next somebody who is just struggling to pay for a telephone. My case, Sir, is that Government and Members of this House should be able to point out certain things to the younger generation.

Some of the Members on the other side of the House do not know what price has been paid to attain this self-government. Some of them climbed on to the band waggon when the going was good. I think we should take this opportunity to make it clear to the younger generation that many dark corners had to be taken before we arrived at this goal. It is something worth celebrating.



Mr Chairman, Sir, I beg to move.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr J. A. Agba (Ogoja Division):** In support of the last speaker, I beg leave to quote the old saying in foreign language and that is: *Quis agit agit propter quid.*

**Several hon. Members:** What does that mean?

**Mr Agba:** It means he who acts, acts on account of something. Before I say more I would like to say that the Government or any authority promulgating a law must have some special reason for doing so. We are on the way to independence and Nigeria will some time come to a stage when it will be regarded as a Government of its own and working on its own and leaving some footprints for the future generation to see. What reason has the Government for setting aside the 27th of March as a public holiday? I look at the whole question from the point of view of religious calendar. There does not seem to be anything in religion that marks out the 27th of March as a special day. Nor is there anything from any other point of view marking the 27th as a special day. I wonder what historical background there is to choose this day.

The British Government when celebrating the Armistice Day on the 11th of the 11th month of the year had some specific historical background and every child taking part in the Armistice knew why November 11 was chosen for the celebration.

Everything must have some sort of historical background, and the Government should have some reasons in mind for choosing this date. Anybody standing up here to say something should have something in mind and say "This is the reason for doing this or doing that". It will not do to support something merely because a far greater brain has proposed it. No man has the seat of wisdom and so everybody is subject to correction and amendment otherwise all of us would not come in here. Mr Chairman, I think that is my own contribution to this question of date. I have no quarrel with the proposal, but the Government should have some specific historical background for choosing 27th of March, and to this end, I am appealing that the Government, in

making a law or doing something else for the public, should have some specific background—specific reason—for doing it, so that anybody coming up would say: "Our forerunners did it because of this or that".

Mr Chairman, I do support the date suggested by the last speaker.

**Mr E. U. Eronini (Owerri Division):** The point I want the Government to consider is that 27th of March is so near the beginning of school year and that the children will start to practise for the games before the 27th of March each year. In that respect they will all normally carry on with their lessons. Also another point: the last week in March is usually the busiest period in Governmental activities. This year we have met with the struggle and we have had to postpone sitting on the 27th of March. I do not know why 27th March, has been chosen, but I still say that the last week of March is often the last week for our annual budgets.

**Mr W. Abengowe (Aba Division):** I rise to oppose the amendment. The objects are clearly stated—and with your permission may I read, "It is intended that the annual school sports of all primary schools shall be held on this public holiday". What is wrong in 27th March? The Opposition has not told us anything that was wrong with that date. By choosing 27th March to be a Youth Day, we are laying foundation for posterity.

The Opposition want 8th August, to be public holiday, but for reasons adduced by the Minister, we do not want it to be a public holiday. When there was Self-government in this Region, we decided not to celebrate it.

**An Opposition Member:** No, it was celebrated.

**Mr Abengowe:** Mr Chairman, you will also realise that we have greater things in view and we shall have greater events than that of August the 8th. The Government has chosen that date because the season appears to be the best in the year for sports.

All championship sports competitions are being held during that period and I do not see what is wrong if we have it at that time.

[MR ABENGOWE]

If it is in the rainy season, certainly the spectators will be disturbed. The competitors themselves will be disturbed and the sports will not be as enthusiastic as they would have been.

Sir, I beg to oppose the amendment.

**Mr R. O. Ukuta, M.B.E. (Nsukka Division):** Mr Chairman, I am suggesting that 27th March, if this is properly reasoned, you will see that it is not suitable (*Hear! Hear!*). March is the Youth Day and on March most of the parents are busy: some are Government servants trying to balance their accounts but they as parents will like to go to the field and witness what their children are doing, and I think another thing to suggest: let it be really Youth Day, let some money be voted and let the youths in rural area see and know that it is really a Youth Day. Not to award exercise books but something that will cheer the children to try to practise sports and know that they will practise sports.

Another thing is that you know (in the way of athletic) that we have great sun in March, so that I think it should be put off to a day before the rains start, say April or May. This suggestion is made because we use to feel much heat in March and when children have to run some of them will collapse in the field. This is my suggestion.

**Mr M. U. Etuk (Uyo Division):** Mr Chairman, I quite remember last year on the floor of this House I had to make some recommendations which are now bearing fruits. We must give our youths something for which they should fight for but those who are teachers will realise that when we re-open schools in January, or sometime in February, as it was the case this year, we have very little time to put our houses in order, and then start training the children for the sports on 27th March.

If it is really going to be a Youth Day, as we would like it to be, the children would like to wear uniform, and as hon. Members said, definitely we may come to that because we want something to attract them. You cannot afford the cost of uniforms in March immediately after Christmas in December, and January school fees—call it what you may, it is still school fees.

So Mr Chairman, with all that has been said about the 8th of August as a date with meaning, I think it is the most appropriate day. Again, it will give time for the training of the children for the sports of that day, and I would add, with due deference to those who studied weather, that there is always a dry spell in the first two weeks of August. So there is no reason to fear that the 8th of August must always be a rainy day, and if it rains, Mr Speaker, what hon. Members said is true about sports—and those of us who have done a bit of it agree—that when it is too sunny, you can't do too much, you get heated too early. The 8th of August is the most appropriate day for the Youth Day. So I support the amendment.

**The Premier (Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe):** Mr Chairman, may I contribute my humble quota to this debate because it is quite obvious that most of the speakers are agreed that we should have a public holiday to be known as Youth Day. I think that where we differ is, whether it should be March 27th or another date, and the basis of the difference is that we want a date which will be ideal for sports activities.

Bearing this in mind, I feel I should answer my hon. Friend opposite from Ogoja, in telling him that although it is true that certain developments are repeated in history and commemorated, nevertheless we have to take the initiative too. My answer to him is that Government has decided to take the initiative and establish 27th March as the day of commemoration so that posterity will ever remember that particular day.

Now, the question is, why select that date and what are we commemorating? The answer is that Government, after taking due consideration, decided that we should put in the "objects and Reasons" that we want an annual school sports in all the Primary Schools in the Region. (*Hear! Hear!*). Why did we do that? It is because we have decided that on our youths lies the future of this country, and therefore, our youths, must be taught clean living. On this particular day, we should disseminate knowledge or physical education among our youths, and at the same time encourage them to develop their minds and their body, so as to present their bodies as a living sacrifice to God. That is the background (*Applause*).

Mr Chairman, to go back to the first point: Why then we should select an ideal day, and why is 27th ideal? Naturally, if we are having annual sports then it must be athletics. Well, I think that without being immodest, as the President of the Amateur Athletic Association of Nigeria, I should know what season of the year is best suited for athletics. (*Applause*).

We are all agreed that the athletic season starts in January, as a matter of fact in November, when cross country begins. In January, when the school opens, the children do their training, and by February they start their various championships. We all know that on the 1st of March we had the Regional Athletic Championships after the Provincial Championships; then we had the Women's Championships, and next Friday and Saturday, we shall witness the Secondary School Championships, and after that the All-Nigeria Championships.

So that March 27th is really the season of the year, that is ideal for Youth Day, because of the fact that, by that time, the young people would have struck their athletic form. Since we are all agreed that there should be a Youth Day, for annual athletic sports, and since our problem is to find an ideal day so as to make it possible for the young people to strike their form, naturally the Government is justified in deciding on 27th March as a public holiday.

Since the highest authority in sports in this country has fixed November to April as the athletic season, hon. Members will agree that 27th March is the ideal day.

*Question put and negatived.*

*Clause 2 agreed to.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported with an amendment, read the Third time and passed.*

## **(2) The Moneylenders (Payment by Cheque) Bill**

*Order for Second Reading read.*

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Mr J. H. E. Nwuke):** Mr Speaker, I am directed by the hon. the Minister of Internal Affairs to move

the Second Reading of the Bill entitled: "A Law to provide that all sums of money lent by a Moneylender shall be lent by means of a Cheque".

Government has been aware for sometime of some serious social evils which exist with regard to moneylenders and that the Moneylenders Ordinance as it at present stands seems unable to deal with it. Cases have been known when borrowers have been forced to accept less than the amount for which they signed and there is little that they can do about it because borrowers need the money badly in order to have had recourse to moneylenders in the first place.

It is difficult for the courts to take any steps to prevent this, because even if the defence is raised that the money borrowed is less than that appearing on the bond, the fact remains that it is the moneylender's oath against the borrower's oath and the former has the documentary evidence on which to rely.

This Bill therefore is aimed at those unscrupulous moneylenders and we think that if all moneylenders are forced to keep bank accounts and to pay by cheque when making a loan, it will make it more difficult for them to take a bond for one sum while actually lending a lesser sum, because these transactions can be verified.

Steps have been taken therefore to draft a Bill requiring three things: firstly, that every moneylender should maintain a current account with a licensed bank; secondly, that no certificate to obtain a licence shall be issued by a magistrate to a moneylender, unless the moneylender produces a certificate that he maintains a current account, and thirdly, that all loans shall be made by cheque on the current account.

I am sure that a measure such as this which aims at protecting the unfortunate man who is forced to borrow money will receive the approval of the hon. Members of this House.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Information (temporarily holding the Portfolio of Education) (Mr B. C. Okwu):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr Ikoku:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move to leave out the word "now" and add at the end of the question the words "upon this day six months".

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like it known that this side of the House supports any measure which is taken to give the borrower a fair deal in his transaction with the lender; but I would like to draw your attention, Sir, and the attention of the House to the fact that a humble petition has been placed before this hon. House. With your permission, Sir, the petition has been laid on the Table of the House and has been referred to our Public Petitions Committee. I would very much like the Minister to see the wisdom of deferring this Bill until the Public Petitions Committee of this House has been able effectively to deal with the petition on this matter. If we rush to pass this Bill right now, we will give the impression that this hon. House does not entertain petition from the public. And I think it will be a very unhealthy impression to give. After all, it is an accepted channel under our democratic institution by which members of the public or a section of the public can bring certain grievances before this hon. House. Even if we are going to throw out the petition, at least, we should give the impression that we have given it due and proper consideration.

Mr Speaker, I think the point is quite clear. I do not intend to refer to Standing Order. So, Sir, I beg to move.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Sir, I beg to second.

**Mr Speaker:** I wish to point out the proposed implication of the present amendment. If you support it, you know the Bill will be obviously thrown out and you will have to start again. It will be proper for the Government to consult with the Opposition on the issue so that if the Government decides to give attention to the suggestions it might be postponed till some time next week.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Mr J. H. E. Nwuke):** Mr Speaker, I wish to postpone the Second reading of the Bill until the Public Petitions Committee has gone into its merits.

**Mr Speaker:** In view of what has just been said and in order to facilitate the position I

think the hon. the Leader of the Opposition may wish to withdraw his motion in the meantime.

**Mr Ikoku:** The whole principle I am fighting to uphold is that the consideration of the petition by the Public Petitions Committee should be prior to the Second reading of the Bill. I am therefore willing to withdraw my motion.

**Mr Speaker:** Is it the consent of the House that the Amendment be withdrawn?

**Hon. Members:** Aye.

*Amendment by leave withdrawn.*

*Second reading of the Bill accordingly deferred.*

### (3) The Children and Young Persons Bill

*Order for Second reading read.*

**The Minister of Welfare (Mr E. A. Chime):**

Mr Speaker, I rise to move that the Bill entitled: "A Law to make provision for the welfare of the Young and the Treatment of Young Offenders and for the establishment of Juvenile Courts" may be read a Second time.

This Bill, Sir, is one of which this Region may be proud. It is based on modern methods and modern and civilised ideas about the treatment of children and young persons.

The objects of the Children and Young Persons Law are three. First, by enacting a Regional Law to deal with this subject we are able to clear up a confusion from which we have been suffering. Hitherto there were two Federal Ordinances, one called the Native Children (Custody and Reformation) Ordinance, Cap. 141 of the Laws of Nigeria, which is an old and somewhat out-of-date law, and there is the Children and Young Persons Ordinance, Cap. 31 which is a modern law but has been applicable to Calabar Province only excepting Part VIII which is applicable to the whole Region. It is better that we should have one law suited to our needs. This is the Bill which is now before you. The whole of it is applicable to the Eastern Region except for Part III, which deals with Probation Officers. At present our probation

service is confined to Calabar Province. The intention is to extend the application of this law to other parts of the Region as soon as we are able to appoint more Probation Officers and to extend the service.

The second object of the Bill is to simplify the procedure for committing children or young persons in need of care and protection, or who have been convicted of some offence to the Remand Home at Calabar or to the Approved School in Enugu. At present the procedure is full of delays. The Magistrate takes the case in some part of this Region; he has to submit his report and order of committal to the Ministry of Welfare; I have to recommend to His Excellency the Governor that he should approve and sign the Order; and then the Magistrate is informed and the boy committed. Under this new law the Minister will have power to sign the committal order and the whole matter can be dealt with more quickly.

At the same time the Minister is given more powers in this Bill on a number of points in place of the Governor, in accordance with the present Constitutional position. The Minister, for example, replaces the Governor in being empowered to establish Remand Homes and make rules for their management. The Minister replaces the Governor in being able to confirm or disallow a committal Order or to vary it. The Minister in place of the Governor can authorise the release of a child from an Approved Institution subject to good behaviour where it is in the interests of the child to let him out on trial.

The third object of the Bill is to tighten up the provisions dealing with traffic in children and also to bring the law governing the protection of children from exploitation or from cruelty or neglect more into line with the laws for the protection of children in the United Kingdom.

Hon. Members will see in Parts VIII and IX of the Bill the provisions of the new law and what is intended. Part VIII is based on Part VIII of the Children and Young Persons Ordinance. The difficulty at present is that the Police are unable to prosecute successfully many cases of near slave dealing in children because it is not possible on the one hand to prove slave dealing within the meaning of

section 369 of the Criminal Code; on the other hand prosecutions under this section of the present Ordinance often fail because the Police have to prove that the child has been sold or bartered or "placed in moral danger". And further it is a defence to prove that the child is given or bartered, say, in accordance with native law and custom.

The law is now made more strict by making it an offence to place a child or young person (that is, anyone up to the age of seventeen) in danger of exploitation as well as in moral danger. Further it is an offence to give a child or young person to any person outside its immediate family (that is, a grandparent or descendant of a grandparent of the child). Further it places the onus of proof on the accused to show that it was for the benefit of the child that he acquired it as well as that it has not been placed in moral danger or in danger of exploitation, and that it is in accordance with native law and custom.

These provisions may seem strict, but after much careful thought it has been decided that this is the only way to strike effectively at the various forms of traffic in children now suspected to be going on in this Region. It is well known that poor parents part with their children, sometimes for only a small 'dash' to a trader or a person who claims that he will take the child to teach him a trade. It is well known that the child is often exploited or treated cruelly, and sometimes passed from one trader to another. Unless you make the law strict this practice will go on.

I need not emphasise to hon. Members how serious is the state of affairs revealed by the reports which have been published in the Press of cases of dealing in children, some cases are now being prosecuted in Abakaliki. I, myself, recently visited the Remand Home at Calabar and saw thirteen small girls who had recently been sent there from Abakaliki area. I am told that another seventeen will arrive shortly. These children had been passed from one trader to another so that in many cases they could not even remember the names of their parents or their homes. It was obvious from their physical state when they arrived that they had been subjected to ill-treatment.

Part IX of this Bill is a new section altogether. It brings the provisions of the law into line with

[MR CHIME]

the English law. I think there is a special case for making it an offence to leave children near a fire without protection. You will often have heard of young children being badly burnt. Furthermore, it is a common practice for a trader to lock a small boy in a store of goods during the night to save him the expense of paying a nightwatchman. If the store were to catch fire the boy could not possibly have any means of escape; or he might be suffocated by goods falling on top of him. Equally, children are often left in canoes at night to guard goods under conditions in which they would be helpless if the canoe drifted down river. I am sure hon. Members will agree also that the law, here, as in England, needs to make it an offence for children to be left unattended in a motor car or for girls to be allowed to wander about trading or hawking goods at night.

Mr Speaker, I need not add more in explanation of this Bill. Apart from the Clauses which I have mentioned, most of the Bill follows closely the Children and Young Persons Ordinance and does not involve any important changes.

I maintain, Sir, that this Bill will be a charter of liberty for our children and young persons, and that to put it into effect is urgently needed. I ask all hon. Members to join me in supporting it.

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Production (Dr M. I. Okpara):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr Ikoku:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Minister of Welfare. I think the purpose of the Bill is admirable and I think I regard his speech, I have no intention of flattering him, as one of the best I have heard from the Government Bench. (*Hear! Hear!*).

I would like to say, Sir, that in effect children in this Region and in this country generally have to a very great extent been neglected. In fact, it is not always correct to believe that the immediate relations of the child would

be particularly humane towards the child. I have seen instances, Sir, where the immediate relations have meted out treatment to the child that is most disgusting and if the Minister—and this is as regards the administration of the law—can find ways and means of keeping a check even on the immediate relations of the child I think a good deal would be done to bring about what he has termed the liberty of our children. There are some difficulties, however, in the application of this Bill as it stands. It would be difficult to prove certain things and even though the Minister tried to lighten the burden of the prosecution in proving certain things I don't think it would still be possible to prove everything.

Furthermore, Sir, there might be a good deal of interference in the running of the home in an attempt to produce evidence acceptable to the court on some of those issues. For example, the Bill assumes that a child will not be given what it calls proper protection if the custodian or guardian is not a descendant of the immediate grand parents. I must point out that there are many instances where a child lives with somebody who has no blood relations whatsoever with his parents and he is very well looked after. But the Bill, as it stands, presumes that immediately the child steps out of the orbit of the immediate family the child is in danger of exploitation, maltreatment and cruelty. I think that has to be looked into.

The converse is also true. The converse, Sir, is the assumption that the child is happy and well protected once he is with his immediate relatives. The Bill talks about children being exposed to immorality and all the rest of it. What of the case of a child who happens to live with his own mother and the mother lives by loitering and soliciting on the street? According to this law the child is under proper protection but in fact the child is exposed to great moral danger because the mother herself is leading an immoral life. Now, what is the position as regards that child? You cannot say that the child is being exploited according to this ordinance or has been exposed to immoral living. But in fact the child is exposed to immoral living. Now you imagine, Sir—I am not anticipating a private Member's Bill coming up before this House—but imagine a little child who knows nothing about this world living in one room with the aunt or

niece or whatever relations it is. But this woman lives on the streets. This child sleeps on the floor and the whole parade of men coming in and going out takes place; the child is pushed up at odd hours in the night to do one or other of a multitude of duties. (*Laughter*) What hon. Members must bear in mind, Sir, is that in performance of their duty they are supposed to know as much as possible of what is happening in their constituencies.

I would like to add that it may be difficult under Part IX—Neglect of Children—to determine when actually a child had been neglected. For example, there is this question of protection from fire.

I turn to Section 32 (b). It is an offence for somebody to expose a child to the risk of burning by allowing him to be near an open fire without any protection or guard against the risk of him being burnt or scalded and without taking any reasonable precaution against that risk. Is the hon. Minister suggesting that in every home where it is the normal practice for little children to make fire and look after the pot on the fire that we have to build a ring to protect the children from fire? This is just not practicable.

I turn, Sir, to clause two. The definition of juvenile includes a child and a young person. I notice here, Sir, that not much has been said as regards the child. If you pay a visit, Sir, to some of our hospitals you will come to the conclusion that there is need for this hon. House to do something for some of these unfortunate babies. These babies know nothing; they come into the world due to no fault of their own, but some of them are abandoned in the hospitals. The mothers simply abscond. There is no trace of the mothers; the fathers—if they are fathers in the real sense—never turn up and these children are just left on the verandahs of the hospital. All that the nurses do is to pass their feeding bottles to them at the stipulated hour. I have actually seen a case of a little child lying on the verandah with the milk bottle which was supposed to be in his mouth out of his mouth and the milk just pouring away. Nobody seemed to care and at the end of the whole thing the nurses discovered that the bottle was empty; so the conclusion was that the child has had his feed. That is how the baby is left lying there until it dies.

So I should like the Minister to bear this class of unfortunates in mind and do something to give them some sort of protection and a chance in life.

I must end where I started. This side of the House very much compliments the Minister of Welfare for this philanthropic and far-sighted Bill. We support.

**Mr V. A. Nwankwo (Abakaliki Division):** Mr Speaker, I very much support this Bill, but there are few observations I wish to make. I am not entirely satisfied with what is provided in section 32. In section 32 it is a thing that cannot be avoided; it is very good to make a Law and ask certain people to interpret it. When somebody is making a Law or Parliament is making a Law, nobody knows who shall be found guilty as an offender of that Law.

It means that if you leave a child in a vehicle unattended to, you are guilty of some offence. I think, Sir, the Government should reconsider the whole section 32. If it is left as it is, it will be used against us some times, as every one of us is a businessman. And section 31(c) says that it will be an offence "to give a child into the custody, possession, control or guardianship of any person other than a grand-parent or the descendant of a grand-parent of such juvenile whether or not for pecuniary or other benefit." In many cases we allow our juvenile daughters to a near relative or the child may be given to other friends to help nurse their own small children. It is simply given out free-will, without charging anything. Then if there should be a gift from that friend you have committed an offence because some other benefit has been derived; the words "other benefit" cover that and other gifts or presents. Sir, this should not be allowed to stand in the law. I agree that Government has a very good intention to give every moral security to children and young persons but should not be too rigid and set unavoidable snares to parents or guardians.

I also observe that the question of determination of age can only be given by a Medical Officer in the service of the Government, which means that any other Medical practitioner who is not engaged by Government is incompetent to determine the age of any child. Is he not fully qualified as Medical practitioner, with the same degrees and qualifications as a Medical

[MR NWANKWO]  
 Officer? Why should there be a discrimination? The Medical Officers engaged by Government who have already been overworked have often expressed that they have little or no time in attending candidates recommended for medical examination from Local Government bodies or other Government bodies or departments and yet by this Bill, if passed they shall, be saddled to undertake solely this age determination. This should be considered seriously by the Government.

Mr Speaker, I seize this opportunity to thank the Police for the good work they have done in rescuing children at Abakaliki and other areas who were sold away on the assumption that they were given out in marriage as wives.

I congratulate the Minister concerned for bringing up this new Bill. Not only that, I think this Bill will be a very good safeguard for children. In some cases parents or guardians have been a bit negligent and leave their children to roam about. The result is that these children fall into the hands of those who love to trade on human beings, so that it is good to make it an offence for those parents if it can be established that their children are stolen owing to their carelessness or negligence. I very much support the Bill, but I would like these observations to be considered with a view to having an amendment made by the Minister responsible for this Bill.

*Sitting suspended at 12 p.m.*

*Sitting resumed at 12.30 p.m.*

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Mr Speaker, I rise to join others to congratulate the Minister on this Bill. I would like to pay tribute to the Welfare Officer in-charge of the Remand Home at Calabar for all the work she has done, in respect of Juvenile and Young Persons who have been put into custody at Calabar. I hope that at the Committee Stage we will have opportunity of debating certain clauses following certain amendments, which we shall move in Committee. We are not happy of certain penalties which will have to be imposed on the persons found guilty under this Ordinance. There is just this I would like to say on the question of orphans. That child, juvenile or young person known as an orphan is a very

pitiable person. I do not know of relatives who are very happy to take orphans into their custody, and I think this is a question for the Ministry of Welfare to look into.

In the old days we used to have Mission boys or girls. It so happens that nowadays the Missionaries have become either wise or very clever so that they have refused to look after the children we used to know as Mission boys or girls with the result that we find these orphans uncared for. I think it is the duty of the Government to do something about them.

If you happen to go to Santa Isabel in Fernando Po or Bata in Rio Muni in the Spanish Territory, the one thing that will strike you, Sir, is the provision for medical facilities for orphans in the hospitals, which I consider to be among the best in Africa. I wonder, Sir, if our Government will be in a position to do something for the orphans.

We commend the Bill to the House as acceptable to us all and we won't like to prolong the debate.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*

**Mr Speaker:** Committee Stage, when?

**The Minister of Welfare (Mr E. A. Chime):** Monday, 24th March, 1958.

**(4) The Eastern Region Forest (Amendment) Bill**

*Order for Second reading read.*

**The Minister of Agriculture (Mr P. O. Nwoga):** Mr Speaker, I beg to move that a Bill for a Law to amend the Eastern Region Forest Law, 1955, be now read a Second time.

The necessity for this amendment has briefly been indicated in the objects and reasons for this Bill. The Forest Law as it now stands does not permit the payment of Royalties to a group of individuals or to community or communities. Under this Law, Royalties are payable either to the owner of the land or to the Council having jurisdiction in the area where no one person can prove ownership. It is this



second course of action which makes the amendment necessary. The District Council Treasury is the smallest official accounting unit in the Region. So the Royalties would have to be paid to it, thereby benefitting more people than those whose land has become a Forest Reserve and to whose benefit it has always been Government's intention to devote the money. This Bill would provide for the payment to the Treasury of all fees received. The Treasury would then pay the appropriate amount to individual owners, or deposit it in the Treasury of a District Council, in the name of the Local Council or Councils having jurisdiction in the area in trust, for and on behalf of such village, community or group of persons, as specified by the Minister.

It is our duty to see to it that Royalties received under this Law shall be paid to the actual owner or owners of the land of the reserve, and so I commend this Bill to you.

Turning now to the amendment. Subsection 1 is as before. Subsection 2 is again as before. Royalties are paid by the Government to the owner of the land. Subsections 3 to 5 can best be read together. I, as Minister of Agriculture, declare which communities should benefit from the Royalties. They will, of course, be those who were collectively enjoying the land in the past. Then my colleague, the Minister of Local Government, will consult with them to decide how best to use the royalties.

You will all agree, I am sure, that this is an uncontentious measure which will be of value, and will bring home to people the value of our forest estate.

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Commerce (Mr J. U. Nwodo):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*

*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

*Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported without amendment, read the Third time and passed.*

**(5) The Eastern Region Local Government (Extension of Office) Bill**

*Order for Second reading read.*

**The Minister of Local Government (Chief A. N. Onyiuke):** Mr Speaker, I rise to move that a Bill for a Law to provide for the Extension of the term of office of certain Local Government councillors be now read a Second time.

It is with some reluctance that my Government proposes this present Bill. It was necessary this time last year, to move a similar Bill and it was passed by this House. That Law extended the term of office of certain councillors by twelve months. The present Bill proposes to extend the terms of office of those councillors for a further six months and to extend the term of office of other councillors, who have now become due for election, for six months.

Almost all the Councils concerned were elected in the old-fashioned method of whispering elections for Local Councils and Local Councillors formed the electoral colleges to elect members of the District Council. It would be entirely contrary to policy of my Government for any further elections to be held in that manner. It was therefore necessary to prepare fresh instruments for these Councils to enable each Local Council and District Council to be elected by direct suffrage and by secret ballot. This involves the division of every council area into single-member wards. Work on this division has been proceeding since last year. When councils first started working out proposals for single-member wards they followed the former practice of proportional representations; that is, if one Local Council area had twice as many people in it as another Local Council area, the first Local Council was given twice as many representatives on the District Council. But in October, 1957, Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1957 was laid on the Table of this House and it proposed that the electoral policy for Local

[CHIEF ONYIUKÉ]

Government should be that every Local Council should have equal representation on the District Council. It was decided to carry out this proposal at once and Councils were asked to submit fresh proposals for the division of their areas into wards on these lines. This has led to opposition from certain parts of the Region and it appears that its enforcement throughout the Region would cause some difficulty. In other areas, of course, it has been possible to work out wards in accordance with this policy. It appeared to my Government, however, that it would be advisable to give this House the opportunity of debating this part of the Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1957 before enforcing it throughout the Region and it has therefore been necessary to postpone these elections until this House could lay down a definite policy to be followed. The extension of the lives of these councils for six months will enable proposals for the Council wards to be worked out in accordance with policy.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Commerce (Mr J. U. Nwodo):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr Ikoku:** This House has been treated to the reason as to why the election to the Councils listed in the Schedule should be postponed for another six months. I must point out that last year, round about this time, this House was asked to extend the lives of these Councils for a whole year; and it is significant that arrangements have not been made during this extended period of a year to conduct Local Council elections as they should be conducted. We see in this matter—I do not know what to call it—laziness or planlessness, or there is another way—a lack of application; that is that the Minister has not quite applied himself to the task before him. That is by the way.

We are grateful to the Minister for telling this House frankly that he is meeting with tremendous opposition. He said “from certain quarters”. I want to assure him that it is “from all quarters” as to the question of representation of Local Council areas on

District Councils. This Region has proved itself as leading the whole Federation in the application of democratic principles of election (*Applause*). We shall not stand for any “putting of the hand of the clock back” and the hon. Minister must bear this in mind—that we want pure democratic elections to our Local Councils. We do not want anything that will be done to give the impression that there is some cooking somewhere about Council election. We want these single-member wards carved out on a purely democratic basis and there should be universal adult suffrage for all Local Council elections.

I notice that the hon. Minister, in a statement issued from his Ministry, said that he intended to conduct Local Council elections on the basis of tax suffrage. I notice too that he has been discretely silent on that point this morning. We want to make it clear that we are not going to support any attempt to conduct Local Council elections on tax suffrage. If men and women in this Region can exercise the franchise in the election of hon. Members here, I do not see why councillors should be able to escape the “fire”.

**An hon. Member:** Is it fire?

**Mr Ikoku:** Yes, it is real fire; it is real fire because the section of the population which has to be convinced before it votes is by and large the women-folk.

The main group of the population, Sir, which has to be convinced before they vote is by and large the women-folk who are not interested in schnapps and whisky and the rest of it. You just have to convince them before they cast their vote. So, I would like the hon. Minister to bear this in mind. He should not expose himself to any attacks from the public by sticking to the tradition of Natural Rulers who seem by nature to be opposed to purely democratic methods. I would like to add a third point. Sir, the hon. Minister has informed us that because there is a sort of opposition to proposals in the White Paper, he has postponed elections to Local Councils pending a debate on these proposals. I would like him to be equally gracious in telling this House that he is going to revoke the order to abolish all County Councils on

the 31st of this month. The point, Sir, is that the change of policy which intimates the abolition of the County Councils is contained in this same White Paper of which the Minister of Local Government has spoken and he should give us the chance of complimenting him in full. He has come here to tell us that the White Paper has not been debated and, as a result, he has deferred action. All we ask the hon. Minister to do is to defer action on all matters contained in the White Paper.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture (Mr D. A. Nnaji):** Point of Order: Standing Order 25 (2) "A Member must confine his observations to the subject under discussion and may not introduce matter irrelevant thereto." In this case we are not discussing the dissolution of County Councils but we are discussing the extension of the life of the present District Councils.

**Mr Speaker:** The Leader of Opposition may continue.

**Mr Ikoku:** Thank you Mr Speaker.

We have been told, Sir, that it is necessary to extend the lives of these Councils in order to give this House an opportunity to debate the policy as regards Local Government, and I think the issue of the abolition of the existing County Councils is a matter of policy—high policy too. We should therefore be given an opportunity to discuss this thing before they carry them out, particularly, Sir, when we know that the staff of the County Councils which we have today are among the best qualified in Local Government affairs. They are the best trained staff available to Local Government and the question of just pushing them about in the next three weeks is something which smacks of arbitrariness. I would like to inform you, Sir, that the Minister has arrogated to himself the powers of distributing these staff. He has said they could be allocated to any District Council but he makes an escape clause for himself by saying that the District Councils are not bound to accept these people. So that in effect the Minister is saying that the best available brains in Local Government service should go to the scrap heap of the unemployment market. We would like to have a full dress debate in this House so that he can convince this House as to the

ways and means by which he is going to salvage these staff before he gets our full support and blessing on this matter.

Well, I think, that this exhausts my point and I would like to give the hon. Minister of Local Government one piece of advice. This is on this question of County Councils. The rumour is gaining ground that the Minister has an axe to grind. (*Interruption*). I hope the Minister will not press me but if he does we have to produce evidence before this House. It is the type of accusation that we would not like to be made against a Minister—that the Minister is so precipitate in the application of a policy which has not been debated in this House because he has an axe to grind. We are told now that it is not necessary to debate it. Why has it been necessary for the hon. Minister of Local Government to defer this election pending a debate on the White Paper? In other words, what has happened is this: he tried to make a change; he saw the storm gathering and he wants all of us to share with him the responsibility. If you want us to take part in explaining your case to the people allow us to know the whole of your case. Do not give us only a part of it.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*

*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

*Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.*

*Schedule agreed to.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported without amendment, read the Third time and passed.*

**(6) The Dogs Ordinance (Amendment) Bill:**

*Order for Second reading read.*

**The Minister of Health (Mr E. P. Okoya):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move the Second reading of a Bill to amend the Dogs Ordinance. The object of this Bill is to *delete* the reference to the Resident which occurs in sections 15 and 16 of the Dogs Ordinance.

[MR OKOYA]

Under these sections the duly appointed authority may in the case of an outbreak or expected outbreak of a disease make rules for the keeping of dogs under control, seizure and detention. Under the present law they may make these rules with the approval of the Residents. Since the post of Resident has been abolished, it is now proposed to confer this authority upon Administrative Officers in charge of Divisions. This amendment is not controversial and so I commend it to the House.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Commerce (Mr J. U. Nwodo):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*

*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

*Clauses 1-3 agreed to.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported without amendment, read the Third time and passed.*

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Minister of Production (Dr M. I. Okpara):** Sir, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

Mr Speaker, I am informed that the Cinema Corporation is showing a film this evening at the forecourt of the House at 7 p.m. Hon. Members may wish to attend and are cordially invited.

**An hon. Member:** The corporation has been suspended.

**Dr Okpara:** This Corporation is not suspended at all—it is very much alive.

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Health (Mr E. P. Okoya):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

#### ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

##### Electricity in Abakaliki

**Mr Nwankwo:** Mr Speaker, I beg to seize this opportunity to tell this hon. House that the people of Abakaliki urban area have asked me to register their appreciation over the recent change experienced in the provision of electric light in Abakaliki. Previously, up to seven months ago, the light had badly disappointed people that in only 18 hours that the plant had to light the houses in Abakaliki, it used to give us only 10 to 12 hours. Within a month we only had light for 18 to 20 days on the average, but since six months ago when we have a new man as Engineer the light has been going on steadily for complete 18 hours. Due to our incessant prayer and pleading to Ministers who used to come to Abakaliki we have been asking them to convey our wishes to the Federal Minister of Mines and Power, so that a better and bigger plant be provided for Abakaliki which will give us 24 hours light and to over 10,000 applicants demanding light to their buildings.

We understand that great preparation is going ahead to build Abakaliki a big plant of three phases. This arrangement had once been made for a long time but was deviated from and the plant taken away to another Division.

**Government Bench:** Which Division?

**Mr Nwankwo:** We understand from official circles that Abakaliki has been placed on the priority list and that a three phase plant is available for installation at Abakaliki and that this plant shall be capable of providing us 24 hours light and to every corner that desires it. We appreciate the hard-working and painstaking efforts of this Engineer. We thank the Government also for conveying the wishes of my people to the proper quarters.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Adjourned accordingly at eight minutes past one o'clock p.m.*

EASTERN HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 13th March, 1958

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

PRAYERS

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

ORAL ANSWER TO QUESTION

Tax Clerks of Local Government Councils

4. **Mr W. Abengowe** asked the Minister of Finance, what was the total number of staff of Local Government Councils responsible for tax duties in each of the following Divisions: Enugu, Aba, Onitsha, Port Harcourt and Bende, from April 1954 to October 1955; what was the total amount of salaries and allowances paid to the staff concerned in each of the Divisions mentioned above during the same period.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Finance (Mr A. O. Chikwendu):** I am directed to answer as follows:

In the period April 1954 to October 1955, the various Local Government Bodies in the Divisions listed below employed staff on tax duties and paid them salaries and allowances as indicated against each.

Enugu employed eleven staff and paid them £1,708.

Aba employed forty-one staff and paid them £4,650.

Onitsha employed forty-one staff and paid them £4,622.

Port Harcourt employed sixteen up to March 1955 and after that twelve and paid them a total of £2,651.

Bende employed nineteen staff and paid them £1,635.

In addition to the staff employed entirely on tax duties there were also people such as Treasurers and messengers, part of whose work was connected with tax collection. In Aba Division the Administrative Officer estimates these at sixteen messengers and six Treasurers.

ORDER OF THE DAY

**Governor's Speech (Debate on the Address)**  
(Third Allotted Day)

*Order read for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question (11th March):*

"That a Humble Address of Thanks be presented to His Excellency the Governor, for His Excellency's Most Gracious Speech".

**Mr Speaker:** Before I propose the Question I think it is proper for me to mention that it would be of no use to debate the original Question. There are, hon. Members will observe, three amendments on which the Opposition Members will speak. I think the best thing for us to do in the circumstances will be to confine ourselves to the amendments. No useful purpose will be served by Members taking the opportunity in speaking to the amendments of discussing all the problems which they have in their Divisions. Hon. Members who have been in this House know exactly what attitude the Opposition and the Government will adopt in this matter. I think we should be as short as possible in our speeches. If we are lucky we might be able to dispose of all the amendments today and deal with the original Motion tomorrow.

*Question again proposed.*

**Mr E. O. Eyo (Uyo Division):** Mr Speaker, I beg to move to add at the end of the motion the following words: "but that this House regrets the omission from the Speech of Government's proposals for amendments to the First Schedule to the Eastern Region Finance (Amendment) Law, 1957, to give some relief to the parents and guardians of pupils in Standards I to VI in Primary Schools who now bear the heavy burden of school fees and/or Assumed Local Contributions as a result of the failure of the Universal Primary Education Scheme".

Now, Sir, last month, during the debate on the modifications of the U.P.E. Scheme, Members on both sides of the House urged upon Government the need for amendment to the First Schedule of the Eastern Region Finance (Amendment) Law, 1957, in order to give some relief to those who now bear the heavy burden of school fees and/or Assumed

[MR E. O. EYO]

Local Contributions. Members naturally expected to hear from the Speech from the Throne Government's proposals to give effect to the desired amendments. The omission from the Speech from the Throne of this most vital matter is therefore a matter for regret—hence this amendment. The Eastern Region Finance Law of 1956 was very unpopular in the Region, but we did our best as politicians to convince the electorate of the need for the law and the advantages to be derived therefrom.

We succeeded, Sir, because the whole argument in support of the new Finance Law was linked up with the implication of the U.P.E. scheme in the Eastern Region. We told the electorate a number of things and with your permission I will just read to the House what we told the public from the assurances given to the House by the Minister of Finance. First of all, I refer to the speech of the Minister of Finance on the Second reading of the Bill—pages 22 to 24, Volume I, Third Session, 5th to 19th of March, 1956:

“It has been much debated as to why Local Government financial structure has not been able to function as efficiently as one had originally hoped. Due examination of the problems involved has led Government to the conclusion that there are two fundamental reasons for this breakdown. First, there is the fact that in the Rural areas, in particular, the problem of the personal accumulation of capital is very difficult. By this, Sir, I mean that to ask a person living in the rural areas to produce at any given moment during the year five one pound notes or even forty shillings is extremely difficult and does, I contend, represent a degree of very real hardship. This does not mean to say that during the year these sums of money do not pass through the hands of the individuals. Without doubt, Sir, they do, but for them to produce sums of this magnitude at any one particular moment is highly impossible as it is not the habit of our people personally to accumulate savings . . .

“Secondly, the fundamental reason for the non-collection of rates and taxes in this Region is, I consider, the fact that any one individual of this Region is at present faced with no less than five separate demands, if not in all areas then in a very large number of the areas of this

Region. They are, Sir, a demand for a flat rate or the Schedule II tax; a demand for general rate; a demand for education rate; a demand for special rate; a demand for development rate.

“Is it any wonder, then, that the people in the rural areas, in particular, are confused? They do not understand why it is necessary to pay five different sums of money, and this enhances the view I expressed a few moments ago when I said that it is a real hardship for them to pay lump sums of money at any one moment during the year.”

Then he goes on “You will notice that the minimum rate is 22s 6d and it is related to the income level of £1-£59 per annum. I can almost hear hon. Members gasping and asking in astonishment—‘What, is everybody going to pay a minimum of £1 2s 6d whereas hitherto all that has been required is 11s or thereabout in flat rate tax?’ Before I am attacked, Sir, let me point out the implications of Head 456 of the Draft Estimates now before the House. Therein provision is made to enable Government to pay to Local Government Bodies moneys in respect of grants. Simultaneously, it is proposed that there shall be a restriction of the power to rate by Local Governments to the extent of no more than 5s per head in coming years. In addition, the power to levy the flat rate in Schedule II Tax under the Direct Taxation Ordinance will be withdrawn, because this Bill virtually repeals this Ordinance within the Eastern Region.

“We come, therefore, to consider what the demands upon a person who normally paid a flat rate tax will be under the aegis of this Bill.” And then he went on to quote the advantages.

Now, Sir, the Minister at the time was telling the people of the Eastern Region why they must support the new Finance Bill. He assured them of major relief from multiplicity of taxes and rates.

I am saying that we went out and told the people of the Eastern Region the advantages of the new Finance Law. We were able to convince the people of the Eastern Region because we linked the new Finance Bill with the U.P.E. Scheme. That is the basis of the Amendment.

Now, Sir, in March, 1957, during the Budget Session, this was what the Minister of Finance said on this very issue. We went out to the people again and told them exactly what the Government promised if only they paid their tax under the new Law. I am reading from the Daily Report of the 26th March, 1957, at page 8, reporting the speech of the Minister of Finance.

“Moreover, the House is aware of Government's decision to introduce Universal Primary Education as from 1st January, 1957. This policy, which has been fully endorsed by all shades of opinion in the House, is now nearing the end of its first quarter's operation, but you will wish to know that when the results of the compulsory registration became known, it was found necessary to provide for additional staff and buildings, not to mention provision for the assumption of the assumed local contribution by the Regional Government.”

This has been made possible by way of supplementary expenditure during the current financial year, amounting to no less than £1,350,000. This has been borne on our existing revenue structure. The Minister was saying: “If you pay the new tax I promise you that the Government will provide for additional staff and buildings in your schools, and what is more Government will be responsible for what in the past you were being called upon to pay, namely, “Assumed Local Contributions.”

That was very grand, and the people of the Eastern Region took the Minister at his word and agreed to pay the new tax. What happened? In 1957, there was a general election and the Government promised the electorate that if they were returned to power they would amend the Finance Law. (*Interruption*). Sir, we came to this House in March, 1957, and the law was amended and I read again what the Minister of Finance told the House at the time he was amending the Finance Law. This is reported at page 4 of the Daily Report of 27th March, 1957, and it reads:

“The education of children is one vital form of investment to the future of this country. But we must also take into account certain forms of financial saving

which may build up resources of capital to help in the investment programme of the country. Here I have in mind particularly contributions to life assurance policies and to pension and provident funds. These are particularly valuable as a form of saving because they are regular and because they are contractual. In most income tax systems special provision is therefore made to allow a deduction from taxable income of contractual savings. So Government has decided that this forward-looking provision is appropriate here in Nigeria too and a clause which has this effect is therefore included.”

The Ministry of Finance accepted the education of children as one vital form of investment, just as life insurance policies for which we made deduction.

Now, Sir, I am proceeding from here to say that now that it is quite clear that the whole burden of school fees and/or Assumed Local Contributions will fall on the people, the only sensible, reasonable and right thing to do will be for Government to amend the First Schedule to the Finance Law in order to grant relief in the same way that deductions have been made in respect of life insurance policies.

We debated the modifications of the Universal Primary Education Scheme last month. Then the Minister of Education issued a Circular. The peculiar thing about this Circular is that it was signed by the Minister of Education himself and it opened by saying “I am directed to inform you”. It is usual for Permanent Secretaries to write such circulars. (*Interruptions*) The Minister of Education in that Circular, said that the Assumed Local Contributions would be deducted from Primary Schools' Grants with effect from the 1st of January, 1958, in the following classes and at the following rates:—

(a) Standards I and II—£2 x 30 = £60 per annum for each class;

Standards III and IV—£4 x 30 = £120 per annum for each class;

Standards V and VI—£6 x 30 = £180 per annum for each class.

[MR E. O. EYO]

- (b) That the proposed Assumed Local Contribution of £8 x 30 in Standard VI is reduced to £6 x 30 as shown above.
- (c) That the local contributions envisaged in the above figures shall be raised locally in any form to be decided by the Voluntary Agency and the Local Government Council in consultation with the Education Department. The forms of collection may include school fees, education rating or voluntary subscriptions.
- (d) That the amount of grant paid by Government at each school shall be communicated by the Education Department to the Local Government Councils for information.

Now, this is very important. "The amount of the Assumed Local Contributions will be deducted by Provincial Education Officers, in respect of each approved class teacher, from the total estimated annual grant for each school. Payment of grant will be made as soon as the re-calculation has been carried out and will be on the usual E.D.(E) 3 for the the four quarters of 1958".—Signed, B. C. Okwu, Minister of Education.

Now, Sir, the point is that the Government is telling the people of the Region: we assume that in standards I and II, you will have thirty pupils on your roll for which we are going to deduct £60 per class a year. In other words, if you are so unfortunate as to get only ten or fifteen or five pupils, it is your own business. All we are interested in is our deduction—£2 x 30 = £60. This applies to standards III and IV; and V and VI; but we are not going to pay for grant even though it will be retrospective as from 1st January, 1958, until we have made all our calculations.

Now, Sir, the position is that teachers in the Region have not received their salaries since the 1st of January, 1958, and you would want to know the number of teachers who have received letters from their employers terminating their appointments and you would want to go round the schools and see reductions in the enrolments. I happened to go round some schools in my Division. I went to one school, Sir, and I did not find up to

ten or twenty pupils in the senior primary school. I was lucky enough to find a father who informed me that he had three boys in standard VI, two in standard four and two in standard one and you would want to see the poor wretched man making an attempt to add up how much he was called upon to pay as school fees. I asked the man: What do you propose to do under the circumstances? He told me point-blank that he was afraid there was nothing he could do about it other than to withdraw his children from school.

That may sound funny to Members of this House. But, Sir, let us also consider the position of teachers in this Region, and in this, I am supported by the Premier himself. I refer to his last message to the Nigerian Union of Teachers when they met in conference in Onitsha. May I with your permission draw the attention of the House to what he said. It is on behalf of these teachers who have not received their salaries from the 1st of January, 1958, and who, I venture to say, have no future whatsoever. There is no indication as to when they are going to be paid. Now, Sir, this is what the Premier said in his message:

"Those who are engaged in the profession of teaching in the whole Federation deserve the gratitude of parents and guardians of the school-going children of Nigeria for three reasons. In spite of alleged adverse conditions of service, teachers have been loyal to their noble profession; due to the industry of teachers and their devotion to duty, the country has been able to satisfy the demand made on its human resources, so as to make our experiment in Parliamentary Government successful; with the active co-operation of the teaching profession, two Regional Governments and the Federal Government have made Universal Primary Education a reality".

That was the compliment to the teachers for the role played by them to make what the Premier regarded as a successful scheme but which eventually collapsed after he had made this broadcast. He went on to say:

"The Government of the Eastern Region appreciates the difficulty confronting teachers in respect of the variegated conditions of their service in the Federation, but my



Government has given them incentive and security by assuming responsibility for the payment of the salaries and perquisites of all registered and qualified teachers of this Region as an earnest demonstration of our good faith."

Now, Sir, this type of thing is very characteristic of our Premier. He will get up a statement carefully prepared and just hand it over to the N.B.C. for it to be broadcast. He went on to say:

"Since the year 1952, five Governments have been created in the Federation of Nigeria. This had meant a drain on our man-power, since our Legislatures and Cabinets must be manned by the products of our schools."

"Universal Primary Education is now an accomplished fact in the Western and Eastern Regions, as well as in the Federal Territory of Lagos. It required years of planning and heavy inroad into the exchequers of the Governments concerned to make it a success. Buildings had to be erected and teachers had to be trained, some of whom had to undergo privations in order to qualify at the minimum time available for the introduction of this most desirable form of social service. Your profession deserves to be approbated because the introduction of Universal Primary Education has increased the number of our primary schools, the population of our school going children and the number of our teacher-training institutions."

And he goes on and on.

The purpose of this amendment, Sir, is to express the regret of the House over the omission of such vital matter in the Speech from the Throne, giving indication of Government proposals to give effect to the wishes expressed by Members of the House by amending the Finance Law to give some form of relief, which we all agree is necessary, to those who are now called upon to bear this heavy burden of school fees and/or Assumed Local Contribution. I have succeeded in proving to the House that the whole success of the operation of this Finance Law was linked up with the U.P.E. Scheme. Now that the scheme has fallen apart, and we are calling upon our people to pay Church contributions to run a function which should be

properly financed from the revenues of the Government, it is only fit and proper that this House should give consideration and direction to Government to effect amendments to this Finance Law. I am sure that my amendment is clear and straightforward. (*Interruption*).

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** I invite Members of this House to give full and careful consideration to this most vital matter, in the interest of the people of the Region whom we represent and grant relief to the suffering people who voted us into this House, and to whom we owe our very existence and future as politicians. (*Laughter*). Members can laugh at them. They may think the people are fools. I don't want anyone to treat this amendment lightly. It is a very serious matter, and knowing Members as I do, that they have the interest of the Eastern Region at heart, and that whatever they do they are being guided by the wishes of the people in their constituencies, I have no reason to anticipate any opposition to this amendment.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move.

**Mr M. U. Etuk (Uyo Division):** Sir, I beg to second the motion.

**Mr Speaker:** The question is to add at the end of the motion the words indicated by the hon. the Mover of the amendment.

Before any Member rises to speak, may I suggest one thing. I still think it is important that the debate on the amendment should end today, and unless any particular Member of the Opposition disagrees with the Mover, I think I will be satisfied with only one or two individuals speaking in support. I will urge the Government to do the same. I think it is quite certain what the views of both sides of the House are in this matter, to have the right of repetition. It will have the effect of curtailing the number of days on which we are authorised to speak about our little problems in our places. Mr Arikpo, I gather you wish to speak at length about this?

**Mr Okoi Arikpo (Obubra Division):** I wish to speak, Sir, but I am not going to speak at length. I am going to be very brief when I speak.

**Mr Speaker:** Does any Member of the Opposition wish to speak now? I control the debates; my question is does any Member of the Opposition wish to speak? I like to curtail these debates and it will be easier for me if any one wishes to speak to enable me to put the question.

**Mr S. G. Ikoku (Enyong Division):** I will be very brief, so I will speak from here. There is the point, Sir, that after the introduction of the new Tax Law in 1956, there was a subsequent amendment to the Schedule. We brought some measure of tax relief to certain categories of the population. I would like to make it clear that that reduction of the tax schedule did not, according to what we were told in this House, bring about a reduction in tax revenue. In fact, the figure given by the Minister of Finance was that, despite the tax review, there would be an increase of £800,000 in tax revenue. I wouldn't like the Government to try to hide the fact that they made certain reductions in the tax Schedule and that is why they can't find money now to handle the U.P.E. Scheme.

My next point, Sir, is an appeal to the Government to try for once to look at this matter from the point of view of the parents, of the guardians, of the people in this Region who are called upon to pay these taxes and the education fees. I would like to give them just two sets of figures in 1956-57 Financial year. If we work on the lowest tax paid and on the lowest column, that is assuming the person has four children or more, the minimum tax paid or payable is £1 2s 6d. Then the rate allowed *per capita* was 5s and there were no school fees. As a result, the large bulk of people in this Region were called upon to pay over to Government or Local Councils a total of £1 7s 6d. But in this financial year the picture has changed. This same man receives no tax relief whatsoever as the result of the first modifications in the tax schedule. He still has to pay £1 2s 6d; there is no relief for that category whatsoever. The rates have been raised from 5s per head to 15s per head and school fees have been raised too. Assume that this man who is assessed to pay £1 2s 6d has four or more children, and that all these children are in school. Let us not worry ourselves for one moment about the classes of these children. For the purpose of argument I shall

put all four in standard VI or V to get the best effect (*Interruption from the Government Bench—“put all four in infant”*) or all in Infant to get the worst effect, or in standards III and IV to get something near the best effect; but I am putting them all, Sir, in the lowest categories of fees, that is, standards I and II, in which case the parent is called upon to pay a total of £8 by way of fees, which brings his total expenditure by way of these payments to £9 17s 6d, compared with what he used to pay in the past financial year of £1 7s 6d. You have something in the neighbourhood of 800 per cent increase, and the man in the street is called upon to pay it. I regard this, Sir, as a fantastic burden to be placed on the shoulders of the people of this Region. I want the Government to look at these figures and see at a glance the type of load they are placing on the shoulders of the overwhelming majority of the people in this Region. It is quite easy to get up and shout about your own finances—somebody said £5.2 million; another said £7.9 million, and the rest of it. You are looking at this matter primarily from the point of view of your own arithmetic in your Executive Council. Try and look at this problem for once from the point of view of the man at the other end—the man on whom the whole burden is placed, and who has very little opportunity of making himself felt. If you look at these sets of figures you find that there has been a very astronomical jump in what these parents are called upon to pay, and I am quite sure any modification in the tax schedule will not give them a reduction of £8. To begin with, it is an impossible arithmetic to deduct £8 from £1 2s 6d—quite impossible. But we are calling upon this House to make a gesture to the people by making some reduction, however small.

Mr Speaker, I support the amendment.

**Mr Arikpo:** Mr Speaker, I have already promised that I am going to be very brief. During the debate on the modification of the Universal Primary Education scheme, I tried to point out from this Despatch Box that it is a moral obligation on the Government and the whole House to take steps which will make clear to the man in the street that Government is not only aware of the financial difficulties facing this Region but it is also determined by example to correct or to solve these difficulties.

Today I want to examine this matter purely from the point of view of financial administration. As the hon. Mover of the amendment has pointed out, one of the principal reasons given for the change in the method of financial administration which was, in fact, the basis of the Finance Law of 1956-57, is to avoid this multiplicity of taxes. The Minister of Finance quite rightly pointed out that because of these various direct and indirect taxes, rates and so on, the tax-payer was bewildered and it was difficult to collect Education Rate, and in order to regularise the whole system of financing the services of the Region, the Finance Law was introduced. Unhappily, the method by which the Minister sought to do this has not quite succeeded, and still more regrettable the Government has decided to fall back on that same system which it found very unsatisfactory. I support this amendment for this one reason. While not anticipating the Minister's Budget Speech, I should like to call his attention to the fact that what Government is doing now, by introducing at one and the same time Education Rating, Assumed Local Contribution, School Fees, is in fact going back to that financial chaos which the Finance Law sought to remedy.

For that reason, I think it is important that Government should be very careful in re-examining the whole problem. It was in this House that the Finance Law was presented and Government promised to look after the people who are paying taxes under the new system. I think it is only right and proper that Government should look back on the schedules in the Finance Law which, in fact, fixed all the amounts paid by the people. For this reason, when people paid the rates and taxes of 11s there was some simple difficulty in collecting education rates, local contribution (school fees) and what not.

I suggest it will be even more difficult for these various taxes to be collected—Education rates, local contribution, etc., and for that and for no other reason, Government is in duty-bound to re-examine the tax schedules with a view to preventing more chaos. Secondly, Sir, it is only right and proper that Government should deduct from the tax schedule of the taxes which represent the national contribution by the tax-payers of this Region, that element of the tax which represents the Education rate. I said that it was not correct to say that all

our financial difficulties were due wholly or even primarily to the ingratitude of the Universal Primary Education, there are other causes of financial difficulties. Not least is the inefficiency of the system of collecting these taxes; and we have been promised, I am glad to say, that the whole system of collecting taxes is being carefully re-examined and that more staff will be trained to handle the question of assessment and collecting of taxes.

I should like Government to bear in mind that when there was only one tax to collect we had considerable difficulties in reaching the estimated revenue from direct tax. Now that we are to have two or three taxes to collect either by the Local Authorities, or the Regional Government, the same people will be paying and, therefore, it is fair to say that we are going to have even greater difficulties in collecting the two or even three taxes from tax-payers every year. It is even more important that there should be a reduction in the taxes paid by the people of this Region in order to prevent a further shortfall in the amount of taxes collected.

Now, this is a question of financial administration. It is not a question of political differences. It is a question of simple common sense that if we have found difficulty in collecting £10 from a person, it will be even more difficult to collect £20 from that same person, and therefore it is a question of prudent financial administration that Government should re-examine these facts with a view to making visible reductions so that the collection goes on smoothly.

The second reason why I think Government should reconsider or re-examine this tax schedule is that we are making a very serious administrative blunder in putting the whole burden of the financial failure in this Region on one item, namely, education. Indeed, nobody can be convinced by the Government that all our difficulties are due to the introduction of the U.P.E. They are not. There are other reasons why we have financial difficulties and to shift the whole burden of these difficulties on to one item, the item of education, merely because we know that education is the most popular service in this Region, to my mind, is a very serious error indeed—an error for which this Region will be forced to pay very

[MR ARIKPO]

heavily. For that reason, if for no other reason, I suggest that Government should go back and examine very carefully the whole question of the schedule under the Finance Law. Otherwise, we will find that next year, the shortfall in the revenue collected will be even greater than that of this year and it will go on year after year until we come to a point when the whole educational administration will break down. It will not happen in two years. The effect is already being felt. More and more parents are withdrawing their children from school, which is something which was never envisaged. The hope was to reach a position where every child of school going age would be at school for a minimum of six years; but what is the Government doing? In fact, its financial administration is doing just the opposite and I suggest very seriously to Government, irrespective of what its vote in this House is, and irrespective of the partisan feelings of its supporters, education is such a vital thing that Government should not allow partisanship to direct its attitude to it.

Whatever this House decides, Government should go back and look into this whole question very carefully because, say what you will, the effect is likely to be that for the current year, Government will collect even less revenue from direct tax as a result of this. After all, the Minister has admitted that last year, he did not collect all the revenue he was expected to collect from direct taxes and that, we have pointed out from time to time from the Opposition Bench, is due to the fact that the Minister has completely lost sight of the fact of the economic law of optimum and maximum involved in taxation. You can tax people up to a point, up to an optimum point, and the moment you go beyond that point, the revenue you collect goes down instead of going forward. That is something which ought to be examined objectively by the Minister and his Advisers before he presents his Budget speech to the House in ten days' time.

Finally, Sir, I support this Amendment also for this last and very simple reason. It is that we must not lose sight of the earning capacity of the masses of the population which has not changed radically since 1956. The average national income changes very gradually and we should have learnt from the experiences of the

last few years that we have not only reached the limit of capability of the people of this Region but we are trying to go beyond that limit. Now the point is not that the taxes we are paying in this Region are in themselves very high, but relative to the earning capacity, relative to the average national income in this Region, they are too high. That is a simple fact and that is one reason why we are not succeeding in collecting all that we estimate we can collect each year. In fact the burden is not falling on those who are best able to pay these taxes. Our system of assessment and our system of collecting these taxes are very incorrect. One will hope that before very long this system will be perfect and people will pay according to their earnings; but for the average person who has nothing to hide, the level of tax is, relative to his earning capacity, too high and that is something which I hope the Government will give very serious consideration, and along with that, try to improve the system of collecting taxes. I quite agree that there are several people who are paying far less than they ought to pay but these people happen not to be the average persons. The average person is, in fact, paying all that he can pay and in some cases more than he can pay. If therefore you introduce another tax or two more taxes, you should expect that there will be a fairly large shortfall in the amount you collect from direct tax and it is from this angle that I would like the Government—whatever is decided here today—to go back and re-examine this whole question of the modification we are proposing. I don't think the Government would be wise to dismiss this question outright without giving very careful consideration to it from the point of view of financial administration.

Sir, I beg to support the amendment.

**The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke):** Mr Speaker, Sir, it is a bit unfortunate to note that we have come to reopen old wounds on this issue. During the debate on the Universal Primary Education, the point was made by Members from both sides of the House that there should be some modification on the tax schedules, because parents were going to be called upon to bear a greater burden. I had pointed out at that time that, though the Government at the time it introduced the Finance Law made it clear that one of the aims

was to make it possible to introduce the U.P.E. Scheme, it was not entirely for that alone and it is obvious to all Members of this House that education alone, including U.P.E. and personal emoluments in the department and so forth, costs at the moment £5.2 million taking account of the modification in the U.P.E. agreed upon at the last meeting of the House. As you all know, Sir, the tax collected is less than half of that amount. The tax collected is £2.3 million from Finance Law and out of this £2.3 million, £2 million goes back to the Local Councils and about £.4 goes to pay commission to the collectors. So that Government is actually not gaining anything from the Finance Law.

**Mr Ikoku:** Certainly.

**Dr Imoke:** It would, therefore, be ridiculous to expect Government to reduce further what it collects from the Finance Law. If the House is going to accept that, then they are in other words saying to Government: "We do not want any more health services, we do not want any more road services, we do not want any more grant to Local Government Councils for capital works and so forth and we want to be at a standstill or even go back". As I said it is really a pity that my hon. Friends opposite should find it convenient to come and play politics again with this issue. Ours is a young developing country and people are anxious for developments in all forms and that was why the Government found it necessary to come to their aid when they found that the people out of anxiety to develop were levying too many rates—rates for this, rates for that and so forth. In some areas people were paying more than £3 on rates alone apart from the eleven shillings capitation tax which existed then, and Government thought that by introducing the Finance Law they would be relieved of this burden. Well, we all agree that education is the foremost of the social services in the minds of our people and Government realised that very well, and wanted to help in taking over the burden of education from the people. It was fully debated here how we came into the snag. The tax estimated to be collected was about £5 million and that has not been collected. It is only about half of it that has been collected and all that is collected even goes back to the Local Government Councils.

It is difficult for me really to understand the last speaker when he said that he did not want

to bring partisanship into this affair. I was very much impressed with his speech last month during the debate on the modification of the U.P.E., but I am afraid I am not very happy about his speech this morning because he definitely realises that this is a young country that wants development and he knows that the people are anxious for development. It is no use coming here to suggest cuts, instead of suggesting ways and means by which we can improve our revenue to give the people the necessary amenities they want. We are only playing up to the gallery by suggesting that the Government should think of reducing tax.

Mr Speaker, I have been reminded that we are collecting less than what we estimated from the Finance Law during the current year.

In the first place I want to point out to you or to remind you, Sir, that when the Finance Law was before this House for debate, the Opposition as a whole boycotted the House. It was their duty to sit here at that time and bring out their own suggestions that could have helped Government perhaps to collect these taxes more easily but they did not do it. They shirked their responsibilities by walking out. When we estimated that we were going to collect £3.3 million I did explain in my speech then that we were hoping that the machinery for collection would be improved and that the people would be awake to their responsibilities as citizens and declare their actual incomes and pay their taxes. The Government has done its best, there is no doubt, to improve the machinery.

We have from the beginning set up a Board of Internal Revenue, headed by a Commissioner with experience in tax matters, who is at the moment training revenue collectors and so forth and so Government cannot be blamed if there is a shortfall, because that was not anticipated and in any case there is no country that sticks exactly to its approved estimates. There is always the approved estimates and later in the year the revised estimates; my friends know it very well.

Finally, Mr Speaker, I think it is obvious that we do not need to waste the time of this House because it is definitely politics we are playing with this very important issue. I want to say that the scheme has not fallen apart

[DR IMOKE]

as alleged by the Mover of the amendment. The scheme has only been modified and one would expect the Opposition as well as the Government Party to put their heads together to suggest ways and means by which the revenue of this Region could be increased so as to make

it possible in the near future to reintroduce the scheme full scale (*Hear ! Hear !*).

Mr Speaker, I beg to oppose the amendment.

**Mr M. E. Ogon: (Ikom Division):** Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the Question be now put.

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

*Original Question put accordingly.*

*House Divided.*

Ayes 13. Noes 54.

**Division No. 1**

Mr J. A. Agba  
Mr S. J. Amachree  
Mr O. Arikpo  
Rev. O. Efiang, C.B.E.  
Mr J. A. Etuhube  
Mr M. U. Etuk

*Ayes*

**11.15 a.m.**

Mr E. O. Eyo  
Mr S. G. Ikoku  
Mr E. Ita  
Mr O. B. Nalelo  
Mr M. N. Yowika

*Tellers for the Ayes:—*

Mr A. J. Ekpe  
Chief I. I. Morphy

*Noes*

Mr C. A. Abangwu  
Mr O. U. Afiah  
Chief G. N. Agbasiere  
Mr D. S. A. Agim  
Mr D. E. Akilo  
Mr H. U. Akpabio  
Mr D. O. Aligwekwe  
Mr S. N. Alo  
Mr P. U. Amaefunah  
Mr N. L. P. Apreala  
Mr J. W. E. Anaba  
Mr R. O. Anoke  
Mr D. O. Anu  
Dr N. Azikiwe  
Mr A. O. Chikwendu  
Mr E. A. Chime  
Mr E. Emole  
Mr U. Enyi  
Mr E. U. Eronini  
Mr J. E. Eyo  
Mr J. O. Ihekwoaba  
Dr S. E. Imoke  
Mr J. M. Ito  
Mr R. O. Iwuagwu  
Mr S. E. K. Iwueke  
Mr O. C. Manu

Mr S. O. Masi  
Mr D. A. Nnaji  
Mr V. A. Nwankwo  
Mr N. Nweze  
Mr J. U. Nwodo  
Mr P. O. Nwoga  
Mr J. H. E. Nwuke  
Mr M. U. Obayi  
Dr A. N. Obonna  
Mr M. E. Ogon  
Mr J. O. Okeh  
Mr P. N. Okeke  
Mr O. Oketa  
Mr G. C. Okeya  
Mr E. P. Okoya  
Dr M. I. Okpara  
Mr K. J. N. Okpokam  
Mr B. C. Okwu  
Chief S. E. Onukogu  
Mr P. A. Onwe  
Mr N. O. Onwudiwe  
Mr V. K. Onyeri  
Chief A. N. Onyiuke  
Mr E. W. Udonkim  
Mr R. O. Ukuta, M.B.E.  
Mr J. O. Umolu

*Tellers for the Noes:—*

Mr K. Kiri  
Mr E. Chidolue

**Mr Ikoku:** With your permission, Sir, I beg to move an amendment motion standing in my name, to *add* at the end of the Question the following words :

“but that this House regrets that His Excellency was unable to announce the reduction of the Assumed Local Contributions payable in the Primary Schools of the Eastern Region in respect of Standards I to VI and hereby calls upon the Government to accept the following new rates:—

Standards I and II—5s a quarter;

Standards III and IV—10s a quarter;

Standards V and VI—15s a quarter.”

During the debate last month in this House, the Government took great pains to explain that the Assumed Local Contribution in our Primary Schools does not necessarily mean school fees. In that debate, Sir, the Acting Minister of Education said, (with your permission, I quote) “The general impression appears to be that Government has decided to introduce fees of £6 and £8 in those classes”—V and VI—“and that these fees must be paid in full at the beginning of the school year. This is not correct. Government has not imposed school fees as such, but it has re-introduced the Assumed Local Contribution in these classes at rates of £6 and £8. The actual amount of Assumed Local Contribution to be raised locally is obtained by multiplying these amounts by a hypothetical enrolment figure of thirty to give £180 in Standard V and £240 in Standard VI. Government is not concerned with the manner in which these amounts are raised. This is a matter for local decision. It may be done by fees, by voluntary donations, by Church subscriptions, by rating or by a combination of such methods.”

That was the Acting Minister of Education. We on this side of the House made it clear that Government was simply quibbling and that Assumed Local Contribution meant nothing more and nothing less than school fees. Today, I trust that hon. Members are a bit wiser. We now know how the Government Assumed Local Contribution is working out in practice. Everywhere the burden is being placed firmly and squarely on the shoulders of parents and guardians. Local Councils, Clan Unions, school managers and proprietors are all singing the same song—school fees. This is because

the fees are excessively high and the burden of them, when we bear in mind the oppressive income tax and the quite considerable local government rate, is fast becoming unbearable to the greater fraction of the population. The fees are considerably higher than what parents and guardians were called upon to pay before the introduction of the ill-fated Universal Primary Education Scheme in 1957.

Again, Sir, the fees approved by the Members opposite on 18th February are even worse than the rates previously announced by the Government. If, assuming that you had a child in every class from Infant I to Standard VI, you paid £19 a year on the first set of rates, you now have to pay £24 a year on the existing rates. Primary Education in the Region today is undergoing a veritable crisis and this crisis manifests itself in many other aspects of our regional life. Children are drifting away from the schools and the pool of unemployed children is growing rapidly. School managers and proprietors are completely perplexed and are trying to find teachers' salaries where parents are unable to pay school fees and the Government has not given out any definite assurance of adequate grants-in-aid being paid. The teachers are demoralised for most still have to receive their salaries for January. Many have been served with notices of termination of their appointments and many more live in complete dread of unemployment at any moment. Parents are caught in a dilemma. They know that their children have little chance in life without some education, but they are simply not in a position to find the money with which to pay the high school fees. Why did we legislate against child marriage and high dowries when we help to create conditions which compel the girls to be sold out in order to provide a modicum of education for the boys? (*Laughter*). We parade ourselves as believers in equal opportunities for men and women. But are we not now creating conditions which rob women of that basic education without which they shall for ever be relegated to an inferior position in our society?

Mr Speaker, it is not the aim of this amendment to abolish the payment of school fees. The Opposition fought gallantly on this point last month and failed—we lost to the solid voting of the Government Party due to hon.

[MR IKOKU]

Members who placed loyalty to their Government above loyalty to their constituencies, Hon. Members who paid more heed to the dictation of their party whips than to the dictates of their conscience. (*Interruption—Why did you people lose?*) We obeyed our conscience. It is not my intention, Sir, to re-open the question of whether or not fees should be paid in the Primary Schools of this Region. We hope, and the whole Region is also hoping, that in no distant future a new Government shall arise. (*Shouts of "No, no" from Government supporters*). We hope, Sir, that in no distant future a new Government shall arise, which by meticulous planning and sincere love of the people, will be able to provide free basic education for every child in the Region.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the amendment now before the House has three main objects: firstly, to enable as many children as possible to remain in school to the benefit of themselves, of their parents and to the glory of the Region; secondly, to reduce to the barest minimum the incidence of unemployment and the uncertainty in the teaching profession; thirdly, to reduce the financial burden of parents to the minimum by running our Primary Schools on a no-profit, no-loss basis. Hon. Members will get at the heart of the whole problem if they seek sincere and accurate answers to two questions. The first question is, how much money does Government expect by way of fees in order to keep our Primary Schools going? In other words, how much exactly is to be raised by the people of the Region, as distinct from the Government, for the running of our Primary Schools? The second question depends on the first, and is, how much does the amount work out per head of the school population? In other words, how much is each child in school expected to pay in order to realise the amount to be raised by the people of the Region for running our Primary Schools? Let us deal with the first question, that is, how much money does Government need from the people of the Region? Speaking in the House on the 13th of February this year, on the debate on the U.P.E. Scheme, the hon. the Acting Minister of Education said at page 22 of the Official Debates of the Eastern House, Vol. I, No. 18: "And now, Sir, I come to the specific problem with which we are confronted.

Stated in its simplest term, it is to reduce the estimated grants for 1958-59 by £2.49 million by spreading the reductions over the three main features of education—primary, secondary and teacher training". We are concerned only with primary education; we are not interested in secondary and teacher training at the moment. Our concern, therefore, is to find how much of this amount of £2.49 million the Government is attributing to primary education—one of the three arms of education. That is, we want to know how much the Government, out of the £2.49 million which is to be spread among the three arms of education, will spend on primary education.

I think, here again, Sir, the Government has provided this hon. House with an answer. Winding up for the Government in the debate on U.P.E. Scheme in this House on the 17th February, the hon. the Acting Minister of Education said (again, Sir, with your permission I would like to quote from the Official Debate of the Eastern House of Assembly, Volume I, No. 22, pages 220 and 221) "In the first place, I would like to make it abundantly clear that the problem before the Eastern Region is to find out the margin of excess in Universal Primary Education. Government has made it clear that as much as £5.2 million would be spent on education and that with all these suggestions made here, our people will not be expected to raise more than £1.4 million. This modification, which is being suggested and which is contained in my main speech, is a proposal to raise only £1.4 million". That is the Acting Minister of Education, and here, Sir, I would remind you that only a few minutes ago while I was talking, I raised a question of the amount attributable to the primary education, he, the very Minister shouted £2.4 million—he has forgotten the £1.4 million made in his debate. It is clear, therefore, that the amount expected from the Region is £1.4 million. I would like to add, incidentally, that if Government would shelve its ill-advised University of Nigeria project, the money so far accumulated for the project would more than cover the amount required to give free primary education to every child in the Region. (*Interruption*). I noticed, Sir, that the Government is very much tickled over this University business. (*Laughter*).

I have established that this hon. House was told that the amount the people of this Region



are to collect or to raise for the U.P.E. is £1.4 million. Let us come to the second problem of ascertaining how much each primary school child is to pay as fees in order to raise the grand total of £1.4 million. Here Sir, it is necessary to ascertain the number of children in school by January this year. In 1956, the last year before U.P.E. was launched, there were approximately 900,000 children in primary schools in Eastern Region. Allowing for about 50,000 who left school at the end of 1956 school year—these are all official figures—and bearing in mind the fact that there were 1,300,000 children in school in January 1957, that is the U.P.E. year, it follows that 450,000 children entered school, that is Infants 1 and 2 in 1957.

By the end of 1957 another 50,000 children approximately left school. An official figure put the school population at January, 1958 as one and a half million. It follows that 250,000 children entered school in January, 1958. From this calculation, Sir, you see at once that at January, 1958, Infant I entrants this year and Infant II entrants last year contained 700,000 children—450,000 who entered in 1957, and 250,000 who entered this year. It is therefore quoted that the number of children in Standards I to VI, leaving out Infants, is the simple difference—one and half million less 700,000. We are going to split £1.4 million over 800,000 children. Now, if we spread £1.4 million among 800,000 school children, the burden works out an average of £1 15s per child per annum—Mr Minister make a note! But the existing rates which were passed by the Government majority in this House last month is an average of £4 per child per annum—£2: I and II; £4: III and IV; £6: V and VI. Work out the average; it is £4 per head—that is what Government is charging. Thus, Government is over-charging to the tune of £2 5s per child per year. It does become abundantly clear that Government is not just trying to raise £1.4 million from the people, it is in fact trying to raise £3.2 million which gives it a surplus, gain, profit—call it what you may—of £1.8 million.

Here is a Government which is not satisfied with having deceived our people over the U.P.E. Scheme. It is actively scheming to extract more money from the very people whom it has placed in financial embarrassment. Isn't this injustice? Isn't this extortion?

Isn't this a case of adding insult to injury? (*Answer of "NO" from Government Bench*). Mr Speaker, I notice that the Minister of Justice answered these questions most emphatically but according to report in the paper, only 20 per cent returned to school in his Division. (*Interruption—Who gave you the information? Who gave you the figures?*) In all, the average per head of £1 15s in our primary schools worked down at 1 : 2 : 3 ratio between standards I and II, Standards III and IV, and Standards V and VI which is the Government's accepted ratio. We are going by the following rates: in Standards I and II 4s 4½d per quarter, Standards III and IV 8s 9d per quarter, Standards V and VI 13s 1½d per quarter, and it will be noted that these rates are even lower than those suggested in my amending Motion. The reason for this is that some allowance is to be made for some children who might be withdrawn from schools, but such number is not likely to be very high because all children now in Standards I to VI had entered school before 1957, when the fees were paid in all classes and I suggest new rates of fees will thus give the Government its desired £1.4 million and may even provide a little margin in excess for safety. Any such margin of safety is always the feature of wise and realistic planning.

My suggested new rates have an added advantage by being reasonably low. The new rates of fees are within the means and ability of many parents and guardians in the Region. They will all enable high percentage of present school population to stay in school. This means that we have taken steps to a considerable degree to provide basic primary education for larger part of younger generation. The benefit of this to the Region today and in future is generally accepted and the suggested new rates have yet another advantage by keeping the high percentage of the present school population and avoiding the loss of many teachers, and all those who depend on these teachers would be less affected. If the existing new rates continue, many teachers are doomed to lose their jobs. Already, termination notices have gone out to many teachers. Our estimate is that about one in every eight teachers is likely to lose his or her job. This means that nearly 4,000 teachers will be out of employment throughout the Region. The figure may be even higher and

[MR IKOKU]

the rural areas are going to be particularly hard hit. Should this House not do something to alleviate the suffering of these 4,000 teachers? Should this House not show concern and sympathy for the 4,000 families or more who depend on the salaries of these teachers? It is degrading and demoralising in the unemployment market. Assuming that three or five persons depend on each teacher, is it not clear that the unemployment of 4,000 teachers means the undermining of the standard of living of some 15,000 to 20,000 people? (*Interruption—It does not mean that*). Sir, I appeal through you to the House that we should rise to the occasion. Should this House not endeavour to reduce to absolute minimum the financial burden borne by the people of this Region as a result of the modifications of U.P.E. Scheme? Let us make sure that no parent is called upon to bear more than he should. Let us bring redress and justice to our people.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

**Mr Arikpo:** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed—That the words proposed to be added be there added.*

*Sitting suspended at 12 o'clock noon.*

*Sitting resumed at 12.30 p.m.*

**The Minister of Information (temporarily holding the Portfolio of Education (Mr B. C. Okwu):** Mr Speaker, Sir, in opposing this amendment, I want to make it abundantly clear that it is not my intention to repeat those arguments advanced by me when I moved the modification to the U.P.E. Scheme. As far as I am concerned, I will confine myself to barely stating the nature of the problem and the fallacy in the arguments of the Leader of the Opposition who moved this amendment.

In the first place, Sir, the modification which was made in this House at the last meeting did state beyond doubt that the Government's new plan envisaged free education in Classes I and II and Assumed Local Contribution in the order of 3s 4d per month in Standards I and II, 6s 8d per month in Standards III and IV, and 10s per month in Standards V and VI. When

then the Leader of Opposition quoted me as saying that by this modification Government did not necessarily re-introduce fees, I think he was right and I still own that statement.

We did point out that this Assumed Local Contribution could be raised in all manner of ways except by stealing and counterfeiting. These were the only two exceptions and I had thought that I was not misunderstood. The point is that, as far as this Government is concerned, the application of these modifications can be explained in this way: that for the purposes of grants-in-aid, Government pays to any grant-aided school in respect of Standard I, the teacher's salary minus 3s 4d multiplied by 30 per month, i.e., that teacher's salary less that amount. The implication is that whereas provided in the Regulations, a junior class has up to forty pupils there is a surplus of ten pupils whose Assumed Local Contribution of 3s 4d is not taken into account. In Standards III-VI the maximum number of pupils allowed is thirty-six and where the class is up to thirty-six, Government is not bothered about the extra six. For instance if you have twenty-five children in Standard IV and thirty-six in Standard VI, it means that this 10s per child in Standard VI will yield a surplus of 10s multiplied by 6, and that amount might go to make up for the Assumed Local Contribution in Standard IV where you have less than thirty. I think, in all fairness, that no sane person can accuse the Government of being unreasonable in this decision.

I come to the proposition made by my hon. Friend, the Leader of the Opposition. In actual fact this amounts to fifty per cent of Government figures. I am sure that all things being equal, there would have been no opposition to these low rates. As a matter of fact, the Government had stated in no uncertain terms that the local contributions have been forced on Government due to circumstances beyond its control. It is a fact, Sir, and I am sure the Leader of the Opposition having never been a schoolmaster, may not be in the know or if he was ever one, he must have had some experience in the field. The fact remains that today, there are more trained and certificated teachers than there were before. The proportion of trained and certificated teachers to teachers of the other category—non-trained teachers—is much higher today than it was two years ago. This is a natural consequence of Government's

new policy, of one Teacher Training College for every Division. As a matter of fact in many Divisions there are several: In addition, when this Government decided to take full responsibility for the payment of teachers' salaries, and undertook to revise them, I did point out when I was making my speech last February that on the average teachers' salaries have been increased by 33½ per cent. It will therefore, be insane for anyone to suggest a lower rate of Assumed Local Contribution without telling the House whether he is prepared to recommend a corresponding decrease in the salaries of teachers, or to recommend that should the money not be forthcoming teachers should be dismissed. What really perplexes me in our regional politics is that the Opposition instead of being responsible and facing, like good men, the problems confronting us as a Region, as some of these problems transcend party politics, go on playing to the gallery. (*Opposition Members: Who is playing to the gallery?*) Of course you know that your speeches are directed to the gallery. You know the truth within yourself and yet you will not admit it in the open.

Mr Speaker, what I am saying is that the Opposition has not been fair to us. Of course, the Leader of the Opposition, as being true to type, did quote from the *Hansard*; he quoted me as having stated that the amount of money which will be raised by local contribution from the Primary Schools was to the tune of £1.4 million. I have here a copy of the speech delivered by me that day, and I have looked through the whole pages and cannot find this figure.

**Mr Ikoku:** On a point of order. Mr Speaker, I refer the Minister to page 221, Vol. I No. 22 of the Debates of the House on 18th February, 1958.

**Government Supporters:** Is it corrected or uncorrected copy?

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

**Mr Okwu:** Mr Speaker, it will interest you, Sir, that this is the very page he is quoting—the very *Hansard* that he is quoting—there is nothing of that sort, in my own copy.

**Mr Ikoku:** May I hand it to you, Sir.

**Mr Speaker:** Will you proceed.

**Mr Okwu:** Mr Speaker, may I draw your attention to a letter which was written to me by the Leader of the Opposition; this letter was about this very subject, and was written to me in my capacity as the Acting Minister of Education. I do not think it is relevant to this point. If the Leader of the Opposition had had the information which he quoted this morning, he would not have written to me, and as far as I know no reply has been given to his letter to date. Therefore, I presume that he was ignorant of the detailed figures which he dwelt upon extensively in his speech.

**Mr Ikoku:** On a point of information. This is a sufficiently important point and I would humbly request that you allow the Minister to read that letter.

**Mr Okwu:** Mr Speaker, I now come back to the question of the Opposition proposals and to see whether the Leader of the Opposition's rates could really cover the shortfall in our 1958–59 estimates for the Ministry of Education.

I would like to explain, Sir, the actual amount, the approximate amount of money which will be raised from the Assumed Local Contribution rates in primary schools is to the order of £2.2 million. When I moved the motion on the modification of U.P.E. in February, I stated in clear and simple terms that it is intended that this shortfall of £2.49 million should be spread on the three arms of education, that is, primary, secondary and teachers training, and it is amazing that after the Leader of the Opposition has juggled with his figures, he did not concern himself with the impact of these new proposals on secondary and teacher training institutions bearing in mind my earlier statement of our intention and the inter-dependence of the three arms. I repeat that the shortfall of £2.49 million was to be found by spreading it on the three arms of education. I did make that clear before and it is on record. (*From the Opposition Bench—How much per annum?*)

The last point I want to make is that whether people talk politics in this House or not, the fact remains that everyone must admit that these days (I think it is a problem that is not

[MR OKWU]

peculiar with us) the governed have the tendency to ask for more social services while being very reluctant to vote the necessary supplies. The Government of the Eastern Region, like other Governments all over the world, has the sole responsibility of making judicious use of the supplies voted and as long as our people continue to make more and more demands but are not prepared to pay for what they want, so long will Government be forced to adopt measures that may bring some difficulties to perhaps some sections of the community.

Education as it is now is free for anyone who can and is willing to benefit from it; there is no compulsion about it. Those who go to school should pay for it. I know of several District Councils which have decided to raise local rates in order to reduce the incidence of these fees or Assumed Local Contributions on the parents and your Council can do the same thing. There are some Councils that have decided to take full responsibilities for Assumed Local Contributions in respect of their own divisions. Instead of the gentlemen in the Opposition helping our people by contributing from the wealth of their experience in their various local councils as members of the Legislature, they go on playing politics with issues that are so vital to the life and progress of this Region. I have to add, we in the Eastern Region are proud of our standard of achievement in education. It is a fact that when you compare both in terms of scholarship and in terms of numbers of the achievement, the Eastern Region is second to none amongst all the Governments of the Federation. It is a fact. (*Interruption—What of the Voluntary Agencies?*) Voluntary Agencies derive their aid from Government. They are only agencies and "agency" is the key word there. Without the funds coming from the Government the Voluntary Agencies will not be able to carry on.

So, Mr Speaker, I beg to oppose the amendment.

**Mr J. A. Agba (Ogoja Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, before I proceed to speak I like to correct some erroneous conception of my status in life. There are some people here who do not seem to understand what Agba has been and what he is and what he will be. (*Interruptions—Laughter*). I have never been a Court Clerk. I have never been an N.A. Sanitary Inspector.

Mr Speaker, I like to say that the aim of any good Government is to see to the consistent happiness, systematic progress and welfare both bodily, spiritually and intellectually of the governed. I do not want to be too theoretical as far as you are concerned; I want to be very practical. The body and spirit are the composites of man. I am not prepared to go into the philosophy of the terms I have used.

**Mr Speaker:** Will you address your statements to me.

**Mr Agba:** I suppose that any ordinary man can understand the words 'happiness, progress and welfare'. I am not suggesting for any one moment that this Government has failed in all its policies to provide the means to foster this systematic progress, happiness and welfare of the governed in this Region. But I want to say that as far as this modification of the U.P.E. Scheme is concerned I say that the Government has completely failed in the aim that any Government should pursue in such a matter. I shall examine this matter from three points of view, having come to the end of my own introduction. I will support the Amendment from three points of view and I divide these points into the position of the Region before the U.P.E. was introduced; the position of the Region during the U.P.E.: and the after-effect of the modification.

Now, before the U.P.E. Scheme, we heard, I must say, that there were not many schools in the Region particularly in the rural areas. The people were careful in sending their children to school and maintaining them comfortably and the school fees at the time were reasonable. Those who were poligamists and had very many children knew that they could not send all of them to school because they could not maintain them but they were able to select those of the children who were intelligent and those who would benefit by going to school. They were very careful in sending their children to school and they really enjoyed them when they came back home. With this system we were doing well and we were quite happy; anybody sending his child to school was perfectly happy with what he was doing. Teachers also were quite happy with what they got as salaries and from which they paid their income tax to the Government. I think Government derived a lot from the income tax of teachers who were

mainly highly trained. At that time, the school fee from Standard IV, I think, to Standard VI, was 1s a month. (*Interruption—What was the Local Government contribution?*). Mr Speaker, though some hon. Members here have never taught, have never been to school and know nothing about school, yet do not want to listen to the masters. (*Interruption—Tell us now, the Teacher!*) Those who were formerly house-boys and are now hon. Members in this House are not expected to know anything of what was going on in the school.

**Mr Speaker:** Please confine yourself to the matter in hand.

**Mr Agba:** I do confine myself. With this introduction of U.P.E. last year all those polygamous parents with twenty to thirty children sent many of these children to school. Why did they do that? They thought they would not pay school fees. They concentrated on collecting money to pay the Government tax and the Council rate. They did not think anything about school fees other than providing books and dress for the children. This year what has happened? We have gone back to ask the parents to pay school fees for their children. Now what is happening? Those of you who have thought that Enugu here is the whole Eastern Region can stay here and debate or talk politics and say any amount of things you like, but what I know is that if any of you can venture out with me to the rural areas he will come back here to confess to the House that what I am talking now is very true. A few weeks ago, there was quite a lot of schools and I have personally been to some of them. Some schools had 320 children on roll; but what are they having now? Pretty a hundred. (*Interruption*) I am in the Opposition to help the Government and not to ruin it. (*Hear! Hear!*). And you will do well to accept my suggestions when they are cogent and reasonable. Now, what is happening to teachers? Many teachers, particularly those that are untrained, are fast losing their jobs, and the number of trained teachers in the Region is so small as compared with the untrained ones that these teachers cannot man all the schools that we have in the Region. Let us take it for granted that the trained teachers are capable of manning these schools, and oneteacher is able to teach two, three, four or five classes if that were possible. They cannot have as many children as before the

modification of the U.P.E. Scheme nor can they do this without the untrained teachers. It is impossible. We need the help of the untrained teachers—C teachers even C.D. teachers. Those children who passed Standard VI last year were due to be recruited into the teaching profession and were to take up appointment this year. But as far as I know, not one of them has been employed. I think from this point of the fact that Government here is out really to minimise the amount of crime committed in the Region by giving employment to as many as possible than encouraging crime. But now there is a large number of children who come out from school only to wander about without jobs to do. There is nothing open to them to do as a means by which to maintain themselves. Some of them who have been used to wearing decent dresses now feel ashamed to go about the countryside in tattered dresses.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture (Mr D. A. Nnaji):** Point of Order—Standing Order 28 (3):

“On an amendment proposing to *leave out* words or to *insert* words debate shall be confined to the omission or insertion of such words respectively.”

He is talking about unemployment of boys who have just left school and the motion here talks about reduction while he talks about the amount which the Opposition wants the House to approve.

Standards I and II ...	5s per quarter.
Standards III and IV	10s per quarter.
Standards V and VI	15s per quarter.

**Mr Agba:** Mr Speaker, with the modification in the U.P.E. Scheme, I repeat, quite many C.D. and C teachers are losing their appointments. Now I beg leave of you to look at it from another point of view.

If you take what the children in standards V and VI pay, each child pays £6 a year. Taking for granted that there are 30 children in the class, that will give us about £180. But if you have five teachers in the same school—C. teachers and C.D. teachers—now paying an income tax of, let us say £5 to £6, I think they will really cover a lot by way of income tax and rates more than is paid by the school children

[MR AGBA]

and therefore, they will be increasing the Government's revenue by this rate than by paying income tax and school fees. I think the Government is losing on that side. The teachers now leaving schools are a loss to the Government not only from the moral point of view, not only from the point of view of revenue, but from the point of view of the fact that Government is losing its hold on the people.

Now, I say that the modification in the U.P.E. scheme does not really make for the happiness of the people. If you go to many places you will see that people are regretting that they agreed to the U.P.E. Scheme and if the Government had really meant to help our people, they should have done something to promote the happiness of the people. The payment of fees could have been presented in such a way that people would be happy to pay it. The Government should cater for the happiness of its people rather than really bringing a burden upon them. I think the point made by the Leader of Opposition with regard to what each class should pay, from Standards I to VI is a cogent one and it is reasonable enough. On the other hand, the modification of the U.P.E. Scheme is too exorbitant and if you go to the rural areas the people just cannot afford to pay the fees. Educationists themselves are in difficulty. I have not the figures to give you here on the subject, but if any body doubts, he can go and see for himself. It is true that some of the councils in some areas have declared their confidence in the Government and the modification, etc., but in most rural areas it is really regrettable.

I believe some of you here have children teaching in Ogoja and Ikom; if you go there you will be sorry that even the trained teachers travel sixty to seventy miles to collect yams from their parents and back to their stations in order to keep up. I have never experienced such a thing ever since I started to teach.

If the Government is really out to help the people and to promote happiness, I would appeal to the Government to take the suggestion of the hon. the Leader of Opposition. Let the Government make the people realise that we are trying to do something and not merely to make money.

The Government has told us they wanted the local people to help the Government in the cost of education which is everyday rising. If it is a help I cannot see why the people should shoulder the whole thing. As it is at the moment it is no longer a help; the people are really shouldering the whole thing and I really doubt whether the Government is having anything to do as far as the Primary Education Scheme is concerned.

In conclusion, Mr Speaker, I will say . . . (*Shouts from the Government Supporters "Go on, go on"*).

**Mr Agba:** No, I am concluding. Those people who think that they are really helping their people, having been voted into this House and forming part of the Government, and are really out in helping the Government to govern the people of this Region successfully, make them feel happy, give them systematic progress and besides coming here to talk in this House in the way they talk, I challenge them to go to their constituencies and make the same statements. I know some of them here, particularly those from Ogoja area who dare not make this, if they can, let them go over there and make the same pronouncements they make in this House and we will see how many of them will survive in this House. (*Laughter*).

**Rev. O. Efiang, C.B.E. (Calabar Division):**

Mr Speaker, the two previous speakers have covered much of what I wanted to say, but I want to say that the Eastern Region Finance Law was introduced and put into operation on the distinct and assured understanding that the U.P.E. will materialise and continue and Government, to pave the way for this Region Finance Law, hastily, without sufficient consideration scrapped the Assumed Local Contribution which was in existence before this Government came into being. At any rate, it is useless crying over spilt milk. That Assumed Local Contribution gave the communities the only opportunity to contribute towards this most needed of social services—education. Now, the Finance Law has proved a miscalculation, not that it cannot produce the required revenue, but the machinery for collection has been faulty or inadequate. For Government now to call upon the parents to pay Assumed Local Contribution which was not paid by the parents before, at least, not by

the parents as such but from the community so that those who have children and those who have not, contribute, now that the payment is limited to parents and guardians, it becomes a discriminatory legislation which is most undemocratic and will raise hue and cry among the people. The question is, when the machinery shall have been perfected for the collection of tax and for the prevention of tax evasion what will happen? Will the Assumed Local Contribution be called off and the parents and guardians be at rest to that extent?

Further, Sir, the Assumed Local Contribution from the calculation we have here is going to produce far more than what is definitely or exactly necessary to meet up the financial deficiency in Primary Schools. It has been confessed that the Assumed Local Contribution is now intended to cover not only the financial deficiency in primary schools but also to cover that of secondary schools and further to meet up teacher training schools. Well, that was not to our understanding at all when the modification of the U.P.E. scheme was introduced.

Sir, I want to say that I am in support of the amendment to the extent that a reduction be made in the Assumed Local Contribution so that parents and guardians could be relieved of the heavy burden that has been laid upon their shoulders. As I have said at the beginning, most of what I wanted to say have been covered by my predecessors, and I think it would be justice not to repeat them.

Sir, I thank you.

**Mr A. G. Umoh (Enyong Division):** Mr Speaker, I rise to support this amendment because it is one, I think, very vital to the future of this Region. I feel sad at the fact that an important issue such as this is taken lightly by the Government. Mr Speaker, it is an admitted fact that whatever we have been or achieved in this Region or in Nigeria as a whole depends on the education that was brought to us by the British people. I do not know who is a Minister of State or who is a Member of this House but does not owe his status to the early education he received in school. The future of this Region depends equally on the educational facilities we give our children today.

Mr Speaker, it is deplorable that the very first move taken by the Eastern Region to celebrate its self-government should be to

close the channels of education which the British people brought. You will find it difficult to appreciate this point sitting here in Enugu, Sir, but if you travel to the rural areas and see the picture there, you will appreciate the difficulties that are confronting parents, children and teachers. In many schools where you had Standard VI, today you have only Standard I because managers of schools, not being sure of where to get the money to pay teachers have been forced to give notices of termination. Now, the result is that those children from Standards II to VI are left wandering in the streets and I imagine within the next few months you will be having so many thieves going round and that will be marvellous result of self-government by the Eastern Region!

Mr Speaker, I appreciate that very many people have spoken on the point and I would not like to repeat them, but I want to underline the fact that the U.P.E. is quickly giving place to mass illiteracy for many children, thousands of them, are just not able to go to school because of excessive fees. The case of girls is particularly pitiable because in the past, very many of our children who attended schools were only boys. It is just of recent that the veils have been lifted for our girls to come in and instead of encouraging these girls Government has decided to levy equal fees for boys and girls so that girls who were coming in for the first time to share the benefits of education are forced back. Government should either allow girls to go to school free or make their fees much lower than that of boys.

The Acting Minister of Education in his speech, Sir, had said that the Government was not prepared to reconsider the question of fees and suggested that the only way out was to cut down the salaries of teachers. I think it is very unfortunate that every time there is any thing affecting the finances of this Government, it is the teachers' salaries that must go down. A teacher works hard if not harder than other grades of civil servants in this Region and it is unfair to threaten to cut his salary as the Acting Minister of Education suggests.

**Mr Okwu :** I protest. That was not what I said. What I said was that that was what the Opposition was not for political reasons prepared to say, since by implication that was the only alternative. The Opposition must come out from their hide outs and face facts.

**Mr Speaker:** The Minister is in order; that is what he said. (*Government Bench: Shame! Shame!*)

**Mr Umoh:** During the last meeting of this House I suggested that the Government should cut down the salaries of Ministers and Members. I was expecting to hear at this meeting an announcement to that effect and not a move to cut teachers' salaries. I do hope that by the time this House rises, the Government will bring a motion cutting down legislators' salaries.

**Mr M. E. Ogon (Ikom Division):** Cut down your car allowance.

**Mr Umoh:** That is alright, I will do it. Mr Speaker, the Government Chief Whip has not paid his taxes yet! (*Laughter*). Mr Speaker, Sir, I feel that the amendment put forward by the Leader of the Opposition is a very, very genuine one for the rate of fees suggested by him are within reach of most parents.

The Minister of Education again did say that the amount of the "Assumed Local Contribution" was to help Government to get sufficient money to spread over the "three arms" of education, viz., Primary, Secondary and Teacher Training, thereby admitting that these high fees are not only for Primary Schools. I think it is unfair to collect money from the Primary School pupils to support secondary schools and teacher training institutions. If the Government is not able to run the Free Primary Education, at least it should be able to upkeep secondary and teacher training institutions without overtaxing the people. So I am strongly suggesting that if that was the reason why the Government decided to put the rates of school fees so high then Government should cut the school fees to the level required to the up-keep of Primary Schools only. The figures the Leader of Opposition has proposed in his amendment will just meet the needs of primary education and that is why I support his amendment.

**Mr Okwu:** On point of Order, Sir. I did not say that. What I did say was that the sum of £2.49 million was going to be spread out between the "three arms" of education. I did not say that the sum of £2.49 million was going

to be raised from the Primary School alone. The term "Assumed Local Contribution" is applicable to the Teacher Training and Secondary Schools.

**Mr Umoh:** I am appealing then to the Government, Mr Speaker, to take this matter very seriously because after all, here we have the 27th of March—the Youth Day—and I wonder how many youths are going to celebrate it when there is such an exodus of children from our schools.

**The Minister of Production (Dr M. I. Okpara):** Millions.

**Mr Umoh:** It has been the slogan of the Government party for many years now that "the worst home rule is better than the best foreign Government". I have always doubted the truth of this statement and my doubts are now greater as I view it in the light of the present move by the Government to close the channels of education against thousands of our boys and girls. I strongly suggest that the Government should keep the old saying that the best is good enough for Africa. We expect better Government from the African and, if this is not forthcoming, I do not think we should pride ourselves that we are free.

Mr Speaker, I support this important amendment in the interest of the children of this Region.

**Mr Okwu:** I want to point out that the apparent disagreement between hon. Ikoku and myself was due to the fact that I had a copy of *Hansard* No. 18 and he had No. 22. He was quoting from the uncorrected version. I want to assure you that the figure which I stated in the main body of my speech is still true and is what is contained in the corrected version No. 22.

**Mr Ikoku:** Please, Sir, I have a point of explanation. The *Hansard* he is quoting from is No. 18. As he has pointed out, he quoted the figure of £2.49 million which, according to him, is to be spread over the three arms of Education, Primary, Secondary and Teacher Training. In winding up his debate which is in *Hansard* No. 22, Vol. I, he said he pointed at those on U.P.E. Scheme and he made it clear at page 221, that he now wants £1.4 million as regards U.P.E.



**Mr Speaker:** Surely, what matters at present is the figure which the Minister now gives you.

**Mr Ikoku:** No, Sir, that might be his point of view but this is a question of juggling. Here is somebody who has come to this House and has told us that he spoke on Thursday and

the debate lasted for four days and he got up again to wind up and gave the figure £1.4 million in two places. Now he jumps up to say it was an uncorrected speech.

**Mr Speaker:** In any case figures are not material. (*Hear! Hear!*)

*Question put. House divided.*

Ayes 13. Noes 55.

Division No. 2

1.20 p.m.

*Ayes*

Mr J. A. Agba  
Mr S. J. Amachree  
Mr O. Arikpo  
Rev. O. Efiang, C.B.E.  
Mr J. A. Etuhube  
Mr M. U. Etuk

Mr E. O. Eyo  
Mr S. G. Ikoku  
Mr O. B. Nalelo  
Mr A. G. Umoh  
Mr M. N. Yowika

*Tellers for the Ayes*

Mr A. J. Ekpe  
Chief I. I. Morphy

*Noes*

Mr C. A. Abangwu  
Mr S. O. Achara  
Mr O. U. Afiah  
Chief G. N. Agbasiere  
Mr D. S. A. Agim  
Mr D. E. Akilo  
Mr H. U. Akpabio  
Mr D. O. Aligwekwe  
Mr S. N. Alo  
Mr P. U. Amaefunah  
Mr N. L. P. Apreala  
Mr J. W. E. Anaba  
Mr R. O. Anoke  
Mr D. O. Anu  
Dr N. Azikiwe  
Mr A. O. Chikwendu  
Mr E. A. Chime  
Mr E. Emole  
Mr U. Enyi  
Mr E. U. Eronini  
Mr J. E. Eyo  
Mr J. O. Ihekwoaba  
Dr S. E. Imoke  
Mr J. M. Ito  
Mr R. O. Iwuagwu  
Mr S. E. K. Iwueke  
Mr O. C. Manu

Mr S. O. Masi  
Mr D. A. Nnaji  
Mr V. A. Nwankwo  
Mr J. U. Nwodo  
Mr P. O. Nwoga  
Mr J. H. E. Nwuke  
Mr M. U. Obayi  
Dr A. N. Obonna  
Mr M. E. Ogon  
Mr C. A. Okafor  
Mr J. O. Okeh  
Mr P. N. Okeke  
Mr G. C. Okeya  
Mr E. P. Okoya  
Dr M. I. Okpara  
Mr K. J. N. Okpokam  
Mr B. C. Okwu  
Chief S. E. Onukogu  
Mr P. A. Onwe  
Mr N. O. Onwudiwe  
Mr V. K. Onyeri  
Chief A. N. Onyiuke  
Mr E. W. Udonkim  
Mr R. O. Ukuta, M.B.E.  
Mr J. O. Umlu  
Mr L. O. Uzoigwe

*Tellers for the Noes*

Mr K. Kiri  
Mr E. Chidolue

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Mr Speaker, I rise to move to add at the end of the motion the following words: "but that this House is unable to accept Government's decision to abolish all existing County Councils in the Region without any consultation to ascertain the views and wishes of the people of the areas concerned".

This amendment is simple and straightforward. It rests on the whole basis and principles of the establishment of Local Government Administration in the Region, namely that the views and the wishes of the people concerned should be ascertained before deciding on the structure of their Local Government. I would like, to trace briefly the historical background of local government in the Eastern Region and I am relying on the Ministry of Local Government's Annual Report published by Government for the year 1956-57.

On the 16th of July, 1949, the then Eastern House of Assembly adopted a memorandum

The former Owerri Province	...	...	Four County Councils and twenty-three District Councils.
The former Onitsha Province	...	...	One Municipality at Enugu, two County Councils and thirteen District Councils.
The former Calabar Province	...	...	Seven County Councils, and thirty-two District Councils.
The former Ogoja Province	...	...	One County Council, ten District Councils, and in
The former Rivers Province	...	...	One Municipality at Port Harcourt, three County Councils and eleven District Councils.

The Eastern Region Local Government Law, 1955 clearly makes it mandatory on the Minister of Local Government to consult the wishes of the inhabitants of the area concerned before deciding on the structure of Local Government Councils.

My argument, Sir, is that in deciding to abolish all existing County Councils in the Region, the Minister of Local Government has not discharged his obligation, having failed to consult the people of the areas concerned with a view to ascertaining their views and their wishes. I would admit that in certain areas the people themselves have petitioned the Minister giving expression of their wishes, but that is not sufficient authority for the Minister of Local Government to decide to abolish all the County Councils in the Region. He must, upon the receipt of petitions from interested

persons, set up machinery to consult the inhabitants of the area concerned and hear their representations.

Now, Sir, section 3 of the Local Government Law, 1955 says "After consulting the wishes of the inhabitants of the area concerned, the Minister with the prior approval of the Governor in Council may by instrument establish such councils for the purposes of local government as he shall think fit." Section 7 says "After consulting the wishes of the inhabitants of the area concerned the Minister with the prior approval of the Governor in Council may by Instrument amend an Instrument in all or any of the following ways:

(a) change the name or seal of the Council;  
 (b) add to, take away from or impose any condition upon the exercise of any of the functions of the Council subject to the

provisions of this Law; or (c) after the constitution of the Council, the method of election or appointment of the chairman, or the appointment of councillors, or the system of rating within the provisions of this Law.

2. The Minister shall cause to be published in the area concerned thirty clear days' notice of his intention to exercise his powers under this section and shall give an opportunity to the Council concerned to make representations to him in writing."

Now, Sir, section 8 goes on further and ties down the Minister to do this. "Where the Minister considers, either on the receipt of proposals from the Council concerned, or otherwise, that a *prima facie* case exists for any of the following changes namely": (then it names all the changes) "the Minister shall cause an inquiry to be held under the provisions of section 13 in the locality concerned. If the Minister is satisfied after holding such inquiry that any such change as aforesaid is desirable, he may with the prior approval of the Governor in Council by an amending Instrument give effect to such change."

I am saying that in deciding on the abolition of existing County Councils in the Region, the Minister of Local Government has failed to consult the people of the areas concerned to ascertain their views and wishes.

**The Premier:** What is your authority?

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** All existing County Councils throughout Calabar Province petitioned Government against the abolition and have protested to the Minister of Local Government. (*Interruption—No, no*). If I am challenged on this, I shall produce copies of resolutions from the various District Councils and County Councils protesting to the Minister of Local Government against the Government's decision.

Now, Sir, I said earlier on that I would admit that in certain areas the people concerned desire a change but it is not enough because a few District Councils or County Councils want the change for the Minister of Local Government to decide on such major issue and abolish all existing County Councils. If the people in a particular area do not want a County Council by all means abolish the Council. If there are other areas that would like to retain their

County Councils I cannot see any justification for the abolition of such County Councils. On what ground is Government deciding to abolish the existing County Councils? These Councils have operated for some time and, relying on this Annual Report, with considerable efficiency in the administration, it would be wrong to judge good Councils by the standards of bad Councils. May I quote exactly what this Annual Report says on the question of the administration of the functions of these Councils. At page 13 paragraph 20, the Ministry has this to say:

"The efficiency with which Councils have carried out their functions varies greatly and depends on the finances and the efficiency of the staff. It is impossible to generalise on the subject."

If it is true that most of these Councils have functioned properly in the discharge of their duties, and if it is true that certain areas would like to retain their own County Councils, why must this Government say "you cannot have your County Councils"?

Government has suddenly decided on this new change of policy. All along it has accepted the principle of prior consultation before deciding on the structure of Local Government Councils. It is only in recent months that Government suddenly said "let us dissolve all the County Councils in the Eastern Region". I refer to two circulars from the Ministry of Local Government in support of that contention. The first circular is dated 29th November, 1957, and the subject is "Local Government Elections". On the 29th of November, 1957, Government suddenly thought of this new policy on the future structure of Local Government Councils in the Eastern Region and issued a circular. But what is very material is that the Ministry had this to say in paragraph 7 of this Circular:—

"The honourable Minister is considering the question of whether in the light of paragraph 8 of Chapter VI of Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1957, elections will be held in the County Councils due for re-election before the 31st March, 1958. Instructions on this point will issue shortly."

That was just last November. The Ministry had not made up its mind on the subject whether to retain or abolish these County Councils.

[MR E. O. EYO]

Now, Sir, what happened after that? On the 15th of February this year, the Ministry issued another circular which says:

"I am directed to refer to Government's recent decision to abolish all existing County Councils with effect from 1st April, 1958."

2. In order to assist with the preparation of the District Council Estimates for 1958-59, will you please break down on a District basis the revenue and expenditure shown in the Draft Estimates already submitted by you and complete two copies of the attached *pro forma* in respect of each Council in your area. One copy of each should be sent to me and one copy to your Local Government Commissioner.

3. The final allocation of staff and property will be done by the hon. Minister in due course and the approval of 1958-59 Estimates will be without prejudice to the final allocations. Meantime staff and institutions should be shared as far as possible on a geographical basis. No new posts are to be created unless the Ministry has already given approval. All revenue and expenditure connected with courts, maternities, dispensaries, teacher training centres, secondary schools, etc., should be allocated to the District Council in whose area the buildings are situated. The same applies to reimbursement of Trunk Road B expenditure and maintenance of roads, bridges, ferries, etc."

Now, Sir, all this is done from Enugu. Government decides on the abolition of the Councils and the Minister issues instructions to the Councils and I am just waiting to see how it is going to be done—how the Ministry will force the existing staff employed by the County Council on the District Council.

Now, Sir, those are the two circulars from the Ministry outlining Government's policy. There is no indication as to how the Ministry arrived at the conclusion to abolish all the existing County Councils. What we want to know is the reason for the recent Government's decision (*Interruption—and we will tell you!*) You want to tell me! Why has Government only suddenly decided to abolish that structure which has been operating satisfactorily for some years now? The reason is contained in this

Annual Report of the Ministry of Local Government. I refer to page 6, paragraph 5 which says—"The early Local Government Councils were set up under the Eastern Region Local Government Ordinance 1950 which gave Councils very considerable powers with only a light form of control exercised by the Regional Authority . . . It was for this reason that the Eastern Region Local Government Law, 1955, gave the Minister greater powers of control over finance and staff matters . . ." It is very clear that since this Government came into power, it has been worried by the powers vested in these Local Government Councils by the 1950 Ordinance and so this Government must make very sure that quite apart from taking the powers from the existing Councils that there will be no big organisation on the Local Government level that will be able to stand up to the Government and criticise effectively Government's policies. That is the only reason why Government has suddenly decided to abolish the existing County Councils which, Government has confessed, were vested with "very considerable powers with only a light form of control exercised by the Regional Authority" by the Eastern Region Local Government Ordinance of 1950. And so Government must abolish these powerful Councils and prefer the small District Councils which will be puppets in the hands of the Regional Government.

Before Local Government was introduced into the Region, expert opinion and advice were sought on the requirements and pre-requisites to qualify an area to be constituted into a County Council. This was done in 1949. This advice formed the basis for the organisation of County Councils in the Eastern Region. I am referring to a document entitled "The Introduction of Local Government in the Eastern Provinces of Nigeria" prepared by the Secretariat in July, 1949. There it was expressly laid down the basis and pre-requisites of all units wanting to be constituted into County Councils and all along Government has been relying wholly and solely on that expert opinion until recently when the present Government found that these County Councils were so powerful that they were able to stand up to the Regional Government.

May I read from that document from paragraph 15. It says:

"It has therefore been accepted that this reform shall plan for a major unit covering

an area which is able under its present resources to produce a revenue of some £50,000 or thereabout."

That was an expert opinion in 1949. Before you decide on any unit to be constituted into a County Council or to be conferred with County powers, you must make sure that it is of a unit which can raise from its resources a revenue of a minimum of £50,000 or thereabout. Now, Sir, what was the revenue position of existing County Councils before they were created? I am relying on revenue figures for 1956-57 as follows:—

In Owerri Province, we have the Aba Ngwa County Council with a revenue of £80,416, which qualified it to be constituted into Aba Ngwa County Council.

Bende County Council had a revenue of £57,822;

Owerri County Council—a revenue of £86,436;

Okigwi County Council—a revenue of £75,244;

The Niger County Council—a revenue of £142,811;

Nsukka County Council—a revenue of £89,802;

The Enugu Municipal Council—a revenue of £84,136;

Ikot Ekpene County Council—a revenue of £82,960

Calabar County Council—this is the only exception of a very small unit with a revenue of £22,919;

Uyo County Council—a revenue of £89,172;

Ibekwe County Council—a revenue of £42,971;

The Annang County Council—a revenue of £56,529;

Lower Cross River County Council—a revenue of £64,083;

Eket County Council—a revenue of £67,115;

Abakaliki County Council—a revenue of £72,361;

The Ahoada County Council—a revenue of £55,105;

Then the small Oil Rivers County Council, a revenue of £12,160;

Central Ijaw County Council—a revenue of £19,560;

Port Harcourt Municipality—a revenue of £117,997.

Now, Sir, on those figures, you will find that the expert view with regard to revenue, given in 1949 has been strictly adhered to with minor modifications. Now, what does the present Government want to do? It wants to abolish all the existing County Councils and constitute the existing District Councils into County Councils. But, Sir, if you go through the revenue figures, you will find that with a few exceptions, that this expert advice has been ignored. Government has decided to confer County powers on the existing District Councils even though these Councils have not the resources to sustain the new responsibilities. If you take the whole of Owerri Province for instance, you have the Aba Urban District Council with a revenue (for 1956-57) of £51,793. That, Sir, can sustain the responsibilities of a County Council because of the revenue; but what about Northern Ngwa whose revenue is £16,678; Southern Ngwa £9,358; Eastern Ngwa £12,109? At Asa you have a revenue of £6,227; Ndoki £9,649. Is it being suggested seriously that it will be in the best interest of these areas raising such a meagre figure as revenue to scrap their existing County Council which has a revenue of £80,450 and has carried out all its responsibilities so far and confer county powers on these little units?

Take Bende Division. Umuahia-Ibeku Urban District Council has revenue of £13,494; Elu-Elu £7,441; Ala-Ala £3,675; Odida Anyanwu £6,255; Owuwa Anyanwu £5,873. Now, Sir, is it being suggested that it is in the best interest of the people of Bende Division to abolish the existing County Council with a revenue of £57,802 which has satisfied the requirements of the people of the area and then confer county powers on these little units?

Take Owerri Province. You have Owerri Urban District Council £5,145; Oratta £5,924; Ngor Okpala £6,810; Ohaji £5,563; Oguta £5,285; Mbaitoli £6,226; Ikeduru £5,038. Now, is it being suggested seriously that it is in the best interest of the people of Owerri Division to abolish their existing County Council with a revenue of £86,436, doing excellent job, and then confer county powers on these little units with revenue barely over £5,000, from each unit?

[MR E. O. EYO]

Now, Sir, I come to C.O.R. State areas. Calabar Province—I will take Ikot Ekpene Division. You have Ikot Ekpene Urban District Council, revenue £9,829; Otoro £12,120 Central Annang £13,825; Eastern Ibibio Ikono £22,617. Now, is it in the best interest of the people of Ikot Ekpene Division to abolish their existing County Council with a revenue of £82,960 and then confer county powers on these little units called District Councils? Go to Calabar Division. Akpabuyo £7,406; Western Calabar £5,903; Odukpani Road £3,829. Go to Calabar Urban District Council with a revenue of £47,122. That, Sir, can sustain the responsibilities of the County Council, but what about the Ejagham District Council with a revenue of £7,412? Go to Uyo Division. Uyo Federated revenue £11,395; Iman £6,992 Western Nsit £7,633; Eastern Nsit £4,381; Uruan £9,082; Ibesikpo—Asutan £8,483. Now, my instruction is that the people of my Division (Uyo) on several occasions over the past few months had met the Local Government Commissioner and discussed with him the financial implications of splitting Uyo Division into smaller areas with county powers. After careful consideration, they have decided to retain the existing County Council at least for the time being.

Now, Sir, go to Opobo Division, the Ibibio District Council £5,352, Four Groups £9,843, Obolo £6,310, Opobo Town £2,329, Annang £3,903. What this Government proposes to do is to scrap the Ibekwe County Council with a revenue of £47,971 and confer county powers on Opobo District Council with a revenue of £2,320. This Government wants us to believe that it is in the best interest of that area to confer county powers on them and that they will be able to sustain the new responsibilities with a revenue of only £2,329. I may leave out Abak and other Divisions, in Calabar Province and go to Ogoja Province. Sir, you have the Abakaliki Urban District Council revenue £8,641, Ishielu £14,352, Izi £15,347 and Ezzikwo £20,516. The present Abakaliki County Council has a revenue of £72,361. Now in Afikpo, Sir, they have no county council. The Afikpo District Council has a revenue of £83,357—more than the revenue of the Abakaliki County Council. So that in that case there was no justification in wanting to create a separate county council.

The Afikpo people within the area of jurisdiction of the Afikpo District Council were able to raise on their own resources £83,357 and naturally, they were in a position to sustain the responsibilities of a county council.

Now, Sir, then comes the Obubra District Council with a revenue of £53,420. In that case there was not any need to have a separate county council but a district council conferred with county powers. The same thing goes for Ogoja Province. The Ogoja District Council with a revenue of £47,426 and Obudu District Council with a revenue of £33,331.

Now, to the Rivers Province. You have in the Degema Division the Kalabari District Council with a revenue of £14,495, Okrika £6,533, Bonny £3,663. Now in the Brass Division, you have Northern Ijaw, revenue £7,378, Southern Ijaw, £10,465, Ogbia £3,008 and Nembe £2,217. The Nembe District Council will now become a District Council with county powers with a revenue of only £2,217. Now, Sir, the Port Harcourt Municipality has a handsome revenue of £117,997. It is interesting to note that Government does not wish to abolish the two municipalities. Why, I do not know. Which is greater, the county or municipality? They will like to retain the municipality at Enugu and the municipality at Port Harcourt; then all existing County Councils should go because certain areas in Awka and Onitsha want to break away from the Niger County Council. By all means let them break away and form their own District Council or whatever they want. It is clear that in deciding to abolish the existing County Councils, the Minister of Local Government and his Colleagues in the Executive Council have been influenced by political considerations in favour of their own constituencies. Why should Ministers allow themselves to be so influenced? The whole argument, Sir, rests on this, that Government has no justification for the abolition of all County Councils in the Region without prior consultation with the people to ascertain their views and wishes, and as I said earlier on, there are certain areas which have made representations to Government. Even at that, Government is still bound to set up machinery for full consultation to ascertain the true wishes of the people. You do not just have to rely on a petition. If there has been any consultation it is not in Calabar Province and certainly not in the

C.O.R. area and I think I am quite competent to speak here on behalf of the C.O.R. people. (*Hear! Hear!*). Before you throw away this amendment, I want to appeal to the Premier because he can understand what I am saying. There are two constitutional principles which the Premier in the past had defended and has taught us to defend, namely, the sovereignty of Parliament and the supremacy of the Law. You cannot run this Region by executive action purporting to over-ride existing legislation without the authority of this House. In the past the Premier had defended these two principles but today because the Premier happens to be in the saddle he would not uphold these two constitutional principles, the sovereignty of Parliament and the supremacy of the Law. Now, Sir, in all the circulars from the Ministry of Local Government these two most important constitutional principles have been violated, and I am appealing to the conscience of the Premier to declare once and for all how he is going to run this Region, whether he is going to run it on established and accepted principles or not. He knows these principles and Members of the House also know them. I am saying, Sir, that in formulating any policy the Government must be guided by well established and accepted principles. If that is accepted then there will be no opposition to this amendment. Well, if the Minister can satisfy the House that the people of the areas in the Eastern Region had been properly consulted as laid down in the Law, then of course, there will be some justification for me to withdraw the amendment. I happen to come from the C.O.R. area and we have had representations from our people saying that we have not been consulted.

Mr Speaker, I commend this amendment to the House and beg to move.

**Mr M. U. Etuk (Uyo Division):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed—That the words proposed to be added be there added.*

*And it being 2.15 p.m., Mr Speaker interrupted the business and the Debate stood adjourned. Debate to be resumed Tomorrow.*

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Minister of Production (Dr M. I. Okpara):** Mr Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until 9 a.m. on Friday, 14th March.

**The Minister of Commerce (Mr J. U Nwodo):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

#### ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

##### Payment of Taxes

**Mr Ogon:** I rise on a very serious and personal issue. When the First Member for Enyong Division was making his speech he, in a very funny but serious way alleged that the Chief Whip has not paid his taxes! I think that is a very irresponsible allegation to make. This allegation which will tantamount to saying that I am not a good citizen, is very serious. I, knowing the amount of good the Government is doing ought to be the very first to support the principle of paying taxes. So, I want to say, Sir, that not only do I pay my taxes, but I pay more taxes than anybody in the Opposition Bench. (*Laughter*).

**Opposition Member:** How do you know?

**Mr Ogon:** I will quote figures from my personal file. I did not think it fit at the time he was speaking to check him because I wanted to go out and get my file. In the last financial year, I have paid a total of £281 5s in taxes.

I want to say that we are willing to tell this Region the truth. Not only do I pay my taxes, but I think that for all the benefits the people of this Region get, they have not reached their taxable capacity. The people of this Region are paying lesser taxes than anywhere in the Federation, and get more benefits for that. I am not one of those who, because of politics will be cowed down to the point of saying "let our people not pay for all they are getting". I will say that they should pay, even if it will mean in future paying more for getting more, I will go out and say that they will pay.

So, no matter his personal frustrations for not getting what he used to get, no matter his hatred, no matter his smallness of mind, I will only appeal to him to tell the truth. (*Laughter*).

##### Delay in Printing the Draft Estimates

**Mr Ikoku:** Mr Speaker, I will like to raise what I consider a rather important point. Yesterday, in this hon. House, the Premier told us that a Senior Official in the Ministry of Finance was responsible for the delay in the

[MR IKOKU]

Estimates being ready, and that he had to take the extraordinary step of getting the man removed. The impression we gain from it is that there was a Nigerian entrusted with such a senior post, virtually the Head of Civil Service, engaging in an act of sabotage against the Government and the Region. I was very shocked myself, and the silence with which that statement was accepted in the House revealed the profound shock to the House.

In today's issue of the *Eastern Outlook*—which is a Government Paper—the same story has been repeated on the front page and the people in this Region are bound to get the impression that the very first time a Nigerian is given the Post of Permanent Secretary of Finance, the whole thing has been jumbled. It is crying shame on this Region; but my main point in raising it here is that the man concerned is a distinguished person. He is unquestionably one of our most capable African Senior Servants—he is very well qualified—he has his training in economics, he has his training in law. We cannot afford, to lose a man of such calibre, particularly when it is being suggested that an expatriate is being tipped for the post. There is another factor in the whole matter now that the clock of Nigerianisation is being set back. Again, Sir, we in this Region should be ashamed because the Western Region now prides itself because it has got an indigene as head of the Western Civil Service and we were bragging too that we have a similar person here, but all of a sudden we find ourselves in the lurch. The points, Sir, are as follows: that one of our best qualified, best trained civil servant, is on his way out; Nigerianisation has been pushed back; we are lagging behind the Western Region and there is the suggestion of sabotage. This civil servant, Sir, has no opportunity of stating his own side of the story. He cannot even step into this House; he is not a Member of this House, and more, he cannot even speak outside this House because he is a civil servant who is not supposed to actively discuss politics.

I am suggesting, Sir, to the Government that they go into the matter fully and give us a White Paper stating all the facts. Alternatively Sir, we want the Public Service Commission to make the full facts of this particular incident available to this House. If the Government is not ready to do any of these two things, it is in

the best interest of this Region, of the Officer concerned and of the public service of this Region, that we are going to demand an inquiry into the circumstances that have led to the delay of the Estimates.

**The Premier:** Mr Speaker, I am very sorry indeed that the Leader of the Opposition has seen fit to introduce to this hon. House a subject of this nature because he knows that, constitutionally, it would be most embarrassing to discuss it at length, much more to mention the name of the person involved. But because I would not like the House to have wrong impression about the three or four mistakes made by my hon. Friend, I hope, Mr Speaker, you will allow me to make one or two points.

It should be borne in mind that it will not be to the best interest of the civil servant concerned and the best interest of this Government if all the full facts were to be known to this House.

According to the understanding reached in London at the Constitutional Conference, it is the exclusive prerogative of the Premier to post Permanent Secretaries and the fact that a Permanent Secretary is posted from one Ministry to another does not necessarily mean that he has been removed.

**The Opposition Bench:** But that is contained in the *Eastern Outlook* of today.

**The Premier:** Since when have the local papers become the source of information or source of authority to this House? It was agreed in London that Permanent Secretaries should be posted from one Ministry to another by the Governor on the recommendation of the Premier. And that is what has been done. This instance is a case of posting, Mr Speaker, where in the opinion of the Premier, it was considered in the best interest of this Region that the gentleman concerned should be posted to another Ministry just as he was posted from another Ministry to the Ministry from which he has now been posted, and I do not see the reason why the Leader of the Opposition should have the audacity to come to this House to question the prerogative of this Government in this respect. He has not this right whatsoever. If he had it, then it amounts to this Government abdicating the power to rule this Region to the Opposition without the knowledge and



consent of the electorate. I resent it, Mr Speaker, and I do hope that in the interest of civil servants, in the future, my hon. Friend would realise that he could easily see me through the usual channels, if he wants to get the facts.

Yesterday, he questioned the delay in publishing the Estimates to hon. Members and he accused this Government of planlessness. Cautiously, I explained the facts and pointed out that I personally made investigations and discovered that the Ministry concerned was at fault. Naturally the Head of the Ministry—The Permanent Official of that Ministry—was vicariously responsible for that fault and had to adjust the situation myself by posting him to another Ministry. Now my hon. Friend comes out today to champion the cause of such a civil servant, giving impression that he has been pilloried.

**Mr Ikoku:** Why not remove the Minister ?

**The Premier:** The question of removal of the Minister is again within the exclusive competence of the Premier and not for the Leader of Opposition or any other member of the Opposition for that matter. If I feel that any of my Colleagues has failed to live up to what is expected of him, it is not for my hon. Friend opposite or anybody else to tell me what to do; I will know what to do, and if I did not do my work well, naturally, this House knows what to do.

With respect, Sir, I would like to refer to three errors committed by my hon. Friend in making this unusual statement: In the first place, he said that it was an extraordinary step for the Premier to remove the Permanent Secretary. May I point out that it is not extraordinary. It is a normal and constitutional thing to do.

The second error is that the person removed is virtually the Head of the Civil Service. This is totally false. The Chief Secretary to

the Premier is the Head of the Administration and the Civil Service. It might be so in the West, but it is not so here. If my hon. Friend does not know this, then I am sorry and I am passing the information to him here.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** What is the position in Westminster ?

**The Premier:** We are not bound to follow the Westminster 100 per cent. We adapt the Westminster model to suit our local condition.

In the circumstances, Sir, I am not prepared to table any White Paper here to discuss matters which are purely of internal administrative machinery. Lastly, it is not true that somebody who is the best qualified civil servant is going away. We have many civil servants who have identical qualifications, if not better qualifications and they are just as good as the person under discussion.

I have not made any statement here impliedly or otherwise to show that we do not appreciate the qualifications of any of our civil servants. The only point I will raise in order to buttress this argument is that even the gentleman concerned was on £930 per annum, only three years ago. He came here on slightly over £1,000; in October, 1954, he was raised to £1,500; by June he went on to £2,040 as from 1st October, 1954. In July, 1957, he was on £2,400. As a matter of fact, all Permanent Secretaries are now on £2,400, so that when one Permanent Secretary leaves one Ministry and goes to another, he loses nothing.

Surely, the shifting of Permanent Secretaries is in the best interest of the machinery of administration and of the Region. Therefore, I respectfully submit that my hon. Friend's riposte is uncalled for and is misconceived.

*And it being 2.30 p.m. Mr Speaker adjourned the House without Question put pursuant to Standing Order 4 (3).*

EASTERN HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Friday, 14th March, 1958

*The House met at Nine o'clock a.m.*

PRAYERS

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

ORDER OF THE DAY

Governor's Speech (Debate on the Address)

(Fourth Allotted Day)

*Order read for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment (13th March) to Question (11th March)—*

"That a Humble Address of Thanks be presented to His Excellency the Governor, for His Excellency's Most Gracious Speech", which amendment was to add at the end of the Question—

"but that this House is unable to accept Government's decision to abolish all existing County Councils in the Region without any consultation to ascertain the views and wishes of the people of the areas concerned".

*Question again proposed—That the words proposed to be added, be there added.*

**Mr A. J. Ekpe (Opobo Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member who moved the amendment dealt at length on the District Councils now proposed to be reorganised into County Councils. I shall leave my comment to the demerits of such proposals and the apparent dangers which the proposals foreshadow. In the first place, the Minister contends that he is exercising his powers under section 12 of the Local Government Law which empowers him to abolish Councils, but it is also a condition imposed by that section, that there should be consultation and ascertaining all the wishes of the people of the area concerned. The Minister has deliberately refused to concede to this section of the Law.

The most important point which I think has also escaped the Minister in this injudicious and arbitrary exercise of his power is that the

smaller the units of Local Government the less efficient and incompetent they become.

County Councils, now to be abolished, did one good thing to the people in the areas in which they were established, namely, bringing the various people together and giving them a feeling of belonging together and common citizenship and unity of purpose. I think that is very very important. In fact, it is the whole basis on which Local Government administration stands. Take, for instance, the case of the Ibekwe County Council comprising four component groups of different cultural peoples: the Ibibios, the Obolos, the Annangs and the Opobos. In spite of their differences and divided loyalties, they worked together as a team and they were very happy. Where there were some misunderstandings due to maladministration on the part of the Executive Officer, a Commission of Enquiry was set up and the people who were responsible were removed. Thereafter, the Council went on quite efficiently and effectively, and by breaking up central local bodies that brought all these people together, the Government is obviously bringing in a policy of separatism and division in otherwise what was absolutely integrated people. I dare say that this division is likely to transcend or be carried on to various aspects of life and activities.

Everywhere in the world today—at least in the free world—Local Government structural organisations favour larger units for Counties than smaller ones.

The set-up of County Councils is such that experts and professional people must be engaged, such as Engineers, Doctors and other technical officials, but if you reduce the size of County Councils to such small ones, it will be impossible for these Councils to carry out these services, so that they will only exist as County Councils in name and not in deed.

Another danger, Sir, in the proposal for small county units is that they will be economically impotent and will become pawns on the chess-board of the Regional Government and will completely be subjected to the Regional Government's dictations. I must remind this House that the first step towards totalitarianism is to strip Local Government Bodies off their independent concern and weaken their

resistance by making the units small and economically impossible and entirely dependent upon grants from the central Government which grants can be withdrawn at any time at the smallest and slightest pretext; resistance becomes impossible and consequently freedom and liberty of the people disappear.

My second point, Sir, is that by issuing out orders to abolish the seventeen County Councils, the Minister, in league with the Executive Council, is trying to give effect to the proposals contained in the White Paper. This White Paper has not yet had Parliamentary sanction. I must here refer, with your permission, Sir, to the section which specifically lays it down in the White Paper and my submission is that Government is trying to give effect to it without first of all debating the motion in this House. I quote from page 24 of the White Paper paragraph 13, the fourth line: "If the seventeen Divisional County Councils are abolished there would be at least ninety-two Local Government bodies which can be constituted into County Councils proper. By rearranging the Local Councils to accord with the criteria of self-determination, cultural and linguistic affinity, geographical contiguity, and viability, it will be possible to evolve a two-tier system, which should provide a suitable basis for an efficient system of Local Government and Administration."

Sir, what the Minister is trying to do is to give effect to the proposal which has not had Parliamentary sanction and that is absolutely against Parliamentary system of Government.

Paragraph 7, page 23 of the White Paper reads as follows:

"Government is of opinion that where people are bound by strong ties of social intercourse, blood relationship, language and geography, and they are willing to assume civic obligations and responsibilities, they should be allowed to practise local self-government. Other things being equal, this should satisfy the aspirations of the self-determinists, most of whom are usually well-meaning, if more sentimental. This modification of policy puts it beyond doubt that Government is willing to concede to the wishes of a fairly large community, in respect of the type of Local Government they desire, after same had been ascertained in a normal

democratic manner, provided that the risks and obligations involved are adequately explained to them".

Now, the Minister of Local Government has dramatically erred against that laid down policy and I had thought that it is the duty of a Cabinet Minister to comply with the laid down policy. Sir, I do not want to take the time of the House. There is this, Sir, that if the mischief of disobedience seems to be lesser than the mischief of obedience, certainly the people have the right to resist the action of the Government. There is clear evidence, Sir, that over a reasonable period this Government has not discharged its obligations to the people and its action has not been in accordance with its purpose. I would wonder if there were no mob demonstrations. It is only normal and natural that the people should demonstrate under a situation of extreme irresponsibility.

Sir, I support the Amendment.

**Mr M. N. Yowika (Ogoni Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, before I proceed, I would like first of all to make it abundantly clear to my hon. Friend on the Government side that I am not speaking merely as an opponent. We on this side of the House always speak with a view to helping the Government in its difficult task and we also wish Government to bear in mind always the interest of the people.

**An hon. Member:** Which people?

**Mr Yowika:** The public. After all, if the Government is a democratic Government, it is a Government of the people by the people and for the people and the people must be allowed to express their own opinions and have a say in their own Government; but very often this Government is fond of imposing on the people the interest of a handful of people. If you compare the number of hon. Members on the Government Bench to the population of the Region, they are a handful of people and their interest is being imposed on the public.

Mr Speaker, Sir, before the County Councils are to be abolished, I feel that the people ought to be consulted and their opinion ought to be sought and in this particular case, the people's opinion has not been sought and Government has taken upon itself to abolish County Councils.

**An hon. Member:** Is it in Ogoni alone?

**Mr Yowika:** I am not here to speak for the interest of Ogoni alone, but for the Region. Therefore, Mr Speaker, Sir, I am supporting this Amendment by saying that if County Councils are to be abolished, the opinions of the people must be sought and the people must be given what they want and not just what the Government, a handful of people want.

**Mr P. U. Amaefunah (Awka Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I stand to oppose vehemently the amendment as proposed by my hon. Friend Mr E. O. Eyo. I know the aim of this amendment. In the first place, he wants to play up to the Gallery. In the second place, he wants to catch the newspaper headlines in the Federation. In the third place, he feels that he is so philanthropic and that he loves the people of the Region. I want to say that he is a Member without a constituency.

You find him going from Ogbete to Uwani, Asata to Ogui and finally he disappears in the Artisan Quarters.

**Mr Speaker:** I am of the opinion that this is not relevant to the debate.

**Mr Amaefunah:** We have an Association of Local Government Bodies of the Eastern Region whose headquarters is at Aba. We have 108 Councils in the Region and these include seventeen County Councils. They all have representation in the Local Government Association, Aba. They all pay their membership fees of five guineas and pay their annual dues. This Association was formed in 1954 when the former Minister of Local Government, Dr E. A. Essin, was in power. Then people started to agitate against the Council institutions in the Region. Members of the County Council are also members of the Local Government Association, Aba that sent delegations to the former Minister of Local Government for the dissolution of the County Councils in the Region.

Now, this agitation for the dissolution started from the Local Council level to the District Councils under one County. The monthly bulletin of the Ministry of Local Government was always sent to all the County and District Councils in the Region. But, of course, the

hon. Member failed to see the difference between the amalgamation of Rural District Councils under a County, Rural District Council with County powers; Urban District Councils and Municipality.

**An Opposition Member:** What has that got to do with the dissolution of County Councils?

**Mr Amaefunah:** You are a nonentity in that direction. So the present Minister of Local Government since he took over the Ministry of Local Government has toured over 80 per cent of the District and County Councils in the Region to explain Government proposals for the dissolution of the Counties. Perhaps you wanted him to tour all the Local Councils in the Region. You wanted him to possess one of the attributes of God, i.e. omnipresence as you seem to possess the attribute of omniscience. If he tours all the Local Council areas he will claim allowance of over a thousand pounds and the hon. Mover will then make some capital political significance of it. I suppose you take delight in confusion. The Local Government Association Aba sent delegations upon delegations to the Minister of Local Government. The District Councils themselves sent petitions upon petitions and memoranda to the present Minister of Local Government about the dissolution of the County Councils because the County Councils have been proved beyond all reasonable doubt to be suffering from squandermania; their areas of jurisdiction are unwieldy and the vastness of their areas has made management impossible. There is duplication of offices and officers in a County set-up and no visible development projects are undertaken; bridges and culverts form death-traps to road users.

Some areas compare favourably with the Southern Cameroons which has a Legislature of its own. The District Councils also started to complain against the rise in precepts causing a rise in rates because the precepts of the County Councils depleted the funds of the District Councils so that they were left with little or no revenue to carry on their social services.

I remember last year when I visited Anua to see a friend who was sick, I passed through your constituency and I saw many Local Councils holding a meeting and complaining of County Council precepts.

**An Opposition Member:** Whose constituency?

**Mr Amaefunah:** The mover of the amendment.

**An hon. Member:** But you said he has no constituency. (Laughter).

**Mr Amaefunah:** There was a meeting of Local Councils in his own area that were complaining about the high council precepts and they were delighted in the dissolution of the County Council in his own area.

Now, if the Minister of Local Government issued directives to the District Councils and County Councils about the dissolution of the County Councils in the Region, and if the District Councils failed in convening meetings of the Local Councils in order to explain the Government's policy and proposals, then it was a dereliction of duty. It was when the members of County Councils became disgruntled that they boycotted the Local Government Association at Aba and formed their own Association because they have some vested interest. I want to prove that; here in my hands is a memorandum submitted to the Ministry by the Association of County Councils in the Region. This Association started after they had read the policy paper of the Eastern Region (Part I).

Mr Speaker, I beg to quote page 24, paragraph 8 which states:

"In the circumstances, Government will divide the Region into a number of constituents or Provinces under a two-tier system of Local Government to be known as County Council and Local Council. This means that all the Urban and Rural District Councils will be reorganised and reconstituted to become County Councils in their own right and the present County Councils will be abolished in place of newly-created one".

Now, why did Government take this decision? It was because of the Jones Report.

Mr Jones is versed and versatile in Local Government Administration, hence he recommended to the Regional Government at paragraph 193 of his Report as follows:

"In regard to the second point, the multiplicity of Councils, it is a moot point

whether the three-tier system of Local Government in the Eastern Region possesses the virtues originally claimed for it."

At paragraph 194 he said:

"It must also be remembered that these are not the only councils concerned with Local Government in its wider aspects. Apart from Traditional and Local Government Councils, there are Council meetings of innumerable 'progressive' associations—Church Councils, Mission Councils, Patriotic, Progressive, Family and other Union Councils. In addition there are also various Regional Government Departments other than the Department of Local Government which are concerned with the stimulation of local initiative, and these attempt to work through any Council or association, official, traditional, or *ad hoc*, which can best serve their local purposes."

Hence he recommended the two-tier system.

**An Opposition Member:** Where are you quoting from?

**Mr Amaefunah:** It is there, unless you don't read your copy. Now, he recommended the two-tier system because he is versed and versatile in Local Government Administration and he is an authority, hence the hon. Mover of the amendment is a nonentity in Local Government Administration

Mr Speaker, on the 18th of July, 1957, a public lecture was delivered at the Dennis Memorial Grammar School, Onitsha, to the members of County and District Councils by Mr H. Keeling, Borough Treasurer, Worthing Sussex. He stated that all-purpose District Councils are more economical and preferable to rate-payers than the three-tier system of Local Government. He said that even in England the three-tier system of Local Government is becoming increasingly unpopular. The Niger County Council presents the three-tier system as the best for the Region. The Council accuses the hon. Minister of Local Government of encouraging agitations against County Councils, and portrays itself to the public as the only body that had studied Local Government in other lands, and therefore a better judge even than the Regional Government, of which system is best for the Eastern Region. I still maintain that all the Local Government Councils in the Region, and the

[MR AMAEFUNAH]  
people, were fully consulted. The consultation started as back as the 18th of March, 1956, when the present Minister of Local Government had not come to power. I make bold to say that the present Minister of Local Government is a round peg in a round hole, and I think the hon. Mover of the amendment was not born when the Minister was the Chairman of the old defunct Native Authority (Laughter).

What I want to show is that he is an authority in Local Government Administration, and he is considerably experienced in that field. Mr Speaker, we have always maintained that experience is the best teacher. To show that Local Government Councils were fully consulted one would remember the old adage which states: *Vox Populi Vox Dei*. Yesterday, the hon. Mover quoted figures stating the reserves to these County Councils, and he maintained that they should not be abolished as it would be difficult to share these County reserves. We could understand that his honesty is above board. Mr Speaker, all the County Councils were in agreement that the County Councils should be abolished in the Association of County Councils. Their petition was sent to the present Minister of Local Government to the effect that County Councils should be abolished; so, anyone who thinks of something to the contrary has a vested interest in the County Council system.

Mr Speaker, paragraph 3 of their petition reads as follows:

"That in view of the fact that re-organisation of the entire Local Government system was proposed, that all present Councils, that is, Local, District and County be scrapped and fresh elections be held for the new two-tier Councils, that is, Local and County Councils."

It goes on to say that all Councils in the Region should be dissolved, so that fresh elections should be held. Now, they want all the Councils to be dissolved in order to give them the chance of contesting fresh elections with the District Councillors. I think they are correct in this respect, because the life of the Councils has been extended by six months, but if they are men of conviction I think that a space of six months will give them enough

time to campaign for election to the District Councils. It is proof-positive that there are men in the County Councils with vested interests.

**Opposition Members:** Who signed the petition?

**Mr Amaefunah:** It was signed by the Secretary of the Association of County Councils.

Now, I can go so far to prove that all the local people were consulted through the directives from the Ministry of Local Government, and through the monthly bulletin from the Ministry of Local Government, and through the directives from the Association of Local Government in Aba to all Councils in the Region. So, that is consultation, unless it takes some other form. Mr Speaker, I feel that when these consultations were going on last year, the hon. Mover of the Amendment was in England trying to shape the Nigeria Constitution he knows nothing about.

**Opposition Members:** Why didn't you go to England?

**Mr Amaefunah:** I am sorry, it is never good to allow *lalang* to grow with the corn.

**Opposition Members:** What is *lalang*?

**Mr Amaefunah:** You don't know what it is because you don't know proverbs as some of you have no secondary school education.

Mr Speaker, with all these observations, I vehemently oppose the amendment proposed by the hon. Mover.

**The Minister of Local Government (Chief A. N. Onyiuke):** Mr Speaker, I congratulate the last speaker for teaching the Mover the working of Local Government.

Mr Speaker, this amendment is a frivolous one and I rise to oppose it vehemently in the words of the last speaker. When the Mover said that this House is unable to accept Government's decision to abolish all existing County Councils in the Region, he meant Eyo's House and not this hon. House. I can assure the Mover that all the people of this Region want the County Councils abolished with the exception of himself and his clients—the

affected people; because Government did not impose the abolition of County Councils on the people but simply carrying out the demand of the greater majority of the people. Mr Speaker, out of 108 councils in the Region I have visited all but thirty-one Councils due to the Minorities Commission, otherwise I would have covered all. Almost all these Councils demand the abolition of County Councils and I know they are aware of the policy that whatever the Councils tell me is the considered opinion of their electorates and not their own private opinion.

Mr Speaker, on 29th May, 1957, the Local Government Association met at Aba with ninety-six members present comprising the representatives of all District Councils and County Councils in the Region. They wrote me of their unanimous resolution to abolish all the County Councils. Before that, Mr Speaker, thirty-five District Councils wrote me asking my approval for them to secede from their County Councils and have County powers. The Mover will be surprised to learn that out of these District Councils the Ibesikpo-Asutan District Council in Uyo Division—his own constituency—wants to secede from the County Council because of too much precept paid to the County Council, a wasteful organisation and for too little return by way of amenities. Mr Speaker, the Association went further to appoint a Committee to work out the details of abolition and asked that an Executive Committee should come with their Council's mandate showing their stand in the matter and fixed 13th June, 1957, for the collection of mandates from all Councils written to ascertain the views of their people and on 13th, they met and agreed on two-tier system of Local Government and abolition of County Councils. There and then, Mr Speaker, the minority clients of the Mover walked out from the Association and formed their own association which I refused to recognise because I did not want double dealing. They called for mandates and when they saw numerous mandates presented, they seceded.

Mr Speaker, the County Councils are not yet abolished but according to the Speech from the Throne a date is fixed for their abolition—31st March. Before then this House shall have debated that part of the White Paper. I have written the County Councils of the date and given them the chance of showing why they

should not be abolished by that time. If, within this period, they succeeded to get their people to prefer the existence of County Councils and the abolition of their District Councils, my Government will not stand in their way provided they have two-tier system of Local Government which is unanimously agreed.

The Mover is inconsistent. He charged me of not consulting the people and not giving them the chance to express their views. He quoted two circulars which did nothing but give them the chance to express their views. Here again, he criticises me for allowing them to express their views.

I call upon this House to take no notice of the amendment but throw it out. He expressed the District Councils as minute bodies unable to carry out the functions of County Councils but he failed to know that without District Councils there would be no funds for the County Councils. They feed by high precepts from the District Councils. All that is done by County and District Councils was once the duty of Native Administration—one Council alone.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion I can assure this hon. House that I am prepared to listen to any representation that any area can make. Hon. Ekpe said that the smaller the area the weaker the Council. On the contrary, in Local Government the smaller the area the better administered it becomes; if it is unwieldy it loses its locality. As for staffs and services it is provided that two or more Councils can employ one or more staffs jointly. My Government will take care of all the staffs in the former County Councils. Mr Speaker, the Mover and all with him in the opposite seat cannot play into my Ministry as they played into the Ministry of Education carrying women in their cars from one corner of the Region to the other; inciting others to be lawless. I can assure them that they cannot incite Councils against me, for as a Natural Ruler and old councillor, I am like hand in glove with my Councils.

Mr Speaker, I call upon this hon. House to throw away the amendment.

*Question put.*

*House divided. Ayes 11, Noes 58.*

Division No. 3

9.45 a.m.

*Ayes*

Mr J. A. Agba  
Mr S. J. Amachree  
Rev. O. Efiang, C.B.E.  
Mr M. U. Etuk  
Mr E. O. Eyo

Mr S. G. Ikoku  
Mr O. B. Nalelo  
Mr A. G. Umoh  
Mr M. N. Yowika

*Tellers for the Ayes:—*

Chief I. I. Morphy  
Mr A. J. Ekpe.

*Noes*

Mr C. A. Abangwu  
Mr W. Abengowe  
Mr S. O. Achara  
Mr O. U. Afiah  
Chief G. N. Agbasiere  
Mr D. S. A. Agim  
Mr D. E. Akilo  
Mr H. U. Akpabio  
Mr D. O. Aligwekwe  
Mr S. N. Alo  
Mr P. U. Amaefunah  
Mr J. W. E. Anaba  
Mr R. O. Anoke  
Mr D. O. Anu  
Mr M. C. Awgu  
Dr N. Azikiwe  
Mr E. Chidolue  
Mr A. O. Chikwendu  
Mr E. A. Chime  
Mr E. Emole  
Mr U. Enyi  
Mr E. U. Eronini  
Mr J. O. Ihekwoaba  
Dr S. E. Imoke  
Mr J. M. Ito  
Mr R. O. Iwuagwu  
Mr S. E. K. Iwueke  
Mr K. Kiri

Mr O. C. Manu  
Mr D. A. Nnaji  
Mr J. U. Nwodo  
Mr P. O. Nwoga  
Mr J. H. E. Nwuke  
Mr M. U. Obayi  
Dr A. N. Obonna  
Mr M. E. Ogon  
Mr C. A. Okafor  
Mr P. N. Okeke  
Mr O. Oketa  
Mr G. C. Okeya  
Mr G. I. Oko, M.B.E.  
Mr E. P. Okoya  
Dr M. I. Okpara  
Mr K. J. N. Okpokam  
Mr B. C. Okwu  
Dr W. N. Onubogu  
Chief S. E. Onukogu  
Mr P. A. Onwe  
Mr N. O. Onwudiwe  
Mr M. N. Onwuma  
Mr V. K. Onyeri  
Chief A. N. Onyiuke  
Mr E. W. Udonkim  
Mr R. O. Ukuta, M.B.E.  
Mr J. O. Umolu  
Mr L. O. Uzoigwe

*Tellers for the Noes:—*

Mr J. E. Eyo  
Mr N. L. P. Apreala.

*Main Question again proposed.*

**Mr C. A. Abangwu (Nsukka Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I rise to support the motion for the vote of thanks for His Excellency's Speech. In doing so, I shall take this opportunity to say how much I appreciated the way the speech was delivered. It was a very

lengthy speech indeed; it was in my opinion an excellent speech, and it took a long time to deliver. It was delivered with all seriousness and I think that we look forward to the time when Nigerians will be able to deliver such speeches in the way this one was done. I was very much impressed.



In going through the whole speech, I also found that the speech shows a very high standard compared with the speeches which were made in previous years. It was very well got up and all the points affecting the problems of this Region were well touched.

The first thing I would like to mention Mr Speaker, is the tour which I made in November and December of last year as a Member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. In doing so, I would like to thank this House and the Government for affording me the opportunity to go to India, Pakistan and Ceylon to represent this Region. I had already submitted my report to Members of this House and I wish it be put on record that we from the Nigerian Delegation were very grateful to India, Pakistan and Ceylon in the way they received us. I would also say that the tour did quite a lot to popularise Nigeria among the other Commonwealth Countries.

I would only emphasise one point, and that is that the greatest problem now facing us is that of self-government or Independence. We all look forward to the year 1960, which is the date line for Nigeria's Independence and I pray and hope that when the time comes Nigeria will not disappoint the world in their expectation.

Mr Speaker, I also have the impression that the Government's main economic institution of this Region is the Eastern Region Development Corporation. This Corporation, Sir, represents the Government's plan for economic expansion of the Region. The Eastern Region Development Corporation has in the years past undergone a lot of vicissitudes. It should also invest more money into it so that it may get out a number of projects which would employ many Nigerians who are now finding their way into Fernando Po as labourers over there.

I would also refer to the Tourist Corporation. I was very glad when it was published in the past year that the Corporation had made a profit; that was encouraging.

When one goes on tour to Enugu or to Aba and Onitsha, one would see the projects which are being carried out by the Tourist Corporation. The only thing I would say

in addition to that is that an effort must be made to give each Administrative Division one Catering Rest House. Many of the officials who tour the various places of the Region experience quite a lot of difficulties, if on official tour, when they go to Divisions where there are no Catering Rest Houses. This is very disappointing and I am hoping that an effort must be made to give each of the Administrative Divisions at least one Catering Rest House. It may not be able to pay its way through but at least the officials who work under such congenial atmosphere will be able to deliver more work with efficiency instead of fighting mosquitoes and fighting lack of food in some of these places.

I would refer to the other industrial developments which are taking place in the Eastern Region. The first is the Aba Brewery which I understand, is producing some millions of gallons of beer. Not that I am encouraging the drinking of beer in millions of gallons, but I would say that at least the revenue we derive from it by way of excise duties goes a long way to help the Region and I am wishing the Directors of the Aba Brewery all the luck, so that they can even expand in the near future.

The second is the Port Harcourt cigarette Factory which was opened by the hon. the Federal Minister of Commerce sometime last year. When we had a debate on the economic expansion in the Commonwealth many of us from Nigeria did a lot to give out facts which might encourage capitalists and industrialists from other parts of the Commonwealth to invest in the different Regions, particularly in the Eastern Region because here we have conditions which are very, very congenial to industrial expansion.

The Nkalagu Cement Factory which was opened by His Excellency the Governor of the Federation in December last year is also another milestone in the economic development of the Eastern Region. I understand that the factory will be producing about 100,000 tons of cement, and it is also understood that the local price of cement has gone down as a result of the Nkalagu cement. (*Hear! Hear!*). Also, this Government has a very good share in that industry. I would add that the Government would impress upon the Nigerian Economic Council not to allow other Regions to establish

[MR ABANGWU]

some competitive industries in other parts of the Region. If for instance they know that we have enough cement in this Region which will be able to supply the whole of the Federation, it will not be economically wise to establish similar industries in other Regions—in competition to that of the Eastern Region; but this does not apply particularly in the case of cement because I think we can afford to have three or four of the Nkalagu Cement Industry type; but in others, for example, the Glass and Window Industry which is being put up at Port Harcourt, I understand, Sir, that some other Regions are contemplating establishing some of these in their own areas, whereas the arrangement was to develop this and supply other places.

My next point, Sir, is the discovery of oil in the Eastern Region.

Of late it has been reported that the Federal Commissioner in London attended the ceremonial off-loading of the crude oil brought from Nigeria. I think this adds both commercial and political prestige to the Eastern Region and we are hoping that the Shell B.P. which is responsible for the exploitation of this oil will even invest more money to the amount which they have invested at the moment in order to exploit all the oil resources which they have.

Another point which I would like to make to the Government, is the amount of royalty which will accrue to this Region as a result of the finding of this oil. I understand that a figure has already been arrived at, the rate of 4s per ton. I am asking the Government that in the near future we hope that this would be revised so that we can get more than 4s per gallon of this oil.

While at this economic survey, Sir, my last point is the question of agricultural industry in the Region. The main prop of subsistence in the Eastern Region is palm oil and kernel industry. I gather that this trade is not as lucrative as it had been in the past time. What I mean is that we are producing less oil to subsidise the price per ton and the price of oil is getting down and not as good as it used to be before. I want to say that the finances of the Region must be involved and as I pointed out during the Budget Meeting of last year we

must not allow any of the Regions to pay anything higher for a ton of oil than we do in the Eastern Region because that would be demoralising and secondly it may make our people neglect that trade which employs millions and millions of people in the Eastern Region. I therefore say that past profits should have been preserved in order to stabilise the present low price of palm oil and kernel.

I understand a similar thing happens in the Western Region where the price of cocoa is being stabilised and that the money which is kept as profit is used for this purpose. I urge that a similar thing should be done in the Eastern Region so that farmers may not be demoralised and bring about unemployment on the part of many thousands engaged in that industry.

Mr Speaker, I like to touch the question of road communication in the Eastern Region. Some time last year it was given out that the Federal Government was considering building a railway line linking, I think, somewhere in Bornu Province with the Sudan and probably going up to the Red Sea. Mr Speaker, I confess that when I heard of that project, my mind ran through with quite a number of things and I was wondering whether building that line would be necessary at the moment in view of the condition of road and rail communications in the Eastern Region. Here we have one track running from Kaduna to Port Harcourt and of late we have had a number of derailments on that line. That only means that the track had been over-used where it is very narrow and perhaps not able to carry the amount of traffic which passes through it.

I suppose it is high time we had double track railway in this country; that is having one line running almost parallel to the other and secondly, I am seriously suggesting that time has come when we should have a railway line joining Oshogbo in the Western Region with Onitsha and then to continue from Onitsha to Enugu. Also, there should be a railway line joining Aba and Oron. Mr Speaker, in my opinion, these lines are very very necessary because they will help to promote trade in the Eastern Region, and not only in the Eastern Region but it would promote trade in the Western Region. One wonders how many millions of pounds will be invested in the

building of this proposed Bornu-Sudan line. I am asking that that money should be used first of all to expand road and railway communications within Nigeria and then to think of the proposed line within the next five years but nobody should think of it now. I also think there is some political colouring in the building of this Bornu-Sudan line. I remember that in 1953 in London when the Nigeria Constitutional Conference was going on, there was a map of Nigeria which was published in the *London Times* carrying beside it a proposed rail line running from Sokoto through French Dahomey down to Cotonou; and the *London Times* (I do not know whether it was *London Times* or *Manchester Guardian*, but it was one of these two papers) gave the impression that if the Southerners denied the Northerners any passage down to the sea, that is, through Lagos, then they have another alternative and that is running the line from Sokoto through the French Dahomey to Cotonou. Mr Speaker, I am wondering whether that proposed line having failed whether this line from Bornu is not another way of affording the Northerners another passage to the sea in the case of secession. I warn the people who are in the Federal Government to find out why it is necessary, and what amount of profit we are going to get by running that line. That is only my own way of looking at it. It may be right or wrong.

Another point, Sir, is that at one time a number of diesel engines were introduced to run on the Northern railway lines. If the use of diesel engines will automatically mean that they don't want a lot of coal, one of the economies we have in the Eastern Region here will be suffering. If this coal is not made use of, it means that money which is expected from it cannot be got. What then is the advantage if we cannot make use of our coal to run our railway lines? What then is the advantage of introducing these diesel engines to run railway lines which will mean automatically that the coal which is used for running these railway engines will no longer be used? It is an economic proposition that a country must make use of its own local materials and it is only in the absence of its own materials that it can look outside. It all amounts to the fact that the coal we have here should be made use of and that no other vehicle or machinery should be introduced which would offset making use of the local materials which we have.

Mr Speaker, I would like again to refer to what was mentioned in the Speech from the Throne about Nigerians in Fernando Po. I must congratulate the Government for contributing to the delegation which went to Fernando Po last year and also the delegation which went there a little earlier than the one of last year.

We understand that about 24,000 men were at Fernando Po in September of last year. Mr Speaker, I feel this is a very big number—24,000 young Nigerians working in Fernando Po! A good number of them come from the Eastern Region of Nigeria. What is driving these Nigerians into Fernando Po? From what we understand from people who have come back from that place, the condition is not congenial to health and the people are not treated humanely in the way labourers should be treated. A good number of them have no hope of returning to Nigeria and some of them returned with ill-health. Mr Speaker, I am not going so far as to say that sending Nigerians or allowing them to go over to that place is another form of slave trade. I would say that no one who has pride of his own people would allow about 24,000 young ones to find their way into another country to work as menial labourers. That is why I say that the E.R.D.C. ought to be given more money to establish farm plantations so that the young men, instead of finding their way to Fernando Po, will find themselves engaged in Nigeria. Certainly, of all the Colonial Powers, the Spanish is not one one would like to work with. The people are not very hospitable.

I like to refer to Government White Paper on Reorganisation of Local Government Councils mentioned also in the Speech from the Throne. The point I should like to make here is the provision which said that in converting the District Councils into County Districts, representation in the new County Councils will be numerically equal from each of the Local Councils existing at the moment. I do not know whether you get my point, but the provision is that in the new County Councils, representation should be on equal numbers coming from each of the existing Local Councils. Mr Speaker, at the time that these Local Councils were set up, this particular provision was not envisaged and the result was that you have very large Local Councils;

[MR ABANGWU]

you also have very small Local Councils. In fact, there are certain Local Councils which have populations of up to about 30,000 as against one which might have about 2,000 or even less. If we are going to have new County Councils, Mr Speaker, I am submitting that larger Councils feel some grievance that they ought to have numerically a number of representation to the County Councils commensurate with their population. (*Hear! Hear!*).

Mr Speaker, the Minister of Local Government must have received a number of petitions on this particular matter. I am asking that the Minister will very kindly look into all these points before bringing into operation the new County Councils; maybe to merge smaller Local Councils into larger Councils. You may break the larger ones into smaller units: one with 10,000, one with 20,000 and one with about 30,000. These should be broken into smaller Local Councils so as to allow them more representation in the proposed County Council.

Another point, Sir, is the reorganisation of the Native Courts into the Customary Courts. This point has been engaging attention of the people in this Region for a long time now and I think the Minister of Justice will look into the matter with a view to expediting action.

You will remember that when the Customary Courts Law was passed in 1956, there was a provision to deprive all Administrative Officers of certain of their judicial powers. The fact that this aspect of the Customary Courts Law has not come into operation means that these Administrative Officers are still having the power which in 1956 we had desired that they should cease to have. This is the first point, Sir.

Secondly, the membership of these Native Courts or Customary Courts: The impression is being created at the moment that all the existing Native Court members will be terminated and that new members will be appointed. The people are under this impression because somebody goes round these areas and says that Government will take away all the present members and bring in new ones. Somebody else makes a counter proposal and these impressions are going round in the Region. The Minister of Justice might be

able to bring this Customary Courts Law into operation and clear some of these wrong impressions.

In any event, I will urge that in the new Native Courts or Customary Courts, there should be good number of people who can read and write. All the members should be honest and intelligent people who can deliver justice. That is what I can say about these Customary Courts.

The next point, Sir, is the House of Chiefs. I am glad the Government is proposing to publish a White Paper or enact a law which will provide for both the Eastern House of Assembly and the House of Chiefs.

This subject is engaging the attention of Chiefs all over the Eastern Region. The Government has manifold advantages in establishing the House of Chiefs here. Firstly, it will convince the Chiefs in the C.O.R. State areas that Government has their interest at heart and it will serve as a unifying factor for the entire Region. There are, however, a number of points to be cleared. Are members of the House of Chiefs going to be appointed, elected or nominated? The Chiefs want themselves to be appointed in the way it was done in the Western and the Northern Regions of Nigeria.

I only raised this point so as to point out to Government whose prerogative it is to decide what is to happen about it, that people will like to know whether it will be by appointment or by nomination. I am not suggesting that it should be by election, which will make the House of Chiefs compete on equal terms with the House of Assembly.

*Sitting suspended at 10.30 a.m.*

*Sitting resumed at 11 a.m.*

**Mr Abangwu:** Mr Speaker, my other point, Sir, is the Africanisation of the Public Service. On this point I would support the Chief Whip of the Government Party when he said that if there is any future vacancy for the Chairman of the Public Service Commission, that a suitable African should be considered for the post. I hope that Government will give this question its serious consideration in pursuant of its Africanisation policy.

Similarly, one hopes that if in future we have any opportunity of appointing a Chief Justice of the Regional High Courts, a suitable African should also be considered for the post.

My final point, Sir, is to congratulate the Government on its decision to establish the University of Nigeria at Nsukka. (*Applause from Government Bench*).

Mr Speaker, Sir, I believe Members from both sides of the House will agree with me that Government should be congratulated because it has actually gone out to look for experts to find out which place in the Region will be most suitable for the establishment of the first University in this Region. I was not surprised at all that Nsukka was chosen because the University College of Ibadan was first sited at Nsukka but owing to the Regionalisation tendencies which certain people had it was shifted to the Western Region.

In this matter of the University of Nigeria, it is also gratifying to note that Government proposes that in establishing a number of Colleges other areas might also be considered. This is in keeping with what is happening in the world elsewhere. When we have the seat of a University, various colleges which compose it will be sited in various places. It is my view that the Government College at Umuahia should be turned into a University College.

We are very grateful to the Government and we can assure the Government that we shall make all facilities available for the building of this University which, when completed, will be one of the best assets of the Eastern Region. (*Hear! Hear!*).

**Mr E. Chidolue (Onitsha Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I rise to speak in support of the motion for a Humble Address of Thanks to His Excellency for his Speech from the Throne, and in doing so, I wish to make certain observations:

**Official Secret.**—The first thing that strikes me forcibly from the Governor's Speech, is the allegation that some Civil Servants delight in revealing official secrets. This is a serious matter and should be condemned with all emphasis by responsible Members of this House. It is said that the mouth does not bite the finger that feeds it. Any expatriate who

reveals official secret is not fit to remain in this country and an African who commits the same offence is a traitor to his race. In my view, any Civil Servant who is found guilty of this offence should be relieved of his job at once so as to make him an example for others.

**House of Chiefs.**—It is pleasing to note that Government is actively planning to establish a House of Chiefs in this Region as it is in other Regions. As a result of the last Constitutional Conference we are irretrievably committed to fulfil this obligation. It is true the Region has some financial difficulties but we cannot make national savings at the expense of one class of people. If there is need for economic measures, people in all classes of life should bear the brunt. It is hoped that when the Estimate is out, it will be seen that provision has been made for House of Chiefs.

After all, when there is trouble we run to Chiefs for help but if they are not recognised by Government the people will not recognise them and consequently they will have no influence over their people.

Referring to agriculture and the development of rice cultivation in the riverine areas of the Eastern Region, I have to point out that the Eastern Ogbaru area comprising of Atani and Ossomari Group Courts in Onitsha Division, have the soil which is excellent for rice cultivation. A report by a Soil Expert has shown that these areas are identical with the soil of parts of Abakaliki and Afikpo Divisions where rice is produced in great quantity. Government should establish experimental farms in this area or subsidise farmers in these areas for increase of rice productivity. The people of Ogbaru Clan have not benefited from Fishing Industries or other Government amenities and they feel aggrieved in the way they are neglected by the Government.

**Cement Industry.**—Mr Speaker, Sir, I will make a statement about the Nigerian Cement Industries: I am glad to say that the cement produced by the Nigerian Cement Company at Nkalagu is very popular in the Region. Many builders have tried it and found it quite as good, if not better than, the imported Portland or Burham Cement. The advantages of the locally produced cement is that, apart from being cheaper, it does not travel far like cement from distant countries. It therefore retains

[MR CHIDOLUE]

its colour and power which otherwise would be adulterated in the process of transportation by sea and land from distant countries.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to emphasise that I disagree with the Government Chief Whip who suggested that Government should not sell shares to indigenous private business men. It is an established fact that many Nigerians are always suspicious of new industries. They would like to watch it for some time to see whether it will succeed or fail before they invest their money in it. Such were the experiences of the promoters of Alahambra Industry of Onitsha, C.D.C. Sack Factory, African Development Corporation, N.E.M.C.O., indigenous Banks, etc. Sometimes the fears entertained are justified and in some genuine cases, the Nigerian fears his own shadow. Secondly, many Nigerians are not rich enough and cannot afford to invest money which will be tied down for a number of years, without declaring dividend or profit.

For example, a princely sum of about £2 million has been sunk at Nkalagu Factory since about five years now. If the capital had been raised by private individuals, the Company would have been criticised heavily. It is therefore plain that if Government and Statutory Corporations do not help new industries at the initial stage, many new industries in this country may not be patronised. The foreign investors may be frightened and frustrated.

As they do not quite understand our people, they may conclude that the venture is unpopular and give it up. The proposal to offer for sale to the indigenous business men (not foreign investors) some of the shares already acquired by the Government in the Nigerian Cement Company, so that Government can finance other new industries is therefore a sound economic proposition and I support it *in toto*.

I hope I am expressing the sentiments of all business men inside and outside this House. After all, a National Government is not out to compete with the indigenous people but to help them to develop their domestic resources. I cannot understand why people who criticise the E.R.D.C. for not implementing "the co-partnership policy" in respect of Pioneer

Oil Mills should not praise the Government for the proposal to sell shares to the indigenous people. We cannot blow hot and cold.

**Town Planning:**—The Minister should make arrangement for aerial surveys with the Director of Federal Surveys so that Topographical maps of principal towns in the rural areas could be produced. Owing to shortage of staff in the Regional Survey Department, land surveys are not so expeditious. Cadastral Maps of the five largest townships are obsolete and need to be revised. In these growing townships, Cadastral maps are not useful after ten years of survey.

**Works:**—Mr Speaker, Sir, the Speech from the Throne admits that rural water supply scheme had been slow. Government should make genuine efforts to supply rural areas with water supply particularly the communities where the rural hospitals or maternities are situated. It is a well known fact that modern hospitals or maternities without water supply leave much to be desired. In fact, under the Hospital Law, they may not be allowed to operate. Government is therefore urged to construct bore holes in these areas for the use of the hospitals or health centres. Times without number we have always stressed most emphatically in this House, that the rural areas are being neglected and they contribute the bulk of the revenue and man power of this Region.

Notwithstanding the above complaints in favour of the rural areas, the people of Onitsha Urban area where I live, are very grateful for the urban water supply which was completed last year. At the opening of the new water works at Onitsha last year, attended by His Highness the Obi of Onitsha, the councillors and other notable members of the community, the hon. Minister was requested to convey the gratitude of Onitsha community to the Regional Government.

**Justice:**—I will refer to the Minister of Justice and we expect justice from him. It is regretted that in Onitsha the buildings where the High Court sessions are held are not worthy of the name. The case of three Magistrate courts is worse because all the three Magistrate Courts now are hired premises and are far from one another. When

one has to attend the court, he does not know which court to go to. Worst still, the buildings are so small that people who are interested in certain cases have to stand outside in the sun and sometimes under rain. It is hoped that the Minister of Justice will provide the Onitsha community with modern buildings worthy of High Courts and Magistrate Courts. In one area in Onitsha which I know, extensive vacant land is available. It has been admitted by the Government that all the Judicial Divisions in the Region (except Onitsha) now have High Court buildings.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I support my hon. Friend Mr C. A. Abangwu, member for Nsukka Division that representations of Local Councils in the proposed County Councils should be based on population. Representations to the House of Representatives and the House of Assembly are based on population and it will be a great injustice and inconsistency if a different system is adopted in County Councils where people have local interests. The Nnewi Local Council with a population of about 30,000 has petitioned the Minister of Local Government on this matter. They have the backing of the large towns in Onitsha Southern District: namely, Ihiala, Okija, Ukpor, Ozubulu, and Oraifite. Also Ossomari Group Courts should have at least two representatives each. An *ad hoc* Committee set up by the Chief Administrative Officer i/c Onitsha Division supported this arrangement and same was approved by the Onitsha Southern District Council. It has also the firm backing of Onitsha Divisional N.C.N.C. If representation is not based on population, Nnewi town may be compelled to demand the status of an urban area or the four quarters will reluctantly form separate four local councils. But disintegration of this nature will not help the town or the district. In the past, the representation to District Councils had been based on population. My people do not want any change but any town or district which likes single representation may be allowed to do so. The aim of Local Government is to meet local conditions.

In conclusion, I wish to congratulate the Premier and his able Ministers for leading us to Regional self-government during the current financial year, despite great odds and handicaps, here and there. It is hoped that they will

contribute their quota to make Nigeria free in April, 1960.

With these few remarks, I support the original motion for a Humble Address of Thanks.

**Mr E. U. Eronini (Owerri Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to support the original motion, ably moved by the Government Chief Whip. In supporting it, I beg to make the following observations. It is said that certain Departments found it difficult in recruiting personnel especially the Medical Department. I should advise the Government to go farther afield to recruit Doctors wherever they can find them and not to depend only on Nigerian Doctors and English Doctors. In Owerri hospital at the moment, we have a Doctor who is a native of Malta. That man is the only Doctor I see who has been to Owerri and who is doing a very good work.

Talking of the Civil Service Commission and the membership thereto, it seems at the moment from the Constitutional Conference, that the membership is limited to three and a Chairman. But at the moment we have two and a Chairman. To be more representative and to represent all parts well, I suggest we expand the membership to the highest limit and that is to have three part-time members and the Chairman.

From the Governor's Speech, it is a wise policy for the Government to help as the financial resources of the private citizens of this Region are insufficient to enter into partnership with all overseas industrial establishments in this Region. Government and its Corporations should pilot the way and when such industries have been successfully established, Government or the Corporations should be relieved of their holdings by private citizens and Government should seek other new industries in which it might become a partner, in which the ordinary citizen is afraid to go in, as one of the passions of the Government is to mobilise its citizen's capital otherwise the country will remain a poor country for ever. Government should do all in its power to see that aborigines of this Region are well situated in business. They are having difficulties against expatriate organised combines who are doing all they can to oust the African business man. Unless a protective tariff is made in some of the trade and industries in this country, there will be no place for the African business man.

[MR ERONINI]

The Government policy in giving aids to farmers, and loans to traders is praiseworthy but in many cases there has been an abuse of this policy and even with the credit facilities there have been abuses. There have been some who have asked for loans because they know that a friend of theirs has got a loan, and it had been suggested in many quarters that once you take a loan, it will not be repaid and everybody is rushing to have a loan. Many people who applied for these loans and who happened to get them are not making any effort to repay them and are not using the money for the purpose for which they applied for the loan.

Road Transport: I will now speak on the five-year road policy of the Government. After three years, only eighty-five miles of road have been completed out of 314 miles. But it remains two years to complete the balance, which is more than two-third of the whole 314 miles. On the Awka-Orlu-Owerri road which is 58 miles, only four miles have been completed after three years. So, it might take another thirty years to complete the fifty-eight miles. Yet, one sees that the following roads have been completed:—

Okigwi-Afikpo	...	...	10 miles.
Abakaliki-Afikpo	...	...	30 miles.
Umuahia-Ikot Ekpene	...	...	10 miles.
Ihiala-Orlu	...	...	13 miles.

One ought to ask why only four miles have been completed on the fifty-eight-mile road.

Electricity: In my area, the Electricity Corporation, the Federal Government and the Minister of Mines and Power, have agreed to supply electricity to Owerri Urban District Council. The need only is to ask this Government to guarantee the proposals. There is every reason that the Shell BP have agreed to join this township and will be a potential consumer of power. This, the Government will please take note.

In this hon. House in 1954, a motion was passed calling upon the Government to explore the possibility of the E.R.D.C. erecting a bulk oil plant for the bulking of oil in the Region. Then it was made clear that the amount to be derived by bulking of a large tonnage of oil from this Region will give this Region and the Corporation very good profit.

It has been shown that even though our oil is of tropical make, it does not stay long in the tropics and the best thing to be done is to see that after processing, evacuation and bulking, transporting overseas should take effect quickly.

At that time, the Produce Department argued against this method but one is surprised to see after four years when the then Director of Produce has gone, it is thought this year to try the method.

A new check test, which the Speech has made us to know, is now being tried and is progressing well, so that our oil is processed within a week and gets to overseas within the next fortnight and in so doing there is no more delay and set up in F.F.A., and that helps to improve the standards of our oil in the world market. This was not discovered four years ago and this has been the cause of the E.R.D.C. losing very much money in its oil; for over four years it has lost over ten thousand tons of oil from S.P.O. to Grade I.

In that respect hundred thousands of pounds have been lost because the advice of African business men could not be accepted, and because the Director could not give way.

We are glad this year that the Minister of Production has found it possible to start this method, and it has been seen that the result of F.F.A. in the B.O.P. at Port Harcourt was considerably favourable than it has ever been before. But there has been a snag on the road. There is not equal concession of F.F.A. being given in all Bulk Oil Plants in order to allow expatriate firms to take their own way. It has been the practice in some B.O.Ps. instead of the F.F.A. limit to four per cent, it has been allowed to go to 4.5 per cent. In so doing, the oil of 4 per cent as S.P.O. will leave this country and mix up with oil of 4.5 per cent and then the quality of our oil will again become reduced. We must have one standard F.F.A. for our S.P.O. otherwise the new method will be defeated.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I come to the question of the University of Nigeria. One would have thought that Government would have made use of the existing institutions now that the financial state of the Region is meagre, especially one of the old Government colleges, for example, the Umuahia College.



In a few years time when the resources of the Region are fully improved consideration on the building of a new University will then be given and a suitable site considered as well. Any attempt at the moment to hurry at the selection of a site will not be to the advantage of the institution, nor to the Government. The partial failure of our U.P.E. is a full indication that whatever is not properly planned is bound to fail. Only some of those whose parents are able to give primary education will gain entrance to our colleges and our secondary schools. Who will then attend our University? There will be a class distinction. The financial commitments for the Region to start a new University now will be so enormous, and at this moment I feel the Government should be well advised to postpone the building of a new University.

Money saved for farmers for the stabilisation of their produce price when the price becomes low enough should not be taken for the establishment of a new University. The farmers should have 100 per cent of the benefit of whatever you are doing with their money.

The Chairman of the Marketing Board is of duty bound to keep the money from Governmental pilferage and to give account of his stewardship.

Now, Sir, the hospital in Owerri was built over thirty years ago by the old Native Administration. With the increase in the population of the area this old hospital is unable to cope with the number of people who require medical attention. There is also need for another Doctor and a Nursing Sister. I am also asking Government to build a Tuberculosis Annexe to the hospital there because due to the population many diseases like Tuberculosis and other contagious diseases abound. At present the T.B. patients are diverted to Port Harcourt because there is no accommodation for them in the hospital in Owerri. You cannot ask the poor patients to travel all the way to Port Harcourt. In the first place you are to consider what it will cost them to travel there and the danger of their passing on the disease to others in these thickly populated areas like Port Harcourt and Aba. I am therefore asking the Ministry of Health to provide the money for the erection of two T.B. wards for male and female patients in Owerri. The cost will not be much because the Doctor there is doing so well in T.B. cases.

I am asking Government to place a limit with reference to population when considering the replacing of County Councils by District Council otherwise the tendency will be for each Local Council to split in order to become a County Council. If this happens, you are bound to have a number of problems.

Sir, I beg to support the Motion.

**Mr M. N. Onwuma (Aba Division):** I would like to take this opportunity to associate myself with the views expressed by some of my colleagues. On the lucidity of the Speech from the Throne it is a tribute to the ability of the producer because it is not easy for one person to synthesise into one complete whole as a dovetail the work of various Ministers. I hope that when I return to my classroom teaching I will give some of the pieces as English comprehension lessons. (*Hear! Hear!*).

**Mr Speaker:** You will not have much time to say all you want to say. You have about three minutes, so you better go on with it now.

**Mr Onwuma:** The one point that is not contained in the Speech which I would like to point out is that of the Southerners in the service of the Northern Region. The Northern Region has made it a point to relieve Southerners of their services in the Northern Region. It seems to be a topic which should engage the attention of our Ministers to see whether a solution could be found. Whereas we are prepared to employ people from various Regions of the Federation some Regions are not prepared to employ Southerners at all.

Another point, Mr Speaker, which I think is worth mentioning is appointment of Electoral Officer or Electoral Commission. It seems to me that a lot of time is wasted when an election is anticipated to start to prepare a voters' list. I think that the matter ought to be taken in hand in anticipation of what can happen at any time.

I mention again this lump sum compensation. It is costing us a lot of money and it does not seem we can do much about it at the present. But a racket is going on which I would like the Premier and the Ministers to take up. Some of these expatriates take or elect to take

[MR ONWUMA]

their lump sum compensation and also remain in the Region and relieve the indigenous practitioners of their practices. I am referring to the case of one or two Doctors who have been practising in this Region. They don't like to remain: they accept the lump sum compensation quite alright. The trouble is not that they remain in the Region to practice but that they adroitly relieve the indigenous Doctors of this Region their retainer fees paid then by foreign firms. It seems to me that it is a thing which the Government has to take into serious consideration.

*And it being 11.45 a.m. Mr Speaker interrupted the business and the Debate stood adjourned. Debate to be resumed on Monday, 17th March, 1958.*

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Minister of Production, (Dr M. I. Okpara):** Mr Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until 10 a.m. on Monday, the 17th of March.

**The Minister of Commerce (Mr J. U. Nwodo):** Sir, I beg to second.

**Mr Speaker:** I wish to draw the attention of the House to a communication between the Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition and the Premier in respect of a matter which was raised on adjournment yesterday. The Leader of the Opposition gave a notice that he wished to clarify certain points in connection with that issue. I replied that I could not take any decision until he gave more information as to the nature of the matter which he would wish clarified. He has now written to me as follows:

"I would like to clear up the following impression.

1. (a) that a Public Servant has been engaged in lobbying;
- (b) that I dragged the matter to the floor of the House;
- (c) that the Premier's prerogative over the posting of Permanent Secretaries is challenged.

2. That we regard this matter not as a case of posting but as removal for dereliction of duty.

3. That it is the practice to conduct an enquiry whenever there is a major lapse. We would, therefore, want to know the true facts that have led up to something which smacks of sabotage."

In the usual course, this matter would ordinarily be referred to Government which is intended to give an answer. It was not. I have passed that document on to the Premier and minuted: "Hon. Premier: Above from Ikoku to see. Has Government any objection?"

He replied: "Yes, it is not in the best interests of the Region to discuss matters of administration in this way."

Years ago when I was first appointed, matters of this nature cropped up. Every Member is aware of my attitude in the matters. I refuse to have anything discussed in this manner when it relates to a particular individual. Administration, I understand, could be criticised, and on a number of occasions the Chief Whip of the Opposition has already done that and there was no objection from me.

Now, it would appear that we are going beyond bounds. I do not think it is in the best interests of the particular official concerned that matters concerning the performance of his duties should be discussed by politicians in the House of Assembly and unless any particular civil servant has intended that a politician should act for him, I believe it is wrong that this matter should be brought here. I have given you the full facts of this matter and I have read the correspondence so that there will be no misunderstanding. I do not intend to allow the hon. the Leader of the Opposition to reopen this matter in this House.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Adjourned accordingly at ten minutes to twelve o'clock noon.*

EASTERN HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Monday, 17th March, 1958

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

PRAYERS

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Merger of Interpreters' and Clerical Services

10. Mr R. O. Ukuta, M.B.E. asked the Premier, apropos the answer to question No. 308 of 1956, how soon will the merger of the Interpreters' and Clerical Services take place in view of fast-changing conditions.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier (Mr J. O. Umolu):** I am directed to answer as follows:—

It is not proposed to merge the Interpreters' Service with the Clerical Service at present. While in certain areas the need for a separate Interpreter Service is not now great, in others special detailed interpretation is necessary. In some places unqualified interpreters, who know special dialects, are almost indispensable, but they are not always qualified for the Clerical Service.

Many of the senior Interpreters perform executive duties of responsibility, and they will be eligible to the Executive Class in the same way as Clerical Officers.

**Mr Ukuta:** Is the hon. Premier aware that in the Judiciary of the Western Region the merger has taken place?

**Mr Umolu:** The hon. Premier is not aware.

Salaries in the Printing Department

11. Mr R. O. Ukuta, M.B.E. asked the Premier, how do the commencing salaries of the Assistant Superintendent of Press and the Proof Reader in the Eastern Region compare with those of their opposite numbers in the Federal, Western and Northern Governments; if anomalies exist, what is their justification and when will they be remedied.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier (Mr J. O. Umolu):** I am directed to answer as follows:—

The commencing salary of the three Assistant Superintendents of Press in this Region is £900. In the Western Region, the commencing salary of the three Assistant Superintendents of Press is £774, but the responsibility of these officers is not so great as that of officers of the same name in this Region: in the Western Region there are two Senior Assistant Superintendents of Press, whereas in this Region we have only one. The size of the Press in the Western Region is about the same as the one here.

In the Federal Service, Assistant Superintendents of Press have been re-named Technical Officers (Press) and they have an entry point of £594. Their responsibility is much less than that of our Assistant Superintendents of Press, which is similar to that of the four Higher Technical Officers (Press) in the Federal Service, who have a commencing salary of £1,056.

The Press in the Northern Region is a small one with one Assistant Superintendent of Press, commencing salary £570, and one Senior Assistant Superintendent of Press, commencing salary £900. The responsibility of the latter is similar to that of each of our Assistant Superintendents of Press, who are in charge of equipment worth about £40,000, and who handle materials worth about £15,000 each year.

It is not considered that there is any anomaly. The difference in organisation and nomenclature as between Regions is misleading, and action will be taken through the National Council on Establishments to achieve more uniformity in this respect.

The commencing salary of a Proof Reader in this Region is £570. There is no such post elsewhere.

Childrens' Allowances

15. Mr R. O. Ukuta, M.B.E. asked the Premier, how do Children's Allowances for expatriate and Nigerian Officers in the Eastern Region compare with those for officers in the Northern Region; if any disparities exist, how soon will they be removed.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier (Mr J. O. Umolu):** I am directed to answer as follows:—

In accordance with the General Orders which were in force before Regionalisation in 1954, an Expatriate Officer, during any tour in which he did not utilise children's passages, was allowed children's (Separate Domicile) Allowance for any period during which he was actually separated from his children. This Allowance was at the rate of £75 per annum and was payable in respect of children up to a maximum of two. Under the same General Orders, Nigerian Officers were also allowed Children's (Separate Domicile) Allowance, varying from between £57 and £75 per annum. The conditions which a Nigerian Officer has to fulfil in order to qualify for this Allowance were rather complicated and were laid down in General Orders. These General Orders still apply in this Region with the following exception. An Expatriate Officer is allowed Separate Domicile Allowance even though he may have utilised children's passages during that tour.

Executive Council has appointed a Committee to undertake the revision of General Orders. That Committee is at the moment working on the Section of General Orders relating to Children's (Separate Domicile) Allowance, and will shortly report to Executive Council. It will then be decided whether this Allowance should continue and if so, in what form.

The Northern Region adopted the recommendations made in the Gorsuch Report regarding Children's (Separate Domicile) Allowance. These recommendations were rejected by the Eastern Region Government. In the Northern Region the Allowance is not a Separate Domicile Allowance, but is payable from the child's birth up to the age of 18 years. An Overseas Officer receives an allowance of £120 per year for the first child, £96 a year for the second child and £72 a year for the third child. A Nigerian Officer whose basic salary is not less than £516 per annum, receives an Allowance of £72 per annum per child up to a maximum of three children.

The Government does not propose to follow the Northern Region in this matter. It should be noted that in the Western Region all

Children's Allowances have been abolished, and the only officers now receiving them are those who were entitled to them before they were abolished in 1955, and who have not accepted the new passage privilege terms.

#### Magistrate's Court at Obudu

23. **Mr J. A. Agba** asked the Minister of Justice, if he contemplates building a Magistrate's Court at Obudu; if so, how soon will this be commenced.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Justice (Mr D. O. Aligwekwe):** I am directed to answer as follows:—

There are other and more pressing demands for judicial buildings and there is no immediate intention of building at Obudu.

#### Headmasters in Standard VI Schools

33. **Mr N. O. Onwudiwe** asked the Minister of Education, whether in view of the fact that Headmasters of Schools with Standard VI classes have onerous and multifarious duties to perform, they will be relieved of class work to enable them to concentrate on supervision and co-ordination for the better management of the schools.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Education (Mr L. O. Uzoigwe):** I am directed to answer as follows:—

The Minister of Education is well aware of this problem, which was taken into consideration when the Grant-in-Aid Regulations were being drafted. If the hon. Member will refer to Grant-in-Aid Regulation 8 (a) he will see that in schools with an enrolment of 500 and above, it is permissible to appoint a full time Headmaster who has no teaching duties to perform.

#### Scholarships

38. **Mr S. N. Alo** asked the Minister of Education, how many students in each Division in the Region have been awarded full and partial scholarships by this Government for the period 1954-57; what has the Minister done to encourage backward Divisions which have not had an adequate share of the awards, in order to bring them into line with more advanced Divisions.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Education (Mr L. O. Uzoigwe):** I am directed to answer as follows:—

The hon. Member is referred to answer to question 168 during the Second Meeting—First Session of the Fourth House of Assembly which was published in the Daily Report of 18th February, 1958. The hon. Member is also referred to the revised scholarship policy as set out in Chapter VIII of Part I of Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1957.

#### COMMITTEE OF SELECTION

**The Minister of Production (Dr M. I. Okpara):** Sir, I beg to move that the following be Members of the Committee of Selection of the Eastern House of Assembly for the Session 1958–59 pursuant to Standing Order 54:—

Mr M. E. Ogon  
Mr K. J. N. Okpokam  
Mr N. O. Onwudiwe  
Mr A. G. Umoh  
Mr A. J. Ekpe  
Chief I. I. Morphy

**The Minister of Commerce (Mr J. U. Nwodo):** Sir, I beg to second.

#### *Question proposed.*

**Mr E. O. Eyo (Uyo Division):** Mr Speaker I would like to draw attention of the House to the provisions of the Standing Order under which the Minister is moving his motion—Standing Order 54 where it is clearly provided that the election of the Committee of Selection shall be at the commencement of every session. Now, Sir, since the 11th March, being the commencement of this session, it has taken the Government almost a week to decide. The other day, Sir, you had the occasion to refer a public petition to the Public Petitions Committee which was then not in existence. I want also to draw your attention to the provisions of Standing Order 62 which make it mandatory on the Committee of Selection to appoint three Standing Committees. Now that has not been done. Besides the Public Accounts Committee and the Standing Committee on Finance, Members will observe that other committees of the House have not been meeting, and I wonder what useful purpose is served in selecting members of these committees. I realise, Sir, that the Standing Orders Committee and the Public Petitions Committee cannot

meet unless there is some matter referred to them. Now, Sir, the House Committee is regarded as being a very important committee of the House. May I observe that from 1954 to date, I have not had any knowledge of the meeting of the House Committee. That committee, Sir, is charged specifically with all matters connected with the comfort and convenience of Members. Surely, Sir, the Chairman of that Committee cannot claim that Members have not complained over a number of years of any discomfort or inconvenience to warrant the sitting of the House Committee.

Perhaps it will be of importance to make one or two suggestions for the House Committee to enquire into. First, Sir, is the accommodation facilities for Members in the Catering Rest House. In 1952 I happened to serve on the House Committee and the matter was taken up by the House Committee which made all arrangements for the convenience of Members while they were attending meetings of the House and who happened to be accommodated in the Catering Rest House. The Committee also recommended that Members of the House should pay one-half of the accommodation charges in the Catering Rest House while attending meetings of the House or Committees of the House.

In Lagos we have the Legco flats in Ikoyi and all the Members who attend meetings of the House of Representatives who live in these Legco flats, have a full flat to themselves, furnished, with a refrigerator, cooking utensils, with two bedrooms. You are called upon to pay 10s 9d per night as against £1 7s 0d that you are called upon to pay at the Catering Rest House, here in Enugu. Now, Sir, it looks as if we are going to be here for over a month and at the rate of £1 7s 0d; we may be called upon to pay anything up to £40–£45.

There is also the question of the bar; I would like the House Committee to go into that. You find that the Retiring Room of Members is being used as the bar. Besides, Members have no special rooms where they can talk to members of the public. Members of the public go into the Retiring Room of Members, and what is worse, the bar is there. The House Committee should make recommendations to this House. The bar should not be run in the Members' Retiring Room

*Eastern House of Assembly Debates*

171

[Committee of Selection]

17 MARCH 1958

[Committee of Selection]

172

[Mr E. O. Eyo]

because not everybody would like to drink, and, also some Members would like to have somewhere to attend those who come into Enugu to consult the Members of the House.

The next Committee is the Statutory Corporation Committee, which is a very important Committee of the House, and yet Government on several occasions has treated this Committee with contempt, and I can even go further.

**Dr Okpara:** On a point of order. Mr Speaker, with your permission I beg to quote Standing Order No. 28 which reads as follows:—

“Debate upon any motion, Bill or amendment shall be relevant to such motion, Bill or amendment. . .”

My hon. Friend's speech is irrelevant as the motion before the House is on the Committee of Selection and not on the other multifarious Committees of this House.

**Mr Speaker:** I am in agreement with the the Minister of Production, but I do think that this is an opportunity for him to air his views on such matters.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** I thank you very much. When Government seeks shelter under any Standing Order, then the House should know there is something cooking.

**Mr Speaker:** This Government is not seeking shelter under any Standing Orders.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Alright, Sir. I was referring to the Statutory Corporations Committee, and I was saying that on several occasions Government has treated this Committee with contempt, and I can even go further and say that this House has been slighted. The Committee is supposed to consider any matter concerning the functions and affairs of any Corporation in the Eastern Region as the House may refer to it from time to time. There is no other machinery provided under the Standing Orders of the House to conduct any Inquiry into the affairs of the Public Corporations of the Region. But, Sir, you will remember in June, 1956, there was a motion on the administration of the E.R.D.C. and upon an amendment by the Premier himself, the House resolved that

Government should conduct an enquiry into its affairs, but made it very specific that the result of the findings and whatever action Government contemplated should be reported back to the House. That was the resolution of the House. The Government did not abide by that.

Again, Sir, in August, 1957, another inquiry was conducted into the affairs of the E.R.D.C. but this House has not had the opportunity of debating the report. Government suppressed it and refused publication. I am submitting that the Government cannot override the provisions of any Standing Order. Where Government appointed an independent Commission to enquire into any matter which is not provided for under any Standing Order of the House, then the Government can decide to accept or reject the recommendations or findings of such Commission. But where we Members of the House made provision in our Standing Orders setting up any Committee to inquire into certain matters, I say that the Government has not the right to withhold the report of any such inquiry.

Again, Sir, the Premier himself appointed his Legal Adviser to conduct an inquiry into the affairs of certain Corporations in the Region: the Cinema, the Printing and Pharmaceutical Corporations. The report was submitted to the Premier and we only read in the newspapers that these Corporations had been suspended. The report has not been submitted to the House. How then, Sir, can we know what is going on in these Corporations? After setting up a Commission of Inquiry it is only the Government that is in possession of the report. I submit that the House should have every opportunity to debate the affairs of every Corporation on which an inquiry has been conducted. During this session, with regard to the Cinema Corporation, I hope that Members will be given every opportunity to debate its affairs. And in order that we should not be wasting our time, the various Committees appointed by the Committee of Selection should meet from time to time and submit reports to this House.

**Mr Speaker:** I approve that the Motion is in order.

*Question put and agreed to.*

Ordered: That the following be members of the Committee of Selection of the Eastern House of Assembly for the Session 1958-59 pursuant to Standing Order 54:—

Mr M. E. Ogon  
Mr K. J. N. Okpokam  
Mr N. O. Onwudiwe  
Mr A. G. Umoh  
Mr A. J. Ekpe  
Chief I. I. Morphy.

### ORDER OF THE DAY

#### Governor's Speech (Debate on the Address) (Fifth Allotted Day)

*Order read for resuming adjourned Debate on Question (11th March):*

"That a Humble Address of Thanks be presented to His Excellency the Governor, for His Excellency's Most Gracious Speech".

*Question again proposed.*

**Mr Speaker:** If the House will agree, I suggest that each Member speaks for 15 minutes in this debate. It will enable most of the hon. Members to talk on this matter. The hon. the Leader of the Opposition, I say that further speeches on this Motion should be limited to 15 minutes either from Government Front Bench or from the Opposition Bench. We owe to the public that everybody here should speak on the Motion and I feel that every Member should be given the opportunity to do so.

**Mr S. G. Ikoku (Enyong Division):** If I may say something, we the Opposition are called upon to reply to the Speech from the Throne and I do not see how we can do it in 15 minutes. It is our duty, Sir, to this House and the public to be able at least to state our views on the Speech from the Throne. This does not mean that everyone of us will speak for the stipulated time of 30 minutes but I am suggesting that we be given ample opportunity to reply to the Speech in full.

**Mr Speaker:** If my suggestion is not agreeable to you, I will make another. If Members are now to speak for a maximum period of 30 minutes, then I propose that when it comes to debating the Appropriation Bill, I need not call on all Members to speak at the time of the debate, and when hon. Members have opportunity to speak this time, they may

deal with both the Speech from the Throne and the Appropriation Bill. It seems to me important that as many Members as possible should be given an opportunity to talk. It is only six days which include the two days, Tuesday and Wednesday, and the Opposition can rightly, in the performance of their duty, decide to have a day and a half to debate upon the amendment. It is a very important amendment and I think I will give full opportunity for it to be debated. Even then, having used a day and a half for debating the amendment, surely, the other Members, especially the Members of the Government Side who did not have the opportunity to debate on this amendment, should be given an opportunity to talk about the matters that really affect them. I think it is only fair. I am not in favour of allowing any abuse of parliamentary procedure. It is fair for both sides to be given opportunity and so far as I am concerned, I think the Opposition has been given sufficient hearing on this matter. I propose to give you 30 minutes if you insist on the matter to be debated to the fullest extent. However, I think I should make it clear that I do not intend to call upon any Opposition Member today.

**Chief I. I. Morphy (Ogoja Division):** What I want to state, Sir, is that most of us have not spoken and should be given opportunity to speak.

**Mr Speaker:** Yes, but the Standing Order provides for four days and we have only two days left. If I allow any Opposition Member to speak for half an hour, surely, we will not be able to go through the Speech and I think we have allowed sufficient time to the Opposition. The Government is entitled to air its views on the matter too.

**Chief Morphy:** Suppose the front Bench Members of the Opposition are allowed to speak for 30 minutes and back benchers of the Opposition 15 minutes.

**Mr Speaker:** I will do nothing of the sort.

**Mr Ikoku:** May I speak on a point arising from the remark that you do not intend to call on the Opposition today. May I say that the Speech from the Throne is a statement of Government Policy and in effect the debate on it is between the Opposition and the Government.

**Mr Speaker:** I am aware of that.

**Mr Ikoku:** And I do not see much point in the Back Benchers on the Government Side being called upon to contribute to the debate (*Interruption*).

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order.

**Mr Ikoku:** Their time is during the debate on the Appropriation Bill and in the Committee of Supply. They will have their time to say all that they want to say. The point I am trying to make is that the Speech from the Throne is a statement of Government Policy and if we are really to examine this Policy, it is a battle between the Government Bench and the Front Bench of the Opposition for that matter.

The principle I am driving at is that we do not seem to gain much by Members, Back Benchers of the Government Party, contributing to the debate on the Speech from the Throne. The proper place for them to air their views about Government Policy is in their Parliamentary Council. When it is a question of talking about their constituencies and the rest of it, then they can air their views. And that is during the debate on the Appropriation Bill. That is my humble submission, Sir.

Much as we have aired our views on the amendments, I would like to make it clear that we did air our views on specific issues.—three issues only. The speech contains much more than three issues.

**Mr Speaker:** There is one point I do not see with you and that is the question of what Members are entitled to speak on the Appropriation Bill. They can only talk strictly about the financial policy of the Region and not general review. This is the proper time when Members should talk about water supplies, electricity supply. If you do think that for your part you need the assurance that you only will be allowed 30 minutes to speak on behalf of the Opposition, I am willing to give it to you, but then I think it would be quite clear that if you take 30 minutes to yourself, in view of the short time left to us, you would not expect me to call on every Opposition Member. I think we should all be fair in this matter. When you debated on your amendments you and Mr Eyo insisted that all other Members of the Opposition had a say—the principle I would like you

to adhere—and naturally I think it is important from the point of view of your constituencies that we should see it recorded that you all said something. Surely, it is important on your side. If you like to listen to whatever the House would say, Front Benchers of the Opposition may do so, but I suggest that tomorrow if you wish to exercise your right to the fullest extent, you will be allowed and your Chief Whip will be at liberty to speak for 30 minutes. On Wednesday too, on the other hand, you know exactly what the position is. If Private Members would agree to give up their day tomorrow, we can go on and make sure that we finish as soon as you can. I am willing to hear you.

**Mr Ikoku:** You have just stated that in the debate on the amendments that we wanted all Members of the Opposition to speak. But that had not in fact materialised.

**Mr Speaker:** It may be one or two Members did not speak, otherwise everybody spoke.

**Mr Ikoku:** The Speaker should use his discretion.

**Mr Speaker:** I shall continue to use my discretion.

**Mr Ikoku:** We cannot, Sir, challenge the exercise of your discretion, but all we are saying is that the principle involved is that the policy outlining Government programme for the next twelve months should be debated in this House and I consider it a waste of time for Government Back Benchers to speak.

**Mr Speaker:** It is not my business under the Standing Orders to dictate or indicate how long the debate will last. If it is the opinion of this House that you are not given sufficient time to debate then I think the best we can do is to amend the Standing Order so that you can come here by way of resolution and discuss any particular item which you wish to. I am bound by the Standing Orders to ensure that debates come to a conclusion just four days and all I am trying to do is to ensure that everybody is given an opportunity to represent his constituency. I believe you all are as important to your constituencies as every other person.

How many of your men would you like to speak on the rest of this debate?



**Mr Ikoku:** We can confer on that, but if we accept your ruling of fifteen minutes per speaker, we will add it all up.

**Mr Speaker:** You told me that the people whose duty it is to speak on this motion sit in the Front Bench. How many of them in the Front Bench do you think ought to speak?

**Mr Ikoku:** As far as we are concerned—this being purely a matter of policy—we can put up a possible maximum of two speakers.

**Mr Speaker:** Two speakers? Who are these going to be?

**Mr Ikoku:** We will consult and tell you.

**Mr Speaker:** Consult and tell me.

**Mr Ikoku:** We are not speaking today. We will consult during the break.

**Mr Speaker:** Are you sure that two Members only from the Front Bench will speak tomorrow?

**Mr Ikoku:** We are sure.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Onwuma, ten minutes only.

**Mr M. N. Onwuma (Aba Division):** That's enough.

It has become necessary for Government to press on and to press on urgently, the revision of the General Orders; not necessarily the part dealing with the allowance for children but I am particularly concerned also with the part that has to deal with leave. If you take up the *Regional Gazette*, from time to time you will discover that expatriate officers have to be on leave for 300 days. In fact, there is a case where an officer has to be on leave for 329 days. I do not know what time remains for him to serve this Region.

Another point which I would like to understand quite clearly is that which runs through the Governor's Speech concerning the "Spirit of the Constitution." I do not understand what that really means so that at a later stage when the Minister will reply, I would like an explanation on that.

To build the "University of Nsukka" at this stage is absolutely unnecessary. What I prefer the Government to do is to press on with anything that will increase the number of children in this Region who get basic primary education, free even if only up to standard II. I will support that move in every respect. If there is no money to support the U.P.E. even up to Standard II, I cannot consider seriously that there is an urgent necessity to have the "University of Nsukka". Not of course that a University is not a necessary institution in a society.

**Mr Speaker:** I am not aware that it is intended to build a "University of Nsukka".

**Mr Onwuma:** The "N" may be for "Nsukka" or for "Nigeria". Those who can go to the University are just a handful of people and it is necessary, indeed far more important, for us to provide basic primary education so that everybody in this Region can at least sign his/her name. The source of money for building the University of Nigeria is subject to fluctuations which plagues the world market because, I am told that the money will come from the Marketing Board. The Marketing Board reserves can be subject to market value fluctuations so that even if we had enough money now for the University, we cannot be sure that in some years to come there will be enough money for the University. To carry on, it would have been much better, as a matter of fact much more laudable, if we had used the money for the proposed University to support Universal Primary Education Scheme up to Standard II. At any rate, if the University must be built, I would like it to be built at Aba! (*Laughter*). It is the most central position in the Region. If that town is not considered suitable it could be built somewhere between Aba and Ikot Ekpene.

Mr Speaker, we have again proposed to build the House of Chiefs. Let the argument not be that just because there are the Houses of Chiefs in the Western and Northern Regions, therefore there must be a House of Chiefs in the Eastern Region (*Laughter*). I am concerned purely with the financial side of the proposal. If this House of Chiefs is to be established and we have say sixty Members in the House of Chiefs it could be imagined how much it will

[MR ONWUMA]

cost the Region in one year. With the proposed expansion of the number of representatives in the House of Assembly to 124 and add sixty Members of House of Chiefs, it will cost the Region no less than £17,000 as recurrent expenditure let alone capital costs. If we are going to establish the House of Chiefs let us make sure that the money is there. We cannot start it all of a sudden and afterwards say we have not got enough money to continue the buildings, as has been the fate of the U.P.E. Scheme.

I fully support my hon. Friend, the Government Chief Whip, about what he said on sale of Government Investments. Government need not sell premium yielding investments to individual capitalists. If Government must sell its investments, it will be better to sell to Co-operatives or to firms of larger units. Those who have enough money in this Region to buy profitable Government shares are individual capitalists who evade taxation and licence their cars and lorries across the Niger.

Mr Speaker, I heartily welcome the appointment of a Committee to investigate the system of education in the Region. May I add that whoever are members of this proposed Committee should be people who are versed in matters of education, not only in this country but also it must include such others as are suitable from other parts of the world.

Whatever we do let us remember that teachers up to this moment have not been paid and after three months teachers who have not been paid will say we have broken faith with them. This matter—payment of teachers' salaries—should be taken up most urgently.

Mr Speaker, the Hospital in Enugu, the capital of the Region, is very shameful because the buildings are of the poorest types. It requires more modern buildings.

The Minister of Local Government issues all sorts of circulars. He issues one today and cancels it tomorrow with another. As a matter of fact, the Minister of Local Government has become the Minister of Circulars. (*Laughter*). Another circular mania stricken Minister is the Minister of Justice. He has issued a circular

that if one quarrels with his wife they must be taken to Court. (*Laughter*). Mr Speaker, it is necessary that minor disputes between husband and wife should be settled out of court for goodness sake.

**Mr S. O. Achara (Okigwi Division):** I read from paragraph 5 of the Speech from the Throne that there are 257 vacancies in this Region and that a great deal of scouting is going on to find members from the junior service who have the necessary experience and qualifications to fill these vacancies. I would like to refer in particular, Mr Speaker, to the lot which has become that of the Local Government trained staff who have been suffering since they returned to join the public service of this Region.

On their qualification, Sir, they came back and took offices here. They were reverted to the offices they were occupying before—third-class clerks, second-class clerks, and first-class clerks as the case may be. What about their counterparts in the Western and Northern Regions? In the case of the Northern Region as soon as they qualified at Ibadan they were appointed straight as Administrative Officers and Assistant Secretaries. In the case of the West, executive posts were created, and these trainees filled these vacancies and while on these executive posts they were being trained to assume higher responsibilities. But what we find here is the opposite of what has been done in the other two Regions. One of these trained gentlemen, Mr Speaker, was sent on scholarship by this Government to the University of Exeter. He was there for three years and had his diploma in Public Administration and came back here and was posted to one of the Ministries here as a third-class clerk. He got disappointed and frustrated and resigned and left the public service last year. The others are still languishing here. I am appealing to the Government to take very serious view of this matter. We would not like to create a state of frustration in the public service. Afterwards the civil servants carry out the fine policies and programmes we draw up here. This matter was hammered upon during the Budget Session last year and up till now nothing has been done. I would like this matter taken up very seriously.

**Mr Speaker:** Is he still languishing?

**Mr Achara:** All of them are still languishing, Mr Speaker; not one excepted.

Mr Speaker, the idea of the University of Nigeria is a grand one and normally I would support the provision of a University here in the Eastern Region. But, Mr Speaker, my fear has been that we have not had enough money to see through our Universal Primary Education and I do not see, Sir, how in the face of the fact that Universal Primary Education has failed, we can now embark upon something which will cost quite a lot of money. It is not an easy thing. It is not easy to build a University. It requires quite a lot of money. I have never been to a University myself but at least I have been to Ibadan and I have seen buildings and I am in a position to appreciate that it is not all that easy to put up a University. I would have preferred, Sir, that the money proposed to be used in building this University, whether at Nsukka or anywhere, should be used in stabilising our Universal Primary Education. (*Applause from the Opposition Bench*) I would like to associate myself fully, Sir, with the last speaker, that the source of this money depends upon world trade and we cannot just say that we shall continue to get so much from the Marketing Board every year. What if the trade collapses?

Mr Speaker, even if we have the money, and if money were available now, I would have suggested, Sir, that we should begin from the known to the unknown. Those who sited the Government College at Umuahia many years ago took several factors into consideration. Umuahia is central and is only seventy miles from the second largest harbour in Nigeria. Sir, the School of Agriculture at Umuahia has developed, and the Joint Hospital which perhaps is only second to that of the University Teaching Hospital, Ibadan, is there. There is also the Union of Theological College at Umuahia. What I am saying is that I do not see how we can site a University at Nsukka—it is an outlandish place; it is far away from the people it is supposed to serve. It may be that in future when we develop research institutions in this Region we might site a could be research institution in Nsukka where learned professors go and do nothing but research. But if it is a question of a university, Sir, I think we should take advantage of the facilities already provided at Government College, Umuahia.

Mr Speaker, let me congratulate the Government on the expansion being made at the General Hospital, Okigwi. Our people are very happy indeed, and I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Minister of Health. I also like to congratulate the Government on the expansion being made at the General Hospital, Enugu. For many years people have cried about shortage of drugs and accommodation, but within recent months quite a lot has been done. But I observe that contrary to suggestions Government has not seen it fit to make provision for a specialist hospital in this Region. During the Budget Session of last year mention was made of this.

**Mr Nwodo:** What is the cost?

**Mr Achara:** Whatever it costs, Mr Minister of Commerce, we have had a recent need to fly a Minister of State to the United Kingdom for specialist treatment. If we had a specialist hospital here the expenses of flying him could have been averted—as a matter of fact I would suggest that reasonable sum of money be set aside to start this specialist hospital. I would like Government to take a serious view of this matter and, if money were available, whether from the Marketing Board or elsewhere a start should be made.

Mr Speaker, I would like to ask that Government should separate the functions of the Chairmanship of the E.R.D.C. from the Chairmanship of the Marketing Board.

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

Mr Speaker, I think in rising to contribute my quota to this Speech, I have one or two observations to make. First of all I have to say that the document prepared by Government is a massive one, and I have to congratulate His Excellency on the able way he presented the Speech.

In the years past we had one ex-Governor who was not all that fluent, even though we just gave him one or two lines to read; but the present Governor, I must say, is a very intelligent Governor of the Eastern Region. *Hear! Hear!*

Mr Speaker, I have to come again to this vexed question of revealing official secrets either in this Region or in the Federation as a whole, because I still regard myself as one of

[MR ONYERI]

those few taught by the hon. the Premier, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, to be thinking in terms of one Nigeria and say that if an African reveals a secret, it is something like a sabotage and if an expatriate reveals same let him go from the country. Sir, if we want to train our people to man all our executive posts we must make them to realise that they are working for their nation.

I have here, Mr Speaker, a document, a secret document for that matter, cyclostyled by a junior staff of the Premier's Office to the effect that he was inviting an area to come and decide those who will be the Members of the proposed House of Chiefs. Mr Speaker, am I permitted to read?

**Mr Speaker:** You are not permitted.

**Mr Onyeri:** What I am saying, Mr Speaker, is that we must inculcate in the minds of our people the sense of duty and go all out to check this revelation of official secrets. If our people in these high positions in the Civil Service leak information of the Government or plans of the Government they are actually endangering the Government at that stage and certainly, civil servants must know that they are either trafficking with the Government or the individual concerned. And for civil servants, highly paid as such, to be indulging in this type of thing is a very serious matter. It is only the politicians that will be playing politics but if civil servants want to play politics they should resign their posts in the civil service and join us to play politics as they think fit. That is my contention in the whole issue. I join issue with my hon. Members to condemn the civil servants who go all out to leak official secrets.

Mr Speaker, I have one thing again to say about Commissions of Inquiry. I must say that we have had enough of Commissions of Inquiry in this Region. Experience has thought me a lesson about Commissions of Inquiry. I am a victim of your Commission of Inquiry. Innocent people have been victimised; innocent people's names have been dragged to the mud—mine is a shining example; you give the people the licence to spoil others names and they say it is a fact finding commission where they cannot even prove their

case. What I am saying here is that whatever the attitude of the Government is about Commissions of Inquiry, we have given latitude to unscrupulous individuals to tarnish the reputation of others just because we want a sort of saint which God never gave to man. Commissions of Inquiry are good in certain respects but in this Region Commissioners and witnesses have used the platform to tarnish the reputation of their political opponents.

Mr Speaker, Sir, there is another thing I want to draw your attention in His Excellency's Speech, and that is the welfare of Ex-Servicemen. During the war years, Mr Speaker, the hon. Premier asked all the youths of this country to join the Army, not only to save Britain, but also to save Nigeria from the hands of an enemy. Many of our youths joined the Army: some of them served Overseas, and others served at home. Sir, it is alleged that during the war years the Ex-Servicemen who served Overseas were promised 2s bonus per day service. In spite of the fact that we have a Minister of Welfare in this Region, charged with the welfare of Ex-Servicemen, nothing has been done to pay this bonus to the Ex-Servicemen. Can't the Minister get in touch with the War Office and get the full facts about the Ex-Servicemen's claim? In course of few more years Nigeria shall be self-governing and we shall be called upon to bear an additional responsibility which was more or less an international matter, an issue which could have been settled before independence. I am asking, Sir, that our Minister of Welfare should take into consideration the welfare and the plight of those who fought and made it possible for us to live happily here in Nigeria.

Mr Speaker, I have to touch our road system in the Region. The Minister of Transport—although I have to congratulate him—said that all our roads in the Eastern Region are nice; but may I just refer you, Sir, to the fact that last year our Premier and the Governor happened to travel in canoe; they risked their lives in Trunk A road at Ugwu-Oba. By that time there was a diversion from mile 23, Oji River to Achi-Inyi-Ajalli-Nnewi-Onitsha. Up till today we have not made any provision so that in case what happened last year should recur this year we should be able to get an alternative road passing

through the Headquarters here to Onitsha and Port Harcourt. What I am saying is that the above alternative route and bridges be repaired in time before the rains start this season. Unfortunately, Sir, the road from Port Harcourt is still worse than what it was even last year and we are being told that our roads are very nice and decent. If we want our commerce in this Region to expand certainly we must see first of all to our road maintenance.

Mr Speaker, I support the Motion.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Commerce (Mr E. W. Udonkim):** Mr Speaker, I am glad that I am called upon to speak on this Motion. I have heard a lot of things which people spoke but which are not from their hearts.

During the debate on the abolition of County Councils in this Region so many people that I know were up against County Councils being in operation campaigned vigorously against it and when they came to the floor of this House they opposed it without genuine reasons. I am sure that this sort of opposition will lead us nowhere.

Recently there have been much criticisms against specific Corporations. Corporations are separate bodies from the Government and they should be allowed to germinate and grow by themselves. There have been a lot of criticisms brought to this House by Members of the House against several corporations; public corporations or private corporations are separate entities and they should not be brought to the floor of this House.

**Mr Ikoku:** They are accountable to this House.

**Mr Udonkim:** I know perfectly well that there has been nothing wrong with our so many corporations rather than lack of personnel with managerial abilities. I would suggest to the Government that more scholarships should be given to men and women of this Region to study at Universities so that they may come back and man our businesses. I have recently been to Nkalagu Cement Factory and I saw quite a marvellous work being done there and I ask the Government to help by ensuring that the Cement Factory at Port Harcourt

work hand in hand with the Cement Factory at Nkalagu. The only thing needed there is to enlarge them or to put in extra kiln.

Mr Speaker, I call upon the Government to make arrangements with the E.C.N. to generate electricity from the Qua falls so that the whole of the Calabar Province might get electricity. Again, I am asking the Minister of Town Planning to take a serious view in planning the Uyo Township, the only township in Ibibio land.

There has been so much talk about the siting of the University of Nigeria. People should not clamour where the University is going to be built. The fact that this University will be built at Nsukka does not mean that it will belong to the people of Nsukka only, neither does it entitle the people of Nsukka to send their children into the University before other people. For instance, some people may live near a Government Training Centre, but cannot send their children there.

Some people say that the launching of the U.P.E. should take priority over the building of the University. In this respect, we must follow the example of other nations of the world. In all civilised countries of the world, Universities were first established before the introduction of the Universal Free Primary Education. There are a large number of our boys and girls who are frustrated in the United States and England owing to the fact that they have not been near home to get the support of their own people. If we get our own Universities here at home we will be better equipped to train our boys and girls here in this country instead of at overseas Universities. Therefore, I am suggesting very seriously that we must not toy with anything which will be in the interests of the younger generation. It was this Region that first proposed the University, but now the Western Government is negotiating very seriously with an American Institution to open a University. At the same time the Northern people are also negotiating now to get a University; therefore, we of this Region should have our own University. In fact this Region deserves to get two or three Universities.

Going back home, I have to congratulate the Government, especially the Minister of Health, for the generous effort to give us the sum of

[MR UDONKIM]

£40,000 towards the building of Opobo Hospital, and suggest that one more medical officer be added in order that he and the present medical officer may work together and improve the health of the people there.

The next thing, Sir, is that I have seen that the Government of this Region is doing everything to help the people of Opobo Division. (*Hear! Hear!*) I appeal that the Government should at the same time try to get the Marketing Board to pay port prices for Palm Produce bulked in Opobo in order to facilitate the opening of the factories closed there due to diversion of trade. I am sure that when this is done produce from Uyo, Eket, Ikot Ekpene and Abak will find easy bulking station there than going the long way to Port Harcourt and many days to Calabar. The frequent coming of tankers to collect produce from Opobo will help in wearing out the silt in Opobo bar.

In conclusion, I am asking the Government that, in implementing the opening of technical schools in the Region, they should not forget that Opobo is in dire need of a technical secondary school.

Sir, I beg to support the motion.

**Mr H. U. Akpabio (Uyo Division):** Mr Speaker, in the first place, I have to thank the Government of this Region for the work they have done for the people of this Region in the past years; and also for the proposals they have put up for the coming year.

I do not know why the Government agreed to the lump sum compensation of £9,000 to the expatriate servants in the service of this Region. This is another compensation of the Royal Niger Company. (*Laughter*). If this Region will pay up to about a million pounds, the five Governments in the Federation will pay about five million pounds. This will be a very big sum of money leaving this country.

**Mr Speaker:** Will you speak up, please.

**Mr H. U. Akpabio:** The next thing I would like to talk about, Mr Speaker, is the Public Service Commission. It is stated in the Speech from the Throne that every attempt is

being made to send people over to England and to other countries to recruit men to serve in this Region. There are some Departments in this Region where civil servants have had a long training both in the United States of America and in England, and according to Davies and Carter/Okoye Reports they were to be upgraded, but this was not done. Mr Speaker, Sir, there is a clear case of a Senior Assistant Agricultural Officer who was refused upgrading while this Officer had made notable contribution in the Department. Mr Speaker, Sir, some of these officers are still on their old scale of salaries, and there are those who have had their training at the University College, Ibadan, and at some Overseas Universities, yet they have not been promoted. It is a surprise, Sir, that the Government should go about looking for trained people elsewhere when they have got people here who should be upgraded. An In-service Training should be organised for these people in order that they can be promoted to Executive posts in the Government.

Mr Speaker, Sir, another point I would like to speak about is the Office of the Commissioner in London. The office has done a lot of work for the students in England and also in publicising the activities of our Government and the people of this Region, and other Regions of Nigeria, but the upkeep and maintenance of five Commissioners' Offices including diplomatic relations for the country are no simple business; they take a lot of money if we want to be up to the standard of other countries. Since we are having independence in 1960, the Government of this Region together with the Government of other Regions, should consider seriously the closing down or the scrapping of these five offices of the Commissioners and have one office of the Commissioner representing one Nigeria.

Mr Speaker, another point is the Department of Agriculture which has done a lot of experiments. I had been reading about these experiments when I was a schoolboy and I still continue to see experiments being carried out by this particular Department. I know they have done a lot of work in this sphere, but, at the same time, a more definite programme should be undertaken in the training of farmers and the public. In this respect funds and land should be provided for the farmers trained to start individual farms. It is needless to go

on experimenting for years without putting experiment into concrete practice. I know that good work is being done in pottery industry in Enugu and Aba. I know that very good work is being done in the pottery centre at Enugu. In Uyo Division, there was a pottery centre at Ikot Abasi and it was rather unfortunate that this centre was about to be closed down due to lack of funds for its maintenance. It was finally handed over to Iman District Council which has limited resources now that the Council has to provide funds for the schools. I am suggesting, Sir, that the Government should take over the centre again. I was told by the officer-in-charge that there is large quantity of good quality clay at Ekpene Obom, just about two miles away from the centre. The Government, I am told, proposes to use this clay at Enugu Centre.

Next thing I want to talk about is the Ministry of Finance. The reason why most people fail to pay their tax in time is due to the fact that most of the people were wrongly assessed, especially the people in the rural areas. I have carried a lot of petitions to the District Officer, asking that the assessment be reduced and so on. I am suggesting that in future a new organisation or a new machinery be set up so that appeals should be heard before the actual collection of the tax. There are thousands of appeals pending in the Region. This is one of the causes why people have not paid their tax. The method and machinery of appeal is so complicated that an ordinary man does not know what to do.

I have to thank the Government for the hospitals built with the lot of money voted, and should like to say that the hospitals are going on very well. Some time last year in this House many Members spoke about the rising cost of treatment in voluntary agency hospitals and nothing has been done to check it and since the Government spends a lot of money in support of most of these voluntary agency hospitals, I think that the tax-payers have right also to have treatment there, but how can these poor men pay for their treatment when the fees are so high. It would be fair to these people who pay the tax if there should be a check.

We are going to undertake reorganisation of the Local Government. I must point out that one of the causes of the failure of the Local Government system is the fact that most

of the people who were employed were people of Standard IV, Standard V or even Standard II. They all came from the old N.A. We have appealed to the Government for their transfer from the executive posts as they cannot pull with the work. In future, people who know exactly what is to be done should be appointed. You will find that in many cases, the returns of many years have not been sent up to this time and this is due to the fact that most of these people do not know what to do.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I am referring to the law that compels our women who get married while in the Civil Service to resign their appointment. This law should be amended or repealed completely. The aim of good law is not to discriminate against a section of the community. This law is in fact discriminatory in nature, contents and intent against a section of people in the Region. We want women to enjoy the same status in the service. Therefore we should give them equal treatment in the public service of the Eastern Region of Nigeria. (*Hear! Hear!*) The discriminatory law kills incentive in women and it is necessary that the law be amended.

Again, Mr Speaker, it is hard for most of the private organisations or individuals to get any loan from the Loans Board. I know that in the past few years, the Government made a law to facilitate taking of loans, and in fact, I understand that there were offices for loans in different parts of the Region and that people could approach loan offices for loan arrangements but now people have come all the way to Enugu and when they come over, it becomes almost impossible for them to make appropriate arrangement for loans. I am suggesting that since it is put down in the Speech from the Throne that this year the Government is prepared to give out loans, loans offices should be established in all parts of the Region so that people can have easy access to the Loans Board or to make applications there before they come over to Enugu for final negotiation.

Sir, I want to talk about the Town Planning. It appears to me that most of the towns in Nigeria are still planned in the old way. You have the pedestrians, the cyclists, the motor vehicles taking the same road, and this is one of the causes of accidents in Nigeria. I think if we plan the cities in such a way that we have the

[MR H. U. AKPABIO]

side-walks for pedestrians and cyclists and lawns in front of buildings, it will be much better than having everybody to walk in the street.

Sir, I am glad that there is profit in the Tourist Corporation. The Ministry of Commerce should see to it that there is a Catering Rest House at Uyo. When the Minister and others make tours of Uyo Division, they usually put up in the Catering Rest House at Aba and from there travel to Uyo. This is needless loss of money and time. Much time and money will be saved if a Catering Rest House is built at Uyo. Uyo is fast becoming a big town in the Eastern Region of Nigeria. (*Interruption*) The present source of water supply in Uyo Township is very very bad. The implementation of the rural water scheme in Uyo Division has been very slow.

Mr Speaker, I thank Government for all they have done in the Region. (*Hear! Hear!*).

**Mr D. E. Akilo (Udi Division):** Mr Speaker, I have certain observations to make. In the first place, I have to dwell more on education. If there is anything that Government should take a serious view about it is our education and the pioneers of education in this Region are the Voluntary Agencies. The people under this Department so-called are not encouraged as far as conditions of service are concerned. It is only in this Department, Sir, that teachers have not yet got their conditions of service. It is only in this Department that there is no promotion to encourage the experienced headmasters to retire at a higher scale than is hitherto given to them. I thought, Sir, that these headmasters with long years of service should be given opportunities to enter into their extended scales which we have seen approved in the scales of salaries for teachers.

If a person has reached his maximum, it is very tiresome and very unpopular for him to mark time for donkey years. Again, Sir, there is a class of teachers among the Voluntary Agency teachers that is very unfortunate, that is the class of teachers that started teaching in those days when teachers' salaries ranged from 2s 6d to 7s 6d. These teachers are on the Special Register known as C/S Teachers. Many of them have had ability to teach even

better than those teachers that have gone for training. I suggest that these teachers be encouraged by giving them honorary certificates according to their abilities. Higher Elementary certificates should be given to those teachers with high ability and Lower Elementary certificates should be given to those who qualify to teach in junior primary schools. I think, Sir, if this is done our education should be encouraged and progress made on that line.

The next point I have to touch, is our Medical Department. I have to thank the Minister of Health for the extensions that have been done in this Enugu township (*Hear! Hear!*). It is true, Sir, that not every Division has the facility of having a hospital at present, but as far as I can just suggest those places that are very far away from the centres of hospitals should be encouraged to have at least rural health centres. These rural health centres as time goes on will be converted into cottage hospitals and this will do us a lot of good. By the way, Sir, I have to take this opportunity to thank the Minister of Local Government for having given or approving in principle the vote of £4,500 to the Ezeagu District Council in Udi Division. This will be of more service to the people if that money is given now to start the work for it is time to do so.

My next observation, Sir, is Local Government. His Excellency stated in the Speech from the Throne that a Bill to amend the Local Government Law will be moved at this meeting of the House. It will deal mainly with proposals to give the Minister of Local Government powers of compulsory transfer of Local Government staff. That, of course, is rather overdue. I uphold this idea. Many inefficient Local Government staff are shelved by the widewings of nepotism or by the "son of the soil" policy. I think time is up that these people should be transferred to other Divisions in the Region where they are to stay and work so that if they are inefficient the next thing to do is to terminate them at once without wasting the Region's money.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the next one I have to dwell upon is tax. It is barely about three weeks ago that I spoke in this hon. House about the ways and means of catching those tax evaders. Since then, I have been thinking of the method we have to adopt now in order to



get in our net, those our big guns, the contractors, the businessmen and the traders whose salaries are not well known. These people have money but they are the people that pay less, if they do pay at all.

I suggest that we have to make our observations through the sources from where they get their own contracts. We have to refer to the departments or firms that give them contract in order to know how much that is given to them. In the case of businessmen, we have to refer to the bank and know how much money they have got there. In the case of traders, they must come under the category of those that will pay tax through their town unions, the secretaries of which will know their occupations and how wealthy they are. Government can find out from the secretaries how to assess those traders who pretend to be petty traders when they are big businessmen. By so doing such evaders have no more ways to evade tax payment in the Region.

The industrialisation of this Region is rather overdue. I should ask the E.R.D.C. to expand its own work at present. The soil of Udi Division has been proved to be very very good for Cashew Industry. Time and again I always speak in this House to the Chairman of that Corporation that the people of Udi are prepared to give free land to this Corporation if the Corporation is prepared to have any land there.

At present we have so many school leavers hanging about in big townships. Why can't that Corporation expand the Cashew Industry in Udi Division and employ as many hands as possible in the Ajali Cashew Plantation.

The site for our University of Nigeria has been a controversial subject. I think this site has not been chosen at random. An expert has been sent to survey the whole Region and make a report, and fortunately for Nsukka that site has been chosen. We cannot leave that very particular site, the climate of which is congenial, and the place quite away from the noisy areas, for brain work does not want any noise.

I agree with one of the speakers who has said that we must make hay while the sun shines. Government should now be prepared to find out diversion route to Onitsha against the rainy season. I would like to say that the

only short cut to Onitsha is the road from the 9th mile to Aguobu Owa, from there to Ebenebe and from Ebenebe to Awka and then to Onitsha. This road cuts off seventeen miles from the present Enugu-Onitsha road. (*Laughter*).

Mr Speaker, I would ask the Government to maintain that road as Trunk B road. It is only the question of bridging Ezi River. Ebenebe is a town that is full of everything. We have planks, foodstuffs and coconut palms and yet there is no good road to make it possible for the people there to transport all these to the people in the townships who are suffering from hunger. Even at present, there are some lorries that ply from Enugu to Ebenebe.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I think with these observations, I beg to support the motion.

**Chief G. N. Agbasiere (Orlu Division):**  
Mr Speaker, I rise to support the motion for an Humble Address of Thanks to His Excellency for the Speech from the Throne. I would first of all touch the question of the House of Chiefs. Before I say anything about this I would like to ask if there is any provision in the 1958-59 Estimates for the building of the House of Chiefs in the Region. Mr Speaker, if there is none, there is therefore no estimate to pay the Members of the Eastern House of Assembly in 1958 unless Government make provision to build the House of Chiefs. When we talk of building the House of Chiefs in the Region it appears that young people do not understand what we mean. In the Federation of Nigeria there are three autonomous Regions—North, West and East—and already two of these have had each a House of Chiefs.

It is indeed shameful that there is no House of Chiefs in this Region. Mr Speaker, I hope that all hon. Members will join hands together with me to see that a House of Chiefs is established in 1958.

There is another point I noticed in His Excellency's Speech from the Throne. Some hon. Members here say that there should be election to the House of Chiefs. But according to the resolution passed by the Eastern Region Chiefs at the Owerri Conference we do not want election. We are against the idea of election to the House of Chiefs. (*Roaring laughter*).

**An hon. Member:** Why? It is not democratic.

**Chief Agbasiere:** Somebody asked me why. I am going to tell him why election is not required. If it is left entirely to the Chiefs to elect themselves then we shall have no objection. But if it is intended to open it, it is feared that all these young boys with their plenty of money will come in to fight us. Mr Speaker, so if the Government really intend to establish the House of Chiefs there are two ways open and either will satisfy the Chiefs of the Eastern Region. They could put a law and tell Chiefs of each Division to appoint at least twenty or forty persons who will elect the one, two or three Chiefs to represent the Division in the House of Chiefs. If the Government find it difficult to do this the Government can nominate in each Division about two or three Chiefs who will go to the House of Chiefs. This done everything will be accomplished to the satisfaction of all.

Now, Mr Speaker, there is another thing about the Customary Courts. I thank the Government for the idea on the introduction of the Customary Courts. So many people do not know what is called Native Courts. Native Court is established for the old Chiefs of the town—the natural rullers of the town; they go there. But now some young people want to come in. The young people are the teachers, they are the engineers, they are the doctors, *et cetera*. They want to do all, leaving nothing to the Chiefs! We are dying only for the sake of the Government. So, I thank the Government about it. Mr Speaker, Chiefs must be considered for the membership of the Customary Courts, because they are the people who laid the foundation. Membership should be forbidden to any man who is not a Chief.

Mr Speaker, about rural water supply, I observe from the Governor's Speech that water is being provided to many places which already have water supply, while in certain specific places where women have to travel for more than six miles to fetch water, no provision has been made. These people need water as much as others. They have their food to cook, and without water this cannot be done. Therefore I suggest that the money provided for water supply should be shared among these places—in fact priority should be given to places which have no water at all.

*Sitting suspended at 12 noon.*

*Sitting resumed at 12.30 p.m.*

**Mr G. I. Oko, M.B.E. (Awgu Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I rise to make some observations on the Motion for an Address. In doing so, I would like to mention paragraph 34 of Page 11 of the Governor's Speech, which says that in Primary Education it is intended to revert to the policy in operation in the years immediately preceding the introduction of U.P.E. when the local communities were required to help considerably towards the total cost. The following words, Sir, I wanted to refer. "In the coming financial year, it is estimated on the basis of the rates of assumed local contribution recently announced that those communities will meet just under 38 per cent of the total cost." Sir, while I feel for the Government of the Eastern Region for the failure of funds to meet up the payment of teachers' salaries in the Eastern Region, I am of the opinion that the decision of the Government to meet this responsibility through the aid of the Assumed Local Contribution was rather too sudden both on the part of the Local Government Councils and on the part of the Voluntary Agencies. In consequence, I am asking the Government to make specific arrangements for the payment of teachers' salaries for the first quarter of this year while the Local Contribution system as arranged by the Government should come into effect as from the second quarter of the year. This is very very necessary because the period between the time this Motion was passed last month and the time teachers were to be paid for the first quarter has been too short for the people to raise the funds.

I would like to stress that the provision of education for girls in this Region is poor. I feel that while the Government is doing its best to provide education for all, that of the male sex is miles ahead of the girl's education. No nation can be on its proper seat without educating both sexes. There are many institutions in the East for boys to learn but in some Divisions there is not a single teacher-training nor secondary schools for girls. Awgu Division is a glaring example. Apart from the many junior and a few senior primary schools functioning in the Division there are no secondary schools nor teacher training centres for girls in Awgu. This slight on

Awgu has made our girls find no alternative as far as their education is concerned than to stop in Standard Six. The people of Awgu have viewed the situation with very grave concern, and as a step to ameliorate condition, the people have embarked on community effort to build and equip a school for girls ever before the Ministry of Education Circular of last year. The School is situated at Mgbowo. Appeals were made to the Government for some support to aid the school but nothing has come from the Ministry of Education. I am almost convinced that this might be the fate of other Divisions. I am imploring the Government very humbly to give serious consideration to girls education thereby encourage the efforts made by the people of Awgu Division. The little effort of the people of Awgu to erect the building at Mgbowo seems quite useless now as the building cannot be put into the use as it was intended. This in my opinion is very discouraging and disheartening as nobody would like to waste his time on fruitless ventures.

I want to make it clearer that the people of Awgu Division have not been adequately considered in the awards of Regional scholarships. I am speaking particularly about University awards. How can the people of Awgu follow up the trend of development when there are not even a handful of well-trained men? I hope the Minister of Education will reconsider this matter with a view to making conditions better in the future.

I now come to the Government Grants: It is deeply regretted that in 1956 £10,000 was granted to the Awgu Community Hospital. Arrangements for the commencement of work was completed when nothing was heard from the Ministry of Health about this grant. I would like the Minister of Health to make a specific statement about the disappearance of the grant already made. The need for this money is not only grave, but also a pressing and teething one.

I now come to the Awgu Community Hospital in general. In the first place, I am making it clear that the people of Awgu are looked down by the entire staff of the hospital and consequently fail to give them proper attention at the hospital. This is a very sad thing. Charges at the hospital are cut-throat.

Where will the poor people find funds to pay this cut-throat charges? Thirdly, the patients can hardly get water while in the hospital. Government is requested to provide water for the hospital. The Doctor has no quarters within the hospital compound with the result that emergency cases are not attended to at once because before the Doctor is got the patient will almost collapse.

With regard to the general conditions in the hospital, hon. Members will like to hear that the hospital was built by the effort of the people. Government came to the aid of the people by taking it over. Now, in the hospital, there are no sufficient water, no lighting—nothing to show that it is a Government aided hospital. The Doctor is not even living in the premises of the hospital. The Government is called upon to investigate how much the patients pay in Awgu hospital.

If the people of Awgu are given the chance to own a Government Hospital, I think it is to be equally right for the people to receive treatment in the same way people in other Divisions receive treatments in the Government Hospitals. It is very sad indeed and I want the Minister of Health to look into it and find a solution.

I therefore appeal that the schemes of Rural Health and Rural Water Supply start this year from Awgu.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to say that the question of water supply for Awgu Division is not anything new to this hon. House. Much as I credit the Minister of Works with his effort to give the people of this Region water by wells, etc., I dare say with some deference that the whole project is not without blemish. I dare say that those executing the job are either indifferent or the Government is not keen on the project. The wells cannot support the people during the dry season, as a result, the people of Egbo-Etiti in Awgu have no water a good part of the year through. This will indicate to this House that digging of wells cannot solve our problem; rather it is a waste of funds and material. Pipe-borne water for Awgu will serve a more useful purpose than water from shallow wells. I am suggesting that the Government should embark on pipe-borne water scheme wholesale; this can be done

[MR OKO]

piecemeal. A good gesture on the part of the Government can induce complementary community effort. A visit by the Minister to this water scarcity area may prove that whatever I say on this matter is true. Many of the women there travel five to six miles from home to fetch their water.

Now, Sir, I wish to say a word or two about roads and bridges. Many speakers this morning spoke about communication. The state of roads and bridges in Awgu Division is deplorable. The talk of improved economy in Awgu seems word-play. How can we develop our local economy without good roads for proper communications? For instance, Oduma, Mpu, Okpanku, and the areas around Owelle court, cannot with ease link themselves with other areas near them and for that matter within the Region and the whole Federation at large. It is true that roads within the Area of Authority of a District Council are the responsibility of the Council but what of the Major Trunk Roads? The Government should not just rest on its arms and console itself that it is the responsibility of the District Council. The Council as well as the Government should both consider the plight of the people since this affects the economy of the people. The hon. the Minister of Town Planning can hardly get to Oduma as it is so swampy that any effort to plan out the place with the limited facility of the District Council produces nothing. Can we, the people of Awgu, be assured that something will be done in the circumstances? I therefore appeal that the Government of this Region should do something about these roads and bridges.

**Mr J. E. Eyo (Abak Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, Members will remember that on the floor of this House it was the Minister of Education that was highly praised all the time but during this session he has been on fire. I will not say that he has been in hell but he has been on fire. Now, since it is only because this Ministry went too fast that it made a small mistake, it appears that due to that small mistake many people have refused to appreciate all the good things that the Government has done for this Region.

They say that one bad apple spoils the whole. I do not agree to this. Members went to

criticise or charge Government of pilfering the money of this Region. I think this is too serious for Members of this to say. The money for the proposed University is the money from the Marketing Board and if we have the money, whether from Owerri Block or anything like that, I do not see any justifiable reason for that. It is the Members from Calabar Province which has the largest part of the produce that make the money of this Marketing Board that should cry for it. If we begin to fight for sectional interests I might well say that the University should be in Calabar Province. If people say that it should go to Umuahia because in the past certain facilities, certain amenities went to Umuahia I would ask what shall attract traffic of people to Calabar Province which was the seat of education in the past? They should therefore kindly allow the proposal of the Government to come to sanction and not try to discourage it.

I think it is just one thing that the Minister of Education should need to clarify. I think the Minister has not made it clear on what this matter of Assumed Local Contribution is based. I take this example. If we have standard six and we have a Higher Elementary teacher on a salary of £156 per annum to teach that class and Government would wish to deduct £180, I ask if the teacher's salary is £156 and Government deducts £180 from what is the deduction? I think it has got to be made plain to the public—this question of deduction. It is just from this point of view that Members are trying to raise some justifiable arguments that if our U.P.E. Scheme has failed then we should not embark upon University Scheme. But I say that we have greater demand for children going to University and we should not do anything that will impede the progress of the University.

Mr Speaker, I will touch the question of finance. The Speech from the Throne says that something should be done so that very few people could escape the liability to pay tax. You will remember that the financial year starts from April and this was well planned, well thought of, because as far as the rural areas are concerned the first three or four months of the financial year should be the rich months of the year; that is when we have palm produce and farm crops as well. But the arrangement in the past and up till present has been that the

people in the rural areas are called upon to pay their taxes as from September to December. These are the dry months of the year and if there should be some arrangement made so that people are asked or called upon to pay their taxes during the rich months of the year, say April, May, June or July, we shall have very few people running away from paying the tax. Some run away because they have not the money to pay the tax. If they are called upon to pay the tax when they have the money I think they will not run away.

Mr Speaker, I would like to touch the Ministry of Production. I take it as a promise when the Minister says that loans will continue to be given to farmers so as to help them in their work. I have seen in the speech and I take it as a promise that the Minister said that loans will continue to be given out to farmers so that they might help them in their work. But I have been given to understand that there is a circular that no loans will be given in the near future, and if that circular is correct then it is contradictory to the speech. Why attempt this wilful deceit? In 1956 some bottles of preserved palm wine were demonstrated in this hon. House. But in the Papers today the Federal Government says she spent £260,000 on research of palm wine preservation. This happened after palm wine preserved was distributed on the Floor of this House. I think that was a worthy industry that should be encouraged, but since that time this gentleman has not been attended to. But just in February he has been given a paper saying that loans will not be given in the near future. What is the near future? And yet we heard a contradictory speech from the Throne that loans will continue to be given. It is the General Manager of the E.R.D.C. that signed this and I understand it is the instruction of the Minister. It might interest you to know that this gentleman, understanding he would be assisted, has given some consignment to people who want to drink this palm wine. It is very good that this Government should do all the best it can to assist industries of this nature. It is an industry that should be encouraged.

There is some false propaganda going on, trying to tell the Region that the E.R.D.C. has no money. I think for a year now £42,000 has been collected in the way of repayment from those who had loans; and where is that

money? Since that time no new loan has been given to anybody. If this money is there it should be given out to other people. If we do not encourage our farmers, I think we are not doing justice to the public at all.

Mr Speaker, one Department that used to be praised in the past and continues to enjoy it to day is the Ministry of Health. It had the Rural Hospital Programme, and this programme is really a success. In Abak Division with the help of the Government and the contribution of the people we are able to put up a hospital of £51,000. I wish that a wide publicity should be given to this scheme so that it should go out and cover all the Divisions in the Region. I therefore pay tribute to the staff of this Department who had made this plan a success.

There is a scheme known as the Rural Health Centre Scheme. I do not mind whether you want to make a paradise out of Nsukka or Awgu, or anything like that. What I am concerned at the moment is that this facility—whenever you want to demonstrate on things like that—should also be extended to all areas. Reasons might be advanced why a scheme was demonstrated this way or that way, leaving out some rural areas aside. We are told the money now remaining would not be sufficient to serve all deserving cases in the rural areas merely because the greater proportion of the money had been spent in only a very few Divisions. Whatever is the case the Northern Annang Rural District Council in Abak Division has satisfied all the conditions to warrant this Rural Health Service Scheme at Utu Etim Ekpo; so give it to us at once.

I am saying that we in Abak Division are prepared to see that this Rural Health Centre comes to stay with us and we are going to do our best to make it a success as in the case of the Rural Hospital Scheme.

I turn now to the Ministry of Works, having also connection with Rural Areas. Look at pages 28 and 29 of the Speech. It lays down clearly that much has been done to improve water supplies in the Townships, even increasing some to two million gallons a day and it is also confessed and admitted there that little or no progress has been made in the rural area.

[MR J. E. EYO]

Coming to rural areas, we want some wells. To sink a well might cost only £350. Now the policy is that the locality which wants the water at that spot must pay half of it. I think it is the height of injustice. If we have water supply in the township, the people concerned are not called upon to pay money down before they are given it, but when you come to the rural areas, you see they have not got water at all. The policy says that you must pay down. People say we pay rate. You pay water rate just because you have got water already and not that you should pay rate before you are given it. Government should rally to the help of these people and see that these wells are sunk for them.

Turning to the Ministry of Justice, I remember that a Local Government set-up was started in Ikot Ekpene in Calabar Province, but coming to the Customary Courts, the whole thing is the other way round, so that it may be a year before it will extend to Calabar Province. If they tried and saw that Local Government was a success in Calabar Province—Ikot Ekpene quite near to Abak—I do not see the justification why Customary Courts should not have started in Calabar Province.

I am saying that sometimes the Ministry of Justice has failed to exercise justice to us in this respect.

**Mr K. Kiri (Degema Division):** I think the Civil Servants will continue to play an important role in the affairs of this Region. I am appealing to them to have interest in their work and not to play politics, except where they cannot help it. (*Interruption from both sides*). I have my reasons. All should appreciate that the best brains we have in the country are in the Civil Service and if you do in any way incur their ill will, you will be working against the tide and that will be harmful to the progress of this Nation. We should realise that it is quite an easy matter to criticise—in fact it is fairly easy to sit for an examination and be qualified—but to be a man of character is not a commodity that is run off from a machine. It takes time and pains to build a name and when once it is built, it is left for everyone of us to protect that-all-valuable name. I would not like my name to be

stained, but I don't care what somebody might feel about me personally, but I would ask that, in staining a character you should always have a good cause to do so. That applies to we politicians; we have privilege to come to the Floor of this House and make some uncomplimentary remarks on people's character.

I am appealing also to the Heads of Departments that it is high time there is that human touch between the junior and the senior Civil Servants in the various Departments. Where there is no good relationship, it is very difficult to have a team work. Ministers concerned should do all they can to detect where and when an error starts and not to wait till the error assumed serious form. I am appealing to both Politicians and Civil Servants to start to work as a team so as to get better results.

With regard to revenue aspects, one would have thought that a definite statement would be made about how to improve the revenue of the Eastern Region, in order to maintain the social services that we are all interested in.

Mention was made about Shell Oil. We are very grateful to the Shell Company and I think Government will do all it can to give it assistance. I must call the attention of the Government and say that we are not only interested in the oil, but we are also interested in the number of skilled people the Shell Company produce for the use of this Region. If there is money, I would advise the Government to enquire from the Shell Company whether we could give them help by way of scholarships, so that they can use more of our people in the executive posts. (*Interruption—they have their own scheme*). I know that they have their own scheme, but I think other countries like India had followed similar schemes. It is no use for us to come to say that we want Shell Company, or any other company for that matter, to recruit more of our people when we have not got the people to take up such posts. We all know what the Shell business is; it is not like any other simple corporation; it is an international body. So, I am suggesting, Sir, that there should be co-operation between the Shell Company and the Government of this Region, so that we may be in a position to provide them with the men. That is my own advice.

Secondly, Sir, I am of the opinion that the present system of experimental form of the Agricultural Department would no longer help this Region. We have all admitted that this is an agricultural Region; if it is going to be an agricultural Region, the best thing to do is to introduce the plantation system. If other countries could depend on the plantation system of agriculture, we could as well do the same. We should not be afraid of the Land Tenure or the Land Law. We can start it from the District Council and Local Council level where it could be possible to acquire several acres of land, and grants could be given to develop the type of crop that is suitable in that area. That is one of the possible ways we can diversify agricultural economy. I do not think it will be wise to spend thousands of pounds to produce only very few crops. The only consolation we receive is that the species has changed and become much fatter, but we do not have the value of our money and energy from that type of experimental agriculture. I therefore suggest that the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Production should work together and introduce at least the plantation system of agriculture throughout the fertile areas of this Region.

Commenting on the University of Nigeria, I do feel that there is need for an institution of this nature in the Eastern Region, although I would suggest that caution be exercised to study the scheme very well. We have the Ibadan University. I agree it will not be the same type of University, but there would be certain basic things that would be similar in both institutions. Unless you go and study the present operation at the Ibadan University you might find it difficult to compromise. We should not take chances as we did at the time we introduced the U.P.E. Scheme. We saw what happened in the West. If a careful study had been made we could have known what to do, but we felt we could do everything. I am suggesting that, although the scheme of the University is a very good one, careful study should be made and the faculties should reflect the needs of this Region in particular and Nigeria in general.

To my fortunate friends of Nsukka, we are very grateful for having given us land for this business, but do not forget that the value of your land will increase and you are going to

have a continuous expanding township. You will have an assured market for your commodities and you will now acquire civilisation at a much faster pace. These are advantages and I think that you should be grateful to the Government that has made this possible. I pray that in other areas too Government should be in a position to provide certain advantageous projects, otherwise it will incur the displeasure of some of us. We are not after where the University is to be built. We know that the University has got to be in a place. We are therefore giving it all the necessary support, but a careful study should be made.

May I call the attention of the hon. Minister of Works. It is unfortunate that throughout the Address from the Throne there is not one thing that is in favour of the people of the Creeks. All that I saw is 'fisheries' in three lines—the same thing worded differently every year. Mr Speaker, I am calling the attention of the Government that the whole Creek area is neglected. You talk about roads, you do not mention waterways, wharves or anything that will interest the people of the Creeks. Whether you believe it or not, this is the type of thing that goes far in the minds and behaviour of the people. It is most disgraceful to observe that during the period of a year not more than two Ministers visited this area. How do Ministers expect to know the conditions of the people there?

A chart is necessary for every Ministry so that you can know what you have done for an area. It will attract your attention in the office. Except you do that you will be ignoring particular areas. I know all politicians cannot be Ministers at the same time and it is not convenient for all Members to keep touring all the time as Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries would. I am appealing in the interest of the whole Region: please slow down the bias for a particular area. You should, as a statesman, have to look at things in a broad way. (*Hear! Hear!*)

I would like to call the attention of the Government that whenever Rivers is mentioned the attention goes to Port Harcourt alone. Port Harcourt is not the whole of Rivers; it is a township in the Rivers Province. I would like to say that all amenities go to Port Harcourt alone and that is all. I do not say, however, that Port Harcourt should be neglected;

[MR KIRI]

attention should be given to it. However, it will be unfair for the rest of the Rivers Province to suffer because of Port Harcourt.

I am suggesting that Government should give attention to this all important problem of rural water supply. We can do without many things, but we cannot, as human beings, do without good water supply. We in the creeks are surrounded by salt water. If you have bad water it can be remedied by boiling, but salt water cannot be remedied by boiling. You can now see the need for immediate supply of fresh water in these areas. Does it take a university graduate to realise that? It does not. It is mere duty to these areas.

I am asking, Sir, that in the future it will be necessary to demand from each Minister what he has done for each Division. Unless that happens it will be difficult for us to assess the activities of the various Ministries. As we are not in a position to remove any of you, the Premier will have to be guided by that chart so as to know what has been done in each area and then take necessary action. Otherwise some sections of the community will be feeding at the expense of others.

As for Industry, I am happy to learn that Metal Window Industry is coming into this Region. I would like to say that this industry would only operate as an assembly line. It may use only manpower and not other raw materials of ours. In attracting industries, please look for industries that would use the basic raw materials available in the Region; not only assembling projects. That should be the guiding factor. If a better study is made, as they are doing in the United States, of the types of wood and the different chemicals that are applied to preserve them, the people would be encouraged to use more of our timbers. Careful study should be made before investing our money or attracting other industrialists to this Region.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Mr J. O. Okeh (Ahoada Division):** Mr Speaker, I rise to speak in support of the motion ably proposed by the Government Chief Whip to present a Humble Address of Thanks to His Excellency the Governor for His Most Gracious Speech from the Throne. The Mover of

the motion has described the Speech as a document of hope. I share this view because the Speech is a comprehensive survey of the Government's activities in the past and proposals for the future: proposals which to my mind will bring lasting beneficial results to the people of this Region. (*Applause*)

Mr Speaker, what has interested me most in the Speech is the news of the progress made towards the building of a University in this Region. This, Sir, is a step forward in the right direction. Although I do not quarrel with the siting of this institution, it is my humble view that in distributing any amenity, Government should take into full consideration the areas from where the revenue of this Region is derived. It cannot be denied that the greatest bulk of this Region's revenue comes from the Government share of Federal taxes which are collected from the Rivers Province. Now that the University is taken away from this area, I am strongly suggesting that Government should go all out to establish a full-fledged Technical College in the area.

We have been told often times that the policy of the Ministry of Commerce is to attract overseas industrialists and capital, as well as to mobilise domestic capital. Government should not only be interested in exploiting the lead-zinc deposits at Abakaliki. We want this Government to tell this House what it has done so far with this very important project.

On the side of mobilising domestic capital, it is my honest belief that the Ministry of Commerce has failed in its duty (*Noise*) to encourage farmers and traders in this Region to invest in sound business propositions. In fact the Department of Trade is redundant since the Federal Department of Commerce and Industries appears to discharge identical functions in the Regions. Government, therefore, in the interest of economy should close down the Regional Department of Trade and transfer all its function to the Ministry of Commerce. (*Interruptions*)

The next point I would like to make before I leave this Ministry, is that Government should look into the matter of encouraging the establishment of "Fibre and Copra" industries in the Rivers Province. I say this, Sir, because the products of these industries will find a ready market both at home and overseas.



Next point I would like to make concerns the Ministry of Town Planning. It is really very important that Government recognises that it has a fundamental obligation towards the people of this Region to do its utmost to ensure that the conditions under which they live and work are those most conducive to physical and mental health, happiness and prosperity. In the past, Government has not adhered to this policy in full. Government has acted unilaterally by acquiring peoples land without bothering to know what becomes of the indigenous people. No sane man will oppose development but what I am saying is that in acquiring land for development purposes, Government should enter into full consultation with the people of the area concerned so as to ensure that they derive maximum benefit from the lease of their land, and where necessary, Government should provide for their full comfort and happiness. If this is not done people will always resist any encroachment on their land.

Another point I would like to mention is the activities of foreign enterprises in this Region, particularly the Shell-B.P. As a result of the Oil Wells in Oloibiri and Affam, this Company has taken a large portion of land in the Ahoada Division for both industrial and residential purposes. I would like to know whether the Government of this Region has fully protected the interest of the indigenous land-owners from foreign exploitation. It is a fact, Sir, that if oil is found in commercial quantities this area will attract a large number of immigrants. How is Government going to solve this problem for the benefit of the people in the area concerned.

I am to congratulate the Government for the effort made towards road development in the Region. One point I seem to disagree with is the delaying tactics employed by the officials of the Public Works Department. I think the whole thing is to make it possible for the grants under Colonial Development and Welfare Funds to lapse at the end of the period. Hon. Minister of Transport should check this trick. For two years now Ahoada-Yenagoa Road has been on the paper—nothing done. No news about the proposal to build a road from Port Harcourt to Degema. I am also suggesting to the hon. Minister to speed up the building of Chokocho bridge in order to make it possible

for the evacuation of palm kernels and palm oil which we know form the prop of the economy of this Region.

It is very interesting that Government is going to establish a Regional Census Department. I want this proposal to be followed up immediately. Every one in this House will agree that the old population census is no longer accurate and will not give accurate guide to the Electoral Delimitation Committee. For instance the population of Ahoada Division has increased as a result of the adjustment of divisional boundary and, on the other hand, due to the transfer of personnel of the Shell-B.P. from Owerri to this Division. This is supported by the fact that revenue accruing from tax under the Finance Law from the Ahoada Division has increased from £67,000 to £134,000 according to Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1958.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I will have to stress here that it appears the policy of the Government in the allocation of amenities, etc., is said to be on population basis. But the fewness of the people of Rivers Province is sufficiently made up by their contribution towards the revenue of this Region. (*Hear! Hear!*). So you can't ignore this matter for while others are considered on population basis, Rivers Province should be considered on account of the revenue derived from it.

Mr Speaker, I am supporting the Motion of the Government Chief Whip.

**Mr M. C. Awgu (Awka Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am thankful for the Motion made by Mr M. E. Ogon and I am speaking in support of the Motion. The speech, certainly, is full of life and promises future hope for the country. However, I have to comment very briefly on some of the points raised, and shall begin with the Public Service Commission.

It is indeed encouraging to learn that our Government is determined to insulate the Public Service from political influence. Personally, I cannot convince myself that this is a possible proposition. But if it proves that the Government fulfils its determination in practice, and not in paper or in theory, then I shall deem it another milestone in the progressive measure of our new democracy.

[MR AWGU]

I say this, Sir, because this is a party Government and members of the Public Service Commission are usually recommended for appointment by the leader of the Party in power; so that, human nature being what it is, no member so recommended or appointed will be so foolish as to go against the wishes of the Party that has been so kind enough as to butter his bread. I must comment succinctly on the relationship between politicians and civil servants, now that we are undergoing some measure of new transfer of power. For example, the Administration has now been transferred from the Deputy Governor's Office to the Premier's Office. In our new democracy we must make errors of omissions and commissions that characterise the acts of a young growing nation that is trying to find its feet among other nations of the Commonwealth. And so it may happen that a young politician in power, may go to the length of telling a civil servant when to sneeze or cough in the office. But it is never the lot of politicians to execute policies. Theirs is to control the direction and policy of Government whilst the civil servants do the execution or the Government. If this is observed, there certainly must be harmony. But, Sir, let it not be understood that what I mean is that the Government of our country should be left, for instance in the Administration, into the hands of raw and inexperienced young men straight from the Universities, however, able they are. I suggest, Sir, that the Government can employ them at lower levels and promote them as they acquire wisdom and experience.

I very greatly deplore the practice of some civil servants trafficking in office files. News obtained from the Secretariat files sell like hot cake in the rural areas. There is a case in point which is now being delayed at the Awka Police Station. If the Government feels uneasy about the leakage of office secrets, let it pursue the above-mentioned case to a finish and see that whoever is responsible is taught lesson.

Mr Speaker, I have another point to be treated, and that is education. This is really a very important matter. At this stage of our existence, we are thinking of freedom in 1960. We all know, Mr Speaker, that the destiny of

any country lies on its education, and that the future progress lies on the success of our children, educationally. What I am thanking the Government for mostly is for having thought it wise at this time to appoint a committee to investigate into the system of education of this country. The Government is to be congratulated on that score. But what I must say is that the educational system needs reorganisation. The education of this country must be based on human culture—human culture which is primarily African and which is fully related to the needs and aspirations of the people. We must have a system of education which will produce effective, efficient and responsible citizens for the development of our nation, to take its rightful place among the community of nations. (*Hear! Hear!*)

Mr Speaker, we do not send our children Overseas to come back to Nigeria as Americans or Germans for that matter, but we send them to come back and develop what is latent in us Africans.

Mr Speaker, Sir, at this time our development is contemplating to have a Nigeria Army. I think, personally, Sir, that we are going to build an army of people who do not love their country. The idea of nationalism can only be infused into the blood of the people when it is taught them within the four walls of their schools.

Mr Speaker, another point is about Jury System. Jury System, as suggested by the Government, is nice, but I shall caution our Government to hasten slowly. From the book given to us sometime ago, I have been able to read impartially the history of the origin of the Jury System. We know we have men in our country who are honest, but I shall say that, by the Grace of God, let us wait awhile before appointing a Jury.

Mr Speaker, "the University of Nigeria to be built at Nsukka"—how captivating and beautiful is that phrase. The news of the location tingles the ear (*laughter*) for obvious reasons! Is it not a long time now since the Ministry of Education talked over the radio that some Government Schools at Awka and other places, should be converted to Secondary Schools? Boys went and paid their entrance examination fees of 3s 6d each, but after a

while they were told there is no money to run the secondary schools. How soon has the Government again announced that it is building a University which would cost much more than the Secondary Schools? I am saying this, Sir, that we must be charged with "Inconsistent inconsistency". (*Laughter*).

Mr Speaker, another important point is transport. We are very grateful to Government for the work so ably done in Nnewi-Ekwulobia-Umunze road, not Amenze, as put down in the Speech. We are very happy but I must ask Government to investigate and look into the quality of the work that is being done there. The Government should remember that that road is the only diversion route we have between Onitsha and Enugu in cases of emergency.

Finally, I am again appealing to Government to hasten slowly. Let some of our advice be a blend to one of material and spiritual. If we worship the head, the intellect and Law alone, I do not think we shall land on a safe place. There must be a mixture of two. There is a time when sentimentalism and emotionalism should give way to realism. (*Laughter*).

**Mr N. L. P. Apreala (Brass Division):** Mr Speaker, much has been said about Corporations. I should say that all should have been very well with these Corporations as their intentions are for revenue collection. In my own opinion, there are reasons why the existence of these Corporations is made very difficult. One is the number of Executive Officers who are attached to these young Corporations. Another is Buildings which take much money from these young Corporations thus reducing the capital considerably. After all, limited money was given to many of these Corporations but the amount of high officials engaged, e.g., the General Manager £2,000, and then the Accountant, the Secretary and so many other officers, each earning very high salaries, thus makes it entirely very difficult for many of our Corporations to live up to the expectations of the public. They are very young and the intention is to have some money surplus but the staff and the executive inducements of these Corporations have made it very difficult and that is why they do not work very well in the way we expected.

There are lots of interferences into these Corporations from some civil servants and Ministries. Some are deliberately doing it. They make things very difficult. For example the Tourist Corporation comprises of what in the past were Rest Houses enjoyed by civil servants only but now that Rest Houses are under the Tourist Corporation and are commercial concerns many feel reluctant to pay money for their enjoyment; they do all in their power to make it difficult for many of these Corporations to work. That is one example I would like to make.

Mr Speaker, another point I would like to mention is the University which we are all talking about. The University is to be at Nsukka and there is quite a lot of noise. It has become the bone of contention in this House so much that I begin to feel if it had been mentioned to be built in Calabar, Brass or elsewhere, I think some would have committed suicide already. It is proposed to be built within the Ibo area whose people should be interested and be grateful but there is much talk about it that I am afraid if we have all read John Ploughman's Book, it appears some meat is given to people who arguing over it gave room to someone cleverer to take it off by weighing the scale cunningly.

**An hon. Member:** Should it be at Brass?

**Mr Apreala:** I am not interested wherever it is situated. But if this is the way we shall argue over castles in the air I am afraid. Mr Speaker, I do not doubt that it will be possible to build it unless those who have not got the opportunity to know how it will work, but those who know feel confident that it will work.

I would like to mention, Mr Speaker, few points about the Agricultural Department. I am obliged to say that hundreds of people from my Division, Brass, have been applying for loans for farming. The soil is very fertile. They grow a lot of economic crops there but when many of these farmers apply they are disappointed. No Minister will come to say that one single loan has been given to any farmer in Brass Division. This is very deplorable!

Another point, Mr Speaker, which will interest you to know is that apart from even

[MR APREALA]

denying us the right of having loans for people in Brass Division, our people have been growing yams but these are very small.

**An hon. Member:** Is that not water yam? No land.

**Mr Apreala:** Whatever name is given to it I do not know but if they are called water yams, they are not grown in the water.

We all hear of Agricultural Department having helped very much at Abakaliki Division in growing rice, in another place in growing yams which are very good. When will these people come to Brass Division to teach my people how to grow yams that are very big and good? Some Members say the land is bad. I do not believe that the land is bad. But it is rather fertile and good for planting. After all, our Ministers do not tour. My people would not have known who is a Minister were it not for the kindness of the Premier who tours there every time. Ministers do not go there and when we talk of what is happening there in this House it looks like fairy tales told in dream. The Ministers do not tour there perhaps for fear of going into the water—but the Premier who is the most important figure in the Government will risk his life—how much less . . .

**An hon. Member:** He can swim.

**Mr Apreala:** Mr Speaker, I would also like to mention that the condition of our fishermen is very deplorable. Any time we talk of fishing industry, we talk of mechanised fishing, we talk of engine boats—these will not help my people. How many of them are rich enough to buy these boats? What we want are small loans given to them to enable them to buy nets, canoes and other fishing materials. No amount of engine put in canoe which is too costly to buy will help them. We feel Government should look into it and do something to help our fishermen.

Another thing, Sir, is that no new methods are taught them. Many of them are still hanging on the old methods of fishing, and if you see any officer going there, he only goes for site seeing. The next moment he is off in his launch.

In the Speech from the Throne, a lot of things has been mentioned but there is nothing

about the Sugar Factory. If you look into the whole of the Divisions in the Eastern Region it is only the Brass Division and some other Divisions in the Rivers area that have enough sugar cane for this sugar making. Why is it that no mention is made of it? Our people are very anxious to hear whether that only opportunity which they are blessed shall be given to them.

Mr Speaker, I also like to say that Customary Courts are mentioned there. I would like to refresh the memory of Members in this House that when Local Government scheme started in the Region, it started from different places and Brass Division was the last. Now Customary Courts are starting and if you see the list in this very Speech from the Throne, the Courts will start from many other places and this time again Degema and Brass are the last. Why are we last in everything? I am obliged to say though I do not support lawless demonstrators, while we are last in everything good we were the first to be shot. (*Laughter*).

Mr Speaker, under Production, I would like to say that mention is also made of the oil in Oloibiri and its quantity. This appears to be an industrial deceit on our people. Every now and again we hear of enough oil there but not in commercial quantity.

Another point is the maintenance of roads. It will interest you to know that a lot of roads were proposed, and at paragraph 80 of the Speech, you will see that no less than eight new roads or more are mentioned as being made or completed. Mr Speaker, the Yenogoa to Ahoada road came into the Estimates since 1956—a year before the following roads were being approved in the 1957 Estimates:—Okigwi-Afikpo Road, ten miles; Abakaliki-Afikpo road, thirty miles; Umuahia-Ikot Ekpene road, ten miles; etc., etc.

My next point, Mr Speaker, Sir, is that a very decent hospital costing about £60,000 has been built for my people. They are very grateful for it and are very anxious to make use of it. But it will interest this House to know that all is not well with the Ministry of Works. It is a surprise that the benefit of a work that cost Government a good deal of time and as much as £60,000 should be withheld from the people of Brass because the Minister of Works could

not see his way through to spend a few thousands of pounds to instal water and light. Water is very near to it and should he have helped to instal water my people would have benefitted. But that is not done. Mr Speaker, these are the few things that delay its opening. Often we are told that tenders have been given out but another time we are told that there are no engineers and it is in this very House that we were told some engineers were surplus somewhere.

Now, my next point, Mr Speaker, concerns the Ministry of Welfare. The Ministry of Welfare has been so kind in the past to put into effect the findings of the Bride Price Committee. Now, there is only one thing left which is the system of marriage in my own area. We have been able to legislate against Osu System, the Limitation of Dowry and Child Marriage; but the only very important one which will benefit my people is unattended to, that is to have a child and the child belonging to the mother. When one has a child, one takes pains to educate him and takes pains even to give him money to trade with. But if the father is not dead and it is unfortunate that it is the child that dies earlier, while the father is mourning for his child's death, the mother's side is so happy packing his belongings.

This is so embarrassing to my people and it is one of the causes dragging my people backwards. As a result, the people of my Division have strongly refused to educate their children and I am sorry that the Minister of Welfare, either very busy or so, has not been able to find it possible to legislate on that. My people are very anxious and I hope the Minister of Welfare will handle this matter in no distant date.

Mr Speaker, I support the Motion that an Address of thanks be given to His Excellency the Governor for His Gracious Speech from the Throne.

**Dr W. N. Onubogu (Onitsha Division):**

Mr Speaker, thank you very much for catching my eyes. I want to say a few words to thank the Government for what they put down here and, as many speakers said, for this year's programme and for the past events.

Naturally, I am interested in what has been said under health. Government has laid

emphasis on preventive medicine; it is on this point that I want to deliver a message to this hon. House. The British Medical Association, Eastern Nigeria Branch is alarmed to note that the health of the people of the Eastern Region is in danger (*Interruption—In danger of what?*). Mr Speaker, the members of this Association consist of Government Medical Officers, Doctors from the Voluntary Agencies and Private Medical Practitioners. Mr Speaker, there is a lot of dangerous drugs that are not supposed to be exposed for sale or to be sold without Doctor's prescription. (*Interruption—Self-interest*). Mr Speaker, I implore you to ask them to hear me for a few minutes. Self-interest, yes, I agree, but this time it is in the interest of your own health. I have already told you that your own health is in danger. I am saying, Sir, that drugs like the N.A.B. and many other dangerous ones should not be allowed to be sold openly. What happens, Sir, is that most of these drugs are sold in open markets in Onitsha, Aba, Port Harcourt, Calabar and even here in Enugu under the nose of this Government. The offenders, Mr Speaker, are the following:—

Chemists, both private and Government, demoralised Nursing Orderlies, Traders, even hospital ward servants.

These drugs are obtained from big firms in Lagos and chemist shops. Chemists who are neither qualified nor trained to give injections do so with impunity and these include some of those at present working in the General Hospitals. Now, how does it affect the health of this country? These illicit injections instead of curing the patients, make them resistant to them and at last when the patients get to the hospital, their ailments are very difficult to cure. Mr Speaker, those gentlemen who are talking now complain that they charge a lot in the General Hospitals and so they prefer to be treated by traders who buy these drugs from Lagos. It is very shameful that they do not even know the difference between a qualified doctor and a quack. It is true that if you go the Tuberculosis Hospital you will find that no drug can cure the patients any more. This is a sorry position. I implore the hon. Minister of Health to take note and know what to do. Most people refuse to give information to the police, so that it is no question of police but the question of ourselves. Mr Speaker, I am sure that this has gone down and has gone down well.

I want now to touch the question of County Councils. I want to congratulate the Minister of Local Government for abolishing these Councils. They have outlived their usefulness. In selecting members for the District Councils with County power I want to suggest the following representations so as to make them workable, otherwise they would be unwieldy:—

10,000 of population, 1 representative;

below 10,000, 1 representative;

20,000, 2 representatives.

Mr Speaker, the gentleman on my left has already made a point on the question of piecemeal introduction of Customary Courts first at Udi, then Awgu, Nsukka and Onitsha, and Brass last. Why not start all at the same time? I do not like this method of starting things piecemeal. Why not start with Brass first?

Let me come to the University of Nigeria. We people in Onitsha do not care where the University is built. We have plenty of schools

which we know that in future will develop into Universities. I am saying that in choosing Nsukka we should be careful so as not to choose a piece of land that will call for litigation. I want to warn the Government that I have no objection to the siting of the University at Nsukka. After all, they have plenty of land which cannot be spared in Onitsha Division. When I send my children to this University I will expect them to qualify M.A., or Ph.D., Nsukka and not Nkpologwu.

*And it being 2.15 p.m. Mr Speaker interrupted the business and the Debate stood adjourned. Debate to be resumed on Wednesday, 19th March, 1958.*

#### ADJOURNMENT

Resolved: That this House do now adjourn.  
(*The Minister of Production, Dr M. I. Okpara*).

*Adjourned accordingly at seventeen minutes past Two o'clock p.m.*

## WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Monday, 17th March, 1958

### Exodus of Women from Obubra Division

48. **Mr J. W. E. Anaba** asked the Minister of Internal Affairs, when will Government take steps to restrict exodus of women from Obubra Division to Ghana and the French Territory of the Ivory Coast.

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** The Government has no intention of restricting the free movement of individuals of any class or sex provided that they are going about their lawful business.

### Ediba Postal Agency

49. **Mr J. W. E. Anaba** asked the Minister of Works, whether he will request the Federal

Government to consider the conversion of Ediba Postal Agency into a full time Post Office.

**The Minister of Works:** In its Sessional Paper No. 4 of 1957 the Federal Government sets out the standards required for upgrading a Postal Agency to either a Sub-Post Office or a Departmental Post Office. For a Sub-Post Office there must be at least 24,000 units of mail a week, and for a Departmental Post Office at least 40,000. Units of mail are reckoned in terms of items of mail handled at a particular Postal Agency or Post Office.

Ediba Postal Agency despatches and receives a mail three times weekly in either direction, but the total units for all work amount to only 10,721 per week. Thus for the present, Ediba Postal Agency does not qualify for upgrading.

EASTERN HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 18th March, 1958

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

PRAYERS

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Development of Abakaliki Urban Area

17. Mr S. N. Alo asked the Minister of Town Planning, when will Government undertake the planning and development of the Urban Area of Abakaliki, including the new layout on Crown land.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Town Planning (Chief S. E. Onukogu): I am directed to answer as follows:—

Arrangements are in hand for the development of a new residential and commercial layout on Crown land at Abakaliki comprising 305 plots: it is expected that, subject to the availability of funds, work on the project will be commenced during the coming financial year. No other town planning measures within the urban area of Abakaliki are under consideration at present.

Nbawsi and Omoba Water Pumps

18. Mr W. Abengowe asked the Minister of Works, if he is aware that the water pumps at Nbawsi and Omoba in Aba Division have been out of order for a very long time, thereby depriving the communities concerned of their water supply; if so what attempt is being made to repair the water pumps.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Works (Mr R. O. Anoke): I am directed to answer as follows:—

I am aware of the position and have instructed the Zone Engineer, Rural Water Supply to visit and report with a view to advising the local authorities on what steps to take to restore their installations to working order.

This is clearly a question of maintenance, which as the hon. Member knows, is the responsibility of the Local Government Council.

Water for the Urban Area of Abakaliki

19. Mr S. A. Alo asked the Minister of Works, how soon will Government provide a water borehole in Abakaliki Urban Town; is the Minister aware that the site for the borehole has already been chosen.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Works (Mr R. O. Anoke): I am directed to answer as follows:—

Abakaliki Urban Water Supply Phase Two is included in the Second Urban Water Supply Scheme which will be executed when funds become available. Whether this will involve a borehole or other mechanical plant is a matter for technical decision, but geological reports show that the country rock around Abakaliki will give water only very slowly to wells or boreholes. The development of ground water is thought to offer the best chance for water intake at Abakaliki.

For the present, in consultation with the Electricity Corporation of Nigeria, I am examining the possibility of increasing the output of the existing installation from 48,000 gallons per day to 80,000.

I am aware that a provisional site for a borehole has already been chosen, on the advice of the Geological Survey Department.

MOTIONS FOR LEAVE TO BRING IN BILLS

1. Welfare of Illegitimate Children: Affiliation Orders

Mr G. C. Okeya: (Owerri Division): Mr Speaker, Sir, I rise to move That leave be granted to bring in a Bill entitled "A Law to make Provision for the Welfare of Illegitimate Children by Providing for the granting of Affiliation Orders for the Maintenance and Education of such Children". (Hear! Hear!).

Mr Speaker, at this stage of the Motion, it is necessary to explain the objects of this Bill and give reasons for its introduction. This is a Bill for the welfare of illegitimate children of whom there are many in the towns especially.

Hon. Members: Where? Where?

Mr Okeya: The House cannot do justice to itself unless and until the Bill has been



thrashed out in detail on the floor of this House. Mr Speaker, Sir, it will be very unfair to me if after taking all these pains the House rejects the Motion. (*Laughter*).

Now, the object of the Bill is to enable the mother of an illegitimate child to apply to the Magistrate Court for an order on the putative father for the maintenance and the education of such child. Any order so obtained is for the benefit of the child. The welfare of the illegitimate children is the essence of the Bill.

There are reasons for its introduction. Mr Speaker, Sir, it is the duty of the state amidst this welter of social changes to provide adequate safeguards for the care and welfare of its children.

Procreation is a sacred injunction which imposes a natural obligation on two individuals—a man and a woman. It is against natural law to shirk the responsibility in the upbringing of a child whom you have produced. The problem of illegitimate children is one of moral laxity, and social irresponsibility which is the duty of any Government to discourage.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in drawing up this Bill, I have at the back of my mind the moral risks and social insecurity besetting young girls and the needless sufferings of illegitimate children in this Region.

The complexity of our social structure makes it imperative that our social development should pace *pari passu* with social reforms. It is common knowledge that many men who have illegitimate children abandon them with impunity even when they can afford to maintain the illegitimate children. Many girls run the risk of moral deterioration because there is no legislation for their welfare. Some attempt suicide or commit abortions through fear of public opinion or just because there is no security in case the child is born. Evidences are available to show that parental rejection throws the illegitimate child to the winds and results in various manifestations of social maladjustment. This Region faces the danger of juvenile delinquency if the illegitimate children are not protected by law. The welfare of the illegitimate children is the prime consideration of this Bill.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move.

**Mr K. Kiri (Degema Division):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

**The Premier (Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe):** Mr Speaker, permit me to offer the congratulations of the Government to the hon. Mover on his maiden effort. I think it is the first time in the history of this Legislature—maybe the Legislatures of the whole country since the introduction of the ministerial system of Government—when a private Member of the House has had the courage to prepare a Bill, have same published in the *Gazette*, and then stand before the House to challenge the Members to give him the right of audience.

So far as we are concerned, we feel that all hon. Members here are entitled to right of audience irrespective of what may be our views on the merits or demerits of the subject matter of the Bill. It is from this point of view, therefore, that I appeal to the House to extend this privilege to the hon. Member. So far as we are concerned, we feel that when we come to debate the merits or demerits of the Bill, that we should present an open mind and, subject to what my Parliamentary Party may decide later, we suggest that the whip should not be applied.

**Mr S. G. Ikoku (Enyong Division):** Mr Speaker, I must say quite frankly that on this matter we on this side of the House are at one with the Premier. We congratulate the hon. Mover of the Motion for being so circumspect in applying his mind to the misfortune of this class in our society. When everybody is worried about politics of state and the problems of nursing, looking after one's constituency and being asked innumerable difficult questions, it is a great credit to the hon. Member that he had the time and the luck to apply his mind to this problem.

We do not want to pre-judge the fate of the Bill, but I think the principle is that we should be able to hear this Member. I must say, Sir, that we in the Opposition will gladly accept and apply the Premier's suggestion that the whip be not applied in this matter. (*Hear! Hear!*). I would like to congratulate the hon. Mover, because in fact, he has made history.

[MR IKOKU]

In my recollection I do not think a Private Member's Bill has ever been moved in any of the Legislatures in this country.

**Hon. Members:** It has, it has.

**Mr Ikoku:** It must have been moved when the Legislature was not quite worth the name, but right now we have Legislatures worth the name. I think my Friend, hon. Okeya, will be endeared to future research scholars because he will go down as the first Private Member to bring in a Bill under self-government. I think every Member, particularly those on the other side of the House should try to emulate. I do not think we should spend much more time on this Bill other than to say that we are in complete agreement with the Premier on allowing hon. Okeya to bring his Bill forward.

**Mr D. A. Nnaji (Udi Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I rise to oppose the granting of the leave. (*Hear! Hear!*). I have the following reasons for opposing it. Personally, I do not think that anybody will prove that this or that person is an illegitimate person or child. For example, when we had the Osu Bill, certain classes of people were mentioned specifically as Osu and some Oru, that is, slaves. Some people have these people ostracised in their areas. If we allow this Bill to be introduced, it will just be a bad precedent in the history of this Region. It is good for somebody to attempt to introduce a Private Member's Bill in any Legislature, but it will be wise for such person contemplating upon introducing such a Bill to know all the implications and complications of the Bill. If we allow him to bring this Bill into this Legislature, it will be laying a very bad precedent. So I oppose the granting of the leave vehemently.

**Dr A. N. Obonna (Owerri Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I rise to oppose the leave and before doing so, I must say that I associate myself with the views of the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition in congratulating the hon. Member in bringing this Bill. Well, I oppose it on the ground that the leave will serve no useful purpose. It will be unnecessary and a sheer waste of time. For one thing, we have in our possession now, the Bill; we have all read it and having read it, have come to the conclusion that it serves no useful purpose.

There is already sufficient provision in the existing laws to protect such women who are faced with such difficulty. If the women have not taken such steps to get justice it is up to them and there is no reason to prove that this Bill, if passed into law, they will take such step. If any woman in this country were to get into the family way and the man refused to do the right thing, legal action could be taken and surely there would be a case made out and where the husband disputed that it was not a fact, then medical grounds should come in. In such a case, the medical science can say that this or that is a fact. In fact, there is sufficient provision to find out the culprit and in the Court, justice is always meted in such matters. So I do not think it will serve any useful purpose in granting the leave to present this Bill.

Again, Sir, in our custom here in Africa, I doubt if there is anything like illegitimacy, and I want to say that this African tradition has been followed by some continental people like Sweden where people now question what one means exactly by illegitimate child. You have already judged the child without hearing that child. The child has never asked to be brought to this world. Why label the child illegitimate. In Africa here, we have no such thing as illegitimate children and the child born of a man is a child. (*Interruption*). It has been against the tradition of our people, it is foreign and I strongly recommend that it should not be given unnecessary publicity.

**Dr W. N. Onubogu (Onitsha Division):** I would like to speak to the Motion and I do so, Sir, because this House has been noted for passing too many Bills. Far too many Bills have been passed in this House. We have a native proverb which says: To give a monkey a cup of palm wine is easy, but what of getting the cup back from him. (*Laughter*).

We have passed the Osu Bill here. Where is the Osu Minister. As for that, it is all forgotten. The same thing is being practised in Owerri Division. The Osu is still Osu there. We have passed a Bill here limiting bride price to £30. On the surface it is £30 but below, it is £200. What of incest Bill? We passed it here in this House. I am not satisfied how the whole thing is being implemented. Even the ordinary rent control Bill is not being enforced. Go down to Uwani

and see what is happening. The Mover has very good intentions. If we waste our time this morning in going through this Bill, what should the House of Chiefs do when they come. (*Laughter*). They are the people to handle this Bill. I am saying it is a very good Bill and with good intention and so forth but Chiefs should be consulted. After all, I agree with the last speaker that this question of illegitimacy is an imported word in this place. Every child is a child. That is all. In England, they marry one wife because they cannot maintain more than one at a time. This country of ours is polygamous in nature, so that all our children are regarded as legitimate. (*Shouts of no, no*). Don't say no. I am saying, Sir, even if it is necessary to allow the Bill to go through the House, it is not time yet. Let us wait until the House of Chiefs is created. When the House of Chiefs is created we shall throw the matter to them to handle first. I say that it is not yet time because we have no money. It will be established when we have the money. I am still of that opinion and nothing will make me change it. Perhaps next year we might have plenty of money and then we could establish the House of Chiefs. I oppose it because it is not time for it; there is plenty of time for it.

**Mr R. O. Ukuta (Nsukka Division):** Mr Speaker I oppose this Bill. I regard the Bill as a two-edged sword. It means that our girls will have cause to misbehave and, secondly, if this Bill is passed through this House you will get a thousand and one Magistrates to preside and decide who is the father of a child. A child is never born without a father. If a woman has no husband she will certainly know who is her husband immediately she is pregnant. So I am opposing it because if it is passed it will be a passport to our girls to misbehave.

**Mr N. L. P. Apreala (Brass Division):** Mr Speaker, I am supporting this Motion, "The Welfare of Illegitimate Children". The Mover of this Motion has been able to bring it out in a broad-minded way. You will notice that many of us who say we are legally married hardly have enough time to spend in our own houses. A lot of them go out in pleasant cars with long tails, and when they are going out they never think of the bad side of it. Rather they always think of the good side of chasing girls or ladies.

Mr Speaker, I am sure that all heads of Christian Religion in this country will receive this Bill with joy. Mr Speaker, I am now bringing out one fact. In this very particular case, there is a case where a particular husband who has even got twin children with his own wife had even neglected her and refused to carry responsibilities.

**An hon. Member:** Where, where?

**Mr N. L. P. Apreala:** Everywhere. You may be one of the fathers but you are now asking where, where?

Now, Mr Speaker, if this Bill is passed it will be to help many of our twin mothers. In many cases whenever they apply for monetary help from the Government they are always told that the Regional Government is only prepared to help those who have triplets or quadruplets and that it is the responsibility of the County Councils or District Councils to care for the twins. In many cases when they apply, the result is that these very particular County Councils have no money to maintain them and, therefore, if you see the condition of some of the women who have been, excuse me to say, unfortunate to bring twin children you will be very sorry. Therefore, if we will oppose this very particular Bill it means we should check ourselves and confine ourselves not to bring issues which we will not have in our own houses and take full responsibility. I am therefore supporting this Bill *in toto*.

**Chief G. N. Agbasiere (Orlu Division):** Mr Speaker, I beg to support the Motion. It is only that the Bill, in my opinion, should have been referred to the Chiefs first. Mr Speaker, as a ruler of the area and a man who knows better than many in this House about this Bill if I start now to explain the things in this Bill they will be surprised. Mr Speaker, so many bloods are running up and down every month and every year. We are the people who can explain it to the younger men who go to and fro—Onitsha, Aba, etc. They do not know the meaning of this Bill. So I will ask hon. Members to give leave to the hon. Member to bring this Bill before this House because it is a righteous one.

Mr Speaker, I beg to support.

**Chief I. I. Morphy (Ogoja Division):** I rise to support this Motion. This Bill should be brought before this House. I think the hon. Members have missed the issue at hand. All we are asking for is that this Bill should be brought before this House. We are not now debating it. When the hon. Member concerned shall have moved this Bill then we shall have the opportunity of debating it.

The Premier and the Leader of the Opposition did say that we are creating a precedent in this country by the introduction of this Private Member's Bill. So if we go to muzzle this Bill I will say that we are not really creating the precedent they have mentioned. Even though you will not pass the Bill all we are saying now is that the hon. Member should be granted leave to bring this Bill before the House so that the real precedent that is talked about should be created. So we on this side of the House are in support. Let us make history for other Governments of Nigeria to emulate.

**Mr V. K. Onyeri (Port Harcourt Division):** I think today is a Private Members day, a humorous day as such, and that is the reason why I have actually thought over this Motion, and I think I have to contribute a little bit of humour to it. Mr Speaker, Sir, you will see that actually we have nothing to do today. That is how I see it. Neither the Government nor even the Opposition is serious about the business of today. If we have something to do, I am begging we continue with that which we have to do. As far as I am concerned in this matter the issue raises so many things. First of all, I have to take it on the economical plane and to say that two things rule the world today—man-power and money and when my hon. Friend, the Mover of this Motion, is asking leave to present a motion which in the long run will turn this Region down to an economic nothingness, I have my doubts about its usefulness. Russia today with her man-power is aiming at the moon and America with her money and man-power is getting along with their atomic energy. Jesus Christ enjoined us to "increase and multiply" and today the Mover of this Motion is preaching otherwise.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have to congratulate my hon. Friend on his genuine attempt made in framing this Bill, but, for goodness sake, there

are certain issues that we should not bring to this House and this is one of them. I am opposing this Motion on the ground that it will give girls the licence to misbehave, and I hope that hon. Members who know their real obligations to this House and their constituencies will oppose the Motion.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Welfare (Mr C. A. Okafor):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I oppose this Motion. First of all in the words of my hon. Friend, Mr Apreala, if a person sows a seed he is going to reap it. That, of course, is the case if he did that on his own land because if he sowed the seed in another persons land he is not going to reap it. (*Laughter*).

In this Region, to be fair to everybody in this House, there are customs in certain areas where women actually bring children and where some people claim these children which they get from the outside. But it is not the custom in all areas. If any person allows himself to be used as a he-goat he is not going to get any reward because if you go after a girl on whom you understand you have not paid any mite as dowry, or in respect of whom you know you have not given any wine to the father proposing that you are going to marry her, according to native law and custom, the girl is not regarded as your own wife and any issue begotten by that girl is not, in Ibo land, your own. (*Hear! Hear!*).

If we are to allow this Bill to be brought to this House, then it means that in some cases some unfortunate people will get a girl that has love for them and claim as the fathers of the children they are going to bring to the world, because in many cases you will understand that it is the rascally man who influences the girl to love him. Girls are queer people. Simply because of dancing or simply because of certain jokes a girl may like a boy who has no substance and afterwards when she sees that something is resulting she looks round for a well-to-do person who can maintain her and then goes to swear affidavit claiming that that well-to-do person was responsible, and when a girl swears affidavit claiming that you were responsible perhaps you cannot get out of it.

In this Region, I speak particularly for my own Division, no person claims a child unless the mother of that child is his own wife.

Therefore, I oppose this Motion.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Town Planning (Chief S. E. Onukogu):** Mr Speaker, I rise to oppose this Motion. I oppose it because the Mover of the Motion failed to make a specific case. Young men go out to enjoy themselves and not to own children. Bringing this Motion for leave to allow him to introduce a Bill that we should debate who is a legitimate and who is not a legitimate child is a disgrace. What about people who took legal marriage and who are not allowed by law to go out to own outside children. I would like to know how many children my hon. Friend the Mover of this Motion had when he went to England. Mr Speaker, I would repeat that this Motion asking for leave to bring in a Bill about the illegitimate children is disgraceful and many people inside and outside this House are very much ashamed of such a Bill. I feel that my hon. Friend should be asked to withdraw the Motion and to save your time and the time of this House.

Sir, I beg to oppose.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Commerce (Mr E. W. Udonkim):** Mr Speaker, I rise to support this Motion. The question which is before the House is a serious one. We are not concerned with the merits and demerits of the Bill yet. My hon. Friend the Mover is asking for one simple thing, and that is a permission to introduce a Bill into the House. The only time we are going to go into detail is when the permission has been given to the Mover of the Bill and he can then explain himself as to why this Bill should be debated by this House.

Mr Speaker, a gentleman has just said that the Bill is intended to stop people from rearing children. That is not so. It is merely to protect these children and I am merely supporting the Mover so that he may have a chance of expressing himself.

**Mr P. N. Okeke (Onitsha Division):** Mr Speaker, in supporting this Motion I would like the Mover to realise that this does not necessarily mean that Members of this House will have to vote in support when the Bill comes into this House. I think the hon. Member should be congratulated on having the courage

to bring this Bill to the Floor of the House and he should also be given the opportunity of stating the merits and demerits of this Bill. Members are anticipating a debate on the real Bill and, Mr Speaker, Sir, in ancient Greece there used to be a mock parliament in which the leaders of the country sat round a tree and debated. I think the time shall come when Members of this House will have their own Speaker and when the Speaker is not here we have a kind of mock parliament. I think Mr Okeya's Motion is an opportunity for Members of this House to learn how to bring in a Bill. This is the first time a private Member has had the courage to bring in a Bill to the House and I think he should be given the fullest opportunity even if this Bill may be defeated in the end. Otherwise, we shall only be destroying the enthusiasm of others wishing to do so.

**Mr J. E. Eyo (Abak Division):** I hope certain Members do not allow themselves to be carried away by the appeals from the hon. the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition. The Premier has well discharged his duty as a politician. It is up to the Members to decide for themselves whether to grant the appeal or not. But this is the position. The Bill has already been circulated to hon. Members and they have read through. We have come to the decision that the Bill shall serve no useful purpose and it shall therefore be needless wasting our precious moments to debate a useless Bill. We are of the opinion that we come here not to waste time. There is no need granting leave and going on to speak on the Bill at the same time sharing the evils by disposing altogether of the Motion.

I oppose the Motion.

**Mr M. U. Etuk (Uyo Division):** Mr Speaker, a lot has been said about this Motion and more will be said in due course when the actual Bill comes before the House. But I want to point out to the Members three small points, which are pertinent and should not be overlooked. The first is that we are not called upon to discuss a Bill. We must always try to do the right thing first. Number two, remember that vaulting ambition often lapses before its goal! Members are rather anticipating the effect of the Bill, and so each say "let me fight against it, for if allowed to pass it may affect me. (*Laughter*). Lastly, it has been

[MR ETUK]

said by the Premier, and repeated by the Leader of the Opposition and by another hon. Member, that the hon. the Mover of this Motion deserves encouragement, and that the merits and demerits of the Bill will be discussed later. Let hon. Members leave the immaterial side and talk of the thing that matters. The Motion seeks leave to bring in a Bill to the House after which you may apply any argument to throw it out. Let things be done in the right way and let our action follow correct sequence as they may be.

Now, another Member desires that the Bill be left for the House of Chiefs, when created, to consider. Mr Speaker, that is an indirect way of saying that it should not come up at all. Who knows when the said House of Chiefs will be created?

Mr Speaker, I support the Motion that he be granted leave for this Bill to be introduced on the Floor of this House. Let us have opportunity to air our views. The most important thing to remember is that your illicit action is responsible for the children that the Bill seeks to protect. You must reap what you have sown.

Mr Speaker, I support the Motion.

**Mr K. J. N. Okpokam (Ikom Division):** I rise to support the Motion. Many Members who spoke against the Motion spoke like children. Somebody said that we had been passing so many Bills in this House that were not being enforced. Therefore, this Bill should not be introduced. Why did we pass other Bills in the last sitting and during the present sitting of the House? Why not introduce a Motion that from this time on no more Bills be debated in this House until Bills which had been passed into law were withdrawn. Another said that young men only go to enjoy themselves. They do not go out to get children. It is shameful to note that that statement came from the mouth of a gentleman who is likely to become a Member of the proposed House of Chiefs. As a Chief he would allow young men to go out to please themselves as they liked but whatever happened as a result of that pleasure he did not care. Every now and then we find school girls in the family way. Yet Members speak and give the impression that

this evil does not exist. Young men who are responsible for spoiling these girls continue their studies undisturbed. Well, if these young men are made to realise that the union between a man and a woman has some possible results of producing a child, and that when a child is produced whoever is responsible is bound to take care of that child, I believe our young men will think twice before they go to spoil girls. We are not at the moment discussing the Bill itself, otherwise I would have had a lot of things to say. At present what the Member is asking for is only that he be allowed to introduce the Bill. I am very sorry the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition had spoken in the way they spoke. They had praised the courage of the Member, and said that that was the first time in the Eastern Region, in fact in the whole of Nigeria, that a Private Member introduced a Bill. That remark appeared to have aroused prejudice and envy from the Members of the House. (*Interruption*).

Mr Speaker, I have no reason whatsoever to oppose the Motion to introduce this Bill, and I do hope that Members at this stage will be good enough to lay aside their private interests and prejudices (*Laughter*), and support this Motion.

**Mr Kiri:** Mr Speaker, Sir, it is indeed very surprising that this is the first time that such a Bill has been introduced in this House and we shall be running shy of our responsibility if we as Members of this House fail to support this Bill in the interest of the over seven million people in the Eastern Region. Parliament is instituted to discuss the welfare of the people and not the personal interests of its Members. I am surprised to note that we who should be more interested in the innocent children that the Bill seeks to protect appear to come here to be very unreasonable. In fact, I am ashamed that some of us have gone to the extent of opposing the Bill for the sake of personal questionable acts of indecency without regard to the general interest of the people we represent. Let us be frank and speak out our minds in the interest of humanity. Let the Bill be debated in this House.

Mr Speaker, Sir, some have said that in the African way of life—i.e., African custom—there is nothing like illegitimacy. In fact,

illegitimacy started from the day that prostitution came into existence, but our society provided social protection by the introduction of what I may term as "guardian parents" whose duty it is to provide for the illegitimate children. Let me say that the Africans have been fortunate enough that from the time "guardian parents" came into our society, there have been somebody responsible for the care and maintenance of such children. The "guardian parents" interest in providing for such illegitimate children is to exploit the children in later days either in giving them out for marriage for mainly financial reasons if they are females, and in the case of males they are used as effective labour force—indeed cheap labour and financial interest is the motive behind. In the creeks such illegitimate male children are used as "gig boys" and in the interior the illegitimate children are employed in the farms by their masters. I am suggesting to you, Sir, that we are not passing a Bill to check birth control particularly to those who fear that it will affect the growth of our population, directly or indirectly. What we are seeking is to provide a means whereby those who are responsible for the maintenance of these children are restricted from enslaving such children. Mr Speaker, Sir, I want to remind this House that what we call custom is not static group behaviour. Custom is dynamic. It involves social changes related to our economic environment. In the light of changes in our society it is no longer convenient for a person to pay serious attention to children of unknown fathers. I am appealing to you, Sir, as the Eastern Region is not ready now to take care of such children let us protect the future of such children by checking the very people who are responsible for such acts of inhumanity to man. (*Laughter*). Some Members have asked for a specific example. Now, let me tell you what happened to the children in question when the U.P.E. Scheme failed. Immediately fees were introduced they were the first to be dropped, particularly those who were in Standards III, IV, V and VI due to lack of financial aid.

I am appealing to this House that we should for the first time show the world that we are not representing only our interest but rather that we are more concerned in the interest of those we represent than ourselves.

Mr Speaker, I beg to support.

**Mr D. S. A. Agim (Orlu Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to speak in support of this Motion. It is interesting to note the excitement that follows the application to bring the Bill to this House. There is one thing that I wish to point out first before I go on, and that is about somebody who was telling us that in Africa there is nothing like an illegitimate child. That man needs to go back and study his native customs. African custom has a legal status for polygamy and all children born of a polygamous husband are legitimate children. Before a woman is a wife to anybody in this part of Africa there is usually something like dowry paid and unless that is done that woman is not the man's wife and any child coming of that woman is not the man's child. We have names for this type of children. Sometimes they are called "*Nwa enwegh nna*" or "*Okwara ime Okwa*". These are Ibo translations for illegitimate children.

Mr Speaker, I want to draw the attention of this House to what I regard as two important points. The first one is that these children are found principally in cosmopolitan urban areas and most of us are people who have spent most of our lives in areas or societies of that nature. For that matter, these children are just a bit of common place to us. But we are here representing a large population of about eight million who live mostly in the rural areas; you will agree with me that the presence of such children in such areas is scandalous. Many families do not admit such children to their homes. In years gone-by, before the coming of the white men, these children did appear. They were illegitimate children and most of them were usually sold into slavery when they became of age, because the father of the lady who gave birth to them did not regard them as his children. They were usually denied full right of birth in the family.

The second point to which I want to draw the attention of the House is that people outside are watching our reaction towards this Bill, because I am sure the Bill will get the support of the majority of the population of this Region. Most of us will not like it. There is every reason why we should support that this Bill be tabled before the House. Somebody said before that he was talking in terms of economics, and referred to money and man-power as the goal of economic progress. But you know that

[MR AGIM]

man-power becomes a liability when it is badly maintained. The Bill, if it is brought to this House and passed has some economic effects.

Most of us go in for very long cars with long tails that tickle the public and become centres of attraction to people. We very often have the most secret reasons for creating this attraction and many of us who dress very profusely also have reasons for this. If we are dressing only for our wives and our children and merely for decency in the public, I think we should save a lot. If we buy cars mainly to transport us from place to place, without the intention of creating unnecessary attraction, which is very often created towards a purpose, I think it will go very far to keep money in our pockets.

This proposed law is very humane and the man who conceived this Bill was inspired by humane principles. The Bill intends to look after a set of children who have been a sort of disgrace to the society. You will find many of these children sleeping by the way side. Very often when the mother gets sick and the fatherless child has nobody to look after him he becomes a street child. If you live in urban areas you will find them along the lanes and in the backyards. They are usually full of craw-craw because nobody looks after them. Well, they will turn to the State for help, but they are too many to be helped and therefore the only thing I think should be done is to create preventive measures. That is why this Bill comes to this House to be debated on its merits.

I think the reason why many of us are very much afraid of this Bill is that it is going to have more effect on ourselves than it will have on the ordinary man in the street. Mr Speaker, I am supporting this Motion on the ground that it will bring better moral responsibility among our youths. You know that there is usually a tendency for young girls to leave their homes, leave their parental control and go to the townships where loose life is possible. In the rural areas such girls will be an eye-sore. Public opinion will not allow a girl to live a loose life in the village. So there is the usual attraction towards the townships where such life is possible. If this Bill is passed, I think, Sir, it will keep not only our young men but

also our young women in check, and it will raise the general morals of our society.

Sir, I am supporting the Motion.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Works (Mr R. O. Anoke):** Mr Speaker, before this joke is carried too far, the hon. Member who is moving this Motion should be satisfied with two things. One is that he has been congratulated by so many Members of this House on his effort in framing, and his courage in bringing up the Bill. Two, I think that both young men and young girls in this Region will take heed of his warning, because I think it will be a warning. Beyond that, Sir, I do not see anything else that makes the Bill necessary. (*Laughter*).

As some of the previous Members have said, it will only give chance to these young girls to go and accuse anybody who is wealthy of child producing intercourse with her and you know that if such a case goes to the Court, it will be very hard to prove because, in performing such act, there is scarcely a third party being present.

What I am trying to show the hon. Member is that we are very grateful that he has asked leave to bring a Bill which cannot be entertained in this House not because the House is opposed to a Private Member bringing up a Bill, but I feel that it will serve no useful purpose than to encourage litigation—people going to and returning from the Court. Already now, if you go to some of the rural areas you scarcely hear of any other thing than cases of divorce—that this man has been married and has divorced. Again, the Bill does not try to show the means of bringing in money into this country.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I agree with the Mover and other people who are trying to show us that the matter on Floor is only a Motion for leave to bring in the Bill. I am not interested in that because the Bill has been circulated to Members *in extenso* and Members have had the chance of going through it. In fact, there is nothing that shows the necessity at the moment of passing such a Bill, and because of that I am of the opinion that this Bill should be disposed of and if we have any other business, to carry it on.



**Mr L. O. Uzoigwe (Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Education):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I rise to oppose the Motion, because I feel no useful purpose will be served by introducing a Bill that will not pass through this House. I have to remind this hon. House that we are legislating for over 8,000,000 people of this Region, majority of whom are illiterate. Many of these people are tied very closely to their customs. Among the various people, there are customs for the custody of children and, in fact, as many of the speakers have said, there is no illegitimate child among the Africans. (*Interruptions There are, there are*). What, Mr Speaker, if the Magistrate Court should award the child to a person other than the one stipulated by custom? I feel that will cause much conflict among the people in the rural areas. On this ground I feel that it is not yet time for us to introduce this Bill. On the other hand, Mr Speaker, I feel it may serve as a sort of encouragement for the production of more of this type of children, and therefore it is not necessary to give the Mover leave to introduce this Bill into this House.

*Question put and agreed to.*

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr D. S. A. Agim, Mr Kalada Kiri, Mr J. A. Agba and Mr G. C. Okeya.

Bill to be published in the *Eastern Regional Gazette* and to be presented at a later date pursuant to Standing Order 40 (2).

## 2. Welfare of Illegitimate Children: Adoption

**Mr Okeya:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I rise to move that leave be granted to bring in a Bill entitled "A Law to make Provision for the Welfare of Illegitimate Children by Providing for the Adoption of such Children by the Father of such Children".

Mr Speaker, Sir, I briefly give the objects and reasons of this Bill. The object of the Bill is to confer upon the High Court jurisdiction to enable it to make adoption orders in certain circumstances—here I emphasise the phrase "in certain circumstances" because most of the Members might feel that an ordinary man who is not married can adopt a child. That person is not within the ambit of this Bill or

Law. But the Bill provides that the father of an illegitimate child may apply to the Court for the adoption order in respect of that child and the Court may make such an order where it is in the interest of the child to do so.

The object of the Bill, Sir, is the welfare of the child, the interest of the child, and where it is necessary in the interest of the child, the father may adopt. The welfare of the child is the prime consideration before an order can be made, and the Bill provides that the mother of the child must consent to the order being made except in exceptional circumstances.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move.

**Mr Agba:** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr D. S. A. Agim, Mr Kalada Kiri, Mr J. A. Agba and Mr G. C. Okeya.

Bill to be published in the *Eastern Regional Gazette* and to be presented at a later date pursuant to Standing Order 40 (2).

## REST HOUSES IN DIVISIONAL HEADQUARTERS

**Mr Apreala:** Mr Speaker, I rise to move a Motion in my name "That this House urges Government to build at least one Rest House in every Divisional Headquarters". Sir, this Motion is non-contentious and I am sure it will have the desired blessing from both sides of the House.

Out of the 28th Divisions making up the Eastern Region, it is an admitted fact that there are still some of them without any Rest Houses. In view of the many important personalities who visit many parts of the Eastern Region for commercial purposes and otherwise, there is a necessity for having Rest Houses—at least one in every Divisional Headquarters. Mr Speaker, it will interest you to hear that the press men and Information Service staff who accompany the Premier on his tours of the Divisions have to sleep in

[MR APREALA]

open Court rooms. I remember, Sir, that when the Bride Price Commission sat in the Divisional Headquarters, it was unable to visit Brass Division. The reason was because there was lack of suitable accommodation—there is no Rest House in Brass Division. One of the Commissioners was a married woman and therefore could not share the same sleeping accommodation with the men. It was therefore impossible for them to visit Brass Division. They made their base at Abonnema which is hundreds of miles away from Brass Division and invited people who wanted to give evidence to come there. It was difficult for anyone to travel that distance to give evidence and this was a great loss to Brass Division. I am, therefore, appealing to the Government that more money should be voted to the Tourist Corporation of Eastern Nigeria for the building of Rest Houses in every Divisional Headquarters. This opportunity should not be enjoyed by a few Divisions only leaving others to suffer, but it should be common opportunity for every Division to enjoy.

Sir, I think the usual silence of the House shows that my points are sympathetic and I have already made them very clear and, therefore, Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

**Mr E. Chidolue (Onitsha Division):** Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

**The Minister of Commerce (Mr J. U. Nwodo):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to amend this Motion by asking to *leave* out all the words after "That" and *insert* "this House urges Government to direct the Tourist Corporation to consider the feasibility of building at least one Catering Rest House in each of the Divisional Headquarters".

Hon. Members will recollect that since passing the Tourist Corporation Law, building of Catering Rest Houses in the Region has become the function of that Corporation. By decision of Government, consequent upon the passing of this Law, seven Rest Houses in the Region together with a stock of drinks and provision up to a total of £250 became vested in the Corporation. Previously, Mr Speaker, Catering Rest Houses were under the Department of the Ministry of Welfare and were as

such administered by a Board of Management. But this Board of Management has since been replaced by the Tourist Corporation whose sole motive is to operate the Corporation on commercial basis.

As I said earlier, Sir, there are seven Catering Rest Houses—these are sited in Ikom, Calabar, Abakaliki, Onitsha, Aba, Port Harcourt and Euugu. With the exception of the last four, my information is that the other three are running at a loss. This obviously makes it imperative for the Tourist Corporation to examine the feasibility of creating more stations which, in the ultimate end, might not be a gainful proposition. In other words, what I am saying is that under this gloomy condition, it is necessary to accept my amendment if the principle for which the Tourist Corporation was established should be maintained. This principle is that the Corporation, as the name implies, must be self-supporting and should develop within its framework a clean commercial standard characteristic of good business. I am sorry to say, Mr Speaker, that it would be saddling the Corporation with too much to do at its embryonic stage to urge it, without qualification, to build Catering Rest Houses in every Division. Precisely, what I am asking the House is that the Corporation should be given an opportunity to examine the impact of this Motion on its meagre finances and be able to decide the order of precedence for itself. Incidentally, the Member who moved this Motion is a member of the Tourist Corporation and I think he could have thought it wiser to have brought this Motion in the meeting of the Corporation where naturally it should have received the blessing of the members. Definitely, Mr Speaker, to demand by the terms of this Motion that Catering Rest Houses should be built in every Division would be to throw very big strain on the finances of the Corporation and the result is that the enterprise might die no sooner than it was introduced. Hon. Members are aware that this Corporation is alive to its responsibility and it is working with the utmost velocity to make sure that it stands on sound financial position.

No doubt Members would have noticed more chalets being built here and there by this Corporation and this increase in accommodation will not only ease the congestion but will

bring in more revenue to the Corporation, thus helping to swell the economic prosperity of the Region. I am fully cognisant of the fact that the interest of hon. Members on the provision of well-built Catering Rest Houses in every Division is paramount. That indeed should be so because the very nature of Catering Rest House in itself pre-supposes that it is a very good premises for cool thinking, and extreme relaxation. You know what I mean by extreme relaxation. (*Interruption: No, we do not know.*)

Again Sir, I fully appreciate the spirit of the Motion but I am impelled to say that as the Motion stands in the Order Paper, it is unacceptable to the Government. Rest Houses as can be interpreted by this Motion imply the building of unfurnished houses in Divisional Headquarters. I presume these types of houses are already in existence in every Division and, in any case, the intention at the moment is not to provide such buildings as they fall short of modern amenities. The Tourist Corporation is supposed to be run and managed on commercial lines as a profit-making body. It will hardly, therefore, be proper for the Government to direct that these Rest Houses should be built where they do not pay. Given good business management, however, it is to be hoped that the Corporation would be able to make big enough profits in Enugu, Port Harcourt and other large towns to be able to run some Catering Rest Houses at a loss. It would be valuable also for them to investigate any possibilities of running the smallest design of quarter at the cheapest cost. That is the drive in the eight bedded Rest Houses employing no more than one cook, a steward and a caretaker. The supervisor of the nearest big station will have to give touring supervision. As a good business organisation it might be able to make a success of such a venture. The serving of suitable and popular local menu will especially help to make these buildings profitable. Government cannot support the Motion as it stands but should be prepared to support the amendment.

**The Minister of Local Government (Chief A. N. Onyiuke):** Sir, I beg to second.

Question proposed: That the words proposed to be left out be left out.

**Mr A. G. Umoh (Enyong Division):** Mr Speaker, I rise to support the Amendment and to express regret on behalf of the Opposition that we are unable to support the original Motion for two reasons. We feel today that the need is more for a Catering Rest House to be built by the Tourist Corporation in all the Headquarters of the Divisions of this Region than the sort of Rest House the Mover of the original Motion is thinking about. We are willing to support the Government Amendment also because we realise that it is true that it is more of the job of the Tourist Corporation to establish Catering Rest Houses and not the main Government as stated in the original Motion. In view of the number of visitors who visit Divisional Headquarters and have nowhere to stay, I urge on Government to get the Tourist Corporation to provide Catering Rest Houses in each of our Divisional Headquarters, and on behalf of the Opposition I whole heartedly support this Amendment by the Government.

*Question put and agreed to.*

Question proposed: That the words proposed to be *inserted* be there *inserted*.

*Question put and agreed to.*

Resolved: That this House urges Government to direct the Tourist Corporation to consider the feasibility of building at least one Catering Rest House in each Divisional Headquarters.

#### COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO THE U.P.E. SCHEME DISTURBANCES

**Mr Ikoku:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I rise to move the Motion standing in my name which reads: "That this House urges the need for setting up an independent Commission of Inquiry to investigate all the circumstances which led to the demonstrations, riotings and shootings in the Eastern Region last February, in connection with the modifications in the Universal Primary Education Scheme."

Mr Speaker, Sir, this is a very sad matter: that there should have been this outburst of lawlessness in the Region. It is also sad that it was necessary to spill blood in order to bring it under control.

[MR IKOKU]

Early in January, Sir, Government announced that school fees and/or enrolment fees will be charged in primary schools in the Region. There was little visible reaction among the people of the Region; but as the schools were reopened early in February and the parents were actually called upon to pay these fees, the people rose against the Government with such a suddenness and fury that the Government itself was left baffled and legislators were left stupified. Thousands of women—and it must be said right away, men in addition—demonstrated in the streets, shouting slogans and beating up people. This incident which began in Owerri Division soon spread like Prairie fire to many other Divisions and so, we came to witness what is probably the worse upset of law and order since the Women's riot in the late 1920s.

The magnitude and seriousness of the riot is best described in the words of His Excellency the Governor. Delivering his Speech from the Throne in this House exactly a week ago today, His Excellency said—with your permission Sir, I quote from page 5 of the Speech from the Throne—

“As a result of widespread demonstrations against certain modifications of the Universal Primary Education, the security Committee under my chairmanship, advised the Governor-General of the Federation to proclaim the Emergency Regulations in fourteen Divisions. There were sporadic attacks on the Police and other peaceful and law-abiding citizens by women and men who were armed with all sorts of weapons. Private houses were destroyed and Public buildings were ransacked and looted. On two occasions the Police were forced under extreme provocation to open fire. In all, four men were killed, not five as previously reported, and many sustained injuries. As a result of these acts of lawlessness and violence, 274 people have so far been convicted.”

I take one very important section.

“I need not remind hon. Members of the great harm incidents of this nature do to our reputation both in Nigeria and abroad. In spite of appeals by both the Premier and myself the demonstrators had the audacity

not only to flout the constituted authority but also to open fire on the police, seven of whom sustained serious injuries.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, this is a very telling, a very cogent statement coming from His Excellency the Governor and Members of this House cannot take that statement lightly because it points directly to something which is, I might say, very dangerous to the democratic way of life. Can we, Sir, as hon. Members of this House, take lightly this warning which suggests that men and women are not only satisfied with making constitutional protests against acts of Government but have taken the law into their own hands and not only that but went to the extent of opening fire on the police? This is a threat not only to the existing Government but to any Government that may come into being in this Region. This is a threat to the democratic way of life. It is a threat to this House and I would like to tell hon. Members that were it not for the firm and prompt action taken by the police under instructions there would be no Government in the Region today. The Government of the Region would have been swept away. And let nobody be happy or feel that if the Government is swept away, well, that is a business for the Government. With the sweeping away of the Government, Members of this House would have been swept away as well; this House would have been in utter disrepute and nobody would care one hoot whether Members are attending here to discuss anything or not. In other words anarchy would have been enthroned in the Region and I shudder to think of what would have followed.

My point in introducing this matter is that hon. Members must adopt a very serious attitude to the events which led to the shooting. I would just like to draw your attention to two points. First, the way the looting was organised. Mr Speaker, Sir, a mob is a very unruly thing. Once they decide to loot they will loot anything that comes their way. They behave like a tropical cyclone. But it is significant that in this case it did not happen that way. Specific buildings were singled out for looting. It suggests that there was some measure of plan and reason behind the looting. It was not anything very uncontrollable. There was some direction. That is the first point to which I like to draw attention.

The second point is that the police in the Eastern Region seemed completely inadequate to cope with the task. I am not suggesting for one moment that the contingent stationed in the Region did not do their duty. In fact, from what the Premier has said in this House I think they did their duty admirably. But my point is that the strength of the police force in the Eastern Region was completely inadequate to cope with this event and were it not that large contingents of police were rushed in from other parts of the Federation I do not know what would have happened. In some areas, Sir, for example in Aba, ordinary police duties could not be undertaken; police officers were not available to go to court to prosecute cases. Is this the type of thing we are going to put up with in this Region—having a government carrying out its programme to the best of its ability but with a police force which is completely inefficient for the maintenance of law and order? I would like to make this clear, Sir, that the trouble started only in a few Divisions. Let us imagine for one moment that this thing happened all over the Region. What would have been the state of the police? What would have been the state of the Government? What would have been the state of the Region?

My third point, Sir, is the cost of the operation. Firstly, large police contingents had to be sent from other parts of the Federation and the Prime Minister of the Federation, speaking in the Federal House, said that up to mid-February, the operations had cost the Federal Government something like £16,000. That is not a small amount of money. If by the middle of February the Federation had spent £16,000 it is quite conceivable that by the time the operations could come to an end the cost to the Federation might have been twice or thrice that amount. I would like to add, Sir, that in addition to the cost connected with the movement of police there was the cost connected with the movement of troops because those of us who were at Aba saw with our own eyes troops who have been moved down presumably from Enugu. I do not know where they came from, but they do cost money. Our own Government, here, is going to be called upon to do something by way of paying compensation to people whose buildings and houses were damaged and that is going to bring its own financial repercussions. I would like hon. Members to give serious thought to this way of

spending money. It is not the fault of the Government that they had to spend that money; they had to spend it. They had no alternative and all the claims arising therefrom will have to be met. There is no getting out of it. But what I am saying, Sir, is that if we could find out the causes as well as the mechanism behind these demonstrations and lootings we might put ourselves in a better position in the future to avoid this type of expenditure.

Fourthly, Sir, we must consider the political repercussions of the demonstrations particularly in a self-governing Region. First the women went out on the streets with banners with slogan "down with black man rule". Photographs were taken and published in the national papers which are read overseas. Certainly it will put us in a very bad light overseas for people to feel that the masses in our own Region, barely seven months after we are self-governing, go out on the street with such a slogan. The civilised world know the value of opposition. When the Opposition gets up to criticise the Government and say that it has failed in its duty, any person in the civilised world knows the meaning of that criticism. When the people in the streets carried placards in thousands saying not only that this Government has let them down but that they are fed up with blackman's rule, it becomes very serious. The women came out with these, and mark you, Sir, many of these women are illiterate; many of them cannot write. I suggest, Sir, that people prepared those placards for them.

Again, Sir, when women were convicted for acts of lawlessness in Port Harcourt they had the boldness to tell the Magistrate right there that they were tired with this blackman's business. When women were convicted at Aba the Magistrate was judicious enough to give them the option of fine; the women said they had no money to pay. The Magistrate said "alright, I give you 21 days within which to pay this fine." The women said "Give us any number of months you like, we are not paying this money, we are prepared to go to jail."

**Government Bench:** What did you tell them?

**Mr Ikoku:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the question of what did I tell them does not arise. Am I the Magistrate? What did you tell them? You

[MR IKOKU]

are in the same position with me. What did you tell them? I want these political repercussions to be given their full evaluation.

Again, Sir, these events, all these remarks by the women, all these demonstrations, all these placards were carried over the B.B.C.; they were also carried in the national papers which are read in Britain at least and other parts of the world and they were flashed by Reuters.

*Sitting suspended at 12.00 noon.*

*Sitting resumed at 12.30 p.m.*

**Mr Ikoku:** Mr Speaker, Sir, just before the break, I was trying to touch briefly on what I considered to be the political implications of the disturbances, and I was at the point where I made it clear that the whole world has heard about this ugly event over the B.B.C. and from the pages of our National Papers, and over the world-wide net-work of Reuter's Organisation. I think we must do every thing in our power to clear the impression that we, as a Government or as a Paliament, are in any way afraid of unveiling the full facts, because we should be able to tell all interested parties that we did not, and do not intend to, condone lawlessness, and it is our business to expose all the facts connected therewith. But, Sir, there are other significant facts to which I would like to draw the attention of this hon. House.

The first, is that on the 11th of February, about well over 10,000 women gathered at Awka.

**Mr Ogon:** Were you there?

**Mr Ikoku:** Yes, I was coming through there when I saw this crowd. I stopped and approached the Police Sergeant in-charge of the contingent there and later on, I met the District Officer there. It was pointed out to me, Sir, by the District Officer that about 40 per cent of the women in that crowd had come all the way from Okigwi, Orlu and Owerri Divisions. Now, this does not sound very significant, but it is important. On that day, Sir, Awka was not one of the proclaimed areas. Orlu, Okigwi and Owerri Divisions had already been gazetted as proclaimed areas, and these women knew that they couldn't gather in

these places, but they moved themselves to Awka and gathered, and I am suggesting, Sir, that that type of thing is not very commonly associated with rioting mob. There must be some brain that has brought that information to them. They knew it would be illegal for them to meet at Okigwi, Orlu or Owerri and they decided to go where the emergency regulation did not apply at the moment, and I think this theory is borne out by the fact that as soon as Awka was included among the proclaimed areas, the crowd were dispersed with no effort at all, so that these women somehow know what is law and what is not law. I am submitting, Sir, that it is not a common habit in this country for illiterate women to read the *Gazette*, and that some people must have been passing on this information to them.

Again, I would like to draw attention to the tactics employed by the crowd. First, they all tended to surround the Police. At times they would deliberately run away and lure the Police into remote areas and as soon as the Police were well clear of the highways, they would fell trees to block their line of retreat before they settled down on the Police. I quite agree that some of our people have had army experience overseas, but I do not think a rioting mob can go to the pains of applying such tactics. When they have clashed with the Police, the Police were forced to withdraw. They knew very well that the Police would make an attempt to come back and collect the ringleaders. By the time the Police returned the whole village had evacuated.

Again, Sir, we have been told that something must be done to punish these riotous acts, and a Bill is being brought before this House. It is clear that the intention of the Bill is to make it possible for guilty communities to be swiftly dealt with and punished and made to pay the cost of damages. When the House comes to debate that we will be in a position to say what we can say in favour or against.

Further, Sir, there is the constitutional significance, and here I hope the Premier will be at one with me. Is it wise that we should continue to have a constitutional arrangement by which the Government of a Region, fully competent as regards matters within its portfolio, is entirely at the mercy of another Government as regards the maintenance of law and order? There has been a lot of

controversy about regionalisation or no regionalisation of the Police. Here is a case, and it is proving a test case, where we have to think again and make sure that, whether the Federal Government have its own Police force or not, a Government charged with the maintenance of law and order over a given piece of territory should be supplied with the instrument with which to maintain that law and order. Do you imagine for one moment that there is a safeguard in the constitution? The Premier was completely helpless—he had to go to the Governor, and the Governor had to go to the Governor-General, and then a Council met. Suppose for one moment you have a Federal Government which is not in all that sympathy with the Eastern Government. A mere delay of one day or two days would have completely altered the picture in the Eastern Region. And I am suggesting that something has to be done.

I come to the last section of my Motion, and that is the theories, the explanations, which have been put forward about these riots.

The Opposition still holds the view held last February that these riots were spontaneous—that the people were just fed up, disappointed and decided to riot. Much as we still hold this view, we have to make some modification now. We feel that after the outburst there were some clever persons, associations or bodies which cashed in on the situation and actually gave direction to the demonstrators. That is our view right now.

Secondly, people like the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier and my hon. Friend from Ahoada, hold the view that the riots were a sort of release of pent-up grievances. That is another view. My hon. Friend, Rev. Opara actually held the view that there were some communist tendencies in the business—that the poor are now revolting against the rich. It was a question of the poor having made up their minds that these rich fellows shall not continue to be rich at their expense. There is also the view that some officials had a hand in the business. I do not think I can go beyond that at this stage, but what I want to dwell on is this theory that the demonstrations had been instigated by the Opposition, and that is the ground on which we as members

of the Opposition call upon the Government to institute a Commission of Inquiry. We have been accused of instigating this business and we want an impartial inquiry into the whole affair.

I now come to some speeches made by members of the Government. I refer to the speech of the hon. the Acting Minister of Education made in this House last month. I quote, with your permission, Sir, from page 10 Volume I No. 18 of the Debates of the Eastern House of Assembly. He said:

“In this connection I cannot refrain from contrasting the responsible views of these bodies with the malicious nonsense that has been spread abroad by certain individuals and I regret to say, by certain sections of the Nigerian Press, with the clear intention of aggravating an already difficult situation. There can be no doubt that, if it had not been for this campaign of half-truths, tendentious statements and deliberate calumnies, the situation would not have assumed its present proportions.”

That was the Acting Minister of Education making it clear that the Nigerian Press must take part of the blame for these demonstrations. He went on to say:

“You are aware, Sir, that as a result of this press offensive there have been widespread agitation and demonstrations attended by some degree of violence and looting in parts of the Eastern Region. . . .”

This is as far as the press goes, and I think this enquiry should be set up to give us an opportunity of really determining to what extent our newspapers have been responsible for this business. My view and the view of the Opposition is that the blame should be put on whatever quarter deserves the blame and if it is possible, prosecutions should be instituted against those who are responsible for instigating the demonstrations. The Acting Minister of Education in the same debate said:

“Sir, I am in a position to say that I am satisfied that women have been incited to agitate and demonstrate by men who feel frustrated and incapable of realising their life-ambition.”

**Government Bench:** To whom does that refer?

**Mr Ikoku:** You know, I need not tell you again. I am coming, take it easy. He wants to know, Sir, where mention was made of the Opposition and one thing I discovered with the Acting Minister of Education is that he has a habit of forgetting what he has said. (*Laughter*).

At page 16 of the same report, with your permission, I quote, Sir, while the Minister was speaking, I challenged him. I said: "Go and tell the women". The Minister replied:

"Mr Speaker, I am happy that the Leader of the Opposition has the effrontery of asking me to go and tell the women. We understand that our women have been inspired to agitate when they know the truth".

Furthermore, Sir, the Premier spoke that very day, but he cleverly avoided supporting the hon. the Acting Minister of Education on his insinuation. But a less tactful politician . . .

**The Speaker:** Order! Order! How does it really relate to the setting up of the Commission of Inquiry whether by your Party or other Party—how does it really arise?

**Mr Ikoku:** My point, Sir, is that if it is not the view of the Government or the majority of the House that this inquiry should be set up, we in the Opposition are insisting that we have been charged on the Floor of the House with instigating this riot and it is to our best interest and to the best interest of the Region that an independent Commission of Inquiry be instituted to go into the full facts. I give you an example, Sir, of the recent Bank Leakage Inquiry—afterwards no Member of the House was accused. It was the Chairman or the outgoing Chairman of the Conservative Party who was accused and he insisted on an inquiry in spite of the statement by his own Prime Minister that he is satisfied there was no such leakage. He insisted that because his name has been mentioned, there should be such public inquiry and the inquiry was instituted. (*Laughter*).

You need not agree in order that the Premier might set up an inquiry. You should have known that by now. If you did not know that, then you don't know your power.

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order! The hon. the Leader of Opposition has spoken for quite a very long time. Is it your wish that he be allowed to continue?

**Hon. Members:** Yes.

**Mr Speaker:** I gather that it is the wish of the House that you continue.

**Mr Ikoku:** I thank you, Sir, I thank the Premier. When the hon. the Government Chief Whip got up to speak, he became even more direct. I would like to draw your attention, Sir, to extracts from his speech. He said at page 87 of Volume I No. 19:

"I do not agree with the Opposition that they were not inspired. I will not necessarily say that they were inspired by the Opposition Front but I will say that if there were agents, let us say the Voluntary Agents who do not support a good measure of this type, they are in opposition with the Government. I would like to say, Sir, that it is significant that the language used by these women coincides exactly with the language used by the Opposition during the Minority Commission in Calabar. Now, one other leader Dr Udoma said: 'Bring back the British'. The people said 'bring back the British'. It is significant that the slogans are your slogans".

At that stage, Sir, the official record of the House said: "Interruption from Members who shouted: You cannot get out of it." We cannot get out of it. The impression is there. We have been accused and all of them in the characteristic manner echoed. They did not know the implication. They echoed and said: "Yes, yes. You cannot get out of it." Now we want all of us to be in it. I challenge you if you know what you are talking about, come out before an independent Commission of Inquiry and establish your case. If you cannot, shame on you and forever hold your peace. (*Shouts of shame, shame, from the Government Bench*).

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

**Mr Ikoku:** In conclusion, Sir, he the Government Chief Whip went on to expound the theory of what he called subversive activities suggesting that because this demonstration took place in the Government strongholds it was



the Opposition which took the trouble of keeping their own constituencies quiet and then sneaking into the Government constituencies to cause trouble. At page 92, he said:

“Then there is the question of subversive activities—You know how to do it. You start from where you will not be caught, because if you start from where you will be caught, they will say eh! Enyong people—it is Mr Ikoku who is doing this. The normal thing is for you to go to say, Onitsha, Dr Azikiwe’s constituency; that is all”.

So the accusation is there. (*Laughter*). We have been accused. (*Shouts of Awka . . .*) If you are very serious about your Awka matter, why not start this commission of inquiry. (*Interruption*).

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

**Mr Ikoku:** I have already made reference to Awka and I had told you all the information I collected at Awka.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to wind up and in doing so, I would like you to bear in mind the remarks which are still coming from the Government Bench. We feel very strongly on this matter. In 1949 we had shootings in this Region here in Enugu and we had an inquiry to determine to what extent the various parties were guilty, and I would like to tell this Government now that they should know that it is the usual practice for inquiry to be set up wherever or whenever an abnormal incident takes place. I am telling them that in the interest of law and order in this Region they themselves should support strongly any measure, any move, to uncover all the facts. We are saying, Sir, that we want the facts uncovered and I would go further to tell the authorities concerned that when the facts are uncovered they should not hesitate to apply the Law to whoever is found guilty, because we on the Opposition are determined that law and order should be maintained in this Region and no personality should be above the Law. What I am saying is that to leave the matter as it stands is to leave a big cloud of darkness over our affairs. Let us clear this cloud of darkness and ascertain the facts and take action in accordance with the facts.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

**Mr Etuk:** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr M. E. Ogon (Ikom Division):** Mr Speaker, I want really to be brief. I just rise to oppose the Motion. I still maintain my former stand that the Opposition failed in their duty to condemn lawlessness when these women started this trouble in this Region. Sir, I would like to take example from the West. The Leader of Opposition in the West has consistently been appealing to his supporters, not only to pay taxes but to desist from lawlessness. He even recently told these same people to sell their clothes in order to pay their taxes to the Western Government, but there has never been any statement attributed to the Leader of Opposition in this Region in his effort to condemn lawlessness and violence.

I still maintain, Sir, that Government is prepared to bear any cost to bring policemen here to maintain law and order and allow peaceful citizens to move about.

Sir, the Motion is unnecessary. The Motion urges to see the need for setting up a Commission of Inquiry in order to investigate all the circumstances. I am very sure, Sir, that the Government have all the machinery for knowing all the facts and we should not set up unnecessary Commission of Inquiry.

There is nothing new he has told us. All the things he has told us have been known either by the security guards or the members of the public. Even the oversea papers said the Federal Police, half of whose junior officers are Nigerians, acted in restraint and although hundreds of their members were injured it was only when the jungle police came in and began attack with bows and arrows that the police opened fire. The police acted in extreme provocation. I think that the Nigerian Police knew all that took place and I want to urge on the Government to take a strong stand; we do not need any inquest. It is only significant that the disturbances have quietened and law and order have returned to the Region.

I must say, Sir, that the mere fact that Federal Police, acting independently

[MR OGON]

of the Regional Government, were able to rush on request to maintain law and order in any Region in the country strengthens our arm in making the police remain a Federal subject. (*Hear! Hear!*). Sir, there would be no danger greater than making the police force the tool of any Regional Government in power. We all know what has been happening with the Native Authority Police in the West, we know what has been happening with the Native Authority Police in the North, and we see that this Region is the only Region free from any police interruption. If and when we think there is any need for police to come we will appeal to the Federal Government and I am sure that the Federal Police will be sent to maintain law and order.

I think, Sir, that it is not very necessary always to set up Commissions of Inquiry. What of the Lalupon train disaster when the train killed a lot of Nigerian Students. The Railway Corporation and the Ministry of Transport and the officials investigated the circumstances and declared that there was no need for any public inquiry. I think, Sir, that this Regional Government and the Federal Police have sufficient facts at their disposal and there is, therefore, no more need for any inquiry.

I must congratulate the Leader of Opposition on one point. I am glad for his explanation of how it was scientifically organised or how the women were invading the law. We have heard a lot in this House since the U.P.E. started and it is time we called off this sort of playing to the gallery. Ever since the demonstrations there have been series of amendments here—amendment to the Speech from the Throne, etc. First of all we do not want to pay fees, secondly amend the Regional Finance Law, reduce rate and all the sort and we say that we have come to the time when we should stop this playing to the gallery. We still maintain that we will support this Government in their effort to maintain law and order. You will like to know that when these demonstrations started women were being told that because Dr Azikiwe and other Africans were in power heavy taxes were being paid.

**Mr Ikoku:** Who told them?

**Mr Ogon:** You told them. If a statement is made that the Leader of the Opposition or the

Opposition organised the women all you need to do is to come to this House and say you did not. Up to the moment of speaking I am not convinced that the people in the bush were not misled to take part in the demonstrations.

Sir, I still say that not only are we no more having any more inquiry in this Region but also that the Opposition should be condemned for failing in their duty to support the Government in the maintenance of law and order. There is no comparison between the Enugu shooting and the present disturbance in this part of the country. The Commission of Inquiry into the Enugu shooting said that the authorities mistook industrial dispute for political uprising, but this one everybody knew that there were demonstrations and the Premier appealed to them to go back to their duties. There were no arrests. What has happened in this Region that has paralleled what happened in Okitipupa? And you ask for a Commission of Inquiry. There is no need for such an inquiry. Every day you ask for inquiries: inquiry into U.P.E., inquiry into housewife (*Laughter*).

I think, Sir, it is about time we forgot about these disturbances and look boldly to the future. I am very confident that if the police are alive to their duties, as they have been, I think this country and this Region can grow into a strong democratic state. The Opposition need not fear that they have been told that they organised it. We are not going to deport them.

**The Minister of Information, temporarily holding the portfolio of Education (Mr B. C. Okwu):** Mr Speaker, in rising to oppose this Motion, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the operative phrase in the Motion itself—"that this House urges the need for setting up an independent Commission of Inquiry". From the foregoing, Sir, it would appear that the Leader of the Opposition is not even clear as to what he wants. Having asked this House to see the need for such an inquiry, Government is in a position to say that there is no such need and that is the end of it all. But, Sir, I would like to draw your attention to one very significant fact which was very manifest in the speech of the Leader of the Opposition. He gave the House the impression of one who was constantly in touch with every stage of the development in the rioting and agitation that occurred recently. He has given you details of what happened in every part of the Eastern

Region, he has given you day to day account of how the women organised and how an outside body inspired them at every stage and I say that it would have given me the greatest of pleasure if he accepted the fact that the cap perhaps fitted him very well and therefore he should have the courage to wear it.

Sir, as the Acting Minister of Education, I had the good fortune of knowing the developments from day to day. I had occasions to interview women who came from various parts of the troubled areas to air their grievances to me and then it was my duty to give them the true picture of the situation.

In the first place, Sir, the first batch of women who came to Enugu to see the Minister were women from Owerri. I had one and a half hour's meeting with them at the Secretariat. Then came women from Umuahia, then women from Awka and then little groups from various parts of the Region. There is one significant fact in all these meetings I had with them. All submitted to me petitions of their grievances and it is most interesting, Sir, that the petitions were almost identical in every detail, showing that the women were told what to write. As a matter of fact, the women were not agitating principally against the U.P.E. because they jumbled into their grievances, all known grievances that one can think of. They talked about bicycle licences, about fraud in produce inspection, about corruption in employment in Local Councils and Local Government U.P.E. schools and so on and so forth. I told the women that most of the things against which they agitated were within the competence of their Local Government Councils and these things they should thrash out with their Local Councils. I am glad to say, Sir, that most of these women went home satisfied that the Government was not as black as it was painted before them. Further, in the contents of all the petitions submitted to me, the women also sang the same abusive song against the Government, extolling the good old days of the white man and asking that the white man should come back and rule them. As the Government Chief Whip said, these were precisely the words used by the members of the Opposition during the Minorities Commission. I am sure, Sir, that before this House rises I will be in the position to quote from records that the Opposition, on point of fact, did say those things.

Sir, I want also to draw the attention of the House to the fact that when the agitations started Government took a decision and stated publicly that since it appeared that many people misunderstood Government's decision that Government would suspend action on the collection of enrolment fees and the imposition of £8 and £6 in Standards six and five respectively for two weeks. The Premier of the Region made a broadcast in which he appealed to the people to stop violent agitation and that since the House was being summoned to debate this very issue, it would be in their own interest to make use of the opportunities offered them by the services of their representatives by briefing them so that when they came to the House they would be in a position to tell the Government what the people felt about the proposed measures. Surely, democracy becomes meaningless when an elected Government allows itself to be run by black-mail and mob agitation. After all, it is an elected Parliament and people have every right to go to their representatives and tell them either to uphold or oppose Government's measures. They have the constitutional weapon for fighting their case. But, Sir, the moment people begin to fight for a redress of their grievances by unlawfully assembling together or by looting and rioting democratic Government becomes meaningless.

Sir, I want to say that the recent happening in the Eastern Region which involved loss of lives is an issue that should engage the serious consideration of each and everyone of us who is responsible. In the first place, Government here in Enugu proposes legislations; Members of the House adopt these and when they are finally passed, it becomes morally binding on the people to comply with the laws as they are. In the villages we have local councils, chiefs and court judges and these are the immediate local authorities. As a result of the persistent agitation which took place for some time past in the Region, Government decided to establish a House of Chiefs and to provide the new system of customary courts and provincial assemblies in order to enable our natural rulers to participate in the Government of the Region. They told us that by reason of their influence with the people, they are justified in agitating for these amenities. These amenities are about to be provided, but I would say, Sir, that I begin to have some

[MR OKWU]

doubts as to the effectiveness of our natural Rulers who control the destiny of the rural areas. If things like the recent agitation take place, our Chiefs and Councillors should be able to prove that they are the respected Rulers or overlords of the rural people they claim to be. It is true, Sir, that there were certain Rulers who came all out, even risked their lives to quell down the agitation. Yet some were known to have either enjoyed the game or encouraged women to go ahead. Is it not a fact that even these modified rates of the U.P.E. are a burden on men principally? I am not saying that women have no share in it indirectly. But the fact remains that the burden of taxation is on men in the Eastern Region. It is most interesting, most baffling, that it was the women who decided to take up the gauntlet. We are over considerate in all our dealings with women because we consider them as sacred, we respect them; we know they are honest. Sir, most of these women knew very little of what the recent agitation was about. They just moved together like a flock of sheep without a shepherd and looted local treasuries and poured refuse into the dwellings of the hon. Members.

You table this Motion asking for a commission of inquiry. Is the commission going to look into the reasons why these women poured refuse into the dwellings of hon. Members or why they looted the local treasuries? It is our opinion that we should let the sleeping dog lie. There is no point reeking up old wounds; there is no point in instituting a commission of inquiry that will end like that of 1949 shooting, which returned the verdict of "an error of judgment."

**Mr Ikoku:** The whole Government is lying on this issue. It is a complete lie.

**Members of the Government Party:** What were you doing at Awka? Is it your constituency?

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

**Mr Okwu:** Mr Speaker, you remember that during the period of the agitation it was unsafe for men to ride in beautiful cars—I would not say long ones because cars are cars be they American or Opel Kapitán. You are

not, Mr Leader of the Opposition, a Police Officer or the District Officer. Why did you go to Awka? Awka is not your constituency! Which reminds me; you went in the company of the Opposition Chief Whip! (noise).

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

**Mr Okwu:** You told the Minorities Commission that you are not an Ibo man. (Laughter) But yet you went to Awka! You are supposed not to understand Ibo. But you went there. You told the House that you went to Awka to pacify the women. To deceive us is not so easy, Sir. We have enough facts; the Government has enough facts at its disposal to make it feel that there is no point in appointing this your independent Commission of Inquiry. Certain women who were fined in Awka were paid for by people who are not natives of Awka or relatives of the women. Evidence will be produced to show that we know that there was conspiracy.

**Mr Ikoku:** Bring the evidence before the Inquiry.

**Mr Okwu:** I want you to listen to me in silence. Truth is bitter but no amount of attempt to sidetrack me will distract me from the point I am making. The people of this Region ought to be very grateful to the Government for this was the real test of our maturity for a democratic way of life. I can assure you that under none of the former bureaucratic Governments of the Region could have any group of men or women been tolerated to take the law into its own hands in such a big way without serious consequences to all concerned. In the past shootings have taken place in this country due to agitations more insignificant compared with the recent U.P.E. agitation. The police were attacked, Government was challenged. Women trooped into Enugu when they were told not to. We are fully conscious of the burden or the task before the Region and no one can solve it by wild agitation. When all the facts are laid bare and the truth known, all will be satisfied with the actions of the Government. We are not all that happy at having to ask our people to bear extra burden but there was no other solution. You challenged me to go to the women and I took up the challenge and went to them. The women asked whether I was the Acting Minister of

Education who took the unpopular decisions. I did not disown responsibility but patiently explained to the women the reasons for the decisions. Then I went to my District County Council and they gave the Government a vote of confidence and voted in support of the decisions taken. And throughout the Region the same reactions were recorded. This is to prove that when our people know the truth they will stand by it and, therefore, without further wasting the time of the House,

your Motion is frivolous and we are deadily opposed to it. (*Applause*).

*Question put and negatived.*

### ADJOURNMENT

Resolved: That this House do now adjourn.  
(*The Minister of Production*).

*Adjourned, accordingly, at twenty-five minutes past one o'clock p.m.*

**WRITTEN ANSWER TO QUESTION**

*Tuesday, 18th March, 1958*

**Dredging of the Urashi River**

45. **Mr G. C. Okeya** asked the Minister of Transport, how practicable is the proposal to dredge and clear the Urashi River from Oguta to Degema; how soon will it be put into effect.

**The Minister of Transport:** At the request of this Government the Netherlands Engineering Consultants, who have been employed by the Federal Government to make a survey of the Niger, were asked to undertake a preliminary reconnaissance of the Urashi

River with a view to estimating the approximate cost of making a detailed survey of the river. That preliminary reconnaissance has been completed and Government is now considering the firm's estimate.

The firm states that a detailed survey would take one and a half years (two dry seasons and one rainy season). The hon. Member will appreciate that it will not be possible to say whether the proposal to dredge and clear the Urashi River will be practicable until a detailed survey has been completed.

## EASTERN HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 19th March, 1958

*The House met at Ten o'clock a.m.*

## PRAYERS

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

## ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

## Salaries of Administrative Officers

12. Mr R.O. Ukuta, M.B.E. asked the Premier, how do the pre-Gorsuch, Gorsuch and post-Gorsuch salaries of Medical Officers, Crown Counsel and Assistant Superintendents of Press compare with those of Administrative Officers, with particular regard to their points of entry; by how many points is each of the former ahead of the latter since Gorsuch; what is the justification therefor and how soon will the point of entry of Administrative Officers be raised correspondingly.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier (Mr J. O. Umolu):** I am directed to answer as follows:—

*Medical Officers:*

The pre-Gorsuch salary of Medical Officers was from £770 to £1,500 by 18 incremental steps.

The Gorsuch Report did not specify entry points, but a decision of Government fixed it at £888. The salary of Medical Officers was then from £888 by 16 incremental steps to £1,650. A later decision raised the entry point to £972.

*Crown Counsel:*

The pre-Gorsuch salary of Crown Counsel was from £770 to £1,290 by 13 incremental steps.

The Gorsuch Report did not specify entry points, but a decision of Government fixed it at £888. The salary of Crown Counsel was then from £888 by 11 incremental steps to £1,380. A later decision raised the entry point to £972.

*Assistant Superintendents of Press:*

The pre-Gorsuch salary of Assistant Superintendents of Press was from £570 to £795 by 9 incremental steps.

The Gorsuch Report regraded the post from £570 to £864 by nine incremental steps.

With the expansion of the Government Press, these Officers were in positions of such great responsibility that a reorganisation put them on a salary of £900 to £1,140 by 6 incremental steps. This salary is similar to that of officers of similar responsibility in the other Government Presses: although the latter have been differently named.

*Administrative Officers:*

The pre-Gorsuch salary of Administrative Officers was £570 to £1,290 by 18 incremental steps. Since the Gorsuch Report, it has been £624 to £1,380 by 16 incremental steps. The entry is at the minimum of the Scale, whereas Medical Officers and Crown Counsel enter on the 8th point. The salary of Assistant Superintendents of Press is in a different scale altogether and not comparable.

The reasons for the high entry point for Medical Officers were the long and very expensive course of training (at least six years) and the need to offer Medical Officers a salary similar to what they could earn in private practice. Government Medical Officers in this Region are allowed no private practice to supplement their salary.

Similar reasons led to the decision on the entry point for Crown Counsel, who must have at least two years post-call experience before being considered for appointment. Lawyers can earn a good living outside Government service, so a suitable entry point is necessary if any are to be recruited.

The above considerations do not affect Administrative Officers, and it is Government's view that suitable candidates will continue to come forward for the important work of Administration, without any alteration in the present scales, which in view of present prices and the country's economy, are considered good.

**Electricity Supply for Abakaliki Urban Town**

20. Mr S. N. Alo asked the Minister of Works, whether work has yet started on the expansion of electricity supplies for Abakaliki

[MR ALO]

Urban Town; if so, what progress has been made in regard to the £6,000 provided for this work in the Federal Estimates for 1957-58.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Works (Mr R. O. Anoke):** I am directed to answer as follows:—

Work has not yet started on the expansion of the Abakaliki Electricity Undertaking. The Electricity Corporation of Nigeria has asked for a guarantee, before work starts, that any operating losses over and above £5,000 per annum will be met by this Government.

The question of underwriting these possible losses is now under consideration.

I am not aware that provision for this work was inserted in the Federal Estimates. The Scheme would be carried by the Electricity Corporation of Nigeria and not by the Federal Government.

**Transport Allowances: U.P.E. Scheme**

32. **Mr W. Abengowe** asked the Minister of Education, if he is aware that non-Government officials who are members of District Planning Committees in the Region's Universal Primary Education Scheme are paid transport allowance of 4d per mile for cars and 3d per mile for bicycles when on business in connection with Universal Primary Education; if so, what was the basis for these calculations.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Education (Mr L. O. Uzoigwe):** I am directed to answer as follows:—

Travelling expenses were paid to District Planning Committee members at the following rates:—

4d a mile for car;

Year of Award	Name	Course of Study
1952/53	1. Amobi, H. C. ... ..	Medicine.
	2. Asinugo, B. O. ... ..	Teacher Training.
	3. Chima, I. N. ... ..	Medicine.
	4. Ebizie, M. O. ... ..	B.Sc. Civil Engineering.
	5. Igwe, S. E. ... ..	B.Sc. (Econ.)
	6. Nduka, M. C. ... ..	M.Sc.
	7. Obu, G. O. ... ..	Medicine.
	8. Ogoke, R. I. ... ..	Teacher Training.
	9. Oji, N. O. ... ..	B.A. and Dip. Ed.
	10. Okoro, N. A. ... ..	Dip. Public Admn.
	11. Onyeaso, D. O. ... ..	Medicine.

7½d a day for member's bicycle; up to a maximum of 12s 6d a month;

3d a mile for hired bicycle.

Mileage allowance was not payable generally where travelling involved a journey undertaken to attend full meetings for which sitting fees were paid.

Membership of the District Planning Committee was partly voluntary. The conditions were made known to members when they were appointed, and any appointee was free to refuse membership if the rates were unacceptable to him, that is if he was not prepared to accept the job as partly voluntary.

The underlying principle was to reimburse District Planning Committee members for their out of pocket expenses. The rates paid in other circumstances are higher; for example, 1s a mile for car; but rates for District Planning Committee were never meant to be full. If such full rates had been paid the cost of the District Planning Committee and Registration would have been prohibitive.

**Regional Scholarships**

34. **Mr N. O. Onwudiwe** asked the Minister of Education, how many people have received Eastern Region Government Scholarship awards in Okigwi Division during the years 1951 to 1957, what are their names and the Faculties pursued by each individual.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Education (Mr L. O. Uzoigwe):** I am directed to answer as follows:—

Twenty-nine scholarships were awarded to Okigwi Division by the Eastern Regional Government from 1952 (when the Scholarship Scheme was launched) to 1957. Details of the awards including the names and faculties of scholars will be circulated in the Daily Report.



Year of Award	Name	Course of Study
1954/55	1. Achara, E. N. ...	Pharmacy.
	2. Ebirim, A. O. ...	Civil Engineering.
	3. Ebirim, Miss V. C. ...	Nursing and Midwifery.
	4. Ibeawuchi, A. E. ...	Agriculture.
	5. Muotoh, E. O. G. ...	Geology.
	6. Ogwuegbu, E. D. ...	Auto. Engineering.
	7. Onweni, N. D. ...	Co-operatives.
	8. Onyeaso, D. O. ...	Medicine.
	9. Osuji, I. B. ...	Civil Engineering.
	10. Ugoagwu, H. B. O. ...	Medicine.
1955/56	1. Anyanwu, E. A. ...	B.A. (Hons) Statistics.
	2. Nwana, O. C. ...	B.Sc. and Dip. Ed.
	3. Obioha, E. N. ...	B.Sc. (Hon) Physics.
	4. Okezie, G. C. ...	B.Sc. (Hon) Chemistry.
	5. Uwaegbute, H. O. ...	B.Sc. Agric and/or Animal Husbandry.
1956/57	1. Oji, H. A. ...	Pharmacy.
	2. Okereke, Miss E. N. ...	B.A. (Gen) and Dip. Ed.
	3. Onyeforo, J. N. ...	Leather Work.

### Trunk "B" Roads

39. **Mr N. O. Onwudiwe** asked the Minister of Transport, whether in his tarring programme for "B" roads in the Eastern Region he has mapped out definite roads for tarring in Okigwi Division; if so, which are the roads scheduled; what is the mileage of each and the priority accorded it; and when will tarring commence.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Transport (Mr D. O. Anu):** I am directed to answer as follows:—

The only Trunk Road B in Okigwi Division that has been scheduled for tarring is Okigwi to Afikpo Road, of which approximately 10 miles fall within Okigwi Division. Work is already in hand on that portion within Afikpo Division and should reach Okigwi Division within a few months.

Apart from this we have for tarring Afikpo-Okigwi road, 10 miles; Umuahia-Okigwi-Awgu road, 43 miles; Okigwi-Mballa road, 12 miles.

### Felling of Trees on the Oguta-Mbidi Road

40. **Mr G. C. Okeya** asked the Minister of Transport, why the big trees on the eight-mile long Oguta-Mbidi Road were not felled and whether he would advise the Local Authorities concerned to fell them.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Transport (Mr D. O. Anu):** I am directed to answer as follows:—

The felling of trees on Local Government Roads is not the responsibility of the Regional Government. Although Government reimburses the Owerri County and Orlu District Councils a 100 per cent of the cost of the maintenance of Oguta-Mbidi Road, it is not its duty to say how the road will be maintained.

**Mr Abengowe:** What is the policy of the Ministry of Transport with regard to the felling of trees on Trunk "B" Roads in the Region?

**Mr Anu:** The hon. Minister of Transport requires a notice to go into the question. (*Hear! Hear!*).

### Teachers and Political Activities

42. **Mr R. O. Ukuta, M.B.E.:** asked the Minister of Education, why he withdrew his Circular Letter No. 56/214 of October, 1957, forbidding teachers from engaging in extra mural activities of a political nature; is the Minister aware that such activities impair the efficiency and moral tone of schools in the rural areas; if he is, how soon will the circular re-issue.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Education (Mr L. O. Uzoigwe):** I am directed to answer as follows:—

The circular arose from an adverse inspection report of a Secondary School in which one class had suffered considerable set-back due to its teacher being absent for several weeks while engaging in electioneering campaign. It seems that the intention of the circular which was to discourage "all political activities of a time-consuming nature" that interfere with the efficient performance by teachers of their duties has been misunderstood.

I am aware that such activities do not accord with the maintenance of a high standard in teaching, but as provision for checking this practice is made in Section 4 (viii) of the Sixth Schedule to the Education Law, a re-issue of the circular in question is not considered necessary at present.

#### Police Post at Biakpan

64. **Mr S. G. Ikoku** asked the Premier, in view of the state of tension existing between the Biakpan and Ohafia people and arising from a long-standing land dispute, is the Government prepared to take up with the Inspector-General of Police the urgent need for a Police Post at Biakpan.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier (Mr J. O. Umolu):** I am directed to answer as follows:—

The vicinity of Biakpan is regularly patrolled, especially during the farming season, by Police from the Police Post at Ebem Ohafia, 12 miles distant. Since this Police Post serves other area than Biakpan it would be impracticable, unless the manpower situation eases, to allocate in addition a Police Post to Biakpan alone. I understand also that Biakpan is inaccessible by road in which case it would be impracticable to establish a Police Post there.

Furthermore, in view of the paring down of the Advance Proposals for 1958-59 which has resulted in the establishment of other stations and posts of a higher priority than Biakpan having to be deferred, the chances of a police post at Biakpan being approved in the immediate future are remote.

The tension in this area has recently tended to relax, and the case concerned now awaits determination before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.

#### ORDER OF THE DAY

#### Governor's Speech (Debate on the Address)

(Sixth And Last Allotted Day)

*Order read for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question (11th March):*

"That a Humble Address of Thanks be presented to His Excellency the Governor for His Excellency's Most Gracious Speech".

*Question again proposed.*

**Mr Speaker:** The hon. the Leader of the Opposition, I am quite prepared to let you go on till 11 o'clock—more than half an hour. Will that be alright?

**Mr S. G. Ikoku (Enyong Division):** Yes, thank you.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Opposition finds it extremely difficult to congratulate His Excellency the Governor for what we consider a most uninspiring Speech from the Throne. However, we applaud His Excellency for the bravery and pluck he displayed in wading through thirty pages of gloom and foreboding punctuated here and there by beautiful phraseologies which, on close examination, turn out to contain mere platitudes. There is no gain-saying the fact that the Speech from the Throne leaves us anxious over the present and uncertain about the future.

Seven months ago this Region, together with the Western Region, attained the enviable status of full internal autonomy in all matters within Regional competence. Four months ago Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal conveyed to this hon. House the memorable message of Her Majesty the Queen congratulating this Region on the attainment of self-government and charging this House with the welfare and prosperity of the eight million people of this Region. These are two very significant events. The first was a practical demonstration of the success of British colonial

policy which is to lead all colonial peoples steadily and surely to self-rule. The second event was pageantry with a meaning—that we aspire to and no doubt will be gladly given full membership of that unique association of free peoples commonly called the British Commonwealth of Nations.

If Regional Self-Government is to bring stability and not chaos, orderly progress and not a selfish scramble for personal advantage, the welfare of the people and not widespread cynicism and frustration, the good of all and not the advantage of a few—if Self-Government is to bring all these—then the primary task facing this hon. House is to create and maintain a Public Service free from the sinister machinations of scheming politicians and attracting into its fold the best brains available.

The Public Service must be absolutely above politics and the best way to ensure this is to continue to have an expatriate Chairman assisted by three capable Nigerians who should be drawn as follows:—one from the N.C.N.C., one from the Action Group and the third should be a well known citizen with an independent turn of mind. (*Interruptions*).

This suggestion, Mr Speaker, may sound rather novel but it is based on the facts of life in this Region today. Hon. Members will agree that it is rather rare to come across an educated person in the Region who does not have political bias. Therefore, the only way to keep politics out of the Public Service is to have the main political parties represented to keep a watch on each other.

**Hon. Members:** No, no.

**Mr Ikoku:** In addition, the members of the Public Service Commission should be appointed by Instrument for five years in order to render them non-removable within that period.

The lump sum compensation scheme, though proving a very heavy strain on our finances, must be carried through bravely. We must give the assurance to the outside world that we can fulfil our part in any agreement. This is, I think, the most practical way of re-assuring those expatriates who have chosen to continue in the Civil Service of this Region.

Again, we must leave entirely within the control of the Public Service Commission all

matters relating to the internal life of the Public Service. The politicians should be satisfied with trimming the Public Service by way of the Annual Financial Vote. But when we begin to interfere unduly with matters of recruitment, posting and discipline—we are even now witnessing such an interference—we shall only succeed in breaking the morale of our Civil Service.

Let me warn Members that the flight from our Civil Service is not confined to expatriates. Nigerians have left us for the Federal Civil Service and even for some of the larger Commercial Firms. We must now realise that to encourage intrigues in the upper rung of the Civil Service—intrigues backed by politicians and aimed at nepotism—we shall only succeed in breaking down the morale of civil servants and actually engender the flight of capable men from our Civil Service, leaving ourselves with a skeleton of incapable, gossiping and string-pulling persons. It is our considered view that every exertion must be made to step up recruitment into the Civil Service. In order to fill the numerous vacancies in the technical departments attractive contract scales should be offered to expatriates as a stop-gap measure. The long term plan, however, must be to appoint Nigerians on to these posts. The wisest step to take now is to look for competent and promising youngmen in the upper stratum of the Junior Service and send them Overseas to acquire the necessary training with a view to filling precisely these vacant posts. We shall have quite a good troop of recruits in our Civil Service if we try to make the service attractive to women, with a view that married women should be regarded as permanent staff enjoying full pension and other rights in order to be encouraged to make a life career of the Civil Service. We agree with the Government that the periphery of the employment market should be widened but with two proviso. Firstly, such a widening of the employment must not mean any lowering of standard. Secondly, the employment market for our public service should only in very rare circumstances be extended to outside the British Commonwealth. I have sincere doubts here that under the guise of widening the periphery of the employment market the Government might fill our public service with American Negroes.

**Government Bench:** What is wrong there?

**Mr Ikoku:** Some of these men are quite good and capable, but as a stock, I believe they will be a bad influence to this Region. They talk big, they act big; they are black alright, but they are completely de-africanised; they suffer from a terrible inferiority complex.

Let me warn against the attempt to black-mail our Civil Servants by suggesting that they are in the habit of disclosing official secrets. The Premier should know, if he does not already know this, that the leakage of certain so-called secrets which seem to puzzle him can be traced to some of his new-found political lieutenants.

Talking about the Public Service of the country invariably means two things: Nigerianisation and the maintenance of a high standard.

May I request you, Sir, to convey the warm congratulations of this House to Sir Adetokumbo Ademola on his appointment as the first Chief Justice of Nigeria. The appointment is a great credit to the Governor-General, Sir James Robertson, who has once again demonstrated his belief in the capability of the Nigerian. Before I leave the Civil Service, Sir, I would like to take this opportunity to offer the sincere thanks of the Opposition to all our Civil Servants, those who have left us and those who are still with us, for their most valuable contribution to our general political progress. We trust they will continue to offer their unstinted services in this last phase of what the Leader of the House once called the fascinating dash to nationhood; so that when the hour does strike they will share with the politicians the great honour of having built the greatest Negro State in the world.

We want it to be known, Sir, that the Opposition regard the building of the University of Nigeria as unnecessary and premature. It is unnecessary because the University College, Ibadan, has still to reach its optimum capacity. It is premature because other arms of education in the Region have a more urgent claim on the Region's financial resources. It is wrong policy to rob the Marketing Board of the money which will be better employed cushioning the prices for palm produce and using such money to build a University which has very little significance for the masses of

the people. The siting of the proposed University has very little to recommend it. From every angle Nsukka is simply an indefensible choice as the seat of higher learning in this Region. Here I just want to make it clear that we are bringing in a motion in this House to debate Nsukka as the site of the proposed University. The real need of the Region is to bridge the gap which exists between the School Certificate and entrance to the Universities. We need a polytechnic here at Enugu which can provide our secondary school leavers with a two-year-course leading up to the Intermediate level. The subjects should be in Arts, Science, Accountancy, etc., to begin with. The courses should be open to full-time as well as to part-time students at very low costs. The aim of these courses should be to prepare our students for entrance into the Universities. That should reduce the time they spend in obtaining degrees. It will also greatly reduce the number of students who fail to complete their University courses, not to mention the fact that it will help to improve the quality of our students. It is such a polytechnic which can quite conceivably evolve into a full University in the distant future, if future conditions so demand.

I do not intend, Sir, at this stage to deal with the policies to be pursued by the various Ministries. I only wish to touch on two points. Firstly, the increase in the financial burden imposed on Local Government Councils and, secondly, intimated economic measures to be taken in the field of industries. Two years ago, Sir, the Government made the Region to believe that the Finance Law, 1956 was the magic wand which will cure all our financial headaches. The people were assured of not paying a rate of more than 5s *per capita*. Today, there seems to be a complete somersault in our financial relation with Local Government Councils and the result is a steep rise in the rates people have to pay. A Government circular has announced an 8.3 per cent cut in Local Councils grants in the coming financial year. Local Councils are expected to do something to raise their own share of Assumed Local Contributions in connection with the modified U.P.E. Scheme, and at page 24 of the Speech from the Throne it is planned to force Local Government Councils to undertake the maintenance of trunk roads lying within their respective areas. The sum total of this is that Local

Council rates are bound to rise, particularly when we remember that Government intends to abolish existing county councils in favour of smaller local government units with much narrower financial base. Indeed, here is the ominous writing on the wall for the ratepayers of this Region.

Turning to economic matters, we are compelled to state that Government still has not succeeded in evolving a balanced and workable economic plan for the development of the Region. Foreign capital is needed; but what steps is Government taking to create conditions that will attract investment? Capital could be accumulated at home. I agree. But what positive steps has Government taken for bringing this about. The income tax schedule continues to impose an excessive burden on businessmen from whose savings mainly the domestic investment capital can be accumulated.

The policy of selling Government shares to private businessmen in the successful industries is wholly wrong and quite indefensible. The profits of Industry are the reward of risk and initiative taken by businessmen. Why should Government take the risk and initiative to get a business going and then hand it over to private businessmen to enjoy the profits? The E.R.D.C. should remain our main medium for channelling public investment in the Region. That is why I think the programme for the attraction of foreign investment should be within the portfolio of the Minister of Production and not the Minister of Commerce. The E.R.D.C. should create a Capital Investment Fund which should be built up to a respectable size. Then the E.R.D.C., drawing on this Fund, should go into partnership with foreign investors in establishing industrial projects in the Region. If the Eastern Regional Development Corporation is to play such a major role in our industrial programme, it stands to reason that it must be supplied with first-class staff and capable board members. In this connection, I congratulate the Minister of Production on his choice of Mr L. P. Ojukwu as Chairman of the E.R.D.C. (*Hear! Hear!*). We hope that this gentleman will bring to the E.R.D.C. that hard-headed business acumen which has stood him so well in his personal enterprises.

May I, Mr Speaker, draw attention to an important problem which, unfortunately, is completely left out in the Speech from the Throne. It is the problem of the rising cost of living and the consequent fall in the standard of living of the masses. The advantages brought to workers by way of the Gorsuch and subsequent awards have now been completely wiped out by the steady rise in the cost of living. Government's decision to cut down services of the Region by about £2 million in the coming financial year is bound to create more unemployment. The contraction in public capital works will have the same effect of reducing purchasing power and increasing unemployment.

In the rural areas the high taxes, high rates and continued low prices of palm produce are bound to lower the already low standard of living.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier has rightly observed that the lawlessness of last month owed a lot to pent-up anger and grievances. The trouble, Sir, is that we are now forcing the masses onto lower standards of living and they are turning envious eyes on the so-called rich people, among whom they include the hon. Members. I think something has to be done by the Government to tackle the problem of poverty particularly in the rural areas. And in this connection I would like to draw attention to the writings of J. L. and Barbara Hammond, two great authorities on rural England in the 18th century. In their book "The Village Labourer" Vol. I they make this remarkable statement:

"If a proletariat were left to starve, despair might teach bad habits and this impoverished race might begin to look with ravenous eyes on the lot of those who lived on the spoils and sinecures of the state".

Lastly, Sir, may I turn to constitutional matters. It is a pity that the Government has failed to give the Region any clear lead on matters which are to come up at the Resumed Constitutional Conference. It is right and proper that the leaders of opinion in this Region should give mature thought to constitutional issues between now and September when the Resumed Conference is likely to take place.

[MR IKOKU]

I maintain Sir, that we must make up our minds on the issue of the creation of more States as well as on the conditions for the maintenance of our national unity. Today, in the supposed interest of Nigerian unity, Southern political leaders, especially my Friends opposite, are in the habit of lending a deaf ear to events in the Northern Region. Flogging, mass retrenchment, denial of basic human rights—these and many other reactionary and barbarous practices are being condoned by Southern politicians simply because they hope to keep the door open for forming a coalition Government with the N.P.C. in 1960. My view, Sir, is that these reactionary and inhumane practices must be eliminated and the conditions of a new democratic way of life in the North created before, and not after, national independence.

To make matters worse, it is being seriously suggested that the Regions should be left in their present size and composition. Does such a deification of the *status quo* not mean that the Northern Region shall have 55 per cent of the seats in the new Federal House of Representatives? Is it being seriously suggested that we work a so-called Federal Constitution under which one Region has 174 seats and all other Regions combined have only 146 seats? (*Interruptions—You were in London*). The implications are obvious: political power remains for all time with one Region, the Northern Region, and flowing from this single fact, Nigeria shall become a Moslem dominated country which may fall an easy prey to Arab nationalism masquerading under the guise of Islam. We on this side appeal to the politicians opposite to be guided, on constitutional matters, by the long-term good of Nigeria as a nation than by the short term desire to play second fiddle in a possible coalition Government in the Centre? (*Interruptions*).

**Mr Speaker:** Will you please address your speech to me.

**Mr Ikoku:** I was saying, Sir, that the gentlemen opposite would be given another opportunity to rethink their thought on the issues of a Nigerian constitution, and I only hope that when that opportunity is given them they will make good use of it.

To conclude, Sir, I would like to remind hon. Members that this Region, the Eastern

Region, is going through rather difficult time. Our finances are precariously poised, there is nearly a 15 per cent cut in State services, unemployment is growing, standard of living is falling, the civil servants are baffled and perplexed by the rather uncertain prospects ahead of them, the masses are dissolutioned and disappointed, political leaders are demoralised, cynicism and pessimism abound everywhere. In short our ship of State is pitching and pitching heavily; and heavy seas lie ahead.

This is no time for despair. We must re-ignite our belief in the eventful greatness of our Region. We must believe in ourselves and in our ability to steer this ship of state safely to port. We need to develop all the qualities of the great warriors of old. But, above all, we need faith—faith that is given to us to help and comfort us when we stand in awe before the unfurling scroll of human destiny. Today we are, in rather different circumstances, in a state similar to that of Britain in 1940–42. And I can do no better than leave you with an extract from one of Sir Winston Churchill's great speeches. (*Interruptions: "What we have we hold"*). Speaking from the steps of the town hall of the bomb-battered city of Leeds in 1942 Sir Winston Churchill said:

"The road upwards is stony. There are upon our journey dark and dangerous valleys through which we have to make and fight our way. But it is sure and certain that if we persevere—and we shall persevere—we shall come through these dark and dangerous valleys into a sunlight broader and more genial and more lasting than mankind has ever known."

*Sitting suspended at 11.30 a.m.*

*Sitting resumed at 12 noon.*

**The Premier (Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe):** Mr Speaker, any person who has had the unique experience to watch the proceedings of this hon. House will admit that the Eastern House of Assembly is a model of democratic Government (*Hear! Hear!*). It is not for me at this stage to pin-point the atmosphere of seriousness, of mirth, of pathos and of humour which permeates the proceedings of this House. It is not material now to emphasise the liberty of all Members, both of the Government Party and of the Opposition, in discussing matters before

this august Assembly, with complete freedom of conscience. I am not amiss when I say that we are one of the very few Legislatures in the Federation which allows even Members of the Government Party to criticise Government policies and measures openly in such a way as to reflect the opinions of their constituencies.

Whilst it is true that, on very few occasions, this liberty has been abused, nevertheless I will not say that it has degenerated into licentiousness. I am, therefore, replying to the points made by my hon. Colleagues of our Back-Bench and my Friends opposite in the same frank and candid manner they had made use of this much-cherished democratic process. In so doing, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all who had spoken on the dignity and restraint shown by them in expressing their views no matter how very strong they may have felt in certain issues.

I propose to reply in kind knowing that what is sauce for the goose should also be sauce for the gander, according to the gospel of parliamentary democracy in the Eastern House of Assembly.

In course of the debate on the Speech, several hon. Members have had the occasion to make comments on the Public Service. They spoke on four main topics: the Public Service Commission, Nigerianisation, Discrimination, and Discipline. Our respected Deputy Speaker, the hon. C. A. Abangwu, suggested that the Chairman of the Public Service Commission should be a Nigerian, as well as the Chief Justice of the Region. The hon. E. U. Eronini held that there should be more than three members of the Public Service Commission. Our valued Government Chief Whip, the hon. M. E. Ogon, requested that in order to ensure security of tenure of office of Magistrates, their salaries should now be consolidated and not be subject to annual incremental review.

The principle of the Lump Sum Compensation Scheme came in for rather severe strictures from the hon. M. N. Onwuma, who urged that it was morally bad for dependent territories which had been promised self-government as a professed policy of Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, to be penalised to pay compensations which are

uneconomic and which has degenerated into a racket. He cited an instance of an expatriate who received his compensation on retirement and returned to Nigeria to compete with Nigerians professionally.

The hon. H. U. Akpabio in a dignified speech called attention to alleged discrimination of graduates of the Ibadan University College. He also criticised the discrimination practised in the Public Civil Service against married women. He felt that this Government should adopt as a policy the principle of "equal pay for equal work". Hon. Members like Messrs Ejike Chidolue, V. K. Onyeri, M. C. Awgu and Kalada Kiri touched on discipline in the Public Service. The first three hon. Members spoke at length on the disclosure of official secrets and urged Government to check this cancerous growth. Mr Kiri discussed the impropriety of discussing civil servants in the House, and Mr Awgu doubted the possibility of insulating the Public Service from political influence.

I am, indeed, grateful to hon. Members for their constructive criticisms. The points raised will be communicated to the appropriate quarters for necessary attention. In connection with the Lump Sum Compensation Scheme, it is unfortunate to admit that it is the penalty Nigerians must pay for their freedom. Without your leaders agreeing to pay such compensation, it is possible that independence would not be in sight. Ghana and Malaya had to pay Lump Sum Compensation; therefore, we cannot do otherwise.

I shall investigate the possibility of removing discrimination of any sort from the Public Service in collaboration with the National Council on Establishments. As you are aware, a Bill to amend the Criminal Code in respect of the leakage of official secret has been published and, if enacted into law, will bring both public officers and non-public officers within the stranglehold of the Legal Department. Whilst the hon. Member for Awka (Mr Awgu) is entitled to the right of his opinion in respect of the improbability of insulating the Public Service from political influence, I can assure the House that this Government so regarded this issue as an article of faith that our delegation to the London Constitutional Conference supported the incorporation in our Constitution

[THE PREMIER]

of a paragraph which makes it a criminal offence for any person to interfere directly or indirectly in the execution of the duties of the Public Service Commission.

Here, Sir, I would like to join issues with the hon. the Leader of the Opposition in some of the remarks made by him a few minutes ago. I disagree with him completely on the suggestion that the Public Service Commission should contain representatives of political parties. This is fundamentally unsound and it was one of the reasons why at the London Constitutional Conference all delegations agreed that the Civil Service must be completely insulated from political influence. He made three accusations on this score, namely, that there are interferences in the recruitment of staff, that there are interferences in the postings of staff and also interferences in the discipline of staff. I beg to differ from him and to say that the first accusation with reference to interference in recruitment is not true. What the Director of Recruitment does is to keep records of applications submitted to him through the Secretary to the Public Service Commission and for him to give a certificate that no qualified and suitable Nigerian is available for the particular post. Actually recruitment and appointment are done by the Public Service Commission. On the second accusation of postings, I would say that he is partly right; that is that Government can interfere with the postings which affect the administration but then it is purely constitutional. At the London Constitutional Conference it was agreed that postings of Permanent Secretaries should be the prerogative of Premiers of the Regions and the Prime Minister of the Federation when the Federation becomes self-governing and that of the Administration is reserved for the Premiers but even this is still done by the Heads of Departments and not necessarily by the Government. I would say that in connection with postings in Administration, since that power was transferred to me last August, I have never interfered once or indicated to the Chief Secretary to the Premier where to post any particular person. It is not because I have not the power to do so but because my hon. Friends opposite will come to this House and express views exactly as my hon. Friend has done this morning. The third accusation about discipline is completely false. This

Government does not interfere directly or indirectly with the discipline of staff. Naturally since we are agreed that the Civil Service should be completely insulated from political influence it is unfair to interfere with the discipline of staff.

Unfortunately my hon. Friend dragged in the question of American Negroes. I can assure him that his ideas are largely his own. This Government has not made any definite pronouncements or formulated any policy with particular reference to American Negroes or any other race. We do not believe that racial factor should enter into anything affecting our Public Service hence we have in our Public Service various racial groups working together in harmony. We have the white and the black, we have Australians, Canadians, Maltese, Indians and Chinese and they are all working harmoniously. As a matter of fact, we feel proud that our country Nigeria is a haven in which people of all races should practise living together, so that I feel very sorry that he had made this spirited attack on American Negroes. They are human beings like ourselves and despite man-made handicaps they have forged ahead and reached the top of the ladder of every sphere of human endeavour and I feel therefore that they deserve compliment and not an insult.

The hon. H. U. Akpabio in his dignified speech, called attention to the alleged discrimination to the graduates of Ibadan University College. I beg pardon, I am so sorry.

My Friend, from Aba (Mr Onwuma) has asked for an explanation of the meaning of the phrase "The Spirit of the Constitution." It simply means that on matters on which *prima facie* a large measure of agreement was reached at the London Constitutional Conference, this Government as well as other Governments in the Federation, has proceeded to implement such decisions as if the Constitutional Instruments have been finally promulgated. I am authoritatively informed that the Instruments will soon be signed and that a statement to that effect will be published simultaneously in London and in Nigeria in the immediate future.

I agree with the hon. Member for Degema Division that it is improper to discuss matters which personally affect civil servants on the floor of this House. It can demoralise not only



the civil servant concerned but also other civil servants who know that, since they are not Members of this House, they are prevented from defending their integrity on the floor of the Legislature. I hope that when the Legislative Houses Bill is drafted it will include a clause which will make it to be a breach of parliamentary privilege for any hon. Member to drag the person of any civil servant unceremoniously into the floor of this House without the expressed sanction of Mr Speaker, and then upon a substantive Motion.

It is with regret that I have observed the spate of criticisms levelled on that part of the Speech which dealt with the proposed University. If they had been wholly constructive one could have appreciated that the aim of the critics was to enable Government to guard against the commission of avoidable errors. With few exemplary exceptions the criticisms have been mainly destructive.

They appear under four heads. Government should have made use of existing facilities in view of its limited financial resources. The reserves of the Marketing Board belong to the farmers and should not be diverted illegally from its sole purpose, which is to stabilise the price of produce. Since the reserves of the Marketing Board are based on the profits it makes in the sale of produce, it follows that its funds must fluctuate with the fortunes of the world market; this would be harmful to the finances of the University. Instead of using the reserves of the Marketing Board to finance the University, it should be employed to stabilise the Universal Primary Education.

Those who suggest that Government should make use of existing educational facilities commit a common error by falsely assuming that the Government College at Umuahia is the only institution which can adequately serve this purpose. How about the Women's Training Centre, the Queen's School and the Technical Institute and Trade Centre at Enugu, which together cost the tax-payers of Nigeria almost £1 million? How about the facilities provided by the Government College at Afikpo which cost about £300,000? How about the facilities at the Government Secondary School at Owerri or the Domestic Science Centre at Aba?

I have mentioned these places because they have almost identical facilities as at Umuahia

and can be expanded for the purpose of a University. The fact remains that previous Governments overlooked the claims of other equally important cultural centres, when they decided to establish first-class secondary and vocational schools at the above places, but the forgotten areas did not obstruct their construction in the favoured places, and they did not insist that these facilities should be removed to their localities. They were public spirited enough to appreciate that good things always come to those who wait. At a later stage I will deal with Government's plans to disperse higher educational facilities by using the prevailing centres of secondary education as nuclei for the establishment of university colleges.

The other criticism was also made by the hon. Member for Owerri (Mr E. U. Eronini), who argued that since the reserves of the Marketing Board were saved exclusively for the use of farmers, such funds should not be diverted from their primary purpose, otherwise Government would be guilty of pilferage. I cannot take my hon. Friend seriously in the light of the facts which are well-known to the House. The Constitutional Conference which was resumed in Lagos in 1954 punctured this myth, which had been wrecklessly used by my Friends opposite to deceive the farmers of this Region.

Sections 19 (h) and 28 (j) of the Eastern Regional Marketing Board Law, 1954 specifically vest the Board with the power "to make grants to any Corporation established in the Eastern Region under the provisions of any written law or to any local government body in the Eastern Region." In fact, as Chairman of the Eastern Region Development Corporation, my Friend, Mr Eronini, can testify that the reserves of the Marketing Board served as a sheet-anchor to salvage his Corporation. At that time I am sure that nobody accused the E.R.D.C. of what my Friend now calls "pilferage."

It has always been the studied view of this Government that this particular section of the Marketing Board Law envisaged the use of the Board's funds for financing our University just as other Regions had used their Marketing Board reserves to finance projects which have no direct bearing to agriculture.

[THE PREMIER]

In order to remove any doubt as to the legality of apportioning the Board's funds for educational development, this House enacted an amendment to the Marketing Board Law in 1955 vesting the Board with the power to "make grants to any University established in the Eastern Region." This is now known as Law No. 39 of 1955. How any person can fairly accuse this Government of "pilferage" because one of its Ministers legitimately directed the Board, after due consultation, to discharge the obligation imposed upon it by law, beats me. Here I must commend the hon. Member for Abak (Mr J. E. Eyo) for resisting this unjustified insinuation. Indeed, Mr Speaker, I am surprised that one of our valued Back Benchers gives impression of falling a victim to the crafty propaganda of my worthy Friends opposite!

The hon. Member for Aba (Mr M. N. Onwuma) properly urged that the price paid for our primary produce, which is the main source of funds of the Marketing Board, fluctuates with the fortunes of the world market. But my Friend conveniently forgot that for purposes of financing the University, we are not concerned with the current funds of the Board but with its committed reserves. I am emphasising this point, Mr Speaker, because the former is variable whilst the latter is constant. Moreover, since the committed reserves of the Board are to accumulate for a lengthy period of ten years, prudent allowance has been made for any possible contraction in the profits to be recovered, so that it would not be possible to make any marked inroad into the reserves and thereby upset previous calculations on the uses to which they are to be put.

There is another criticism which is of sufficient magnitude to attract my attention. The hon. Member for Okigwi (Mr S. O. Achara) postulated the curious thesis that the funds of the Marketing Board should be utilised in stabilising the Universal Primary Education instead of the University of Nigeria. What the hon. Member advocates is that reserves should be used to finance recurrent expenditure irrespective of the fact that this is only a temporary panacea; but he failed to realise that that was exactly the dilemma which necessitated this Government's modification of the U.P.E.

The House will agree with me that the constant call on our reserves for the purpose of financing the U.P.E. projects so depleted our reserves almost to the diminishing point that we were obliged to curb this phenomenon. Now, the hon. Member wants us to steer our financial canoe from the shallows of Scylla to the undercurrents of Charybdis! It is absurd to talk of using reserve funds to finance recurrent expenditure, because it violates a fundamental principle of public finance. I am sure he cannot be serious in advocating that we should live on our capital without seriously planning for the expansion of our current revenue.

A number of speakers did comment on the siting of the University. Some feel that Nsukka is rather isolated from the humdrum of modernity. Others feel that Nsukka is not central enough and that it is populated by so-called backward people. I will concede to these speakers their right to opinion, but I must submit that opinions equally important as theirs regard Nsukka as an ideal site for a University. Our Deputy Speaker (the hon. C. A. Abangwu) has referred to the fact that the Elliot Commission on Higher Education in West Africa did recommend Nsukka as a possible site for a University, but for reasons best known to those concerned, Ibadan was finally selected.

There can be no doubt that argument can be marshalled to prove that Ibadan is not an ideal site as a centre of higher learning, just as it is now being done in the case of Nsukka. The truth, however, is that Nsukka appeals to the landscape architects—those who are in position to know—as an extraordinary spot for its natural beauty, probably unmatched elsewhere in the world. The architects who are now working with Government on this project are experienced in constructing higher institutions, having done so in Burma, Indonesia and other parts of the world, so they must know what they are talking about.

I am convinced that some people deride Nsukka because they have never been there and are therefore ignorant of its reputed beautiful topography. Its road system is one of the best in Nigeria. Hardly is there any local government area without a network of roads. Before 1960 the Federal trunk road between Nine Mile Corner and Idoma Division would have been completely tarred. Before the end of the

next financial year the Regional road between Opi and Nsukka would have been tarred.

**An hon. Member:** What of Ogoja area?

**The Premier:** It will be tarred in due course. The Federal geologists have divined that Nsukka is situated on top of an underground sea, hence bore-holes sunk to a depth of 400 to 500 feet or more have produced crystal clear water supply.

**An hon. Member:** In abundance.

**The Premier:** Since it is obvious that, natural prejudice apart, the main cause of the abhorrence of Nsukka, by some people, is because they do not know the place, the remedy is to invite them and I am hereby inviting them to visit the *locus in quo* so that they will realise the scenic beauty which has so impressed landscape architects to this plateau which is 1,315 feet above sea level.

I am very grateful to those who have offered constructive suggestions in connection with the University. The Government Chief Whip suggests that the content of the University curricula should be Nigerian and that emphasis should be placed on the social studies. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Commerce has correctly urged the importance of using the University to produce teachers who will man our secondary schools, when the products of our primary schools begin to flood them, and for which no provision has been made so far. The hon. Member for Degema Division (Mr Kalada Kiri) has also suggested that the University should reflect the needs of the Region.

As indicated in the Speech, over three years have been spent now in preliminary preparations and negotiations with British and American experts in connection with the establishment of this University. The United Nations, through UNESCO, did promise to co-operate, and as hon. Members will remember, the Minister of Education visited Paris in 1955 in this connection. His Excellency has assured the House that a White Paper will be published giving relevant facts and figures of the proposed organisation, administration and finances of the University. I should have thought that, like good minute-men they are, hon. Members

would have withheld opening their fire until after they had seen the White Paper. After all, we cannot criticise objectively until we have obtained all the relevant facts at our finger's tip.

At the risk of being accused of anticipating what would be incorporated in the White Paper, may I with your permission Sir, say that it is intended to construct the University in phases. The whole project will cost £4 million and will provide higher educational facilities for a maximum of 3,000 students. The first phase will cost £1.5 million with facilities for 1,000 students. The money is available and preliminary arrangements have been made. It is proposed that £1 million should be earmarked as an endowment fund which will yield income to augment the current revenues of the University. By the end of 1958, the first phase would have been embarked upon and half a million pound would have been ready as part of the endowment fund, so that there will be no demand on the financial resources of this Region.

The first phase will emphasise studies in the Faculties of Arts, Science, and Engineering together with studies in certain technological and technical fields which have so far eluded Nigerian students due to lack of local facilities or accommodation abroad. It is proposed to expand the facilities of certain secondary and teacher-training institutions, at present under Government auspices, so that they will become University Colleges offering courses in Arts, Science, Education and Agriculture, with a maximum number of 500 students at each institution. It is hoped that such University Colleges will be established at least in each of the former Provinces of the Region. When this phase is embarked upon serious consideration will be given to the Government secondary and teacher-training institutions which are now situated at Uyo, Afikpo, Umuahia-Ibeku, and Owerri.

In view of the fact that no Government educational institution of outstanding importance is situated in former Onitsha and Rivers Provinces, Government will exchange views with the voluntary agencies and other bodies to explore the possibilities of transforming their institutions into University Colleges. After the second phase, Government will be in

[THE PREMIER]

position to consider the possibility of establishing a Faculty of Medicine—which is frightfully expensive—whose teaching hospital may be the Queen Elizabeth Hospital at Umuahia-Ibeku, provided funds are available and the proprietors of that hospital are willing and prepared to co-operate with the Government which had already spent a monumental sum—£375,000—on this joint hospital.

To sum up on the University of Nigeria, I have examined the arguments adduced by the critics of this project, some of whom have been unnecessarily hostile and prejudiced and some have been very fair and objective indeed. I have shown why experienced landscape architects suggested Nsukka as the site for the University. I have explained Government plans to disperse higher institutions in each of the former Provinces of the Region so that secondary schools and teacher-training institutions under the auspices of the Government and certain voluntary agencies may play their part in our University system to the advantage of us all.

I hope, Mr Speaker, that I have explained matters clearly and frankly enough so as to remove any doubts which the most uncompromising critics, most of whom I know may be well-meaning, may harbour. It is significant that throughout the debate, none has seriously suggested the abandonment of the idea of establishing a University in this Region. Therefore, I can proudly say that the criticisms have been motivated by a sincere desire to ensure financial stability.

Another subject which has attracted the attention of some hon. Members is the House of Chiefs. The hon. C. A. Abangwu has requested Government to explain the method of appointment of Members to this House. Chief the hon. Gregory Agbasiere has urged the system of nomination and suggested that each Division should elect a college for the ultimate selection of Chiefs who will be Members of the House. The hon. M. N. Onwuma and others advised against establishing this House because of the financial problems facing this Government.

The Speech from the Throne made it clear that the recognition of Chiefs for purpose of

membership in the House is yet to be determined. This has been done, because the London Constitutional Conference left it to the Governor, the Government Party and the Opposition Parties to have general accord on this issue. Government has ascertained the trend of public opinion on this issue and intends to start consultations with those immediately concerned, that is, the Opposition Parties and the Governor, in order to be in position to present an amendment to the Recognition of Chiefs Law in due course. It is hoped that there will be a measure of agreement to enable each Division to have at least one representative Second-class Chief in the House, on the basis of an assumed population, depending upon the popularity of the Chiefs who present themselves for selection in an appropriate electoral college. Since this matter is still under consideration, judgment should be suspended until final agreement had been reached.

I disagree with the Member for Aba (Mr Onwuma), and others who had spoken in such a vein, who suggest that the House should be shelved until our financial situation has improved. Very few Governments in the world are in position to say that their financial situation is satisfactory. He knows this fact, and if we follow his yardstick, this Government will achieve practically nothing during its tenure of office. Moreover, the Constitution enjoins us to establish this House, to bring us into line with the other Regions, including the Southern Cameroons. We shall not shirk our responsibility and we shall not break our election pledge to our people. Therefore, the House of Chiefs must be established as soon as the preliminary issues referred to above have been resolved.

I am, however, grateful to the hon. Member for spotlighting the omissions of an Electoral Commission in the Speech. It is really not an omission because our Delegation raised the point at the Constitutional Conference that electoral regulation for Federal and Regional elections should be prepared under the auspices of the Federal Government with a view to achieving uniformity. It is the intention of this Government to have an Electoral Commission as soon as the constitutional aspects of it have been clarified. Otherwise, I hope that it will be possible to incorporate it in a subsequent budget.

I am grateful to the hon. Member for Uyo (Mr H. U. Akpabio) for the kind sentiments he expressed in connection with the Office of the Commissioner of the Eastern Region in the United Kingdom. I agree with him that it is doing good work in many respects but that its functions are expensive.

Whether the Commission should be scrapped or not is a matter of policy and I will bear in mind the suggestions of my Friend. Suffice it to say that this Office is acting as an effective liaison between this Government and the United Kingdom public.

My hon. Friend, the Leader of the Opposition did mention the fact that we omitted from the Speech the question of rising cost of living and the fall in the standard of living of the masses. I agree with him, but may I respectfully remind him that usually, financial and economic policy of this Government is reserved for a full dressed debate during the budget, that is why we have not discussed it. I do hope that when it comes to be discussed, he will bear in mind that this has only three answers among others: increased wages, that is, raising the minimum wage, compared with trading, and increased taxation on business. Whether these are feasible or not, will be left for the House to decide.

Mr Speaker, I have replied to the main points raised by various speakers on matters which are cognate to my portfolio and I thank them for their constructive suggestions. My hon. Colleagues will not reply to the various points raised in connection with their Ministries, but they will do so during the full dressed debate on the budget. I thank all the hon. Members who have spoken, for their dignity and restraint in spite of the fact that I know how strongly they feel on certain issues. I assure the House that efforts will be made to continue to maintain the high standards which have characterised the activities of this Government in the past.

Mr Speaker, I beg to support the Motion.

*Question put and agreed to.*

Resolved: That a Humble Address of Thanks be presented to His Excellency the Governor, for His Excellency's Most Gracious Speech.

**The Address will be presented by Members of the Regional Executive Council.**

### ADJOURNMENT

**The Minister of Production (Dr M. I. Okpara):** Mr Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn till 10 a.m. tomorrow.

**The Minister of Transport (Mr P. O. Ururuka):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

### ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

#### Chemists and Druggists

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Mr J. H. E. Nwuke):** Mr Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to clear certain impression created on the side of Chemists and Druggists by the Member from Onitsha (Dr Onubogu). If he regards a Chemist as a quack, the Chemist will also regard him as a quack. After all, it is the same Medical Council that awarded them the Diploma.

Chemists and Druggists are not surgeons and are not interested in any form of administering injection. The field of a Chemist and Druggist is pharmacy, and he is solely empowered by law to manufacture, compound, import, dispense, mix and to sell drugs and poisons. It is also the Chemist who advises on the chemical properties of these drugs and their potencies. Which doctor could produce penicillin, or say how it is manufactured? The two professions are equal in importance each in its own field; it will therefore be morally wrong for a never-do-well medical practitioner...

**Mr Speaker:** I will not allow the hon. Member to use the floor of this House to damage the reputation of professionals.

**Mr Nwuke:** Mr Speaker, I withdraw the statement.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Adjourned, accordingly, at twenty-eight minutes to one o'clock p.m.*

**WRITTEN ANSWER TO QUESTION**

*Wednesday, 19th March, 1958*

**Information Services: Staff Grading**

63. **Mr G. I. Oko, M.B.E.** asked the Premier, whether he is aware of the omission in the recent staff grading of Assistant Publicity Officers in the implementation of the Davies and Carter/Okoye Reports, and whether any

steps will be taken to remedy this omission with retrospective effect to the 1st October, 1954.

**The Premier:** I am informed that the Assistant Publicity Officers seconded to the Eastern Nigeria Information Services were duly converted and the arrears of salary due to them as a result of the conversion were paid to them.

## EASTERN HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 20th March, 1958

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

## PRAYERS

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

## BILL PRESENTED

## Local Government

The Eastern Region Local Government (Amendment) Bill, 1958; presented by the Minister of Local Government; read the First time; to be read a Second time on Monday, 24th March, 1958.

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

## Exemption from Standing Order

**The Minister of Production (Dr M. I. Okpara):** Mr Speaker, I beg to take leave of this House to move, without notice, that the proceedings of the motion relating to self-government in the Eastern Region be exempted at today's sitting from the provision of paragraph 3 of Standing Order 16.

Hon. Members will remember that we had a similar provision in regard to the motion on Universal Primary Education. It will be necessary to suspend that Standing Order if this debate is to continue beyond 2.15 p.m. today and it is proposed that the debate should last for tomorrow and Monday to give every Member an opportunity to express the views of his constituents.

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Transport (Mr P. O. Ururuka):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

Resolved: That the proceedings on the Motion relating to Self-Government in the Eastern Region be exempted at Today's sitting from the provisions of paragraph (3) of Standing Order 16.

SELF-GOVERNMENT IN THE  
EASTERN REGION

**The Premier (Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe):** Mr Speaker, I rise to move: "That this House approves in principle the proposals contained in Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1957—Self-Government in the Eastern Region, Part I: Policy Statements."

This paper was laid on the Table of this House on 18th November, 1957, and there has been ample time for hon. Members to have studied it and to have discussed its contents with their constituents. Therefore I need not take up the valuable time of this House with a lengthy exposition of every aspect of it. I would say that the Paper sets out the policies of this Government whose aim and objects among others are to improve and diversify the economy of this Region, to raise the standard of living of its people and to develop its social services so far and as fast as possible according to the means at our disposal. The Policy of each Ministry is stated in Chapter II of the Paper. Hon. Members will note the comprehensive nature of the proposals. None should expect us to achieve all these in the immediate future. This chapter is rather a statement of aims and of objectives. It is a plan, some aspects of which will be implemented earlier than others, and it is to be hoped that hon. Members in the course of debate of this Motion will indicate to what parts of the plan a higher priority should be given. I would like to draw attention to certain points that are vital to the progress of this Region. First, there is the research and demonstration work to improve agricultural methods which will be related to a drive to increase production of cash and food crop and produce for export. Then there are the plans for the development of local crafts industries followed by the introduction of light metal industries of which the Government recent deal with Messrs William and Williams is an example. Later will come investigation into the possibilities of heavy industry. The steady expansion of the social services must also continue and the Paper sets out in detail the aims of the Government in the fields of education and health. I would mention here the revised policy for the award of scholarships. In the past, emphasis was placed on an equitable distribution on the basis of the administrative division. Although this policy was desirable, yet, it has not produced either enough qualified candidates for the rapid Nigerianisation of the Public Service or an adequate supply of trained technicians for the development of the Region's agricultural and industrial resources. In future the emphasis must be shifted on awards for post-secondary scholarships to the best available material in the interest of the Region. The proposals for County Scholarships for secondary and technical education, it is hoped,

[THE PREMIER]

will result in an increased flow of candidates for post-secondary awards, especially from those areas where educational facilities are as yet not fully developed.

The critic may ask how these plans will be financed. My reply is that the cost of education apart, the finances of the Region are buoyant. May I remind the House of the old saying, "Where there is a will, there is a way". That is the spirit in which I invite this House to tackle the problems that face us. It is our policy that the progress we desire shall be achieved by the joint efforts of the Regional Government, the Local Government Councils, and the various communities throughout the Region. This is a suitable moment for me to mention the changes that are proposed in the Local Government structure.

In 1955, the Ministry of Local Government stated in a Policy Paper that the Region, in developing its local government, was still in a period of trial and error, and that both the Government and the people would learn by experience what form of local government would suit them best.

Experience over the past three years has shown that the three-tier system of County, District and Local Councils has not generally been satisfactory, and that the "District-with-County-powers" is preferred by majority of the people. It has been said that the County is an expensive luxury, which increases overhead expenses. On more than one occasion, I have heard it called a "wastepipe". District Councils have disliked collecting rates to meet County precepts, in the spending of which they have no say. Small districts, especially if of different linguistic groups from the majority in a County, have felt that their views can never be heeded and their requests never met.

In the face of this feeling, Government has no alternative but to adopt the present District Council areas as the units for all-purpose authorities, based on ethnic, linguistic and cultural affinities. It is proposed to substitute the name "County" for "District" in the rural areas. It is also the intention of this Government to use these Local Government Councils as the chief instruments of policy, and by devolving on them responsibility for the operation of social services within their

competence, to avoid over-centralisation. Thus the Ministries will formulate policy and will act in an advisory and supervisory capacity towards the County Councils, which will be charged progressively with responsibility for the maintenance of the social services and will be assisted by means of grants-in-aid and by the advice and supervision of Government Officers.

In order to ensure the proper co-ordination of the services operated by the County Councils and the most effective and economical use of Government officers in their advisory and supervisory capacities, it is intended to group Counties, broadly, according to geography and to ethnic and linguistic affinity, in Provinces. There will be a headquarters in each Province with a senior officer of the Administration as Provincial Inspector, who will be the agent of the Government to see that the policies are carried out by the County Councils. He will be assisted by County Inspectors, whose functions will be chiefly supervision of the Councils and of revenue collection, and by a team of departmental officers, who will provide the professional and technical supervision and advice required by the County Councils in the operation of services.

I would draw special attention of the House to the proposal to form Provincial Assemblies in each Province. Under the chairmanship of a Commissioner, they will comprise representatives of each Local Council in the Province. The aim is to secure close contact between the Government and the people and, as far as possible, to do away with the complaint that there is little or no consultation between the Government and the governed. The Assemblies will be deliberative and consultative bodies, whose opinions the Government will seek on matters concerned with the progress and prosperity of the people of each Province. Thus, it is my hope, that Government will be brought nearer to the people.

The White Paper also deals with electoral reform. This Government is committed to the introduction of election to this House on the basis of single member constituencies. Preliminary planning has shown clearly that if there were to be eighty-four constituencies a cause of grievance to many small communities, namely; that under the present system they can never hope to be directly represented, will go unredressed. Rather than deny representation to these



communities, this Government is ready to and will enlarge the size of the House.

Since for purposes of the operation of social services the present District or future County Council is to be the unit of administration, then it is no more than reasonable to use that unit as the electoral unit also. True, some Council areas must by reason of their very large populations merit more than one seat. Appendix "B" of the White Paper shows how the basis of the proposals is one seat for each County, while the larger ones have two, and in very few cases three seats. Thus it is intended to ensure full and adequate representation for all sections of the people of this Region. At the beginning of this speech I said that I would not take up the valuable time of this House with a long exposition since hon. Members have had time to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest the contents of this White Paper. I will only add that it sets out Government's ideas for the orderly progress of this Region. It does not claim to be infallible or to be final.

My attention has been drawn to representations received from various communities, particularly concerning the proposed constituencies and provinces. These will be carefully considered on their merits and I hope that hon. Members will freely voice their views and the views of those they represent. This will assist the Government to make plans for the greatest good of the greatest number.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Production (Dr M. I. Okpara):** Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

Mr Speaker, I regard this as a great privilege.

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order! I was wondering in an ordinary case you would be entitled to speak at any stage of the proceedings and whether you would not be prepared to speak at the end when you wind up for the Government.

**Dr Okpara:** I think the Premier will be winding up.

**Mr Speaker:** You can proceed.

**Dr Okpara:** Mr Speaker, I regard this as a great privilege to second this Motion, because this is indeed a momentous occasion in the

history and life of this Region. We all know that the struggle for self-government had been a very difficult one and I would suggest, Sir, that the struggle started when the European nations came to trade with West Africa. That trade was almost entirely in slaves. Then later on there were the famous explorations of Mungo Park, Clapperton and the Landers who traced the course of the Niger to the sea. Then came the slave boom and all European nations vied with each other to excel in this barbarous traffic.

The need to expand peaceful trade and to stop the slave trade led to the establishment of British suzerainty in this part of the world. Some people have called it unlawful occupation by the British. There is a little rhyme, Sir, quoted by an Englishman on how they got parts of the West Coast: "And some we got by purchase and some we had by trade; and some we found by courtesy of Pyke and carronade". But, Sir, before our great grand fathers knew what was happening, they had become a subject race to an alien people. There was no doubt that our own culture suffered as a result and the wealth of this land was developed not primarily for the people but only secondarily—it was developed primarily for the benefit of the occupying nations.

I am suggesting, Sir, that it would be entirely wrong to regard the British occupation of this country as unfavourable to the African. (*Hear! Hear!*). Contact with the West had very many good results. The country was opened up to the influx of western ideas—Christianity was introduced, education flourished, modern medical methods of diagnosis and treatment were embraced with the consequent reduction in mortality and morbidity. The British, above all, brought justice, law and order; roads and railways were built; even the aeroplane was introduced. Above all, modern trade boomed. Many indeed have wondered why with all these advantages of British rule there should ever be dissatisfaction with it. Why have the scattered brain been shouting up and down the country "we want self-government, we want the British to hand over power to us"? First, Sir, I regard self-government as one of the inalienable rights of any people, and however imperfect self-government may be, it is certainly more acceptable than the best form of foreign rule. Secondly, the pace of progress, fast

[DR OKPARA]

as it was, to us, the younger generation, was not fast enough. In other words, although all these things were being done, we the younger generation did not regard the pace of progress fast enough. We wanted the tempo quickened; we wanted everything accelerated; we wanted more schools built—and indeed an experiment has already been made with U.P.E.—we wanted to change the curriculum in the school, to learn modern agriculture, the thing that will benefit our people, and not only Socrates, Plato and Latin. In other words, Sir, those aspects of education that would bring the African culture back into its own, we wanted to emphasise. Indeed, we even wanted a University. I remember in 1944 or 1945 when the Elliot Commission came, even though some of us were medical students in those days, we desired to give evidence and we went to give evidence. The idea behind this being to train those people who will fill the various gaps in our national life. Where are the engineers that will build all our roads, the agriculturist, the educationist, the doctor, the research worker? The trickle that comes overseas is not just enough and so we the younger generation were not satisfied with this. We wanted the tempo quickened. That was the only reason why we wanted the British, although they were doing very well, to hand over to us.

We could industrialise our own country faster, and we already know what is being done in that respect. In other words, we wanted to use the machinery of Government to change the face of our land, revolutionise it and bring about a modern and efficient nation.

The idea of joining in such a crusade, a crusade to bring out this change, was very fascinating to many of us and as far back as 1943, I remember, we congregated at a place near Agege (I think it is called Ojokoro Farm) in an effort to encourage the emergence of a national force with a view to win this prize I have enumerated—prize of national independence. The meeting led to the formation of the N.C.N.C. in the subsequent year. After that all other parties mushroomed all over the country. I think that the subsequent history of the nationalist movement in this country is well known for me to recapitulate here. Suffice it to say that by 1952 there had emerged

three strong Political Parties, the N.C.N.C., the N.P.C. and the Action Group. I think, Sir, that for what we have achieved so far credit must go first to these political parties, their leaders and their followers for the success they have made possible in the struggle. And I venture to add, Sir, that perhaps no one will argue that the greatest contribution to this struggle has been made by our own leader, Dr Zik. (*Hear! Hear!*).

Last year, Mr Speaker, (I am coming now to the present) we had the privilege to go to London on a promise made to the Nigerian delegations in 1953, that in 1956, if there was any Region that desired it that Region could have self-government. We went to London—we of the N.C.N.C. did not just ask for self-government for the Eastern Region; we wanted self-government for the Eastern Region and, if possible, for the other Regions and, above all, internal self-government for the Federation. We had self-government for our Eastern Region and, of course, internal self-government for the Federation. That is the short history of what we are debating today. I may go to say, Sir, that the achievement of self-government is a major triumph for all the major and minor political parties in this country. It has been a very difficult struggle and it will be wrong not to remember those who have made the success possible. I would like to remember, Sir, the civil servants who have worked ironically for the day when their services would no longer be required. What could we have achieved without the Administrative Officer—that jack-of-all-trades, master of most things—without whom civil service as we know it today would be non-existent. There is also the Missionary, the Medical Officer, that most amiable of all persons (*Applause*), the permanent warrior against disease and death, the Educationist, and then the whole army of Justice, Law and Order. But I would like, Sir, to remember a small group of people who are often maligned. I would want our gratitude to go to the so-called scatter-brains, the people who make a lot of noise; they are thrown to jail today, tomorrow they are out and continue making more noise. (*Hear! Hear!*). I think a great deal of credit should go to them, Sir. When they were making all the noise most people thought they were crazy, they were lunatics. I think, Sir, that without their own contribution the

struggle would probably have taken a longer time and, above all, our own people, who, through no fault of their own had been subjected to waves upon waves of foreign rulers.

And, Sir, in this round of congratulations, I want to congratulate the various leaders in the three Regions, who, by coming together have made this new chapter possible. It is to consolidate this milestone in our political history that this White Paper has been presented to this hon. House. The achievement of liberty in this country had been such an arduous one that every gain should be enshrined in Statute to preserve it forever for posterity. I would like to touch at this stage perhaps the most interesting section of all, the section dealing with the devolution of powers.

We have already dealt at length with the policies of various Ministries in the speech from the Throne and I do not think it would be very valuable exercise to touch them now, except, Sir, on the devolution of powers. I will agree that at times the Regional Government at Enugu seems to be rather remote from the people and this proposal will bring the Government closer to our people so that they can understand the intricacies of Government, comprehend some of the policies which are always designed for their benefit. And this proposal, Sir, in the devolution section will help the Government at Enugu to concentrate on broad essentials.

You will see, Sir, on page 20 paragraph 7 that most of the bones of contention, most of the subjects that take a lot of our time in this hon. House at least, will be handed over to these provincial assemblies.

**Education.** If you read the speeches in this hon. House in the past six years, you will find that people are always talking about education; primary education and secondary education.

**Scholarships:** Well, most of these things will now be handed to a legislature or quasi legislature that will be very close to the people.

**Health.** We always talk about hospitals, rural hospitals, health centres, maternity homes. It is far better to bring these closer to

the people than to have the organisation controlling the machinery situated in Enugu.

**Roads:** Who would not like to see another new road in his constituency? Well, these trunk B roads will be handed over, to a large extent, to these new assemblies.

Water supplies, building construction, natural resources will also be handed over, so that you see that the Government at Enugu will therefore be given ample opportunity to concentrate on what I regard as broad essentials; of course this is not an entirely new thing. In the old British Administration they had what they called Residents in the Eastern Region. At first we had four provinces but later on five. Up to the time we took over, they had five provinces and they had Residents who in many respects, Sir, were more powerful than the Governor at Enugu. He was in control of the Local Government system and law and order in his area, he was in charge of the police, he reviewed cases, but hardly anything did by-pass the Resident and he acted as a sort of sieve lightening the burden of people at Headquarters. The Northern Region also had a proposal similar to this—the devolution of powers to the provinces. But Sir, I wish to emphasise that there is a great deal of difference between what is proposed in the North and what is proposed here. I personally regard these proposals as a step in the right direction. The Commissioner here will be a political appointee. He will not be an Administrative Officer; he will be a political appointee rather like what has happened in Ghana.

**Opposition Members:** Are Ghanaians your brothers?

**Dr Okpara:** Ghanaians are our brothers and we are not ashamed to claim that. You will recollect that even at the tribunal, I challenged you people and said that we were happy with what was happening in Ghana in the advancement they have made.

If you will not mind, Mr Speaker, could I just quote one paragraph of how they organised it in Ghana—in the National Assembly. Well, it will give gladness that now when you open a book like this you have United Kingdom, Canada and then you come on to Ghana.

[DR OKPARA]

This is the *Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Journal*, Sir, and it is trying to describe the debate in the various Legislatures. Here hon. Kojo Botsio is summarizing their own ideas about Regional Assemblies. I am quoting, Sir:—

“Summarizing the main functions of Chief Regional and Regional officers at the present time, the Minister said they were required (i) to act as the senior representatives of the Government, to explain Government policy, and report the wishes and needs of the people, (ii) to be in touch with the security situation, (iii) to co-ordinate the work of all Government departments in their Regions, (iv) to be responsible for their own Regional Office and for the work of Government Agents, particularly for the efficient functioning of Local Governments, and (v) to preside at Sessions of Regional Councils and Development Committees on the occasion of the election of a Chairman.

It was the Government's view that civil servants could not under the present circumstances carry out all the functions described, and this was the main reason why the Government had decided to abolish Chief Regional Officers and Regional Officers and to appoint Ministers known as Regional Commissioners.

The office of Chief Regional Officer and Regional Officer was unsuitable for a democratic state, the Minister continued.

“The essence of the British system of Parliamentary democracy which we are trying to adopt for use in Ghana is that there should be a clear distinction between political, administrative and judicial functions.’ The new Regional Commissioners would be Ministers, and therefore the doctrine of collective Cabinet responsibility would apply, and the House would be able to discuss and criticize the officer responsible for carrying out Government policy in the Region. It was essential, however, when criticizing policy, that the House did not criticize those civil servants whose duty it was to carry out the policy of the Government irrespective of what Government was in power.

The object of the Bill was, therefore, to divide into three parts the functions previously exercised by Chief Regional and Regional Officers, the political functions being transferred to the Regional Commissioners, and the administrative to the new post of Secretary to the Regional Commissioner, which would be a civil service appointment.”

I submit, Sir, that what we are trying to do is similar to that and we are not hiding the fact. It is similar to that and it is a very welcomed change. It would be wrong in principle, Sir, to let the administrative officer-in-charge of a province bear all the burden that ought to fall squarely on the shoulders of a politician. For instance, during the last trouble we had over the U.P.E. he took it very bravely. He did a lot of work which should have been done by a politician. Politicians should have been able to explain the policy that led to the agitation.

I wish, Sir, to refer to the proposals in regard to Minorities Commission. I remember the Opposition charged us at the Minorities Commission that we are not going to debate this White Paper. I hope that the Minorities Commission, wherever they may be now, will take note that we have lived up to our word.

We promised to debate these proposals but what is more, Government is serious about these proposals and intends to implement them within reason. I wish to assure this House with regard to States, Sir, that it would be wrong for anybody to think that by these proposals the N.C.N.C. as a political party has abandoned the idea of many small states in the country and a strong Federal Government. Far from it; that is still our ideal; but within the framework of the self-governing Eastern Region it is proper that we should plan how to run the Region to the benefit of our own people.

**Mr S. G. Ikoku (Enyong Division):** What did you tell the Commission?

**Dr Okpara:** These proposals do not in any way clash with the policy of N.C.N.C. and I wish to make it abundantly clear that if tomorrow it is decided that all the provinces in the North, East and West should be converted into small states with smaller powers than the present Regional Government; that a strong Federal Government should be set up in the

centre, the N.C.N.C. would only be too glad to support as this is the bedrock of N.C.N.C. policy. (*Hear! Hear!*)

I wish to wind up, Sir, by saying that to achieve what we have here, the policies and the proposals will require, as the Premier has said, co-operation from all sides and at all levels, both at Government level here at Enugu and the Local Government level and the level of the people. Without this co-operation, it will be very difficult if not impossible to achieve the desired aim. Really, self-government means harder work than before. And I don't subscribe, Sir, to the idea that this our self-government is self-government on trial, which is absolute nonsense. However, Sir, I must say that we must work very hard to justify the hope of our people here and all over the world.

In conclusion, Sir, I commend these proposals to hon. Members and hope that with the implementation of these, our people will understand more what the Government is and the co-operation which we have enjoyed so far will even be increased several fold.

Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr A. J. Ekpe (Opobo Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I really must congratulate the Premier for that short speech, although I could see melancholy sit heavily on his face as he was trying to give expression to a White Paper which I believe he does not believe in.

**Mr Speaker:** What do you say. I didn't hear you.

**Mr Ekpe:** He was trying to give expression to a White Paper which I believe he does not believe in. (*Laughter*). It is unfortunate, Sir, that the White Paper should be commenced with that horrible statement that "The office of the Premier is also the Treasury", and that the Premier is also ultimately responsible for the Policy of the Treasury. No where in the democratic world that practises the democratic system of Parliamentary Government is the office of the Premier also the Treasury. If it is true that we take our system of Parliamentary Government from the pattern of Westminster then the Premier could only be a nominal Head of the Treasury as is the practice in the United Kingdom where the Prime Minister is purely

the nominal Head of the Treasury and has no hands in the formulation of policy in that Ministry. I submit, Sir, that the Minister of Finance should be the real Head of the Treasury as his office corresponds with that of the Chancellor of Exchequer who is directly responsible for the financial policy of the Government.

The functions of the Minister of Finance broadly speaking includes answering to Parliament for due collection of public revenue, the means by which it is raised, the loans by which it is supplemented, the taxes imposed, the remissions and exemptions allowed, the custody of the public balances, the broad outlines of public expenditures, and the preservation of equilibrium between that expenditure and the revenue. He is responsible for all financial matters generally, prepares the annual budget embodying a programme of taxation and pilots financial measures through Parliament. These are the duties which the Premier wishes to add to his already top-heavy portfolio . . .

**Mr Speaker:** It seems the hon. Member is too fast. Are you reading your speech?

**Mr Ekpe:** No, Sir, I am only glancing at my notes.

Mr Speaker, Sir, besides, what would be the sense of having a Ministry of Finance divested of its proper function of responsibility for government financial policy? By arrogating to himself the Region's purse string as Head of the Treasury the position of the Premier will become exactly like that reported of the Nazi Regime, to wit:

"After the death of President von Hindenburg, the Office of the President was merged with that of the Chancellor of Exchequer and Hitler became the formal as well as actual Head of the Treasury in Germany".

If the Legislature allows this situation to develop it shall be concentrating absolute power in the hands of a single individual and you know what absolute power did in Germany.

The policy of the Ministry of Commerce as contained in the White Paper is wrong in principle. The Ministry of Commerce cannot and should not be concerned with the economic development programme. That function should properly go to the E.R.D.C. and other corporate bodies established by Law.

[MR EKPE]

Experience has shown older states that economic development can best be prosecuted through public Corporations; to quote a few sentences to support my contention, I refer you, Sir, to the Official Hand Book of Britain page 130.

“State participation in economic development is effected mainly through special Statutory Bodies set up to deal with a particular activity. Such bodies though not a part of Government Department are under a considerable but varying degree of public control. The most important of these bodies have been the public Corporations which operate major industries and services in the public interest”.

My suggestion is that economic development should be left to State-aided private enterprise and public Corporations. The reasons for these suggestions are obvious. The Ministry of Commerce with its official red-tapes and cumbrous rigmarole possesses the same characteristics of Government Departments, guarding unnecessarily against risks, slow and rational, cautious and prudent, with an eye to the annual audit and so, cannot satisfactorily undertake economic enterprise which by nature requires risk-taking, speculation and snapshot decisions.

I now come to the Public Service of the Region. The policy in respect of the Public Service of the Region is vague. I had thought that the Premier in the White Paper would set out a comprehensive policy in respect of the Public Service. I disagree entirely with the idea that Political Executive should have any hand at all in the postings of permanent officials of the service. I submit that patronage and favouritism cannot altogether be absent in such a situation and insecurity of the service stems from such a practice. Experience in older nations has shown that the time and mind of the Premier will be devoted to rewarding such officers with postings most favourable to them. The Public Service Commission should represent all the minority groups in the Region. Promotions, Sir, must also be on the basis of seniority tempered by factors of efficiency. Members of the Public Service Commission as well as public servants must abstain from party politics, as well as observe strict official secrecy. This point was raised in this House earlier and I support it.

The Minister must also take responsibility for the action of his subordinates and the convention that no mention should be made in Parliament of a Minister's permanent subordinates either by way of praise or criticism must be strictly adhered to and no Minister should take shelter behind the staff of his Department as has happened in this House.

I would like this Government to introduce the system now practised in India, which is essential to the organisation of the civil service, namely, communal representation. The Government of India has laid down that a certain percentage of the service shall be filled by the majority group and the minority group respectively. The reason for communal representation is to help the backward communities due to unequal cultural and educational development. This practice is based on the view that the efficiency of the Public Service is a function not merely of the qualification of the entrants but of the social harmony in the body politic. Such harmony can only be secured by fair representation of the various communities. This principle works under two healthy safeguards. Firstly, in order to secure a fair degree of, if not maximum efficiency, a minimum qualification is imposed and if a senior official finds a junior official promoted over him merely because he happened to belong to a particular community there is bound to be friction, trouble and discontent in the Public Service. I venture to ask whether our civil service is not fraught with such discontent today. The answer is firmly that it is. This principle has been tried with a measure of success in our scholarship programme and there is no reason why it should not work in our Public Service.

I will now deal, Sir, with the Local Government structure as it is proposed in the White Paper. Government policy in the realm of Local Government is like the peace of God which passes human understanding. In one breadth Government advocates larger units of Local Government organisation so that the units may be able to operate major services and in another breadth it proposes to dissect the erstwhile harmonious whole into fragments financially weak and entirely dependent on the Regional Government. This policy cannot mean anything other than a deliberate attempt to wield authority from the Regional height

and exercise full control and direction of the masses. This policy diametrically cuts across the liberal view of freedom of democratic local government institution, namely, to enable the individual local government units to think and express what it likes, to plan its way of life in its own way and to grow to its natural height without dictation from outside. That should be the basis of Government policy in respect of Local Government.

The present policy enunciated in the White Paper resembles in almost every particular the trend of Local Government organisation in France before the Revolution where the policy of strong central control was adopted deliberately and carried out with scrupulous fidelity to a unified symmetrical and logical plan and nearly all threads gathered tightly in one Executive Department—the Ministry of Interior.

The greatest reward which these multifarious and financially weak and dependent units absolutely controlled and directed from Enugu with superimposed functionless provincial assemblies headed by a political appointee designated commissioner is to yield is mainly political and is designed to be used for securing permanent political power to the disadvantage of the Opposition. These are wicked and subtle designs totally undemocratic and should be resisted.

In the proposed provinces and counties in Appendix B page 30 of the White Paper Government betrays its spite and vindictiveness to some of the Opposition strongholds by dismembering the Divisions and flinging their limbs about. Opobo Division for example is split into 3 parts. Four Groups District Council is sent to Eket; the Annang District Council is sacked to Ikot Ekpene and part of Ibibio District Council is to be administered from Port Harcourt and Eket respectively while Opobo town and Obolo are thrown away to Port Harcourt. It is an attempt to disorganise the society that has existed over a number of years, and the people who have lived in harmony together. It is not conducive to good government, and the people feel that the Regional Government is trying to disorganise their society; the Premier himself has been informed of it. He knows the feelings of the people. Another design is to carve out a

haven of autonomous administrative unit for the Ibos wherever they are gathered and to this end, the Premier proposes to excise Egwanga township which is Ibekwe land, and mainly inhabited by Ibos from Ibibio District Council to which it naturally and properly belongs and instal his kinsmen there as rulers.

**Mr Speaker:** Who are the Premier's kinsmen?

**Mr Ekpe:** The Ibos, Sir.

Is there any wonder that pages of protest letters have been sent to the Premier against these acts of extinction and disruption of a people who have lived and worked together in harmony for ages. We shall continue to oppose these unnatural separation of a people bound together by social ties and community of blood and long association. We must resist this, Sir.

Sir, in the proposed provinces under the system of devolution of powers, if the proposed Calabar Province with a population of 169,628, and Ijaw with a population of 126,328 can be created a Province, what justification has Government for not constituting Ibekwe County with a population of 173,657 into Ibekwe Province? It is only an indication of vindictiveness and spite. Again, it is also significant that the Divisions of Nsukka, Bende, Okigwi, Onitsha, Orlu, Owerri and Udi have retained their names as well as acquire the status of Provinces and Ikot Ekpene and Uyo were found necessary to lose their identity. (*Government Supporters: Suggest an alternative*).

**Scholarship Policy:** The policy of Government in this respect is an attempt to rob Peter to pay Paul. You will realise that there are going to be fewer awards of scholarships under the present system of Provincial Administration, and it would be better for the Regional Government to revert to the old system. I do not want to take the time of the House, Sir, but I appeal to Members to oppose this White Paper because it is not in the best interest of the people.

I would refer you, Sir, to the allocation of seats in the expanded House of Assembly. You will realise, Sir, from pages 35 to 37 of the

[MR EKPE]

White Paper regarding these proposals that the minority groups in this Region will be in the worst situation than ever before. You will realise that the Ibos are in the majority, and this majority will be increased by two, so that whether the minority areas are present in the House or not, they will have a constant majority and will continue to rule the Region. If the essence of the new set-up is to bring representation to the minority group, and ultimately that they may be able to take an effective part in the Government, it has failed, for the present proposals as they stand make the situation worse than what it was. Only creation of new states will solve for all times the question of minorities in Nigeria.

*(Government Supporters: Cite a definite page and we will support you).* You have to look it up in the White Paper yourselves.

**Mr Speaker:** Will you please address me?

**Mr Ekpe:** I appeal to the Members of this House to vote against this White Paper. This White Paper is not the inevitable. It is what we can change if we have the courage to change it.

**The Premier:** Courage brother! *(Laughter).*

**Mr Ekpe:** I know that whatever you say in this House the usual phraseology of the Government Party is that the Opposition will have its say, and you shall have your way, but I can assure you that the people of my Division are taking this matter very seriously. I can assure you also that we are not going to Eket nor is any section of our people going to Port Harcourt or to Ikot Ekpen; we want to be organised into a province. *(Laughter).* I had said that earlier. What we want is that if we are going to have two (tier) system, at least to be fair to the people, give them an opportunity as indicated here to say exactly what system of Local Government they want; don't impose anything upon them. That is my contention. This is an imposition because nobody was consulted and Government has already started to implement some sections of the White Paper without its receiving Parliamentary sanction. The County Councils are being abolished on the 31st of this month and it is in compliance with what is put down

here in the White Paper that 17 County Councils shall be abolished in order to give place, Sir, to 109 Local Councils to be transformed to County Councils.

**Mr Speaker:** Don't you think the debate will be over by the 31st? *(Laughter).*

**Mr Ekpe:** One thing, Sir, is significant that executive action has preceded parliamentary discussion which is unfair in a democratic form of Government. I oppose this White Paper.

**Mr E. Chidolue (Onitsha Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have the pleasure to speak in support of this Motion and to outline certain observations and suggestions which hon. Members for Onitsha Division have the mandate of Onitsha Division to put forward.

*Local Government:* During the speech on the Motion for a Humble Address, I made contribution on the representation in the proposed County Councils by population basis, but the time at my disposal then did not allow me to go into details and to express the views of all the sections in Onitsha Division. It is the view of my constituency that towns with a population of 7,000 and under should have one representative with additional representative for every 7,000 of the population, on *pro rata* basis. This figure of 7,000 is not arbitrary because we arrived at it by adding the population of all the towns in Onitsha Division and dividing it by the total number of towns in Onitsha Division. The average population for every town was found to be about 7,000. This will give satisfaction to people of Onitsha Division particularly in the Onitsha Southern District which has very large towns and very small towns. In the Onitsha Northern District where the towns are fairly equal in population, single representations may meet with no opposition.

*Ogburu Area:* Mr Speaker, I would like to refer to Ogburu area in particular. The people of Eastern Ogburu area in the Onitsha Southern District comprising of Atani and Ossomari group courts have petitioned the Premier demanding a separate county council with a direct representation to the Eastern House of Assembly. I have a copy of their petition here



in my hand as their representative. They based their arguments on four heads, namely:

- (a) Local Government organisation.
- (b) Absence of Political representation.
- (c) Woeful lack of provision of social and other services and amenities in the areas concerned.
- (d) Lack of equitable distribution of benefits.

They alleged that they had been in communication with the Premier for some long time now without success. They complain of scholarships Board membership, etc. The population of Onitsha Southern District with Headquarters at Nnewi, including Eastern Ogbaru is 186,677. That of Eastern Ogbaru Area is 18,941, leaving a huge balance of 16,736. It will be seen that if the Eastern Ogbaru area is allowed to form an administrative unit of its own, the remaining area can still form a strong county council and shall still be entitled to two representatives in the Eastern House of Assembly, since their population is still more than twice 75,000.

Personally, I am in sympathy with the Eastern Ogbaru people because they are in minority in the Eastern Region and their counterparts (Western Ogbaru) are also in the minority in the Western Region. The two sections are divided by the River Niger. They are also cut off from the hinterland by creeks and swamps. Again, three roads which were proposed by this Government in order to keep them in direct touch with the rest of the district or division have not been constructed as promised—namely:

- (a) Onitsha-Atani-Ossomari road.
- (b) Nnewi-Ozubulu-Atani road.
- (c) Ihiala-Ogwu-Ossomari road.

Hon. Members will remember that I have made repeated representations in this House on behalf of Atani and Ossomari Clans; and also Anambra people of Onitsha Northern District have similar complaints.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I refer to the *Hansard* of this House of Assembly, in September, 1954—page 355, and March, 1956—Page 322. Approved Estimates 1957-58—page E 107 and Policy Papers.

Many questions were asked the Minister concerned about these two sections of Onitsha Division which are generally believed to be the backward areas of Onitsha Division. I make these explanations, Mr Speaker, in order to show that the views of these sections have been adequately represented in this House in the past. I think we have done everything in our power to present their case and the only thing left for us is to fight the Ministers concerned.

*Proposed Provinces, Counties and Single Member Constituencies:* The majority of the people of Onitsha Division support the proposal for forming new provinces, counties and single member constituencies if other Divisions are in favour. It is, however, pertinent to mention that there are minority views in Onitsha Division which stress that Government should be well advised to reconsider deeply the financial and other implications involved in the proposals for

- (a) the splitting of the old provincial set-up from 5 to 16;
- (b) the formation of 16 provincial assemblies and possibly more as secessionist tendencies have no limit;
- (c) increased membership of the Regional House of Assembly from 84 to 124;
- (d) the establishment of new provincial headquarters and the personnel to run them efficiently.

These are the few points my people would like the Regional Government to consider. Quite apart from the heavy drain on the revenue of this Region, there is also the inescapable loss of the feeling of oneness which the proposed disintegration will dictate.

*Urban Districts:* The people of Onitsha Township support the Urban District proposed in Appendix B at page 34 of the White Paper. They demand Municipal status promised to Onitsha Urban area by this Regional Government for a long time now and we feel that time is overdue to fulfil that promise. They also demand that considering the claims of the indigenous natives and the cosmopolitan elements of Onitsha Township and also the fact that Onitsha is the largest Urban District in the Region whose population is rising daily, they should have two representatives in the proposed new House of Assembly. It is also observed that the interests of the minorities have been

[MR CHIDOLUE]

satisfied at the expense of majority elements, otherwise how can a town with a population of 7,000 be granted a direct representation in the House of Assembly, while a town with about 30,000 population will be struggling with many other towns for one seat? (*Shouts of minority*). We cannot sacrifice everything for the minority!

In conclusion, Mr Speaker, I would like to make a personal suggestion to the Government about the posts of Provincial Inspectors, County Inspectors and a Commissioner to preside over the provincial assembly as envisaged at pages 21 to 22, of the White Paper. Personally, I don't like the use of the word Inspector in two places. It will cause confusion. In the Rural areas, when you talk of Provincial Inspector and County Inspector, the illiterate people will think you are talking of one and the same person. The adjective may not mean much to them. I therefore humbly suggest the designations Provincial Inspectors and County Advisers.

Secondly, the Provincial Inspector should be able to preside over provincial assembly since it is merely deliberative and consultative. When he does that, he will be referred to as Mr Commissioner. The proposed separate post of Commissioner in each Province as at page 22 appears to be redundant and wasteful.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with these words, I support the Motion in principle.

**Mr W. Abengowe (Aba Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, my first remark is that representations in the various bodies should be on population basis.

With regards to the state of the Commissioners as contained in page 22, I am in support of the appointment but I wish to advise the Government to be very careful with the finances of this Region. If each Commissioner should be a Minister, it means that we are going to have sixteen Provincial Commissioners and each of them will carry the status of a Minister. This new proposal is bound to affect the finances of this Region.

With regard to Local Government, Mr Speaker, my people are in full support of the

two-tier system of Local Government, but there are a number of provisions which they have suggested on the proposal contained in the Government White Paper. I am in agreement with the two-tier system of Local Government, and it is my view that Asa, Ndoki and U.D.C. in Aba Division should stand each alone, but my people of Ngwa clan are opposed to the proposals contained in page 31 "Ngwa Province". The Ngwa people feel that instead of having the Eastern Ngwa County Council, the Northern Ngwa County Council and the Southern Ngwa County Council there should be one County Council known as Ngwa County. The reason for this, Mr Speaker, is that the people of Ngwa clan—the three sections of Ngwa mentioned earlier—are from the same stock. Right from the beginning they have been together and the people themselves feel that they will be more benefited if they continue to stay together. Some people may argue that the area is large and will be unwieldy, but if I may refer to page 23 of the Government White Paper, sub-paragraph 2 made it clear as follows:—

"Government is opposed to the setting up of small financially weak units which will never develop social services without placing an undue burden on the people of the area."

I believe that what that means is that the larger the units the less the financial burden on the people. In the case of Ngwa, we feel that when merged, the financial burden will be less. After working the two-tier system of Local Government, from experience, we have discovered that it is not as useful and economical as having one County Council. We of Ngwa Clan feel that since we are one, and the Government White Paper has made it definitely clear on page 23 subsection 7, page 24 subsection 9, that they are in support of any area that has the same affinity to constitute one County, the Ngwa people strongly demand the application of these provisions. Sir, with your permission, I will read paragraph 7 of Chapter VI.

"Government is of opinion that where people are bound by strong ties of social intercourse, blood relationship, language and geography, and they are willing to assume civic obligations and responsibilities, they should be allowed to practise local self-government".

This applies in the case of Ngwa, and if the Government can concede to us this request we will be extremely happy.

May I also say that there have been a number of intelligence reports with regards to the oneness of Ngwa. Major J. C. G. Allen in an intelligence report, referred to the fact that the Ngwas are one. Mr J. Jackson and Captain Kelly in their early reports on the Ngwas, unanimously stated that the whole of Ngwa Clan is one.

Mr Speaker, with regard to the largeness of the area, may I, Sir, with your permission refer to a paragraph of Mr N. U. Akpan's book on Indirect Rule. Mr N. U. Akpan, was Clerk to the Executive Council of this Region, and he wrote a book entitled *Epitaph to Indirect Rule*. He was referring to what obtains in the U.K. and with your permission I will read what he said about the population of county councils and the reason why they should be large.

"Among the County types, he will find at one extreme the largest county with a population of 2,270,000 and at the other extreme the smallest with only 18,000"

On page 51 of the same book, he said:

"The size of the units must needs vary from country to country, or even from place to place within the same country. . . The units of administration must be large enough to take in reasonable essential social services."

That shows, Sir, that the larger the county councils are, the easier they carry the financial responsibilities of the areas. You also have in the White Paper areas that are large enough, and here are a few of them—Onitsha Northern County 203,000, Okigwi County 205,000 and Afikpo County 211,000. I am pleading that Ngwa with a population of 256,000 should be allowed to remain as one county. My people have also sent a number of resolutions and petitions on this score and I hope Government will listen to them.

Again, Sir, the people are opposed to recent circulars sent out by the Ministry of Local Government with regards to assigning buildings and properties. I have here, Sir, a circular from the Ministry of Local Government No. 136/19, paragraph 3 of which reads:

"Buildings should be allocated as far as possible to the District Council within whose

areas they lie, and vehicles to the District Council within whose area they are garaged."

I contend that there is something wrong in the application of this directive in my Division.

In Aba Division, we have a County Council Hall which was built by Ngwa people long before the introduction of local government in the Division and in Aba township. According to this circular, it means that the buildings of this county will be assigned to the Aba Urban District Council where the county buildings are situated. We also have the Ngwa High School which the Ngwa people are running and financing and also a Teacher Training College at Nsulu. With the present situation of things the abolition of county councils will mean that the Ngwa High School will be assigned to the Southern Ngwa Rural District Council which will now become a county. It is quite obvious that the Southern Ngwa County cannot bear the financial burden of the Ngwa High School and this change will mean that the school will have to suffer. The same applies to the Teacher Training College situated in the Northern Ngwa area. The situation will be different if the three sections of Ngwa were to be grouped together and allowed to carry their financial burdens. It will be much easier also for them than if particular sections were allowed to carry responsibilities that are out of proportion with their sizes.

The present membership of the Aba-Ngwa County Council is 57. If the U.D.C. and Asa are extracted the membership will be 35, and that is exactly the average number the Minister stated in his circular, i.e. that membership of county councils should be from 30-40. If the three sections of Ngwa remain together, the existing social services will not suffer. The Ngwa High School will continue to exist, and the Ngwa Teacher Training College also will continue to exist. The culture of the people will also be preserved, and there will be that sense of unity and oneness which the people very seriously want to preserve.

May I also say a word about the question of staff. In the District Councils it is a fact that their staff are not as much trained and high in salary as those of the County Councils, but they are many. I wish to say that if the Government accepts our request to belong to one

[MR ABENGOWE]

County Council that is going to help us, because the County Council can absorb the staff easily. The existing District Councils could still be retained for the collection of taxes and rates. Some of the staff will remain in the District Council offices and others sent on to the County Council. Incidentally, there are some District Councils which have Secretary/Treasurers. So it will be easier to absorb them than to absorb the County staff. We are unanimous on this score of having the three sections to remain as one. We are one. We do not want to be split to be known as Southern Ngwa, Northern Ngwa and Eastern Ngwa. In view of this, Sir, I would like to offer a suggestion on page 31—"Ngwa Province"—it should be grouped as follows: Aba Urban District, Asa County, Ngwa County, and the Ndoki County Council—I shall come to the question of Ndoki later.

This arrangement, Mr Speaker, that I am proposing has nothing to do with the Government proposal of single member wards. The people themselves are happy about that. We welcome it. May I also say that the proposal to have elections on tax suffrage is not conducive to democratic government. My people feel that elections should be on universal adult suffrage and that all representatives into County Councils and Local Councils should be tested and approved, through popular elections, to be the real choice and leaders of the people. Tax suffrage encourages bribery much more than universal adult suffrage.

Mr Speaker, I wish to mention one particular section of Aba Division that my friends of the Abak Division want to extract from us. The area is in Nkoki Clan and it is called Nto Etuk Udom. (*Laughter*). Mr Speaker, in February 1955, I introduced a petition to this House. The petition appealed to Government not to allow this particular village in Ndoki clan to return to Abak. This community have been the real co-landowners with Azumini in Ndoki clan. The petition came from one Mr Matthew Nwankwo who is purely an Iboman. As we are aware in all the areas of this country where the people live on the boundary of different tribes, it is very common and usual that they speak different dialects. That

is just the situation with this particular village. The Public Petitions Committee of this House went into the matter. After going into various intelligence reports dealing with this area, the Committee was satisfied that they are real Ibos of Azumini stock. They have been with the Azumini and Ndoki people right from the time administration started. There is nothing wrong in leaving them there; it is their choice and I want them to be with Aba Division. Furthermore, Sir, there have been various court cases about the position of these people. The cases have gone to the Native Court, the Magistrate's Court and to the High Court, and all these constituted authorities have given verdict that these people are Ibos, and that they are Azumini people. If there is any Division that wants to take them, that Division might as well take the whole of Azumini. No one should dismember them and take them half and half. If I may remark, let us not treat them like the provisions of "Illegitimate Children Bill" whereby fathers are compelled to take only the children and leave their mother (*Laughter*).

Mr Speaker, the other point I wish to make is the position of Ndoki in Aba Division. It is really very unfortunate, Sir, and I would refer to it as an error of judgment by the authors of this White Paper, that Ndoki is included in the Oil Rivers Province. It is the most grievous mistake that has ever been made in this Paper. In the evidence before the Minorities Commission, there were two sections, one was the Akwete section, one village out of a total of 31,000 people. Akwete people said they favour joining the Rivers State. The six other Local Councils of Ndoki clan gave evidence in favour of remaining with Ngwa and Aba Division. I have here, Mr Speaker, the petition from the various sections of Ndoki clan in support of remaining with Aba Division. I have a petition dated 2nd November, 1957, another one dated 4th January, 1958, and another one dated 15th January, 1958. In fact, I have a resolution, submitted to the Premier, a copy of which was sent to me by the whole of Ndoki District Council. There was no political influence at all. The Ndoki people unanimously gave the Ndoki District Council, a constituted authority, permission to submit a memorandum expressing their wishes. Of course, the only way out is for Government to stick to the wishes of the

majority of Ndoki people. I am imploring the Government to amend this White Paper and include Ndoki in page 31 "Ngwa Province". This will satisfy the whole of Aba Division.

Mr Speaker, I want to remind this House that on 8th January, 1958, a delegation of Ndoki people attempted to meet the Premier on this issue, unfortunately the Premier was not in, and they met the Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier. This delegation was aimed at telling the Premier that the people are willing to remain with Aba Division, the three sections comprising Ngwa, Ndoki and Asa had been together. In fact, we had one divisional council, the Aba Divisional Council in which these three sections were adequately represented.

Mr Speaker, in dealing with this situation, we must take various things into consideration; one of them is distance. Ndoki from Aba is twelve miles, and from Ndoki to Port Harcourt is 60 miles. It will be realised that very soon we are going to have county courts, and people who are aggrieved will seek redress in court. How convenient will it be that people from Ndoki will go 60 miles to seek court redress instead of doing 12 miles? Well, Mr Speaker, it is true beyond doubt that the inclusion of Ndoki in Oil Rivers Province is not the wish of the majority of Ndoki people, and the sooner this situation is rectified the better for everybody.

Mr Speaker, about this question of minorities. When we talk of minorities, it will be very bad thing to go from fry-pan to fire. Ndoki people complained that they are in minority in Aba Division because of their small population and they had not direct representation. The Government has satisfied the wishes of Ndoki people by giving them direct representation to this House, according to the proposal in the White Paper. It is inimical to the interests of Ndoki to ascribe them to the Oil Rivers where they do not understand their language. Ndoki people speak Ibo and they are Ibos. If it is imposed on them to go to Oil Rivers Province they will be in a worse minority.

Mr Speaker, as far as Ndoki is concerned we of Aba Division have their mandate and authority to speak for them. I have earlier

referred this House to their documents, representations and delegations on this matter. I do not wish to belabour this issue. If there is any challenge to my views, I suggest here, Sir, that a plebiscite be held to determine whether the people want to go to the Rivers or to go to Aba Division.

May I refer this House to a petition from the Asa people. They warned that while remaining in "Ngwa Province," they are strongly opposed to the name of the Province. They want it to be called "Aba Province". I feel that this is an entirely internal arrangement which can be adequately taken care of by all the sections concerned with the proposed Province.

Mr Speaker, I beg to make one more point on this question of lump sum compensation Scheme which is contained in this White Paper. There is something wrong. What I am saying is that it is morally unfair and unjust for any civil servant, an expatriate for that matter, who feels that he cannot be accommodated in the civil service of this Region to take his lump sum compensation and still remain in the Region. If he takes it and goes to the Northern Region or the Western Region or in fact leaves the country, this will be fair enough. I know of a case, where a civil servant who is incidentally, a Doctor, took the lump sum compensation because he was not appointed to a higher office. At the moment he has established practice at Port Harcourt. Mr Speaker, there are two things involved: one is to compete on equal basis, another one is to compete on the basis of nationality. Doctors know that there is something called retainer allowance. Most of the big firms—Shell Company, Lever Brothers and other firms have Doctors they retain, and pay reasonable retainer allowances.

In Port Harcourt, I know of some African Doctors, people like Doctors Ajibade, Ene who have been working among the people and are retained by some of these big firms. This particular expatriate Doctor went to Port Harcourt and convinced these European firms to do away with the services of these African Doctors. Now all the services of these firms have been given to this expatriate individual. He is not alone. There is yet another one that has already taken his lump sum compensation and is now waiting to see the reaction of this

[MR ABENGOWE]

Region before he starts his own practice. I am emphasising that if an expatriate cannot be accommodated in this Region he must go to another Region or country. (*Interruption*).

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

**Mr Abengowe:** Furthermore, Mr Speaker, I just wish to draw hon. Members' attention to page 49 of this White Paper with regard to this lump sum compensation. With your permission, Mr Speaker, I quote section 18:

"Any compensation or gratuity payable under this Scheme shall be exempt from tax under any law of the Federation or of the Region relating to the taxation of incomes or imposing any other form of taxation."

After having our £9,000 free of tax, these expatriates still remain here to compete with our people—it is morally wrong. Mr Speaker, I realise that there is no law to prevent any one from living in the Eastern Region, but my contention is that if any expatriate officer of this Region feels that he is not happy in our civil service structure and wishes to go with our lump sum compensation, he must go bag and baggage.

This may be an opportune moment to inform this House of my opposition to the agreement reached at the London Constitutional Conference, not to tax the lump sum compensation paid to expatriate officers who are leaving our civil service. You may be surprised, Sir, that students' fees are taxed in Ireland. The Aba-Ngwa County Council has a number of students in Dublin and the University authorities has informed the County Council of this new financial arrangement. If students' fees are taxed in Dublin, I do not see any justifiable reason why this lump sum compensation should not be taxed. It must be admitted that expatriate officers in this Region contribute little or nothing into the revenue of the Region. (*Interruption: You are not sure*). Mr Speaker, I am very sure.

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

**Mr Abengowe:** Mr Speaker, in ending may I implore the Government to take the

points I have made with regards to the position of Ngwa, Ndoki and Nto Etok Udom and also on this question of lump sum compensation into very serious consideration.

Sir, I beg to support the Motion.

*Sitting suspended at 11.55 a.m.*

*Sitting resumed at 12.30 p.m.*

**Mr J. E. Eyo (Abak Division):** Mr Speaker, the proposals contained in Sessional Paper No. 2 entitled "Self-Government in the Eastern Region" are approved by the majority of the people of this Region. I think, I am not wrong if I say unanimously approved by the Region, and therefore I speak in support of the Motion. I should describe this Motion and the White Paper itself as a medium of salvation to the suffering people of the Eastern Region. Mr Speaker, I want to remark very carefully the statement made by hon. Abengowe this morning which is the truth of the whole matter concerning the people of Nto Etok Udom. Whereas God has urged him to say out the truth this morning that the land of Azumini—the land in which the Azumini people are living today—belongs to Nto Etok Udom, I have to say, may God bless him, and may God bless also the Premier who has given us the chance to speak out the minds of this people. It is a simple test case, Mr Speaker, that the word could not be pronounced by the hon. Member. I again repeat that the word is Nto Etok Udom.

Really speaking, Mr Speaker, everybody will agree that there is no village in Ibo land or in Ndoki land known as Nto Etok Udom. If he were here I would ask him to give the meaning of that word "Nto".

Mr Speaker, I am not going to contest the rights of the Public Petitions Committee that thought it fit to arrive at the decision referred to as was placed on the Table of the House by hon. Abengowe. I doubt really if anyone ever presented the case of Nto Etok Udom or Ikot Onono—those people who are now claiming it.

Before we determine the question, I want just to commend Members to the honest feeling within them to see that this matter is

not decided on the basis of majority over minority. I am saying, Mr Speaker, that these people are purely and wholly Annang people.

With respect to the man who now claims the name of Matthew Nwankwo, I will say, Mr Speaker, that as far back as when they were all in the Aba Division, this man has been a sitting member in the Ika-na-Annang Native Court under Aba Division and had never one day answered the name of Matthew Nwankwo. His father also was a court member of the native court and never answered Nwankwo, but overnight after these people had prayed for them to be recognised, this man thought that he should bear an Ibo name. Mr Speaker, there were thirteen villages in Ika-na-Annang Native Court and Nto Etok Udom was one. They were under Azumini and they were all under Aba Division. When the time came for these people to press to join their kith and kin in Abak Division, the whole of that native court was transferred to Abak. This village alone was side-tracked out of the whole lot. I want to say, Mr Speaker, that up to date these people are suffering. They are forced to pay their taxes but they do not enjoy it; they refused to go to court in Azumini because it is not their town and they are not to attend the Court at Ika-na-Annang under Abak Division because the law is against them.

I want to say this: that our people do not believe in intrigues and tricks but when they are irritated they use their matchets. (*Laughter*). They do not mind the consequences. We have been trying all these years to pacify them and the Government must give some consideration to their wants. Petitions have been sent to the Ministry of Local Government from these same people, but no attention has been given to them. Evidence was given at the Commission of Inquiry to support the fact that the people of Abak were Annang people but the Commission saw it fit to decide against them. I am praising the Member who made the confession today because during the Commission fictitious papers were presented to the Commission, saying that the land did not belong to the Annang people.

**Mr Speaker:** Which Commission?

**Mr J. E. Eyo:** The Davies Commission, Sir. The Commissioner had the interest in the land at heart more than the interest of the

people concerned. The people here do know the meaning of that word—Azumini. It is an Ibo name. It is Azu-mini. (*Cries of No. No.*) And these Azumini people call themselves Azumini after the River. They crossed onto the other side for trade purposes and occupied land belonging to other people and with their usual intrigues and tricks claimed the land and they are now extending to about six miles from Azumini. We all know there is a limit to human endurance and the Government should do something before it is too late. This same Government rescued the Ndoki people from the hands of the Ngwas and why should it now force the Annang people to remain in bondage under the Ndoki people? I think there is no sense in that. So far as is the case, the Minister should use his power, before it is too late to see that this village goes back to its kith and kin. There are only about twenty people who claim that they are now Ibos, while 200 people are willing and are clamouring to follow their brothers but the Government has not thought it fit to allow them, and I hope something will be done right now.

I now turn to the question of the devolution of powers. The Annang people have been clamouring in the past when they were dissatisfied with their brothers in the Ibibio area and all efforts were made to have the name of Annang put on the maps then used. There were a lot of schools opened and were known as Annang People's Schools. When the introduction of local government came in 1954 we had to name our Councils Northern Annang, Southern Annang, Eastern Annang and Western Annang Rural District Councils and the county was called Annang County Council. The proposal of the Government for the establishment of an Annang Province is welcome by the people of Annang but we will do our best to desist all attempts to cut us asunder.

We in Abak very well claim the name Annang and the creation of Annang Province judging from the facts above. The Ikot Ekpene people during the introduction of Local Government never once thought to make the name universal, with the exception of Central Annang Rural District Council. We have twenty-one courts in Abak Division as against two in Ikot Ekpene; four District

[MR J. E. EYO]

Councils as against two in Ikot Ekpene Division. The only bad thing that we find in the White Paper is the proposal that the Headquarters should be at Ikot Ekpene. We are not opposed to the Headquarters being anywhere, but we have this to say, that the Ikot Ekpene Division has already been developed, and Abak is under-developed, so that if we are denied this privilege of having the Headquarters of the Annang Province in Abak Division it is indirectly a way of saying "full stop" to further and sincere developments of Abak Division. We have these facts and in our favour: we have a total of 333,361 population in Abak Division, but there are 182,947 people in the Ikot Ekpene Division; if we go to the question of finance the people of Abak Division are going to contribute more or higher than the people of Ikot Ekpene in the proposed Province. So we of the Abak Division welcome the White Paper, but will oppose it to the last if we are asked to have our Headquarters at Ikot Ekpene. That is the mind of our people in Abak Division. They are serious when they say things like that. So I want the Government to take us very seriously.

You remember that formerly Ikot Ekpene had a population of 102,000 and some fraction, a clan cut off to join another province in Uyo. So all what can be done to satisfy my people of the Abak Division is to give them the Headquarters. Now we have our brothers, the Annang people in Opobo Division—I do not mind whatever people may do to stir them up to put in a petition. I doubt really whether that petition comes from the majority of the Annang people in Opobo Division—I remember I led a delegation to the Annang people of the Opobo Division and they very much welcomed the proposals to join their brothers the Annangs as contained in the White Paper. (*Interruptions*). I am speaking for the Annangs—you know you are in a very queer position, you want to deceive the Annang people to join you; that is not how you will succeed. Mr Otop is no more here in this House of Assembly; you used your Ibibio majority to overthrow him, and he is no more in the House.

Having seen in the White Paper that there is a proposal for the Annang section under Opobo to be given direct representation to the House of Assembly, there should be nothing that should bind them to remain under Opobo

people. So any paper or petition presented to the Government purporting to come from the Annang people is not valid—it is only fictitious. They are Annangs and there is nothing that will prevent them from joining their Annang brothers. Their complaint is only about the Headquarters, and that if they are asked to travel all the way from Opobo town to Ikot Ekpene for the Headquarters, they would be worn out. They would like it to be in a central place.

Mr Speaker, on this question of provinces, to my mind, it goes to attack the very root of the old provinces that we had in the past, and I have been wondering what should be the proper name for it. On the question of representation Government should consider representation on the old provincial basis; the new system of representation will cause Government more headache. I was thinking that there would be such things as Annang Areas, Uyo Areas, so that we may have the chance of retaining the old word or old name province.

Coming to the question of Commissioners in the Provincial Administration, there are two County Councils which are called upon to sacrifice the time of summoning these Provincial Assemblies. Take for example Abak and Ikot Ekpene, others will remain a set-up of the County in the setting up of the Provincial Assembly. They might have little or nothing to lose, but where two Divisions are called upon to join themselves for the sake of oneness, Government should do something to encourage the people. I was thinking whether it was not possible to appoint an Assistant Commissioner where two or more Divisions are asked to join in one Assembly. So I thought if that was done there would be no difficulty. I do not know on what basis we are going to do the appointment, whether it is going to be from the people themselves, so that if there are two people to join one should come from this way and one from the other way; that will solve the problem.

Now on the question of four District Councils in Abak Division, the Government can remember that as far back as 1954, when we were going to appoint a Secretary to the Northern Annang District Council, the Minister of Local Government was besieged by a section of



the people, the Ika people. They are really Ika people, and they have been fighting for recognition. Just this morning I was informed that a certain number of people from the opposite camp started to tell the people again to agitate so that they might get recognition, but this has not yet materialised. Therefore Government should take note of this in case trouble flares up again. That is why we have arrears of taxes and rates which are not completely collected till today. It will be of great help to us if Government gives direction as to how to tackle this problem, but I have not got such a mandate from them as to what to do.

I support my hon. Friend in this case, when he said that the people opposed equal representation; our people are very strongly against it. In the present set-up of Local Government, we have certain areas that sent in about two members in the District and other Local Councils sent in ten to twelve members to the same Local Government Council, so that if the question of equality of representation will come to stay, it will mean sacrificing the majority of the population of the people in the interest of the minority. So we really support representation on population basis (*Hear! Hear!*) and not on equal representation.

With regard to the suggestion about scholarship, as is put down in the White Paper, I endorse that it should be on County basis. But where Regional Scholarship holders have been disappointed as is the case with 3 students from Abak Division, Government should not waste time to replace them from that Division. You may go to the appropriate quarters to see that Abak Division is administered as far as Administration is concerned from Ikot Ekpene Division but when we need the Police we have to go all the way to Uyo. This is not satisfactory to the people. As we have the Magistrate from Ikot Ekpene, we should also have the Police from Ikot Ekpene.

Mr Speaker, as I said earlier this White Paper is a medium of salvation to the suffering (*interruptions and laughter*) and Government should rally to the help of the people of Nto Etok Udom alias Ikot Onono and transfer them at once to Abak Division.

I support the Motion.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Commerce (Mr E. W. Udonkim):** Mr Speaker, in supporting the Motion I have here to say that my constituency is in a very peculiar situation since it is composed of four distinct tribal groups—Ubanis, Andonis, Ibibios and Annangs.

In the first place the people of Opobo town are very pleased to be transferred to join their kith and kin in the Rivers Province. (*Applause*). The Andoni people are greatly opposed to any attempt to separate them from the Ibibios and they want to stay wherever the Ibibios are. The Annang people strictly oppose any attempt by the Government to join them with other people except the Ibibios. (*Applause from the Opposition Bench*). To confirm this, copies of petitions and resolutions which have gone to the Premier are with me. It has to be noted that Opobo Division was one of the largest Divisions in the Region. It extended as far as to Ikot Ibit Itam. With the introduction of the Native Administration it was robbed and part of that Division was asked to go to Abak. Today we are not trying to claim what is not ours but we are saying that those areas which are ours should not be taken away from us. The rest of the people of Opobo Division are vehemently opposed to that part of the White Paper which tends to join them or link them with Eket. The four District Councils are very happy to have their representation and they accept all the proposals as are contained in the White Paper, with the exception of the portions that seem to have made them to join Eket.

Mr Speaker, I am glad to say that the entire people of Opobo Division are very happy for what the Government stipulated in the White Paper for them, especially the allocations of more seats and scholarship. They told the Premier when he visited the Four Group District Council of the gratitude. Hitherto, representation, or people representing the area, usually come from the Ibibio, where hon. Ekpe, hon. Udoma and myself come from. We have not given others chance to try themselves and send up representation here and, therefore, I thank the Government for giving the people chance to have their representation.

Mr Speaker, all of Opobo town U.D.C. are strongly opposed to any attempt by the Government to include Egwanga with any other

[MR UDONKIM]  
part of Ibibio. Ibibio people as a whole really want Egwanga, which is part of Ibekwe land. This land belongs to Ibekwe people.

**An hon. Member:** No, it belongs to Jaja.

**Mr Udonkim:** Jaja came there as a trader and asked our great grand-fathers for a piece of land to settle and trade, and nobody in the whole of Nigeria will claim ownership of a place where he was just allowed as a stranger to sell his goods. If this is so, it means the Shell Company in Owerri owns Owerri. On this score, I am asking the Government that Ibekwe township should remain as it is so as to avoid any trouble.

*Provincial Assembly:* We in Opobo Division are used to the whole Calabar Province being together and would rather like to remain as such. (*Hear! Hear!*). But if the need to create more provinces is a dire necessity, the people of Opobo Division would like to be constituted into a separate province adding Oniong Nung Ndem-Awa clans with them. We in these sections are in the same area with no natural line or water to divide us. We claim that if Ijaw Province with a population far less than that of Opobo Division can be made a province, then there is no reason why Opobo Division should not constitute a separate province. On these grounds, I am supporting the Motion on the White Paper.

**Mr S. N. Alo (Abakaliki Division):** Mr Speaker, I rise to support the Motion on the White Paper. My people of Abakaliki would want the old Ogoja Province to remain together. (*Hear! Hear!*) with a clear understanding that the Headquarters should be Abakaliki (*Laughter*). Mr Speaker, it might be interesting to know that most of our own people of Abakaliki are living in Ogoja Division, in Obubra Division and part of Ikwo living in Obubra Division too, and as such, we do not want to call them what is known in the White Paper—Self-Government in the Eastern Region—as Ogoja Province which is said to have its Headquarters at Obubra.

**An hon. Member:** That has been amended.

**Mr Alo:** Mr Speaker, in doing so we want equal representation based on population in

the Provincial Assembly as shown in the White Paper. We have concern about nine villages that have been included in Abakaliki Urban District Council which is at the centre of proposed Izi County Council. Most of these Izi villages within Abakaliki Urban area are not happy to remain with the Abakaliki Urban District Council because that has cut them away from their own brothers of Izi District Council and I would want the Minister of Local Government to study this carefully and know where to put them in order to join their brothers in Izi. With this few observations, I support the White Paper on Self-Government in the Eastern Region.

**Mr J. A. Agba (Ogoja Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I rise to oppose this White Paper which in my own term I call a scrap of paper, a clever thing designed to stifle the effort to achieve the systematic progress, the consistent happiness and the efforts tending to bring man to that level we call "man." Much as I would have praised the Paper, the sections of it in connection with the devolution of powers, building of what is called Provincial Assemblies and the rest of it, really destroy the whole Paper. They are utter nonsense and have communistic tendencies.

**Mr Speaker:** Will you withdraw that remark!

**Mr Agba:** What word? What remark?

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order! I will have no interruptions. Mr Agba, will you withdraw your remarks? You are inclined to be very abusive in this House.

**Mr Agba:** If I have made any abusive remarks conscientiously...

**Mr Speaker:** Will you listen to me. Will you withdraw those remarks? There is no "if" about it.

**Mr Agba:** That is what I am saying now. If I have used any abusive words, I withdraw, Sir.

**Government Bench:** Shame! Shame!

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order! That I give you an opportunity to say something on the matter does not give you any latitude for

abuse. There is far too much abuse going on in this House. If you have no useful contribution to make you can resume your seat.

**Mr Agba:** If I have inadvertently abused any hon. Member of the House, I am really sorry. I have not any intention of abusing anybody. I do not intend to use this Floor for insulting the Members of this hon. House.

**Mr Speaker:** You may proceed.

**Mr Agba:** I take my stand on the word that was used by the hon. Doctor, the Premier in talking about recruiting people into the civil service. He used the word "discrimination". Now, I will like to say something about this word. I take my stand on that word because it will be used in my whole speech and will give a very good colouring on all that I am going to say in opposing this White Paper. The word discrimination is divided into five different senses: it is really an ambiguous word. I divide it into super-natural sphere, natural sphere, human sphere, geographical sphere, and historical sphere.

I wish to make it clear that discrimination really exists; there is no doubt about it, and as I have said, I will consider it first from the supernatural point of view. Almighty God created the angels—Seraphim, Cherubim in all nine choirs of Angels and then ended up with the ordinary angels. (*Laughter*). Again, in according or giving His graces to men, He has what is called sanctifying grace, which makes man like God. (*Laughter*). Even there you have supernatural discrimination. Then there is natural discrimination which divides countries into what they are—some very fast developing, others not; some areas fertile, whilst others in spite of every human effort remain completely barren. This is natural discrimination.

Now, Sir, let me come down to human discrimination. (*Laughter*). I want to be as concrete as possible to an understanding of quite a lot of my Friends here. Mr Speaker, take a look round the House. We have discrimination. There you have the Speaker, the Clerk, and among the Ministers you have the Premier and then you have the ordinary Members. (*Laughter*).

Then you also have what I will try to describe as geographical discrimination which really coincides with natural discrimination in a way. Similarly, historical discrimination is a part of natural discrimination. I want to show by this that there is nothing really wrong in discriminating. What is wrong is when this is carried too far. We cannot help discriminating and anybody who says he does not discriminate is not serious. As the Prime Minister of the Region you cannot class yourself as a labourer of the Region.

**The Premier:** But I am. (*Laughter*).

**Mr Agba:** As an hon. Member in the House you cannot go down to say that you are not an hon. Member and that you are merely a driver or a servant in a hotel. It will be ridiculous to do so. I want to show the House that it is carrying to excess of this word "discrimination" that offends certain people and cause them to demand their rights and separation from the big class so as to enable them to stand by themselves and develop in a way consistent with their own nature and the discrimination that nature has already allotted to them.

I now come to human discrimination. I do agree with the Premier in his statement when he talked about the grouping of Councils. He said that they were grouped according to ethnic, linguistic and cultural basis—qualities which are his reasons for grouping certain people to constitute one council and others to constitute another. I agree with him but in this I find what I call human discrimination coming in. If one Member from one area happens to go to another area that is not so badly discriminated and where men live a fairly comfortable life, he is looked upon as coming from the most interior part of the world. He is at once discriminated, looked down upon and treated as if he were less a man.

Then again, you have something like the geographical and historical discrimination in areas the people of which have no opportunity by any means to develop in a systematic way to achieve standard of happiness on the same level with people from areas that are favourably placed by nature. Now this thing I am talking about, Mr Speaker, brings us face to face with a very important issue, the demand

[MR AGBA]

for states. Self-government in the fullest sense is the government of the people by the people for the people, so far defined. It does not necessarily mean a government of one person or a government of a family. It is the government of the people for the people by the people. Now, I say that if you have one section of the country advancing and progressing in every aspect of human life, while on the other hand another section of the country is completely forgotten and given no opportunity at all to progress in a way consistent to itself it is impossible for the people in such area to attain self-government. Advancement should be, if not on equal level, then almost on the same level. Otherwise it would mean one section governing itself and making the other section complete slaves. You cannot get away from it. How can you expect these people to realise their civic responsibility when they have not attained that standard of life which will enable them to know what to do as members of the State? The brain is not developed, and the mental faculty develops in proportion to the psychological brow of man according to psychologists. (*Interruptions*).

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order! Are you debating this Motion?

**Mr Agba:** As far as self-government for Eastern Region is concerned I say unless we in the backward areas are equally considered the demand for self-government will be really opposed by us. I think we have come to that standard wherein we can also scramble to get things or amenities along with others.

Speaking on this, Mr Speaker, I consider the proposal for provinces and the allotted seats to each of these provinces not altogether agreeable. You have Ogoja Province, Abakaliki Province; again I say I agree with the Premier in this way of the division of provinces for the reasons that it is consistent with what he has in his *Political Blueprint*, and for his grouping areas into Councils. Those people who think or who disagree with it and seem to think that Ogoja Province had formerly embraced Abakaliki, Afikpo and the rest of other Divisions, are greatly mistaken. Taking what he said about ethnic group, cultural

association and the rest of it, I think that that grouping is quite sound. We will continue to be in the minority, I mean people from Ogoja, if we compare ourselves with those in Abakaliki and Afikpo Divisions. Abakaliki for instance has six District Councils; Afikpo has two; Ogoja, Obudu, Obubra, Ikom have only four—the proportion is two to one. Therefore, if these people are placed together they will grow in the way they are able to grow and will progress in the way they are able to progress, and thus other people that are still few will do the same in their own way. Sir, I agree with that division, but one thing I do not agree with is this: you have in the question of allotment of seats, Obudu with a population of 58,000 allotted one seat; Ikom has 45,000. When the population figure of Obudu is compared with that of Ikom, it will be seen that Obudu is not fairly treated. I am not indicating or suggesting that I am envious that special privilege has been given to Ikom Division, and I do not want the hon. Members for Ikom Division to misunderstand me, but for the purpose of comparison, and to help me to show the points very clearly. Ikom has a population of 45,000, Obudu 58,000; Ikom has two seats; why should Obudu have one? I think the reason why Obudu and Ogoja have been overlooked, considering that point, is that people do not seem to understand the history of Obudu. Before the first World War, Obudu was the headquarters of the place; the Army was there, the Prison headquarters was there and very high officials were there. When the first war broke out all these Departments were removed from Obudu, and Obudu today has become the Cinderella of Ogoja, so that people now seem to think that Obudu deprived of all natural privileges must also be deprived of man-power and human privileges as well and I can tell you that the people are really very much dissatisfied. I cite one instance: on the 22nd of this month, when the Obudu District Council was in full session, the (Chairman who is a member of one of the Coproration Boards and whose son also is on Regional scholarship) made a motion that the Council pass a resolution declaring its confidence on the Eastern Regional Premier and his Government. I tell you, the people were so dissatisfied that that motion was defeated by an overwhelming majority. They just couldn't support it. It is a typical example

of the dissatisfaction of the people. We feel that the Government is not according to us our own natural and human privileges. If we were considered, we would not have thought of splitting, perhaps the idea of C.O.R. State would not have arisen. Some people who feel and think in the same way fear to take their stand, and some owing to some political manoeuvre try to bring the other Ogoja Divisions into unity and struggle to retain the old Ogoja Province. I think that is not right.

Another point is the idea of building what you call Provincial Assemblies. I think this suggestion is a means of creating what is called dictatorship. If you look at these suggestions, you will find that even the powers given to these Provincial Assemblies are no real powers at all. According to the chapter on the devolution of powers the functions of the Provincial Assemblies shall be—I start from (b) instead of from (a)—as follows:—

“debating motions on subjects within their competence;”

What are these subjects within their competence? We do not know and how are we going to approve that, how do we know whether these subjects are really relevant or not? Page 21 makes it clear (*interruptions*). Sir, that really does not help us.

This question of revenue comes in again. These people will be debating things initiated by the Regional Government provided what they debate does not charge on the revenue of the Eastern Region. But what is the idea of creating the Provincial Assemblies when there is no money? There is no need whatsoever. It is this idea of revenue which is bringing quite a lot of trouble in the Region. We want to cut off all offices that are irrelevant and unnecessary to the orderly constitution of a good Government in the Eastern Region. Why create these provincial assemblies which will disturb the revenue of the Eastern Region and really contribute nothing to the good government of the people?

**Dr Okpara:** Government is a costly apparatus. (*Laughter*).

**Mr Agba:** I am really emphasising that point. If the functions of the Provincial Assemblies had been brought up very well we could be in a position to say which subjects

pertain to the Provincial Assemblies and which do not. What you have done on that page to which somebody is trying to call my attention is merely to set up a fountain from which come springs. If you go to examine the whole thing you will know that it is merely a superficial structure. These Provincial Assemblies have got no executive power, every power they have must go back to the Government and as far as I understand this Government now to be, all offices we have any where go back to the Premier's Office which is the pivot of every activity of the Government. Even in the councils the Provincial Assemblies have no place as bodies but a source of waste to the Councils as the County Councils had been. They help to build one thing. Consider the things like rivers; they only collect together and then become tributaries to one main river. This is the fundamental thing in the whole of this proposition. It doesn't really solve our problem nor does it allay the fears of the minorities. Now, you take again the allotment of seats. How does this allotment of seats in this single member constituency policy allay the fears of the minorities? You have representations slightly increased in the COR areas, you have representations also increased in what I may call non-COR areas. What is the difference? Perhaps the increase in the non-COR areas is much more than the increase in the COR state areas. How does that allay the fears of the minorities?

**Government Bench:** What exactly do you want then?

**Mr Agba:** What I want is, Mr Speaker, the creation of the COR state. (*Applause from Opposition side*).

I am not saying this merely flippantly but emphatically. Now, Sir, there are hon. Members here, and special hon. Members too for that matter, I know who made statements before the Minorities Commission denying their own language and tribe “we don't speak that language”. I have no desire to name the hon. Member on reference, but he was speaking in support of Ogoja State.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I go back to the natural discrimination and human discrimination. (*Interruption*).

[MR AGBA]

The last thing I have to say is the question of headquarters in Ogoja Province being at Obubra. I don't want to hurt anybody's feelings here. A certain Minister has made a statement in Ogoja to say that the headquarters being at Obubra was a typographical error. I would like it to be confirmed in this House that it was really a mistake and outside that I think we are alright on this point but we want the headquarters to be at Ogoja.

I think, Mr Speaker, I have nearly exhausted my points, the most important points, and I would ask, that these points be taken into consideration, with special regard to this one essential idea, that without the creation of the COR State, there will be no Self-Government, if not in the Region, in the whole Federation of Nigeria.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Information (Mr S. O. Masi):**

Mr Speaker, Sir, I rise to support this Motion and to congratulate the brains behind the production of this valuable Paper. I am personally very happy, Sir, that at the long last, this White Paper has come to the Floor of this House for a full dress debate.

During the Minorities Commission in Calabar, the protagonists of the fantastic COR State told the Commission that the Government only produced this White Paper to deceive the minority groups in the Eastern Region. Today, the White Paper is on the Floor of this House and the Members of the Opposition should bend their heads in shame.

I have a few observations to make as far as my Division, Ahoada, is concerned. My Division has accepted the White Paper and my instructions are to point out to the Government, the local government structure as they affect Ahoada Division. Ahoada Division, Sir, is the largest in the Rivers Province with a population of 300,000. (*Interruption*). It is a Division with seven clans, Ikwerre, Etche, in the Eastern Ahoada and in Western Ahoada—Abua, Ekpeye Ogba, Egenne, and Egbema. Abua is a tribe in itself with a distinct language and culture. In Ahoada Division, we have three District Councils—Etche, Ikwerre, and Western Ahoada. The Council in Western Ahoada is known as Western Ahoada District Council comprising

five clans. According to the White Paper, Sir, these five clans have been put together to form Western Ahoada County Council. My people are opposed to this very vehemently. We want three distinct District Councils, to be known as three County Councils in Western Ahoada. For the past three years, two clans in Western Ahoada known as Ogba and Egbema with a population of 51,000 have been agitating for a separate District Council. The demand was so strong that Government of Eastern Region appointed one man Commission of Inquiry in the person of Mr P. L. Wood, Senior Administrative Officer, now retired, to look into the matter. Government is aware of the report and I am sure it is in favour of creating the Ogba and Egbema District Council. We have agitated, sent petitions, and resolutions demanding the creation of the Ogba-Egbema District Council and it seems that Government up to this time has said nothing. We take it for granted that the Government is in favour of creating the District Council for the people with a population of 51,000. Having waited in vain for the creation of this District Council, a section of Egbema people are now agitating that instead of joining Western Ahoada to form a County Council as proposed in this White Paper, they would rather go to Oguta. When they approached the Oguta people to know whether they would be accommodated, Oguta people being very small, were very happy to receive them. They promised these people six scholarships. They told the Egbema people that as they have built their own secondary schools, they would give them six scholarships every year whether their children pass the entrance examination or not. (*Laughter*.) They told the Egbema people that they would reduce tax and that they would not pay rates. The people then sent petitions upon petitions to the Minister of Local Government. The only answer is for the Government to create the Ogba-Egbema District Council, and that would be the end of the agitation to go to Oguta because there is no relationship whatever between Oguta and Egbema culturally and otherwise.

I beg to quote from the White Paper on Self-Government Page 23, Para. 7—Local Government:

“Government is of the opinion that where people are bound by strong ties of social

intercourse, blood relationship, language and geography, and they are willing to assume the civic obligations and responsibilities, they should be allowed to practise local self-government."

We are one and have been treated as equals for the past 50 years, without trouble. Where a demand is so strong, the only way to determine the people's right is to set up a Commission of Inquiry on the question instead of sending back-door petitions or leading delegations to the Minister; this the Government had done.

Well, coming to Abua, I think, Sir, that the purpose of this White Paper is to allay the fears of the minorities in the Eastern Region. Abua is a tribe in the Western Ahoada which is a minority; so we are asking that Abua should be given a place in Oil Rivers Provincial Assembly; that is Abua should have a District Council of its own.

**An hon. Member:** What is the population?

**Mr Masi:** Nineteen thousand. If a place like Bonny with 10,000 inhabitants and a place like Opobo with 7,000 inhabitants should have County Councils, why not give Abua with 19,000, and a minority for that matter, a District Council?

Coming, Sir, to the Regional Self-Government, we are in complete agreement with the present set-up, for Bonny, Etche, Ikwerre, Kalabari, Khana, Ndoki, Obolo, Okrika, Opobo, and Western Ahoada to form Oil Rivers Provincial Assembly. Sir, the Government is aware of the agitation of Ndoki people—the people who prepared this document know very well that Ndoki for the past three years have been agitating to get out of Ngwa Division and I am sure that Ndoki is prepared to bear the responsibilities.

**An hon. Member:** Are you from Aba?

**Mr Masi:** I am not from Aba Division but I am from the Rivers Province.

Mr Speaker, Sir, what I am saying is that Ndoki people feel disappointed for being with Aba for years past. For instance, I remember somebody from Ndoki who contested four

parliamentary elections and not even a vote was given him by the Ngwa voters. I feel, Sir, that since it is their wish to join Rivers to form the Oil Rivers Provincial Assembly the Government should take their demand into serious consideration. As I said earlier the purpose of this White Paper is to allay the fears of the minorities and already Ndoki is a minority.

Sir, I come to Etche. In Owerri Division one finds a part of Etche; these people have demanded to join their people in Ahoada Division.

We are not trying to extract people from another area but our own people in another area who want to join their kith and kin should be allowed to do so. It is quite different from people of an area going to extract people of another area, like Oguta people, because they are small. We are not opposed to anything in this White Paper. It is acceptable to us both on the county levels and provincial basis.

I must say, Sir, that Government should pay heed to the demands of the Ogba and Egbema people. I am not issuing a threat but merely giving a hint. During my last visit on tour to Ahoada Division I had the opportunity of speaking to the Egbema people and they said that the reason why they agitated to go to Oguta was because Government failed to listen to their demand for the creation of an Ogba and Egbema District Council. They told me to convey to the Premier their unwillingness for a part of Egbema to be joined to Oguta. They added that any attempt to force this decision on them would lead to serious consequences.

Sir, I beg to support.

**Dr A. N. Obonna (Owerri Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am glad to speak on this motion which I must support. In doing so, I must first of all congratulate the Government for the able way they have got this material ready for future guidance to anybody or any Government in this Region. I am glad the Premier has stated that they are proposals not necessarily meant to be implemented now, and Members will agree that it is a very good policy.

[DR OBONNA]

I would like to proceed straight away by taking some of the points I have got down. I will start with the Public Service. I want it known that what we want is complete Africanisation or Nigerianisation of the Public Service Commission with representation on provincial basis. There is no doubt that the Government will find a suitable Nigerian, no matter where he comes from, to chairman the Public Service Commission. Such an African must be a man of letters, integrity and good character. He must be free from political bias. I do not agree for a moment that among us you will not find men of that calibre.

Secondly, Sir, coming to county councils elections, I want to say that the attempt to conduct these elections on equality basis is another attempt to please the minority groups. Mr Speaker, having listened to some members of the Opposition this afternoon, I am convinced it is a waste of time attempting to please the minority. I must say this, that until minority groups are made to realise that they are minority groups and only entitled to minority rights, there will be no peace in this Region. Any attempt to rob the majority groups of their right to palate the minority groups, is not acceptable particularly when they do not appreciate it—in fact I had expected today that they will give thanks to the Government.

There is no doubt that in England there are minority groups, and they never impeded self-government at all. I can assure you that whether they like it or not the East will be self-governing.

Coming to the Provinces, I like to say this, that I would have liked the Government to retain the former five provinces. It would be easy to run and less expensive, but if it is necessary that we should have more provinces, I like to suggest that Awka Division be allowed to form its own province... (*Interruptions*). I am broadminded; I am not parochial.

I come to Ndoki. Land is very valuable in the Eastern Region, in Nigeria for that matter, even a barren land, much less to talk of this land. To transfer any land of a section to another section arbitrarily, without anything, I think is typographical error which

I am sure the Government will have no hesitation to correct. But listening to the threat of hon. S. O. Masi, I am prepared to say this: when it comes to a threat I do not see how a minority group will threaten a majority group, because in population, in any way you may take it, I do not see how they can compare with Owerri people. I hope you will not try to carry it out otherwise you will be totally annihilated.

Now, coming to the scholarship scheme, I must say frankly that this is a great improvement on what we had before. What I do not like in the present scheme is that the Government has stipulated that on the return of any recipient of this scholarship he must sign agreement that he must serve this Region for at least five years. What happens if such a student returns and there is no job for him? I have seen instances in this Region where, even a Ph.D. man stayed idle in this country for two years... (*Members: What Ph.D. man?*)... and he is well qualified. I know a Medical Practitioner who returned to this country for several months without a job. I would like to know what happens if such a student returned and Government is not in a position to provide a job. I must say, Sir, with the outgoing Expatriates' posts being filled now, there will be a time, in two or three years, when it will be hard to get people into the Service; so that Government will have to consider that in case somebody returned and Government have not a suitable job for him. Such redtape attached to the scholarship should be removed.

In any Division you have the minority group. Take for example in Owerri where I come from, the first we had an election, the Oguta man topped the list, and this time again the Division was able to return an Oguta man. What I want to prove is that no matter whether you are in the minority or in the majority group if you are qualified and popular you will be returned to this House. You should not expect to be elected just because you come from the minority group. Such a policy would be wrong.

Coming to the Government policy on the P.W.D., I must say that it is a very progressive policy, and saves that Department from being called Public Waste Department, a name which it has earned in the past.



Coming to the Special List and Lump Sum Compensation, I must say that it is unfortunate that we had to sign such an agreement for a young country coming to self-government. I thought if our white expatriates have had their good intentions of bringing us to nationhood, now would have been the time they would have liked to remain to put us on safe ground. But I think that from such a scheme we shall know those who are friends of this country because those who remain are those who have come here purposely to help us and those who leave because they have got Lump Sum Compensation are those that have always been here for monetary purposes.

I will disagree with my Friend, hon. Abengowe, challenging the right of an expatriate doctor practising here after he has drawn the Lump Sum Compensation. (*Hear! Hear!*). The white expatriate is not responsible for the agreement. He has not asked for the compensation, but it was given to him. Only very few people could resist the temptation and if he has accepted and decided to remain here to practise, I see no point whatever in challenging him. We the Medical Practitioners have been asking Government to increase the number of Medical Practitioners in this Region, so that it is inconsistent to say that somebody should go when we need Doctors in this country. I know we are not afraid to compete with the white man.

Mr Speaker, Sir, before I close I would like to say that with the abolition of the County Councils I see trouble ahead and Government must act immediately. I would suggest that the only way to act is to appoint a Senior Officer now to go into these County Councils now abolished and find out exactly what these areas comprising the Counties had in common before the abolition, and then decide how the assets and liabilities will be distributed, otherwise there will be unnecessary litigations and bad blood throughout the Region which might result to anything any day.

With these few words, Mr Speaker, I beg to support the Motion.

**Mr J. O. Ihekwoaba (Orlu Division):** Mr Speaker, I rise to support the Government White Paper on Self-government. Sir, when this proposal reached my constituency, the

people were glad to receive it, and after going through the contents, most of the parts were received with great joy. Of course they appealed to the Minister concerned for a little amendment for something which they feel is against the minority in our area—Orlu Division. In this White Paper the majority areas were not considered in the proposal of the number of people going to the Eastern House of Assembly. In this case, Sir, I hope that the Minister concerned has received the petition Orlu Council and people of the agrieved areas sent to him. Of course he knows that these people have made out a case out of their appeal. May I draw the attention of Mr Speaker, to the schedule of the proposed Single Member Constituency which puts the minority entirely into the hands of the majority. May I refer this House to page 32 of the White Paper where the majority and the minority in Orlu are not considered. May I refer this House to pages 35 and 36 where it will be seen that Orlu Division is given five seats and out of these five seats the clan which is in the majority of 109,878 has only one seat. The Mbanasa clan with a population of 36,951 has one seat; the two clans of Ndizuogu and Nwabosi are merged together and given one seat. Sir, the population strength of these two clans merged together is 48,656; instead of giving them one seat each they are given one seat together.

May I point out, Sir, that instead of this White Paper favouring Ndizuogu who are in a minority in Orlu Division they have been brought to a position that Nwabosi clan can swallow them at any time there are any elections—Ndizuogu has a population of 13,457 against Nwabosi's 35,199. This absolutely knocks them out entirely from coming into this House.

May I suggest, Sir, that inasmuch as these two clans have been bearing the burden of owning their separate clans all this time they should be allowed to remain so and given one seat each, that is allowing Ndizuogu to have its own separate Council and leaving Nwabosi alone to stay on its own.

May I refer this House, Sir, to other areas similar to Ndizuogu in other divisions that are given some seats. Well, here you see Oron U. D. C. of 13,641 people, given

[MR IHEKWOABA]

one seat; Ikom U. D. C. of 7,641 people, has one seat. Mr Speaker, Opobo U. D. C. with only 7,391 people is given one seat, Owerri U. D. C. with 9,331 people is given one seat; Oguta U. D. C. with 14,761 people is given one seat. Mr Speaker, if a place with only 7,000 people as their population could have one seat, why not consider these Ndizuogu people whose population is nearly 14,000?

Mr Speaker, Sir, from time immemorial, since the beginning of this House, Ndizuogu which is placed in a position of a minority has been coming to this House, even in the Federal House it still has somebody there. But now that they are being merged into a very big area which will absolutely swallow them, it means that they are not to smell this House again and even the Federal House. So, I am appealing, Sir, that they should be considered. If you look well you will see that part of Ndizuogu has been merged with Okigwi area. If this Okigwi area and Orlu area joined together their population should have been up to 40,000 but in view of the demarcation resulting in the taking away of some part of its area Ndizuogu has become a minority on both sides. Let me deal now with the clans which are in the majority. Iso clan with a population of 109,838 has one seat instead of two. Okobo-Oron R.D.C. with a population of 112,000 has two seats; Northern Ngwa R.D.C. which is 116,935 population has two seats; Western Ahoada R.D.C. with only 116,920 population has two seats. So we want our own Iso clan to be given two seats. At present they are running four courts and four local councils and these four courts are grouped together as to have one seat. If they are given two seats, I think that they are not asking too much. These are the points which I want the Minister to take note of.

Mr Speaker, may I draw attention to the proposed Provincial Assembly with equal representation. As most of the Members have spoken about equal representation in the proposed Provincial Assembly, I think most of the people would not like it.

**Mr Speaker:** You would do well to speak up. The reporter cannot hear you.

**Mr Ihekwoaba:** In this proposed equal representation, I think that in our own area, some of our people would not like it especially where you have majority. For instance it is not satisfactory to expect an area with a population of about 109,000 to get equal representation with another having a population of 36,000. I think this requires serious consideration. Representation should be based on population.

*And it being 2.15 p.m. Mr Speaker interrupted the business and the Debate stood adjourned. Debate to be resumed Tomorrow.*

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Minister of Production (Dr M. I. Okpara):** I beg to move that this House do now adjourn till tomorrow at 9 a.m. I wish to remind hon. Members about the Cocktail Party being given at the forecourt of this hon. House tonight.

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Transport (Mr P. O. Ururuka):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Adjourned accordingly at seventeen minutes past two o'clock p.m.*

## WRITTEN ANSWER TO QUESTION

Thursday, 20th March, 1958

### Industries in Owerri Division

47. **Mr G. C. Okeya** asked the Minister of Commerce, what local industries are being planned by his Ministry for Owerri Division.

**The Minister of Commerce:** The Ministry of Commerce does not plan the location of industry: none of the projects at present under active consideration is likely to be located in Owerri Division.

In amplification of the foregoing I should explain that the main work of the Planning and Projects Divisions of my Ministry is to examine the possibility of establishing new industries in the Eastern Region and to encourage overseas firms to set up factories here. In some cases the project would be wholly financed by the

entrepreneurs and in others the Government or a statutory corporation would subscribe part of the share capital.

Moreover the location of a manufacturing industry is largely a matter of natural selection. It must be near to the source of the raw materials it uses, or to a port if those have to be imported. There must be adequate supplies of water and of electric power. It must be well served by railway or a good road network for efficient distribution of its products. So it will be seen that there is little Government can do to influence location of industry and that it would be unwise to attempt to direct industry into areas where overhead costs would be so high that the young company could not operate at a profit.

EASTERN HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Friday, 21st March, 1958

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

PRAYERS

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

ORDER OF THE DAY

Self-Government in the Eastern Region

Order read for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question (20th March).

"That this House approves in principle the proposals contained in Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1957—Self-Government in the Eastern Region."

Question again proposed.

**Mr J. O. Ihekwoaba (Orlu Division):** Mr Speaker, the point I was making yesterday before the House adjourned was to refer this House to page 2 of the White Paper which says that the representation to the Provincial Assemblies will be on equal basis in each local council. It will be unfair to that area which has the majority in the council. I suggest that representation should be based on population. This White Paper has accorded the minority the chance to be represented, that is, to have an equal share with the majority.

I now refer to page 13 of the White Paper which deals with Rural Water Supplies. I want to remind the House on the acute shortage of water supply in Orlu Division. A number of educational institutions in the Division has continually applied for grants-in-aid in order to make boreholes for these institutions. I refer to St. Augustine's Secondary School, the Bishop Shanahan and its Teachers' Training College. Every time you visit these institutions they complain about the scarcity of water supply and any action to remedy the situation will save the children the trouble of going to the jungle every morning to fetch water before going to school.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I now draw the attention of the House to page 30, Part II of the White Paper which deals with Produce Inspection. I

must first of all congratulate the Produce Inspection for the honest work which they are doing this year in the testing of our palm oil. I think, Sir, that if they continue like this our palm produce will be the best in the world market.

If you look at the Schedule showing the stations where palm produce is graded during the period 1957-58, you will see that instead of having three grading stations in Orlu we have only two. One of these stations had to be closed owing to the bad state of the road. There have been petitions to the Government about the tarring of this road to join Owerri and I hope the Government will now see fit to release funds for the reconstruction of this road in order to facilitate the speedy evacuation of produce.

May I close by outlining my points made: it is that Orlu Division be given two more seats to make their seats 7 in the Eastern House of Assembly, that is to give Isu Clan 2 seats instead of one in view of their population which I read yesterday and compared with their counterparts in other Divisions, and Ndizuogu, the minority, one seat, as I have quoted their counterparts in other Divisions; to give water to our educational institutions in Orlu Division and to thank the Produce Inspection Department for the work done this year.

**Mr U. Enyi (Afikpo Division):** Mr Speaker, I support the Motion to approve the proposal for Self-Government in the Eastern Region as contained in the Sessional Paper, No. 2 of 1957. In supporting the Motion I have these few comments to make. The White Paper is acceptable to my constituency almost in all respects. The only point that my people are opposed to is the attempt or the proposal to make representation to County Councils or Provincial Assemblies on equal basis. My people oppose this proposal vehemently. The popularity of democratic government is due to representation on population basis and elections by adult suffrage. Since this has been the procedure both in the Federal and Regional Legislatures, I do not think that there is any justification in changing the policy in the case of Local Government Councils. Mr Speaker, Sir, if this is done it will mean doing justice to the minority areas at the expense of the majority areas. (*Hear! Hear!*). In

Afikpo District Council area, there are 16 Local Councils; the smallest Local Council is Erei with a population of 3,555, while the biggest Local Council is Afikpo with a population of 26,305, and you will agree with me that it will be doing injustice to Afikpo Local Council if they have the same representation as Erei in the proposed County Council. During the past years the people of this Region have been accustomed to the democratic way of representation on population basis, and I do not think that there have been any serious complaints against that policy, and as far as I can remember what the minority areas complained about was and is unfair distribution of amenities and not unequal representation.

My second point, Mr Speaker, is the question of Provincial Assembly. The people of Ogoja Province are not in favour of splitting the former Ogoja Province into two smaller provinces as proposed in the White Paper, rather we prefer remaining as one Province with one Provincial Assembly and sufficient powers to cater for the interests of Ogoja Province in general.

Another point, Sir, is about the Single Member Constituency. The White Paper does not show the Single Member Constituencies for areas that have two or three representatives in the House of Assembly, e.g., in Afikpo Division there are two constituencies—Afikpo County Council area with three representatives and Edda County with one representative. There is no specification of the constituencies for each of the three Members for Afikpo County Council area. The Afikpo District Council on the 26th of February 1958 adopted a resolution that Afikpo County Council area should be divided into three Single Member constituencies as follows:

1. Afikpo Group;
2. Southern Ohaozara Group; and,
3. Northern Ohaozara Group.

The Afikpo Group consists of Afikpo, Agbo, Okpoha, Amaseri, Unwana and Erei Local Council areas with a total population of 62,522; the Southern Ohaozara Group consists of Ake-Eze, Ishiagu, Okposi, Ugulangu, and Uka-wu Local Council areas with a total population of 83,565; and the Northern Ohaozara Group consists of Isu, Uburu, Onicha and Oshiri Local Council areas with a total population of 61,768.

In carving out these constituencies, consideration was given to cultural affinity and geographical position of the areas concerned.

Another point, Sir, is the request by the Agbos which is a minority area in Afikpo Division. The Agbos wish to be grouped together with their brothers of Obubra Division to form one constituency either under Afikpo County Council or as a separate County Council in Afikpo Division, and to be represented in the Eastern House of Assembly.

We support this request if they are given a fourth seat for Afikpo County area in the Eastern House of Assembly.

**An hon. Member:** What is their population?

**Mr Enyi:** 50,000 people if they are grouped together with their brothers of Obubra area.

They are doing this not because they are not happy with the majority area—the Ibos of Afikpo Division—but just because they want to be together with their brothers and they want to benefit from the privilege that is given to the minority areas by the Government. I can prove that the Agbos are happy with the Ibos of Afikpo Division because the present Chairman of Afikpo District Council is a native of Agbo and in spite of their tiny population the hon. Minister of Finance hails from Agbo and he is representing Afikpo Division.

Mr Speaker, Sir, with these few points I beg to support.

**Mr P. N. Okeke (Onitsha Division):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me an opportunity to speak on this Motion. (*Interruption*).

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

**Mr P. N. Okeke:** Mr Speaker, Sir, in the first place, I want to congratulate the Government for bringing up this White Paper. It was well brought up but I think that Government has surrendered completely to the agitation of the minority areas. I consider this White Paper as a "policy of appeasement" for the minority areas. When I took up the White Paper yesterday and analysed the figures, I found out that the so called COR State area

[MR P. N. OKEKE]

has over 50 per cent representation in the proposed Eastern House of Assembly.

Now, Sir, if you turn to page 30 of the White Paper, Appendix B, you will see that Abakaliki with a total population of 722,803 has eleven seats.

**Chief I. I. Morphy (Ogoja Division):** On point of correction, Sir. Since we have been agitating for COR State we have never included Abakaliki and Afikpo Divisions of the former Ogoja Province.

**Mr P. N. Okeke:** Mr Speaker, Calabar, Ogoja and Rivers are the three provinces involved and Abakaliki is in Ogoja Province.

I would like my hon. Friend to take up his pen and do a little arithmetic as I go along. Annang Province with a total population of 445,674, eight seats; add them as we go along. Calabar Province with a total population of 169,628, six seats; Eket Province with a population of 348,789, eight seats; Ibibio Province with a total population of 502,343, nine seats; Ijaw Province with a population of 127,328, four seats; Ogoja Province with a population of 449,545, seven seats; Oil Rivers Province with a population of 707,846, fourteen seats. If you add these figures you will get a total of sixty-seven seats out of 124 seats—more than 50 per cent of the seats in the House, and yet the Opposition stood up here yesterday to criticise the White Paper and to say it favours the majority areas. I think, Sir, that democracy should be carried to its logical conclusion. Yesterday, most of the Members who got up to speak insisted that representation in county area and local councils shall be based strictly on population. I agree with them, that is democracy. But my argument, Sir, is that this should be carried to its logical conclusion. Representation in the county, in the Provincial Assembly, in the House of Assembly should be based strictly on population (*Hear! Hear!*). Otherwise the argument adduced by the advocates of representation by population cannot stand.

Another point, Sir, is that at page 23, you will see why I say that Government capitulated

to the agitation of the members of the Opposition and the minorities. It says at paragraph 5—with your permission may I quote:

“Added to these problems of Local Government financing are political ones in the form of fissiparous agitations in certain areas which seek to secede from the Eastern Region on the ground that they are ‘neglected’ and treated ‘indifferently’. They feel that whilst they claim to produce the bulk of the Regions primary source of revenue, expenditure is concentrated for the development of other areas which are said to be less wealthy and which, in their opinion, contribute less to the Region’s economy”.

**An hon. Member:** Will you dispute that ?

**Mr P. N. Okeke:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have requested sometime ago that Government should produce statistics to show comparative revenue from the different Divisions of this Region in order to prove to people from the minority areas that they have gained.

Mr Speaker, may I give a few examples of different types of assessments in a place like Onitsha and let anybody from the minority areas tell me whether the tax paid by 10 people in Onitsha is not more than the whole tax paid in some minority area. In Onitsha taxes range between £1,500 to £2,000. This is not income but tax payable. I would like people in minority areas to tell me the highest tax paid in their area yet the resources of the Region are pooled together and grants made. What we receive in place like Onitsha, Sir, is only £23,000 when twenty people will contribute this amount. Mr Speaker, may I point out that this Paper is rather very partial to the minority areas at the expense of the majority and if Government will surrender to the parochial clamour of the people for representation in local government areas, Government should go the whole hog and make representation throughout on population basis otherwise the problem of minority will continue. There are minorities in local areas and in Regional Assemblies. It is not only in the Eastern House of Assembly that you have minorities. Even in the local government areas you find large towns with big population tyrannising the small towns. What do you expect these small towns to do? They unite and then there will be agitation for cessation from the counties

or from their Provincial Houses. They will agitate until they mobilise sufficient force. In certain areas it will be impossible for these small towns to unite and form a majority. As my hon. Colleague from Onitsha said yesterday, the tendency is for the larger towns to seek to have Urban District Councils of their own instead of merging with the smaller towns. What I am saying, Sir, is that this White Paper is partial to minorities. I do not blame the Government because for some time now we have heard in this House that the minority areas have been cheated and I think as an earnest of sincerity on the part of the Government it has tried to appease them. I think they should be satisfied and they should congratulate the Government for bringing up this White Paper. The N.C.N.C. has conceded too much in the national interest for the unity of the country. It is the same concession which we are giving on a national level that we are giving now on the regional level at the expense of the real people who produce the bulk of the revenue for running this Region. This is the first point I would like to make. I don't want to belabour the question of representation because if you go through the passage I have just quoted you will notice that Calabar Province with a total population of 169,628 people has six seats while Onitsha Province, for example, at page 32, with a total population of 760,890 has only 10 seats—compare the proportion and then you will realise what I am saying. In fact if you go along and compare places like Orlu, Okigwi and Owerri then you will realise that the whole thing is absurd. The Opposition should be made to realise this, instead of coming to the Floor of this House and like "Oliver Twist", always asking for more.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I want to say a few words on the point raised by my hon. Friend from Onitsha Division. I think it is the wish of minority areas from Onitsha Division to have direct representation to this House. Surely they are perfectly right. With any amount of goodwill on the part of the British rulers in this country, we agitated for Self-Government—we wanted to rule ourselves. We believe that the worst form of Self-Government is better than any foreign rule, so that in Onitsha Division we have two minority areas which, perhaps, will never get representation to this House if they are not directly represented.

It is true that we have given more attention to their interests in this House than to our own areas, and certainly they are not satisfied and nobody will blame them for not being satisfied until they have people from their own areas.

In fact, if you go through the previous *Hansards*, you will notice that some of us from Onitsha Division have given more time and space to Ogbaru and Anambra areas (*Interruption*). They constitute a very large portion of our Division and they are not represented—and like the goose that lays the golden egg, we come here to speak for them but because they are not here and most of them don't read the *Hansards* they do not believe that their interests are adequately represented. So, Sir, I say that Government should try to give these people direct representation. In Onitsha Northern District, the position is very easy. Under the present arrangement Onitsha Northern District will be entitled to three seats and the Anambra area has a population of 102,000. In fact, they are in the majority, but what they want is to be carved into a separate constituency with a separate County Council and direct representation to the House. They agreed even to have one seat out of the three seats for Onitsha Northern District, provided that they are regarded as one single unit with direct representation. They also even want the remaining 100,000 to have the remaining two seats and I think nobody will quarrel over that. In Onitsha Southern District, the problem is different. The Ogbaru people are clearly in the minority and it will never be possible for people from that area to be represented in this House and the Onitsha Divisional Branch of the N.C.N.C. agreed that the Government should treat Ogbaru area as a minority. They have a population of 18,000—more than the population of Ikom, Oguta, Opobo, Bonny, and many other areas, that have been given direct representations to this House; and geographically, Sir, it is difficult for this area to benefit from the development from Onitsha Southern District Council.

I hope Government will consider this area and give them direct representation to the House of Assembly.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I now come to the problem of Provincial Assemblies. One of my fears

[MR P. N. OKEKE]

is the financial implication of the new Provincial Houses. Certainly, I think the idea is well conceived—it will solve the problem of the Eastern Region if we have many of them. In the 16 Provincial Assemblies there will be 16 Commissioners, who will have Ministerial status and if we reckon by the present rates of pay, it will cost £48,000. The number to constitute the Provincial Assembly has not been put down on paper. A hypothetical figure of say 50 may not be alright because if you base representation on local council areas, it will be more than 50 of such Members in each area and I am sure that the Members of the proposed Houses will insist on being paid equally or half the salary of Members of the Eastern House of Assembly. Mr Speaker, Sir, I wonder whether the financial capacity of the Eastern Region can sustain these new proposals and the expenditure involved. That is the only point which worries me at the moment. If we have the money I think it will go a long way towards solving the problems of devolution of powers from the centre to the various areas of the Region.

I think, Sir, that we are reaching the taxable capacity of this Region. Government cannot depend very much on direct taxation. Some of us come from the rural areas and from the townships and we know Government will not achieve much by direct taxation and I am hoping that Government will consider and find a solution on how these Provincial Assemblies will be financed.

I now come to the abolition of County Councils. I think we from Onitsha Division, and I also speak for Awka, welcome the abolition of county councils. It will make people have a real interest in local government. The Niger County Council was too unwieldy and as a result the people did not realise what the council was doing. I am advising the hon. Minister of Local Government that in areas where the people like to retain county councils, he should make arrangements to adjust matters to make it possible for the County Councils to function in such areas.

Members in their speeches raised arguments in respect of certain county areas where they have got amenities like schools and hospitals in common. I think it will be unfair to assign

all these property to areas in which they are situated for it will bring about agitation and as I have already said, adjustment is the only solution.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to say something about rural water supplies. We have been informed in this House since 1954 of the plans the Government had for the expansion of rural water supplies. These plans are repeated year in and year out and still nothing is being done. I would like to know the areas in which the scheme has been applied since 1954. If not I would advise the Government to make a start anywhere in the Region. I remember in 1955 the then Minister of Works toured my Division where he saw the people and told them to survey the areas and select suitable water points. The District Officer went round and points were selected. Since then nothing again has been heard. Of course, the Minister has been changed, so that when people go to him to make enquiries, he always replies "I am no longer the Minister in charge". (*Laughter*). Perhaps we may ask the Premier to allow the new Minister concerned to stay long in this Ministry.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I will not end this speech without saying a word on the Civil Service Commission. We should not close our eyes to the corruption and nepotism practised by our own people. It is admitted that when you go to the rural areas there is a tendency on the part of the uninformed to desire British rule because of the acts of some of our people who have been placed in positions of responsibility. The average man and woman in the village identify the acts of these civil servants with the act of Government, and it is here that we have to draw the attention of the Civil Service Commission in making appointments. It is not giving sufficient opportunity to our young men, especially those of them from the University. From experience, I have been more impressed by the honesty and integrity of these young men than the honesty and integrity of the old court clerks and interpreters. These young men are more reliable. The practice of re-engaging retired pensioners should be discouraged so as to give opportunity to these younger men who will give years of service to the Region. With the present position of the country, with Northernisation in the Northern



Region, with Westernisation in the Western Region and with Cameroonisation in the Cameroons already going on, they are planning to retrench, I think, about 340 Easterners there. Where are these boys going to find jobs if you block their chances with the men who have served their time. I think these people should be satisfied with their pensions and give opportunities to young boys.

Now, Sir, on the Ministry of Transport I would like to say a few words. I want to warn the Government that the Anambra areas will not spare them this time if the Abagana/Aguleri road is not tarred. We told them stories last year; we cannot repeat these stories this year. I think the Premier comes from the Division; he knows how difficult we found it to explain to them during the last elections. We assured them that it was because of the crisis that this road was not included in the Estimates. Mr Speaker, Sir, I have said very often in this House that in the whole of Onitsha Division, there is not, until recently, a single mile of road maintained by the Regional Government. Government promised the Anambra area that this road (which was a kind of Trunk B road); would be tarred, and that it would be included in the Estimates. We have not seen the Estimates; if it is not included, I will advise Government to make a Supplementary Estimate before the Estimates are ready, so that this road will be tarred—the Abagana/Aguleri road.

**An Opposition Member:** So that you might win election.

**Mr P. N. Okeke:** Yes (*laughter*).

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to say a few words on the policy of the Ministry of Commerce. I regard this Ministry as a key Ministry in this Region. Sir, I have gone round some of the big townships in the Region and was shocked. Go through the Factory Roads at Port Harcourt and look round, there is not a single business premises belonging to an Easterner or a Nigerian for that matter. Go along the high streets of Enugu, Sir, there is not a single premises belonging to a Nigerian. Go along the Niger in Onitsha, there is not a single warehouse belonging to the Easterner. Mr Speaker, I read a little History, and I know that

British greatness was achieved by the adventure of its traders. The greatness of any nation depends on its traders, even the British Empire without the British traders could not have come into being. I say this in order to impress upon him the importance of trade and commerce in this Region. Government has not given adequate protection to trade. It is true, Sir, that it is difficult to get our people to pool their resources together. You will not blame them. The first attempt made in this country to pool resources together to form a Company, ended in a fiasco. Most of our businessmen are illiterates and, naturally, are very suspicious and refuse to pool their resources together. I think Government should adopt a brave policy of coming all out to help trade in this Region, of organising the traders, of enabling them to get business premises. Mr Speaker, I do not know of any country in the world where foreigners or aliens are allowed to own the best areas of the town.

Look at the High Street. There a contracting firm that owns a large area of land has put up a very magnificent building and leased out the former Labour Office to a Syrian firm—a former Labour Office belonging to this Region in a very important commercial area in the township. That foreign contracting firm has to lease out that portion of land to a Syrian firm and they are there yet no African trader has been able to get a piece of land there. Mr Speaker in fairness to the Minister of Land, these things happened many years ago. The present Minister cannot be held responsible but we are saying that Government should bring a Bill in this House to make it impossible for the aliens to own land unless the Government finds it necessary in the interest of the Region. Where, Sir, you have aliens competing with the indigenous natives in retail trade, I think that it is unfair and, Mr Speaker, if you take into consideration the poverty of our people, how many African businessmen have a capital of £5,000? Very few. You find petty traders competing with these firms on retail trade, and I think Government should take serious steps to organise our traders; to give them loans (*Interruption*). If Government arranges the system of giving loans to organise businessmen, I think it will be possible for them to organise especially where the condition would be to spend most

[MR P. N. OKEKE]

of this money in acquiring premises; it will make African businessmen to come together when they see that Government is prepared to give them assistance.

Mr Speaker, I think in winding up, I would like to touch the Ministry of Town Planning. The system of carving 50' x 100' and 40' x 70' in the African locations should be discouraged. I think the spaces are too small and it is not possible for people to develop the areas concerned. Wider areas should be allocated. If you go into the Enugu township, for example, you will find that many people cannot have garages for their cars because even the space between two buildings is only about 6 feet. In Onitsha, the position is better because the Onitsha Urban District Council allows 6 feet each way making 12 feet. I think plots should not be less than 100' x 100' especially in certain areas where Government is planning a new layout. There should be a section of it where all plots should be 100' x 100'. That should be left to people who want to have sufficient space for flower and for garage.

Mr Speaker, I support the Motion.

**Chief Morphy:** Mr Speaker, I think hon. Members do not exactly know the definition of COR State. I would like to tell them that COR area is that area which embodies the whole of Ogoja, Ikom, Obubra and Obudu, former Calabar Province and former Rivers Province excluding Ahoada and Port Harcourt. When you are talking about COR you should confine yourselves to the following areas: Ogoja Province minus Abakaliki and Afikpo, Rivers Province minus Ahoada and the whole of Calabar Province. If you look at the White Paper it does not satisfy what we want at all. All we want is that we should have our own COR State where we will have the same powers as this Region has. All these Provincial Assemblies as provided in the White Paper do not iron out our fears.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I oppose the Motion moved by the Premier "That this House approves in principle the proposals contained in Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1957—Self-government in Eastern Region". We of this side of the House think that the aim of Government in bringing up this Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1957 is

to try and allay the fears of the minorities in Eastern Nigeria. Even though that is the aim, Government has failed in an attempt to allay our fears and as such the only way our fears could be allayed is the creation of a COR State.

Let us examine the Self-government which we talk so much about. Let us ask ourselves whether it has brought us the desired good or higher cost of living. Self-government has not at all improved the position. Before we attained Self-government in this Region people were not called upon to pay so many taxes as we are now paying. The burden on the middle class is not so heavy. The last demonstration against the U.P.E. modification will show that the people are not happy and have gone so far as to say that they do not want black man's rule. Regional Self-government has not brought any improvement but hardship on the people. This hardship is more on the middle class whose backs are being broken now with too many taxes. They are called upon to pay P.A.Y.E. tax, Assumed Local Contribution and to contribute on 50/50 basis for the amenities provided them by Government. They are also called upon to pay Local Government rates, which we were told some time in 1957 that we would not pay more than 5s as rates by the Minister of Local Government, but he has now approved 15s to £1 5s as rates. This is too much on the middle class. If the burden were on the privileged class, like my hon. Friends opposite, that would be nice. My hon. Friends opposite are the people who should have the burden of taxation. When Regional Self-government was granted we were asked to ensure that the dignity and purpose of it remained with us and make the people feel that Regional Self-government in matters within our Constitutional competence is a change for the better. But instead it has brought hardships to the entire middle class of this Region who deserve relief before their backs are broken with the burden of taxation. Even though self-governing, let us always remember that we have come to this House with the votes of hundreds of ordinary respectable, decent working class and the common poor people who are farmers and or petty traders. Let the Party in power for one time put into deed what they do claim—that their party is a socialist Party and their Government a Government of the people by the people for the people.

This Socialist Party as they say is only in words not in deeds. If you look up the policy statement it is not at all for the middle class and does not at all come to the aid of our masses because you cannot control the lives of the people by comparing them with Members of this House or the Ministers. If you compare with the ordinary people you will find that this Government is not coming to their aid at all, and is not keeping to their socialist policy which they claim; and in spite of this Government being said to be Government for the people by the people, I think it is a Government for the few or in short for the Politburo: Government by the few who are permanently in authority. Such Government does not take care of the middle class. What I would like this Government to do is even though the task is already very hard if Self-government that we have achieved is really going to be for us to keep we must go to the aid of the masses with all that lie within the power of good Government. It is said that it is better for the people themselves to manage their own affairs than foreigners to come and manage same for them. So we have to congratulate those who have really made it possible to achieve Self-government today. I congratulate the three leaders—Dr Zik, Chief Awolowo and the Sardauna. Even though we have got it we must not forget that Regional Self-government is given us on trial and we must have to remember that the virtues most cherished by free people, as we are supposed to be, are love of truth, pride of work, devotion to country: all these are treasures equally precious in the lives of the humble and of the most exalted. Government should try and take these four qualities into consideration and go all out to serve the people of this Region—as Government knows that they are here to serve the people. We will set back the date for National Self-government if States are not created.

Now I come to what we see here—devolution of powers—and is intended to allay the fears of the minority. Now Government say that with the attainment of Self-government in the Region Government has decided to devolve its powers to its constituencies in such a way as to empower them to exercise a greater measure of control over their local affairs. Government also hopes that these parallel authorities will strengthen and stabilise the unitary nature of the Regional Government

and integrate its constituencies into one constitutional organism in spite of the diversity of their cultures and languages. Government goes further to say that their policy of devolution of powers seeks further to develop the present Local Government structure and to use it generally as an instrument for implementing Government policy so as to allay the fears of communities which can be estranged to become separatist in their tendencies once they are under the false impression that they constitute an extraneous element in the governmental machinery of this Region. Has this Government forgotten that federalism has been accepted as imperative? If federalism has been accepted as imperative why do we come here to say that we are trying to allay the fears of the minorities by creating Provincial Assemblies with no powers at all? Now I will say that since we accepted federalism as imperative we must make sacrifice to keep Nigeria united in a real federal structure, not allowing the Northern Region to be a big block that will perpetually dominate this country, Nigeria, and what we do want is that East, West and North should all be subdivided into more states, because the Northern Region is wanting to go over the Arab way, to make friends with the Arab Nation, and if they go on making friends with the people and the rest two say they do not want, the West and East will have to secede and then we shall have three Nigerias. What we want now is that these three Regions should be broken up into smaller states so that we can keep and maintain Nigeria as Nigeria, even though Nigeria did not exist before the British came to this country. These Regions should be divided as follows: Eastern Region into two (COR State and no-COR State areas), and the North into Middle Belt and the Fulani Empire and in the West you have the Mid-West and the Yoruba area. I think if this is done we shall continue to keep Nigeria as one, other than coming here to say that we are trying to allay minority fears by creating Provincial Assemblies with no powers. We must be willing for our country, Nigeria's sake, individually and as a Nation, to make what sacrifices that may be required of us. A people that values its privileges above its principles soon loses both. Let us not value our privileges and sacrifice our policy. When Dr Azikiwe was in the forefront in those days, what he did say at that time was that we have got to retain Nigeria as one and we have to

[CHIEF MORPHY]

make sacrifices, but what he should do now is to try to sacrifice some of his privileges to keep up his policy, because when the History of this country shall have to be written maybe when he is gone, we shall have to remember that there was a man who came to keep Nigeria as one and did his best to keep it, not minding the privileges that he was enjoying at the time. These basic precepts are not lofty abstractions far from matters of daily living. They are laws of spiritual strength that generate and define our material strength. Leaders of this country, let us be patriotic and patriotism only means equipped forces and a prepared citizenry. Let us also have love of liberty which means the guarding of every resource that make freedom and equal existence possible. Let us think seriously of the unfortunate ones who are a minority in the existing Regions of Nigeria and also think of Nigeria as one in a federal structure.

**Government Bench:** What of the other Regions?

**Chief Morphy:** I am talking about the minorities in the existing Regions of Nigeria—not only in the Eastern Region—and also I am thinking of Nigeria as one in a federal structure. I also want the Action Group Government to think of the minorities and the N.P.C. Government not excepted. I am not saying that you alone should think of minorities. Let us think of minorities and divide this country into states.

**The Minister of Production (Dr M. I. Okpara):** Get Obafemi to agree first.

**Mr S. G. Ikoku (Enyong Division):** He has agreed.

**Chief Morphy:** Any attempt by any of the Nigerian Governments to allay the fears of the minorities without creating the desired States, will not meet the issue. All we are out for is the COR State and the division of this country into more States. The Provincial Assemblies do not answer our question.

Actually, what is the power of these Provincial Assemblies? The Government puts it this way: "These Provinces will constitute

executive bodies which act collectively on behalf of Government, and which are charged with the execution of Government Policy."

What are their functions, Sir? Government has put it this way:

"(a) Co-ordinating and presenting of Estimates of subsidies and grants to County Councils; (b) Debating Motions on subjects within their competence; (c) Debating Motions initiated by them and approved by the Regional Government if they do not constitute a charge on the revenue of the Eastern Region; (d) Putting questions on subjects within their competence; (e) Expressing opinion on draft legislation; (f) Expressing opinion on any matter referred to them by the Regional Government; (g) Making suggestions for the good Government of the Region on subjects within their competence".

May I ask, Sir, what subjects are within the competence of these Provincial Assemblies? Are they the powers as contained in the Local Government Law of 1955? I know your answer will be that it will be found somewhere in the White Paper. These powers as contained on page 20 paragraph 7 (a), (b), (c), (d), (e) and (f) cannot be the answer and not even the 16 Provinces the answer. Neither is the increase of seats in the would-be parliament the answer. The answer, Sir, is the creation of COR State.

I now come to Local Government. I want to say, Sir, that local government in this country was founded on the old native administration system which was founded on traditional and natural rulers. These group of men were the foundation-stone of Native Administration which served as the background for local government. At the moment, Sir, they have been taken out of the show and forgotten. You now have in the rural areas councillors settling cases when it is the duty of chiefs to settle cases.

**Hon. Members:** Vested interest.

**Chief Morphy:** The chiefs have been thrown out of authority and I am asking the Government to bring natural rulers again into the show.

With regard to bringing in chiefs in the ratio of 1 to 5 as recommended by Mr Jones, I am advising the Government to do its best to see that this ratio is increased.

The Government Chief Whip did say that I was not a Chief.

**Hon. Members:** You are too young to be a Chief.

**Chief Morphy:** I am a kingmaker. (*Laughter*). I want to say, Sir, that he knows nothing about chieftaincy in Ogoja—he is from Ikom. He has said this because I opposed him when he posed as Government Chief Whip who was mandated by the Premier to select those who are to go into the House of Chiefs. The Federal Commissioner, Mr Matthew Mbu, when he was here, was an eye-witness to Ogon collecting money from Chiefs and he reported the matter to the Premier.

I now come, Sir, to classes of Chiefs. Since we hope to have first-class, second-class and third-class Chiefs, it will be better for Government to so arrange that third-class Chiefs and second-class Chiefs serve in the local and district councils respectively, whilst the first-class Chiefs go into the House of Chiefs. Some second-class Chiefs should also serve in the Customary Courts, and I am advising the Government not to take all the powers of the Local Government bodies for these bodies should be given some degree of power having Chiefs at the forefront.

In our quest of understanding and execution of governmental policy we beseech God's guidance. Let us summon all our knowledge of the past and scan all signs of the future. Let us bring all our wit and will to meet the question. Have we come in man's long pilgrimage from darkness towards light? Are we nearing the light, a day of freedom and peace for the people of this Region or are the shadows of another light closing upon us? Let God guide us aright and let the Government be God-fearing and let Government's declared aim and policy be to place above every other consideration, the welfare and prosperity of all who live and work in Eastern Nigeria and strive whole-heartedly for the Region's orderly development and progress. Let Government remember that what is suited to the needs of the COR State area is a COR State.

Mr Speaker, I beg to oppose.

**Mr A. G. Umoh (Enyong Division):** Mr Speaker, I rise to oppose this Motion on

behalf of my constituency because the provisions contained in the White Paper, the approval of which this Motion seeks, are entirely unacceptable to Enyong Division. It is understood, Sir, that this White Paper seeks to provide safeguards for the minority groups of the Eastern Region, but I regret to say that it has failed woefully. Even if the safeguards were in any way acceptable, it would be regarded as the "Greek horse" by my constituency who are convinced that their salvation lies in being separated from the present Eastern Region and merged with the COR State, and that is what I have come to this House to demand. Mr Speaker, this attitude has become necessary, for a number of reasons:

1. The persistent inconsistency of the Eastern Government has forced my constituency to loose faith in this Government since there is no guarantee that the Government will keep its word on the safeguards any more than it did on many of its past broken assurances.

2. The unwillingness of this Government, to heed the constant appeals of Enyong Division for essential services, which the Government provides for the Ibo areas makes my people rightly call this Government, "Ibo Government". My constituency has failed to be impressed by the fact that the Government Party which has a solid and unfluctuating "Ibo Majority" can vote for anything right or wrong. The position of Enyong Division looks exactly as it was since 1951, and I know that several Ministers who have been there do agree with me. The people of my Division have lost faith in this Government, and they are determined to join the COR State. (*Government Supporters: Go and join immediately*). We will soon go; it is a matter of months from now. (*Government Supporters: Who told you that?*).

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

**Mr Umoh:** Mr Speaker, before I go any further, I would like to refer to a statement made yesterday in this hon. House by my Friend, Dr Obonna, Member for Owerri. I was surprised that a man of the calibre of Dr Obonna could make such a statement.

**Mr Speaker:** What statement was it?

**Mr Umoh:** He was referring to the case of the minorities in the White Paper, on Self-government. In his speech, Sir, he stated

[MR UMOH]

that there was no reason why the Government should provide safeguards for minorities in this Region, for "minority groups must be made to feel that they are a minority."

**An hon. Member:** The Doctor is not here.

**Mr Speaker:** If you are not in agreement with the views he expressed, will you tell me, and what you do not agree with?

**Mr Umoh:** He said that if the minorities are not satisfied with their lot there was nothing they could do, for if they attempted to fight against the majority rule, the ratio of their strength is 1 to 20.

Sir, when the Premier of this Region started the struggle for the freedom of this country, the slogan of his Party was "that man shall not be a wolf to man". Within the first year of our alleged freedom in this Region, the slogan of his Party has shifted to "Might is Right" as implied in Dr Obonna's speech yesterday.

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

*Sitting suspended at 10.30 a.m.*

*Sitting resumed at 11 a.m.*

**Mr Umoh:** Mr Speaker, just before the recess, I was commenting on the slogan of the Government Party at the beginning of the struggle for the freedom of this country by the Premier. I do not think there is anybody in this country who will not recognise the fact that he has fought very much towards the freedom of this country. As far as we in the C.O.R. State area are concerned, we believe in the Premier to be the one who opened the window for light to reach everybody in this country. Our only disappointment is that what we have seen today is different from what we were expecting, for whereas all sections of the Eastern Region run up to look at the light through the window he has opened, unfortunately, the minority section of the people are told that this light is not for everybody but solely for the Ibos. That is why we are compelled, Sir, even though we recognise the fact that it was the Premier who opened this window, to look for another channel through which this light should come in for the minority groups of this Region to see. (*Interruptions*).

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

**Mr Umoh:** Mr Speaker, Sir, as I said, at the beginning of the struggle the slogan was that "Man shall not be a wolf to man", (*Hear! Hear!*) but now it is "Might is Right" according to Dr Obonna.

I regret, Sir, that a man of Dr Obonna's education, after so many years in the civilised world, should let himself down in this way and that the Premier did not frown when he was saying this.

**Mr Speaker:** I would like Members to confine themselves to the White Paper. If there is anything wrong I for one would like to know what exactly is wrong. There are far too many generalisations.

**Mr Umoh:** I am trying to bring up the need for minorities to break away and I cannot do that without showing sufficiently that there is genuine fear by the minority.

**Mr Speaker:** Yes, that is the point.

**Mr Umoh:** While on this, Sir, I like to observe that this new policy of the Government Party is being applied already on Nto Etok Udom village as told us yesterday by the hon. Abengowe, Member for Aba. I admired his honesty when he admitted that the village in question is not an Ibo village but that the Ibos were only allowed by the kind-hearted natives to settle there. But, Sir, when he demanded that the Government should annex this Ibibio village to the proposed Ngwa Province I felt sad at this reward the Nto Etok Udom village is expected to get for welcoming the Ibos into their village and giving them a place to settle. Mr Speaker, doesn't this look like "Might is Right"? And do you know, Sir, that the hon. Abengowe who is asking the Government to annex this village to Ngwa Province is the Secretary of the N.C.N.C. Parliamentary Party? I wish I could warn, Sir, that if Nto Etok Udom village is annexed to Ngwa Province and other parts of this Region decide as a result, to either drive away or refuse settlement to strangers, this Government will be responsible for this.

Now, Sir, let me make a few observations on that section of the White Paper on devolution of powers. Off-handedly, Sir, I maintain

that the abolition of the five old provinces of this Region on the grounds that the Residents who presided over them constituted an unnecessary charge on our revenue for the £2,000 each of them was getting and the establishment on the same breadth of sixteen provinces each with a Commissioner on £3,000 per annum is a sufficient reason to doubt the sincerity of this Government even when it proposes the best of safeguards.

**Mr Speaker:** Where do you get your figures of £3,000 and £2,000?

**Mr Umoh:** I got these figures considering what is paid to Senior Administrative Officers and Commissioners today.

The designation of two of the proposed provinces Ibibio and Annang, by tribal names, betrays Government's intention to divide and rule the two sections. As to the choice of Ikot Ekpena as the headquarters of the proposed Annang Province rather than Abak I can only congratulate the former for the superior recognition accorded it by Government while expressing the hope that Abak people will not in the quest for their name thus lost, break away from the said Annang Province as the hon. J. E. Eyo, Member for Abak implied in his speech yesterday.

Sir, in the Appendix E of the White Paper provisions are made for single member constituencies. You will agree, Sir, that the operative word there is "Single" and it would interest you to see from pages 35 to 37 the number of constituencies with two and three members are mostly in the Ibo areas. This is not done as a result of Government's misconception of the meaning of the word "single". They can hardly be typographical errors for they occur in too many places to allow of this explanation without at the same time questioning the efficiency of the Government Printing Press which, I hold, is doing excellent work. What it is, Sir, is a manifestation of the policy of the Government saying one thing and doing the other. Besides, it is calculated to increase the number of representatives in the Ibo areas more than ever before, over the minority areas.

**Mr Speaker:** I am inclined to think you impute motive. I do not think it is right. You have made the suggestion and the Premier

of the Region has indicated that it is not in their intention. I think it is only fair that the hon. Member should accept that.

**Mr Umoh:** You will notice Sir, the twenty-eight minority areas or District Councils listed in Appendix C of the White Paper. Twenty-two out of these areas are within the COR State area. The truth is that each of these twenty-two areas has an Ibo majority for they are mostly settled by Ibo strangers and are often referred to even by responsible Ibo people as "Ibo Colonies." What the proposal by the Government to give each of these areas direct representation in the new Eastern House means in effect is that whereas the number of seats for the minority areas is superficially fifty-two, in actual fact it is only thirty.

Sir, I maintain that this allocation is just calculated to increase the number of seats for the majority area because whereas in the new House there will be 124 Members it is clear that the Ibo will have 72 from the purely Ibo areas and twenty-two from the directly represented "Ibo Colonies" within the non-Ibo areas. Thus the Ibos will have ninety-four seats while non-Ibo minorities have 30. Since this is true, Sir, I cannot see why hon. Okeke should say the provisions in the White Paper favour the minority more than the majority. I know, Mr Speaker, that the Government is going to offer the explanation that the provisions are made according to population in each area but how does the Government reconcile this with the fact that Owerri District Council area with a population of 9,331 will have one seat in the new House just as Ibiono District Council area with a population of 71,581 will have one seat? I want to know if Government took population into consideration when it decided to give Owerri with 9,331, equal representation with Ibiono having 71,581. If you check up in the White Paper, Mr Speaker, you will see that there are several figures comparing arbitrarily like the two I have mentioned and I . . . (*interruptions*).

**Mr Speaker:** What will Opobo receive?

**Mr Umoh:** Well, I leave that for the Government Party to answer but the point I am trying to underline is that it is unfair to

[MR UMOH]

expect Ibiono with a population of 71,581 to have only one man to represent them as Owerri with 9,331.

**Mr Speaker:** Will hon. Member quote the page?

**Mr Umoh:** Sir, White Paper page 35. It is under Proposed Single Member Constituencies, Appendix E; it extends up to page 37. There is Owerri 9,331, and you have Ibiono there 71,581.

**Mr Speaker:** I notice also Aba, Eastern Ngwa, R.D.C.

**Mr Umoh:** Well, Sir, I am suggesting that this allocation is wrong and unfair.

**Mr Speaker:** Also I notice in Bende, Elu Elu R.D.C. one seat, Kalabari 73,283 one seat.

**Mr Umoh:** Yes, Sir, you must agree with me there are irregularities because all the numbers you are quoting only go to support my point that Government is doing the allocation arbitrarily and that is why we in the minority object. We feel that there should be a set standard, an accepted figure which is applicable to the biggest provinces and to the smallest.

As I said earlier in my speech, Sir, we are not looking for safeguards because we do not believe that there are any safeguards acceptable to us. Besides, the Government has broken so many of its assurances that we do not believe that it can ever stand by its assurances. Since the matter of the freedom of minorities is too serious to be left to chance my people have asked me to oppose this White Paper and to refuse safeguards. On their behalf and mine, Sir, I oppose this Motion which seeks the adoption of this White Paper. I would like to say, Sir, that the division of Ogoja Province into two blocks—Ogoja, Ikom, Obudu and Obubra as opposed to Afikpo and Abakaliki on the other side, is acceptable to us of the COR State area.

Mr Speaker, we of the minority group are out for the creation of the COR State and we have made up our minds not to go back on

that. We hate no one; we are only struggling to be as free as you are and I hope that you will take the advice which Chief Morphy gave this morning: that you do to others what you would like them to do to you. We don't quarrel with those who are free, but we want to be free too. As far as the minorities of the Eastern Region are concerned, Mr Speaker, we are going to oppose stoutly self-government for the Federation unless the COR State is created.

Sir, in fact, we of the Opposition want this country to remain as one and we are convinced that only the breaking of it into states can secure this for us. Here our views agree with the one time well-intentioned proposals of the Premier for a federal structure with nine states as contained in his *Political Blue Print*. Unless this country is divided into smaller states, the Northern Region whose inclinations to the Arab Block is a known fact will secede. In view of this and all that I have said I like to end with the warning that unless we have the COR State, we shall certainly prefer to die than to live "in awe of such a thing as I myself."

Sir, I oppose this Motion.

**Government Bench:** To die you shall because you are going to lose it.

**Mr M. E. Ogon (Ikom Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I want to be very brief. I rise to support the Motion and to describe this document as a Charter of Freedom and Unity. I think, Sir, that what Members should not lose sight of is the fact that this document guarantees for us parliamentary institution, right to oppose, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and association, and this Paper guarantees to my Friends opposite freedom to oppose without fear of being terrorised.

I should think, Sir, that all good citizens will welcome this bold document. Sir, I think this is an opportunity to join myself with others who have thanked those who made it possible for us to enjoy Self-government in this Region, and I think Sir, that the Mover of the Motion himself should be congratulated as a man who lighted into flame, the light of the safety of Africa which is still burning. I will also thank all the young men; all the



youths who took part in the early stages to make it possible for some of us to be in this House. Some of these young men are not in this House. Some are in different political parties but all of them fought for the cause that we should have Self-government. Those who lived in those days will realise that these young men turned down scholarships awarded to them by the British Council. They argued it this way—that the country will not do without them and wondered what the country would be like if they spent five years in England studying. These young men gave their sweat and sacrifice to make freedom possible for us. If we do not do all in our power now to make Federal Independence possible, we shall be letting down these young men who gave their youth and sweat towards the cause of freedom.

I will now, Sir, turn to the White Paper. I want to say, Sir, that we the people of Ogoja feel very strongly as my Friend from Afikpo has said, that nothing should be done by the Government to split Ogoja Province into two clans. We feel that we have lived together as a people and that our rate of progress is the same. We want to be an example of how different people can live together in one provincial block. This problem of separate states cannot be solved by one Commission of Inquiry—it is a continuous process. We feel that we can use our Ogoja Provincial Assembly as a nucleus of the future Ogoja State that will be within the Federation of Nigeria. This is a very serious matter, Sir, because my Friends of the COR State have said that if there is no COR State they will die. I want to make it clear that our greatest fear is not the Ibo people, it is this association with Calabar and Rivers people, and no Commissions of Inquiry and not even this Government can decide the issue for us. The Ogoja State Movement is quite prepared to accept a general election in order to ascertain the wishes of the Ogoja people on this question of separate states. This is a serious issue and we will ask the Premier of the Region to accede to the request of the elected representatives of the Ogoja Province and leave Ogoja as one block and we will maintain this stand at the Constitutional Conference.

For the purposes of scholarship awards, Ogoja Province should be treated as a block and if a particular Division is unable to accept

its quota on the divisional basis principle, the neighbouring Division should get it. We want to be able to help ourselves because we are very backward.

A number of Members have mentioned Ikom Division. I think this question of minority fears and hatred of one tribe by another is not a normal characteristic of the Ogoja man. If you take the proposed COR State, there will be 77 different languages. Languages as different as Hausa is to the Ibo language. So that the only basis of this creation of a COR State is hatred of the Ibo people, and we in the Ogoja Province say that it does not solve the problem. We have always maintained that stand in any case. We have always asked: why should Ogoja be grouped if the Calabar and Efik people want their own state? They say they have been dominated by the Ibo man for a long time and they now want to dominate the Ogoja man. I remember my hon. Friend from Obudu saying in his election promises that if he was voted into the House of Assembly he would stop Ibos from coming to Obudu. He knows, Sir, that he cannot do such a thing. This is one country and neither the creation of a COR State nor any other State can stop a citizen of one Region from settling in another Region. I am from a minority area, from Ogoja Province, but I think it is only fair, in the words of the Member for Ogoja for us to admit that this White Paper has given us a lot of advantages over the others. I will defend this in my constituency. It is left for us from the minority areas to tell our people to work hard.

I remember—I do not want to deride any one part—honestly when the White men first came to this country they first settled along the river bank. They did not come to the Ibo country, and we remember that even in the days of Queen Victoria my hon. Friend from Okrika has his grandfather . . . (*Interruptions—Laughter*). It is nobody's fault that instead of studying law, he played cricket. It is a part of culture. I think that our approach to this question of one tribe being progressive will be that we should do all in our power to work hard, to study hard and be able to catch up with them.

I gather Members talking about representation. Personally, I think that democracy is

[MR OGON]

not run by giving every villager a seat in Parliament. I am in support of the principle of equal representation, and if that will mean that one of the seats in Ikom will be taken away I am willing to accept that. I say so because my Friends opposite, no matter what you do for them, even if you build an upstairs for them, will still lash you. These people have got a state of mind that can only learn if you victimise them. If you put them in the place of our brothers in the Mid-West or in the North, then they will understand. The only impression that anybody can get from the attitude the Opposition has taken is that they do not understand fair play; they do not understand democratic treatment; they do not understand justice.

If Members want to know the history of why Ikom has two seats, it is not an act of grace by the present Government. What happened was that when we changed from the Macpherson Constitution, Ikom was given two seats, and even in the London Conference you realise it was agreed that a Commission should divide this country into population approximately 100,000 per seat on condition that no administrative divisions lost their representation as a result of the present division. That was the agreement reached in London and I will honestly ask the Parliament to apply the principle of representation according to population with the proviso that no administrative divisions lose their former representation as a result of the new arrangement. This is our special request to the Government.

We feel, Sir, coming to the question of devolution of power, that this system will not only stop slowness and red-tape at the Headquarters, but will encourage local initiative. (*Hear! Hear!*). In Ogoja we say give us Province irrespective of the claim of other people. We even say that if the question of the cost of maintaining a Commissioner will stop the system being put into operation, we the Members from Ogoja are willing to start a Provincial Assembly without pay, because we feel that the art of coming together or having these Local Government Bodies means the art of democratic government coming into operation. Why do we fear to have Provincial Assemblies? Democracy is a costly operation

and if you want to maintain a democratic system of government through which discussion will have to permeate from top to bottom, surely you are going to pay for it. If you have no democracy then be prepared to have dictatorship.

Sir, I want to challenge the statement that self-government has given us no benefit in this Region. Surely anybody who has read *Self-government in the Eastern Region* Part II, from cover to cover, will know that a lot of things has happened since we got self-government. Think even of the question of enrolment in schools. In 1952 (if I can think of Ogoja) Ikom Division had a school enrolment of 3,075 pupils; Ogoja Division 6,666; Obudu Division 1,612. Sir, in 1956 the school population for Ikom Division mounted to the figure of 7,165 and the school population of Ogoja Division mounted from 6,000 to 15,312. The most astronomic jump is found against Obudu whose school population figure rose from 1,612 to 13,808 pupils, within a period of four years.

**Opposition Members:** How many are going to school now?

**Mr Ogon:** The figures will be ready at the end of the school year. (*Hear! Hear!*).

Sir, honestly speaking, it is very difficult for any Government to try and do more than its best within the resources at its disposal. Our problem in Ogoja Province, in fact our biggest quarrel, is not so much against the Regional Government but the Federal Government in many spheres. Take the main Trunk A line road that runs from Abakaliki; that is the responsibility of the Federal Government. Now, if you take the Telephone system, the Electricity, the Post Office, either in Obudu or in Ogoja, or Ikom, these are the responsibilities of the Federal Government. Our quarrel is that Ogoja Province has suffered through the persistent system of neglect by the previous British Government. Since we have self-government, the Regional Government should erect one hospital, either Government or Cottage in every Administrative Division of Ogoja Province. We have been able to build one Teacher-Training College, we have a Government College at Ibok, one at Oguku, and a County College at Abakaliki. There are

only two Divisions without colleges. I am sure that the Regional Government through its good offices will give our people still more in that field. I think it is only fair to hope so. I am not saying, Sir, that like *Oliver Twist*, I would ask for more. I am not saying that the Regional Government has exhausted all they can do for us, but I feel, Sir, that it is very discouraging to come here and abuse people who have been trying from day-to-day to satisfy our requirements within their resources. And one of the strongest reasons why I do not want us to have any differences in this is that there is not just any money to maintain services we get now if you break up. What then shall we do? We are going to have a system that may result in a break down of law and order.

I am not going to go into the whole attitude of who is a Chief or who is not a Chief. I just want to say, Sir, that the tradition in Ogoja Province should be maintained and I still hold my stand. We had Professor Jones to look into the question of who are Chiefs or who are not Chiefs. The situation was such that he was so confused that he recommended that the position in Ogoja Province was so complicated that he had no recommendation to make. (*Laughter*). I don't mind whether one is a Chief or not. What we are saying, Sir, is that when it comes to the question of the recognition of Chiefs, the Government should set up appropriate enquiry to know what is the local custom and interest of the people. Then when we know the local custom, you can then proceed to make chiefs out of the Governor's office if you like, but what we are saying is that we must avoid a lot of Chiefs coming up from left and right.

I commend this White Paper on Self-Government in the Eastern Region because it is the surest way of getting our people united not under frustration but through persuasion. I think it is very unfair for us to be in this Region and condemn the Arab people or condemn any section. What is wrong in a Fulani man becoming the Prime Minister of Nigeria? We take a stand that if anybody whether he comes from backwoods of any Province, if he is given the chance by popular vote to rule, he should rule. But my only regret is that the Western and the Northern Regions have not granted to our

people freedom of association and freedom to campaign because what is happening in the West happens also in the North. As a matter of fact, there is more freedom in the West than in the North and I think it does not help the cause of unity for us to come here to attack the Prime Minister of another Region. I feel, Sir, that the question of who should be one's friend should be left to him. What stops one from being a friend to Nasser, or being a friend to anybody in any part of the world? What we ought to concern ourselves is to see that this country is united through the parliamentary system of Government—Government by discussion—with freedom of association assured.

It has taken other countries bloody path to get unity. Germany was united through blood-shed and iron hand, in the words of Hitler, but we are not going to be united in that way. I think, Sir, that we have the choice of one of two roads: either to accept this White Paper now and go on with a sense of unity or to perish in sordid wrangles, and I think we are going to achieve the way of progress by the former. Through unity coupled by the determination to succeed we shall be able to acquit ourselves of the responsibility entrusted to us by the teaming eight million populace of the Eastern Region.

Sir, I beg to support.

**Mr S. E. K. Iwueke (Okigwi Division):** Mr Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to speak on this Motion. I am most embarrassed by the statement made in this House by most of the members of the Opposition. In fact, I am inclined to lose the least respect I have for these people in the way they present their case. The Opposition seems to be insatiable. They have expressed in this House their fears and the Government has now made plans to allay their fears. They come into this House again to attack the same Government that has sacrificed every interest of the majority in the interest of the minority. I must thank the Government for presenting to this House the White Paper on self-government in a worthwhile manner such as this. It is no exaggeration to say that the Sessional Paper raises high hopes in the hearts of many people in the Eastern Region despite the uncompromising attitude of the Opposition.

[MR IWUEKE]

I must begin observation, Mr Speaker, from the policy on Local Government. The problem of two-tier versus three-tier structure of Local Government set-up has occupied the minds of many protagonists in the Eastern Region since the inception of the Local Government in the East. I cannot therefore, treat this matter dispassionately well without first discussing the merits and demerits of both sides of the case. I have by mere dint of experience acquired sufficient as a councillor for some years now to be able to understand the implications on two-tier system of Local Government as it is. For months now there has been a tendency in many areas to believe that work would be better done if County Councils are scrapped. In many cases, such belief often depended upon exaggerated views of the importance attached to special experience or knowledge of such experience from a particular area. It may be also due to the feeling that to establish a separate County Council for every unit on which many assume a temporary importance or urgency means showing zeal and self-determination.

Besides precluding the maximum possibility of co-ordination the establishment of more counties than is strictly necessary would be bad on psychological ground. It is a well observed fact that every council tends to develop a corporate spirit of its own. This in itself may be good but this aspect is misplaced sense of independence which degenerates into friction between counties. It has been noticed by many students of constitutional and administrative machinery that if two bodies are established to work side by side even with any fundamental cleavage of interest they inevitably generate certain friction among themselves. It is for this reason that it is best to consider how to serve the greatest number of people at the least possible expense.

*And it being 11.45 a.m. Mr Speaker interrupted the business and the Debate stood adjourned. Debate to be resumed on Monday, 24th March, 1958.*

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Minister of Production (Dr M. I. Okpara):** Mr Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Monday the 24th of March, at 10 a.m.

I wish to remind hon. Members who belong to the Committee of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association that there will be a meeting of this Committee immediately after the adjournment.

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Transport (Mr P. O. Ururuka):** Sir, I beg to second.

**Mr Speaker:** Before proposing the question, I like to observe that there is no doubt that most Members will like to talk on this White Paper. It is entirely in their own hands. If it appears to them that it is very important for their views to be heard then I suggest that they will decide not to exercise their rights in respect of Tuesday which is Private Members' Day. If it is agreed to give up that day we can continue with the debate. I propose to suggest that again on Monday and if it is the pleasure of this House there should be no Private Members' Day the debate on the White Paper shall continue.

*Question proposed.*

#### ADJOURNMENT DEBATES

##### (1) Employment Discrimination in Port Harcourt

**Mr V. K. Onyeri (Port Harcourt Division):** Mr Speaker, I have to bring one of the few issues which are confronting the whole Federation today and that is this question of the Ibo man. Mr Speaker, you will notice that three years ago, by that time I happened to be the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour, the Western Government sacked about 200 Ibo labourers in the Western Region without notice and without any compensation whatsoever, and by that time, Mr Speaker, I happened to witness those poor people, men and women with their babies on their backs, coming to Enugu to complain to the Minister of Labour. About three months ago, Mr Speaker, in the Northern Region the Ibo man was again the target which they aimed at. They were about 200 of them sacked. By that time they say it was the southern people that were sacked because they wanted to introduce their Northernisation scheme.

**An hon. Member:** About five hundred.

**Mr Onyeri:** Roughly five hundred. Mr Speaker, again even here in the East, of all places Port Harcourt, I got a delegation three days ago to report that a contracting company doing dredging in Port Harcourt wharf has sacked 150 Ibo people, their reason being that they wanted only Hausa people. It was reported in the "Guardian" and I have here, Sir, this paper, Opposition paper, reporting in bold letter headline "150 Southerners sacked for 200 Northerners in Port Harcourt".

**An hon. Member:** Which Paper ?

**Mr Onyeri:** It is the *Daily Service*. Mr Speaker, if they want me to read or quote verbatim what this Opposition paper said I will do so but I want to make my point straight away. My point is this: why is this Ibo man being hunted everywhere? The answer is not very far to seek; our only crime committed is that the Ibo people have been vocal to say that we the people of this country are now fit to rule ourselves. Everywhere in the Region, everywhere in the whole Federation the Ibo man has been the target of attack and victimisation. People shout regionalise everything just to victimise the Ibo man; even the mere labourership the Ibo man cannot get it again ! In the Northern Region, the Ibo man is not good there, in the Western Region the Ibo man is not wanted. Here in the Eastern Region, the very home of the Ibo man, he is being discriminated against. Sir, one Nigeria we all agree there must be. But the Government and the Members of the Opposition should join me in condemning this height of discrimination, an inhuman act, an atrocious act being committed against the whole tribe of a nation. The Ibo man has suffered for long even though he has done nothing wrong. I

am asking the Minister concerned—the Minister of Welfare—to take up this matter and get the Company concerned at Port Harcourt to re-engage and change their attitude towards the Ibo people.

**(2) Misrepresentation in the "Daily Times"**

**Mr Ikoku:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to draw your attention to a publication in one of the daily papers—a national paper purporting to report the debates of this House on Tuesday, 18th March. It is the *Daily Times*. I just want to draw attention to the second paragraph on the front page which, Sir, with your permission reads: "Mr Ikoku said that the Police were unable to cope with the demonstration as it appears that it is being directed from somewhere". There are two points which strike me as incorrect; and I think it is a question of emphasis.

What I actually said was that the Police contingent in the Eastern Region could not cope with the situation and that was what led to Police contingent from other areas being rushed to the troubled areas. The second misrepresentation, Sir, is that the demonstrations were directed from somewhere. I did make it very clear that our view and our belief is that the demonstrations were spontaneous and that once the demonstrations had started, it is our belief that some people tried to cash in on the situation.

Sir, I just want to make these two clarifications. Mr Speaker, thank you.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Adjourned, accordingly, at eight minutes to twelve o'clock noon.*

EASTERN HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Monday, 24th March, 1958

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

PRAYERS

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

ORAL ANSWER TO QUESTION

Tax Defaulters in Aba Division

22. Mr W. Abengowe asked the Minister of Justice, what is the number of tax defaulters convicted in Aba Division in 1955/56; how does this number compare with the number of tax defaulters convicted in the same Division in 1956/57.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Justice (Mr D. O. Aligwekwe): I am directed to answer as follows:—

The number of tax defaulters convicted in Aba Division in 1955/56 was five hundred and seventy-one and for 1956/57, the number was eleven hundred.

Mr Speaker: Order! Order!

Sitting suspended at 10.8 a.m.

Sitting resumed at 11.5 a.m.

BILLS PRESENTED

1. Criminal Code

Bill to amend the Criminal Code; presented by the Minister of Justice; read the First time; to be read a Second time on Wednesday, 26th March, 1958.

2. Magistrates Courts

Bill to amend the Magistrates Courts Law, 1955; presented by the Minister of Justice; read the First time; to be read a Second time on Wednesday, 26th March, 1958.

3. Riots

Bill to make provision for payment of compensation in respect of damage caused by riots; presented by the Minister of Justice; read the First time; to be read a Second time on Wednesday, 26th March, 1958.

4. Public Lands Acquisition

Bill to amend the Public Lands Acquisition Ordinance Cap. 185; presented by the Minister of Town Planning; read the First time; to be read a Second time on Wednesday, 26th March, 1958.

5. Acquisition of Land by Aliens

Bill to regulate the Acquisition of Land by Aliens; presented by the Minister of Town Planning; read the First time; to be read a Second time on Wednesday 26th March, 1958.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(1) Self-Government in the Eastern Region

Order read for resuming adjourned Debate on Question (20th March):

"That this House approves in principle the proposals contained in Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1957—Self-Government in the Eastern Region."

Question again proposed.

Mr P. U. Amaefunah (Awka Division):

Mr Speaker, I rise to support the Motion "That this House approves in principle the proposals contained in Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1957—Self-Government in the Eastern Region".

Mr Speaker, this Policy Paper is a document of appeasement for the sick child or the feted-child or the insatiable child, that is the COR State of the Eastern Region. It baffles anybody's intelligence to see that in an increased House of 124 Members, the COR State is given 67 seats representing 55 per cent of the whole membership of the House. Mr Speaker, the COR State has a population of 3,370,336 persons to be represented by 67 Members in this House whilst the other Provinces such as Onitsha and Owerri have a population of 3,847,493 to be represented by 57 Members—that is 45 per cent of the membership of this House.

Mr Speaker, comparisons are obvious and I find that we are trying to sacrifice the interest of the majority for the minority. The repercussions of such a mistake by Government in future years are yet to be calculated. Here

in my hand is a book entitled *The Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture Eastern Region 1955/56*. Mr Speaker, I refer you to page 6 of the book where we have all the development projects carried out in the COR State :—

Calabar Oil Palm Estate,  
Ikot Mbom Rubber Estate,  
Ikot Oporo Road Oil Palm,  
Bonny Coco-nut Estate,  
Ikom Cocoa Estate,  
Uban Rubber Estate,  
Ikot Oporo Road Estate, and the  
Ikam Banana-Tobacco Estate.

Mr Speaker, I refer you also to a book entitled, *The Annual Report on the Forest Administration of the Eastern Region of Nigeria for the year ending 31st March, 1957*, page 2 chapter I, paragraphs 4 and 5.

Mr Speaker, the Provincial Assemblies, as we see them, might be County Councils renamed. (*Hear! Hear!*). That is putting new wine in an old bottle. The Provincial Assemblies are miniature Houses of Assembly, providing good training grounds for future legislators. If we take, for instance, Onitsha Provincial Assembly, which is an amalgamation of two Divisions including the Onitsha Urban area in one Assembly—but formerly these two Divisions and Urban areas had three Administrative Officers with a pannel of Assistant Administrative Officers for the areas—they are to form one Provincial Assembly. Mr Speaker, we would ask for Awka Provincial Assembly but we are prepared to co-operate if the Onitsha Provincial Assembly is not going to be given any spending powers or precepting powers upon the District or County Councils below them and they should run no social services whatever in these areas. Their main source of revenue should come from the Regional Government. Mr Speaker, it is true we want to avoid minority fears in the Counties, Provincial Assemblies and in the Eastern House of Assembly but take for instance the case of Onitsha Urban area. In the cosmopolitan town of Onitsha, the stranger elements out-number the indigenous natives. Out of a population of 76,000, the indigenous natives number 15,000. I think their interest must be represented in this House by allotting one member for Onitsha indigenes. Suppose the Premier of this Region is no more, it is certain that no indigenous native of Onitsha

must see the Floor of this House. Mr Speaker, the interest of the indigenous natives must be protected. Here it is stated in paragraph 12 page 21, that there shall be in each Province, a deliberative or consultative body to be known as Provincial Assembly. It will comprise of representatives of the Local Council areas in each Province on the basis of equality of representation for each local council. That being the case, it means that in Onitsha Provincial Assembly, there shall be 82 members from Awka Division, about 75 members from Onitsha Division and about 24 from Onitsha Urban area. I feel that the Assembly will be unwieldy and deliberations will be difficult. So I am suggesting that representations in the Provincial Assembly should be on the basis of County areas or Court areas of the Divisions. Now again, it is not good for us to create minority fears in the present County Council. I take the case of Agulu town in Awka Division. If you knew the historical background of Agulu people and during the old defunct Native Authority, they always had two members in the Council and in any group Court meeting, one for Aguluani and one for Aguluenu. Now in the present set-up, if Agulu people are merged to form one local council to be represented by one representative, there must be unrest and ceaseless troubles in Agulu. So they always want to be represented by two members. And Local Councils should not merge. Now ditto for three Adazis in Awka Division. Mr Speaker, the population of Awka Division is well over 600,000 but during the population-census of 1953, proper propaganda was not carried out and most of the natives ran into the bush because they thought the Government was wanting the number of taxable adults and that is why we have 400,000 as our census figure. (*Interruption*). We are given four members and I feel that this is very inadequate because Awka Division should have been divided into Awka North, Awka Central and Awka South. Awka North comprises Orumba and Mbamaisi Court areas; Awka Central contains Agu-udo and Agulu Court areas and Awka South composes of Udoka, Awka and Mbatete Court areas. Awka North should have three members, that is Aguata area; Awka central, that is Agulu area—one member—Central and Awka South should have two members. But still in Awka North there is a minority fear over the Orumba Court area because the population

[MR AMAEFUNAH]

over that area numbers about 36,000 whilst Aguata District Council area numbers about 96,000. It is feared that during the next election no member should come from Orumba Court area unless they are well protected by allocating one member to them out of the three members for Awka North.

Mr Speaker, we have been craving in Awka Division to have at least one Urban Council area and we suggest Awka town or the Oji River area, because the population of Awka or Oji River compares favourably with Umuahia-Ibeku, 12,000; Oron, 14,000; Abakaliki, 9,000; Owerri, 9,000; Opobo, 7,000; Ikom, 7,000, each of which is an Urban area. Now, in Oji River area, we have unlimited areas of waste land.

**An hon. Member:** What is the population?

**Mr Amaefunah:** The population is about 12,000.

The natives are prepared to give out these areas for development provided they are still the landlords of the areas. Now, because of the availability of water power, industries should be set up; and again the Oji River area is mid-way between Enugu, the seat of the Regional Government and Onitsha, a commercial centre and the topography of the area is liked by everybody.

Mr Speaker, I come now to Agriculture. The imported fertiliser, in spite and despite the strenuous advertising campaign by the E.R.D.C. and the Agricultural Department in the Region, has failed woefully, and there is a loss of £105,000 to the Regional Government, because there is wild and unfounded propaganda going on about imported fertilisers. Some farmers say that the yam pests and beetle pests were caused by the Action Group broom from the Western Region. Some say that it was caused by the imported fertilisers.

The crop farmers of the Region are not satisfied with the E.R.D.C. The E.R.D.C. is the financial life-wire of the Regional Government which gives loans to farmers, but we who live in the rural areas are at a fix to find out exactly what type of farmers get this type of loan from the E.R.D.C.

There are five categories of farmers in any Agricultural community. In the first place, we have the crop farmers who concern themselves with the cultivation of crops for local consumption and thereby reducing the high cost of living. In the second place, we have the stock farmers who rear cattle and sheep. In the third place, we have the mixed farmers who cultivate the soil and at the same time keep cattle. In the fourth place, we have the poultry farmers who keep gallinaceous birds. In the fifth place, we have the planters who plant economic or cash crops. Mr Speaker, we see that the E.R.D.C. sponsors and supports the capitalist class, that is, the planters. That is why in the rural areas many farmers are deserting their farms and getting into Urban areas, where they become fetchers of water and hewers of wood, so that the rural areas are rapidly being depopulated. I am suggesting that in order to check such exodus of farmers from the rural areas, the Government should allot money on divisional basis, from which some loans should be given to crop farmers in the Region. The loans will range from ten to twenty pounds in order to keep them in the rural areas, because times are hard for crop farmers, labour costs are high; they are disgusted with this fertiliser scheme when they have no money to cultivate the land.

Mr Speaker, according to the Minister of Health, the rural hospital programme is really laudable and we in the rural areas like the way the Government sponsor the establishment of health centres—on 50/50 basis—and many of them are springing up now in my own Division but I have a remark to make about the hospitals that are run by Voluntary Agencies—hospitals that are built in arid areas and yet the Government does not give water supplies to these hospitals. Take the case of Adazi hospital, it is built on an arid area and there is no water. Water sells at the rate of 2d a bottle in the hospital and this is to the detriment of the sick from all parts of the Division. Government should place such hospitals on priority list as far as rural water supplies scheme is concerned; also these hospitals should be supplied with Ambulance cars or lorries. We fail to understand why work on Orumba Rural Hospital is suspended—maybe Government has not played its part.



Mr Speaker, we in Awka Division very much like the Yaws Team because when they visited the Division their injections sold like hot cakes. May they revisit Awka Division.

Mr Speaker, the main point really I want to make is that we must try to avoid the minority fears in the present County Council or even in the Provincial Assembly and the Eastern House of Assembly. Agulu in Awka Division is a case in point. Another is the indigenous natives of Onitsha whose interest must be represented in the future Eastern House of Assembly; and financial assistance to crop farmers in the rural areas; encouragement of rural peoples in the establishment of Health Centres.

Mr Speaker, with these observations I beg to support the Motion.

**Mr S. E. K. Iwueke (Okigwi Division):** Last time I was trying to give out my views about the merits and demerits of County Councils as well as those of District Councils. I was trying to say that even though it is being agreed generally that two-tier system of Local Government is most acceptable, we must accept the fact that we had some good advantages in having large Councils because not all those County Councils were useless as they were painted (*Interruptions*). Please I have been the Chairman of a County Council for three years. It is out of experience that I am speaking (*Hear! Hear!*).

There are certain important services which obviously call for large Councils to deal with. Some of these services can hardly justify the existence of multi-County Councils.

Mr Speaker, it is for this reason, that it is best to observe in administration the maxim which the medieval logicians laid down for the process of logical conclusion "Entities should not be gratuitously multiplied."

There are certain important services which obviously call for large Councils to deal with. Some of these services can hardly justify any existence of multi-County Councils. There is an enormous variety of regulative work which is difficult of classification and of which may have no obvious affiliations with the work of

any operating single Council services. The idea of a modern man today is on how to get together in the common interest of humanity.

On the other side of the argument, no thinking person would deny that the two-tier structure is not the most desirable structure for local government in this Region both on the grounds of efficiency and economy. As remarked in paragraph 3 page 23 of the Sessional Paper No. 2 Part I, one remarkable feature in the introduction of this two-tier system in the Local Government in the Eastern Region is the tendency on the part of certain District Councils to claim to break away from the County Units in which they are situated, and to demand the status of so-called District Council with County powers. Added to this are the political problems in the form of fissiparous agitations in certain areas which seek to secede from the Eastern Region on the ground that they are neglected and treated indifferently. This being the case, Government has no alternative but to allow people to practise Local Government where they are bound by strong ties and are willing to assume civic obligations and responsibilities. With the proposal to create Provincial Assemblies in various administrative units Government has got the answer to the pros and cons of the matter, and I do not hesitate to support the proposal for and on behalf of my Division, Okigwi. The primary aim of this proposal should be the best possible combination of these smaller fields of activities in the light of requirements generally, and the necessity of co-ordination in particular.

On the question of representation my people, Okigwi Division, vehemently oppose the idea of equal number of representation from each of the Local Councils within a County. In the circumstances, we wish the representation to be based on population, and we do not forget the fact that we must accede certain measure of privileges to the minorities, and we support that certain safeguards should be provided for the interest of the minorities, but should not be so done at the expense of the majority. Here I must make mention of a specific case of Etiti in Okigwi Division. In Etiti we have three clans, namely, Obowu (having a population of 34,000 approximately); Uboma (with a population of 20,000 approximately); and Ihitte

[MR IWUEKE]

(with a population of 19,000 approximately). At present, Obowu has three Local Councils.

**An hon. Member:** Where is Isuochi ?

**Mr Iwueke:** Isuochi is in Okigwi Division. I am coming to that.

Uboma and Ihitte clans have only one Local Council each. If the present proposal of equal representation from each Local Council were to be accepted, it means then that Obowu, a clan with a population of 34,000 having three Local Councils, will have 15 representatives on the basis of five from each Local Council, and Ihitte and Uboma with a total population of 39,000 having only two Local Councils will have only ten representatives. You can imagine the justification in it. It means then the minority dominating the majority. Already, Sir, there is an incessant demand by Uboma and Ihitte clans respectively, for the creation of two Local Councils in each clan: two Local Councils for each clan for the purposes of administrative convenience, social equality, proximity, social intercourse, blood relationship and geographical position. The new set-up will answer the problem, and then we can have Southern Uboma Local Council, Northern Uboma Local Council, Northern Ihitte Local Council and Southern Ihitte Local Council. It means that if we get four Local Councils in these two clans there will be no question of one clan lording it over the rest. I would also like to mention, for the purposes of reference, that in Etiti we have minority. The problem of minorities can have no end; even if COR State is granted today, you still will have the minority problem there. It continues up to your family. In Etiti, for instance, we have Uboma who in everything, in dialect, in custom even in relationship, has nothing in common with Obowu. Obowu, as I have just said, has a population of 34,000; if the interest of Uboma is not protected you can never think of anybody coming from Uboma to have his interest represented in Etiti where Uboma is in minority. Comparatively speaking, when you take into account the areas with allotted seats in the House of Assembly, I think Uboma has got a justifiable number of population to warrant it a representation. By that you protect the

interest of the minority in that area. Broadly speaking, when you come to Okigwi as a whole, Mr Speaker, it seems most amazing that a Division which is the fifth largest in the Eastern Region, should have five representatives in this House at the moment. Minus Owerri, the largest Division in the whole Region, Abakaliki, Nsukka and Onitsha, should come under the new arrangement to have only six. Let me quote figures.

**An hon. Member:** Increase of one.

**Mr Iwueke:** We have for instance, Uyo with a population of 296,000 increased from three to six; Opobo with a population of 173,000 approximately having representation ranging from two to five; then you get Okigwi with a population of 442,000 to have only six seats. Mr Speaker, I strongly ask the Government to take into consideration the interest of majority as well as that of minority. We should not sacrifice our own overall interest because of the existence of minority. I still give them the right to exist and privilege that can be justifiably allotted to them. But at the same time we cannot forget the fact that man-power has a place to play in every nation. So whenever we take stock of things, we must take this point into consideration.

Then I come next to allocation of assets. The Minister of Local Government's circular in that respect stated that properties of County Councils should be distributed—for instance immovable properties should be allotted in places of their origin or where they exist. We are vehemently opposed to that. It will be highly controversial to suggest for one moment that a building jointly owned by a whole Division for that matter should be allotted to one side. For instance, in Okigwi we have a national grammar school, our source of pride. You cannot ask Okigwi Northern District Council to own it alone, and they cannot own it for that matter, and that is why even left to us, we would ask for one unitary Council, but because of the proviso that we are having provincial assembly we whole-heartedly support Government proposal. We wish the Minister to take note that we wish the assets to be allocated in order of contribution.

Next, Mr Speaker, is on election. The opinion of my people on this matter, that is

general election, is that in all circumstances election should be by adult suffrage. (*Hear! Hear!*)

Next is on education. I have this to say about education. The height of moral laxity in the country, nay in the world these days and also absolute indifferentism in matters of culture, honesty, reliability and social tolerance, respect for God and man have baffled the world today that people should condescend to think which best type of education should be given to their children. The system of education to be envisaged, I suggest, should be one that would promote high standard of morality and sense of responsibility among our children; the education that will interpret the past in such a way that the present must derive good from it, so as to enable our children, even in this age of hydrogen bomb, to learn to respect not so much of dynasties or of conquest, but those things which keep them happy.

Lastly, Mr Speaker, I wish to make this remark. I think it is high time that we people of the Eastern Region for that matter and this august Assembly thought it fit and proper to have the life statue of the Leader of the N.C.N.C. placed at the precincts of this House. (*Hear! Hear!*). No doubt, we are having independence in 1960. Before ever anybody suggests to have his life statue placed at the capital of the Federation, we must first of all have it placed in this House and I hope the Opposition will co-operate.

Mr Speaker, I support the Motion.

**Mr J. A. Etuhube (Ikot Ekpene Division):**

I am grateful to be given this opportunity to declare my stand on this White Paper on Self-Government in the Eastern Region. I am opposing this Motion. What my people want, Mr Speaker, is a government that can provide them with social services and rule this Region justly. My people are not interested in party politics.

Mr Speaker, I want to begin with the Ministry of Agriculture. I begin with this Ministry because this Ministry is directly concerned with what I may call the sources of the revenue in this Region. A detailed policy of running this Ministry has been put

down here in the White Paper, but, Mr Speaker, I want to emphasise that this Ministry has never run the policy successfully to the interest of the people of this Region. Agricultural stations and modern farms have been opened in this Eastern Region, but what do we find? These centres are run mainly to impart knowledge to the pen-pushing elements of the Region. The real people who need these knowledge are the illiterate farmers all around the rural area. Mr Speaker, I want to refer this hon. House to a portion in the White Paper—page 2, paragraph 2. May I read:

“Farmers are taught better farming methods by means of demonstration farms and farm schools and are helped by the supply of the best kind of seed and seedlings of all the crops found to be suitable for the different parts of the Region”.

Mr Speaker, I want to emphasise that farmers in my own area have got no such thing. They have got not the seedlings and the seeds and some of them do not know that to improve the soil, manure is to be used. If the policy of this Ministry is to run only in the centres where students are sent to be trained and when they come out, they are just sent to do pen-pushing work and do not care to impart this knowledge to the people in the rural areas, then the policy is wrong. Mr Speaker, I want to suggest that instead of establishing several Legislatures in the name of Provincial Assemblies in this Region, the money could be used to open Agricultural Centres either in the District Council areas or in the Local Council areas and these centres of modern farms could also be developed to be Welfare Centres. If we get these Agricultural Officers to run these centres, they will teach the people modern method of agriculture. They will help them to run modern farms. They will help them to open the same modern farms in their different villages first of all for the community and then individual modern farms and these trained officials in charge of the stations will also run round to supervise these modern farms in different villages. And there again, Mr Speaker, I want to emphasise that such centres will produce a very wonderful effect both to the people and the Government because the people will be brought directly in touch with the

[MR ETUHUBE]

Government and will be told what Government is actually doing in this Region, day to day, and they will actually understand what to do because, after all, the source of poverty is nothing but ignorance. We had agitation or demonstrations against the U.P.E. last time. All that has come not because the people of this Region are rather too poor to be able to pay fees for their children but because the people did not understand that running these U.P.E. schools would cost Government about £12 million by 1963 and year in year out, this money continues to increase. (*Hear! Hear!*). And it is the duty of the public to help in this thing. So I am urging the Government that if anything is to be done for the people of this Region, they should drop the University project and first of all develop the rural areas, and get in touch with the people.

Mr Speaker, I want to touch another Ministry and that is the Ministry of Commerce. I want to say that it is high time that Government should embark on a very wide programme of industrialisation. These industries should be opened in areas according to the materials produced. For example, I take my own Division. We have palm produce, we have clay, we have raffia and in the case of raffia, Government realised a net profit of £9,000 during the last war and after the war, this raffia industry was closed down to give way to foreign goods. Government should embark upon opening this industry and my people want soap factory in my own Division.

**An hon. Member:** Go to Aba.

**Mr Etuhube:** Aba is not my Division.

Mr Speaker, I come to education. I want to refer this hon. House to page 6 paragraph (a) there. May I read:

“Each County Council shall control or operate County Primary Schools in each Local Council area up to Standard VI level, whose curriculum shall be prescribed by the Ministry of Education, offering instruction in certain courses, free of charge, to the children of the inhabitants of such area”.

Does it mean that free education will be given only to children who attend the County Council Schools? I am opposed to this, Mr Speaker, because all along education has been run in this Region both by Government and by Voluntary Agencies. Now, opening County Schools and making cost of instruction free there will mean that parents will no more send their children to Voluntary Agency schools and this is a step destructive to these Voluntary Agency institutions. I want to tell the Government that the people of this Region have implicit confidence in the Voluntary Agency Organisations and any attempt to kill their institutions will be strongly resisted.

Mr Speaker, I am very happy that the Government has thought it fit to set up a Committee to investigate the whole question of education in the Eastern Region and our people are anxiously waiting to hear the result of it, because in our own area many children have been turned out of schools.

**An hon. Member:** That is not in the White Paper.

**Mr Etuhube:** It is in the White Paper.

Sir, the Ministry of Education issued a circular No. P/107 of the 25th January, 1958 to County Councils in this Region, asking the Councils to stop payment of motor basic allowances to Principals of County Teacher Training Colleges. Sir, these Principals are working in colleges that belong to County Councils in the Region and they work in the same Region and for the same purpose just as their counter-parts work in different Government Secondary Schools and Teacher Training Colleges, and these their counter-parts are given motor advances and motor basic allowances. I find no reason why these Principals should be discriminated against. Just probably as a matter of convenience! I am asking the Government to remove that type of discrimination.

**An hon. Member:** How many of such Principals have you in this Region?

**Mr Etuhube:** You will have to count the number of Training Colleges you have in the Region. At least I have one in my own area and I know others in other areas.

Mr Speaker, another point I would like to speak on is that sometime ago this House debated a motion on the seven schools of the Education Missionary Society and decided to set up a Committee. The Committee was headed by one Mr Nwosu and later on known as Nwosu Commission. It is said that this Commission finished work on this over a year now and Government has not thought it fit to publish the result of the Commission. The people of this Region who all along have been very much interested in these seven schools of the Education Mission Society will want to know the facts of this Commission. I am urging the Government to bring out the facts now and let us know. We want to know if this African Enterprise was actually guilty of misbehaviour or anything of the sort. We want to know whether the Proprietor, Mr T. K. Utchay, was actually an unsuitable person to run a school or not.

*Sitting suspended at 12 noon.*

*Sitting resumed at 12.30 p.m.*

**Mr Speaker:** Mr Etuhube, I think you have finished your discussion.

**Mr Etuhube:** No.

**Mr Speaker:** Have you got anything new to say? I reserve the right to stop you if what you are going to say is not new.

**Mr Etuhube:** I have something new.

Mr Speaker, I come to the Ministry of Transport. I want to tell this House that the Ministry of Transport has actually neglected Calabar Province as a whole.

**Government Bench:** We have heard that—that is not new.

**Mr Etuhube:** Starting from Aba to Oron, you will find . . .

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

I wish to remind the hon. Member that within the next two or three days we should have been debating the Budget. If he wants

to discuss this Department in a general way, I think he should reserve all his discussion to that time. At the moment, what is really relevant is the acceptance or otherwise of the portion relating to Provincial Assemblies. If he continues to speak on Public Works and others, I shall not call upon him when Budget time comes. If he wants to exhaust himself now he can do so.

**Mr Etuhube:** I reserve.

**Mr J. M. Ito (Ikot Ekpene Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I rise to support the Motion and to congratulate the author of this White Paper. It is a monumental document. It has satisfied the desire of our people. Quite a long time, the Annang people have been longing for recognition, a question which has been agitating our minds and went so far as to affect the administration of our great national organisation—Ibibio State Union—and had dealt a fatal blow on its structure or organism which recovery is however not likely to be predicted. During my tour of the Annang territory which includes, Ikot Ekpene, Abak and part of Opobo, the news brought in glad tidings because the Annang people have been accorded recognition.

*Location of Headquarters:* It is extremely difficult at this moment to determine the issue owing to its financial implication and I am afraid not to hurt the feelings of my hon. Friends from Abak Division. Yet, it will interest one to know that Ikot Ekpene has been for years now the Headquarters of Abak and Enyong Divisions and no contention and it is surprising that my hon. Friend who spoke for and on behalf of Abak made it a contentious issue just because it had been postulated in the White Paper. This is running after shadows instead of substance. I would also advise my hon. Friend to develop *esprit de corps*. Our main object is to approve the implementation of the contents of the White Paper. If we, the Annang people, fail to do so it will be a height of folly. Consequently, our evidence before the Minorities Commission will be a farce, a sheer hypocrisy of the first order, apart from being a national betrayal. This, of course, is inconsistency and instability which can affect our prestige as a people.

[MR ITO]

Mr Speaker, Sir, I think it is appropriate to say something about Urban Water Supplies. The question of Urban Water Supplies to Ikot Ekpene has not been tackled for years. If Government should supply an urban area of 12,000 people with pipe-borne water and neglect 18,000 people, I would say there is something wrong somewhere and my people believe that there is disparity in the distribution of amenities.

*Provinces:* Mr Speaker, the new set up is too expensive and I am afraid if there will be enough fund to operate it. It is alleged that our Government is swimming in the pool of squandermania and apart from such expenditure, the proposal is excellent and should be experimented.

*Advice and Suggestions:* My advice is that, the Government should review the proposal with special reference to certain items raised by hon. Members. The five Provinces should be allowed to retain their status for economic purposes and the new Provincial set-up should be known as Territories, for example, the Annang Territory, the Ibibio Territory and so on, and Headquarters placed as envisaged in the White Paper. I also suggest that there should be two Assemblies, the Territorial Assembly and the Provincial Assembly. The former serves as an institution to maintain close contact with the area of its jurisdiction and the latter as Provincial get-together. These will take less personnel and consequently reduce or minimise the cost of maintaining such services in the administration.

I would like to say something about Devolution of Powers and the Dissolution of County Councils. There is one important thing that is noteworthy in running County Councils: there were certain scholarship awards to students to Universities. Now that the Councils are going to be dissolved, I wonder what portion of the burden the Councils will have to bear, because it was a collective responsibility, and I would ask the Government to note this issue. It entails a great financial responsibility which should be well determined.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I turn to the question of a certain section in my Division, which has petitioned this Government protesting that

they should not be included in the Eastern Ibibio Ikono. The contents of this petition which are embodied in a pamphlet, prayed the Government to grant them a seat in the Eastern House of Assembly. During the Native Authority regime they were a separate entity.

I come, Mr Speaker, to the question of election. I would suggest that election should be on universal adult suffrage, and not on tax suffrage.

I also should like to draw the attention of the Minister of Agriculture to one point. The former Minister visited our area, and then we got to a certain section which planted rice; they have not been encouraged. If the policy of the Government to increase the production of foodstuffs still stands, I think loans should be given to certain areas in my Division. There is rice cultivation, but no encouragement from the part of Government in respect of loans.

**Hon. Members:** What type of farmers?

**Mr Ito:** I do not come here to give you the definition of farmers; farmers are farmers. (*Laughter*).

We would like Government to help us in the way of loans, so that we may produce more and more rice and other foodstuffs.

Again, another point I would like to touch is the question of local industries. We have got plenty of raffia works now in progress in my Division. The people concerned have applied for loans, but to no avail; we would like Government to give us a hearing.

Apart from what I have enumerated, Mr Speaker, I beg to support the Motion.

**Mr R. O. Ukuta, M.B.E. (Nsukka Division):** Mr Speaker, I support the Motion on Self-Government in the Eastern Region. Members may be surprised that I call this White Paper a dictionary of Self-government in the Eastern Region. (*Hear! Hear!*). This comprehensive report fulfils our present and future requirements and if there are any data that we need in the Eastern Region, now and in

future we cannot complete the data without laying our hands on the present report. (*Hear! Hear!*).

I have to say that the people of my Division do not want the tyranny of minority against majority. What we want is a representation by population. The minorities should cry to God to increase their number. (*Laughter*).

Mr Speaker, the Trade Union Law should be tightened up because there are too many strikes in the country at present. Mr Speaker, political tricks which amount to extreme abuse of democracy are going on in the Eastern Region. Without a check it will result in lawlessness and open hostility. I therefore strongly suggest that deportation order be made in the Eastern Region so as to curb these rapacious, shameless and irresponsible mischief makers, who go under the veil of politics to create trouble.

About the University of Nigeria, I congratulate the Government and the hon. Members who, out of clear conscience and conviction, agreed that Nsukka is a suitable place to house the University. I know that Members who object to the siting of the University in Nsukka did so out of a spontaneous move to have it built in their own places. This should naturally be so. But one University obviously cannot be sited in the 28 Divisions of the Region. It must be built in one place. Now that the lot has fallen on Nsukka, I pray this hon. House to give the University full blessing, for work well begun is half done.

Everyone should wear a new look in both ideas and action now that we have assumed Self-government in the Eastern Region since the 8th of August, last year. Let our ways be full of honesty in dealing with one another. Let watch repairers be honest. Let local traders be honest and acquire true sense of business. Let lorry drivers and guards be honest and desist from cheating lorry owners. Let landlords be honest and charge rent approved by the Government. Let civil servants be honest and give the best of their service. And lastly, Mr Speaker, let hon. Members be honest and stop playing to the gallery on important matters affecting the life of the Region.

**Hon. Members:** What of Chiefs?

**Mr Ukuta:** Mr Speaker, I am only sounding this warning; believe it or not. Government must be firm. Mr Speaker, hon. Members are including Chiefs. Mr Speaker, we must all try to put on our belts. If we are entering Self-government everybody must try to curb his avarice and greed for everything. These are only my short warnings because the way things are done in the Eastern Region is creating a lot of unrest.

Mr Speaker, with these few warnings I support the Motion.

**Mr G. I. Oko, M.B.E. (Awgu Division):** Mr Speaker, I want to start with the 16 proposed administrative provinces. Mr Speaker, I want to state that the 16 administrative provinces is opposed by my people for the first reason that it will create more financial burden on the tax-payers of the Region. My second reason, Sir, is for the entire advantage of the Government. It will create more avaricious political consciousness on the part of the people seeking membership to Boards, Corporations, to Ministerial posts and even to the Privy Council. For this, I think Government will be well advised to reconsider decreasing the present set-up to the number of establishment that will not in due course bring more financial burden on the tax-payers. My suggestion, is that the five old provincial administrative set-up should be upheld. It is more economical to run and people therein have had themselves close for a long time. People knew themselves as one in Onitsha, Owerri, Ogoja Provinces and so on. They should not be divorced at this stage.

I refer to pages 11 and 12 of Part I of the Self-Government Paper in the Eastern Region. With your permission, Sir, may I read the following:—

“The aim is to encourage and expand the growing and already famous work of the people of the Eastern Region by their own efforts to promote better living and economic and social development in each community for the whole community”.

On page 12.—

“The aim is to make it possible for the people of this Region to be housed under

[MR OKO]

conditions in which it is possible to promote maximum physical, mental and spiritual development."

With what safeguards and financial provisions, if not more financial burdens? What provisions have Government made for the creation of more industries and economic development for the people to earn living suitable to these conditions? Government is to reconsider these points with a view to helping the people.

On Local Government the policy is sound if only it will continue and expand the training facilities for Local Government Councillors and Staff and Community leaders at the Awgu C.D.T.C. I would like to speak about the new set-up that are involved in the White Paper. Page 15, Sir, is about "finance". More grant should be given to run the Local Government Councils on understanding that the Revenue of the Region is much improved now than before.

With regards to the proposed (new) Local Government Councils the question of single member representation from a local Council to the District Council is a serious matter that Government should re-examine; whether the minority groups should be given chance to run the Council at the expense of majority groups even with a doubled population. The contrary is now the case in the Eastern Region as against the rules of democracy. (*Laughter*). Sir, we are not prepared to give way to the minority groups in this case because of the ambitious careerists in this Region. If the Government wants to hearken to or listen to the voice of the minorities in all cases, I think there should be no need to record the population census of the Region. The use of the census is no longer necessary. The minority should have its way. No, Sir, population should be considered in the light of its merit. We support, Sir, that the Councils should be represented on population basis, not on minority group demands. I agree with my hon. Friend, Mr R. O. Ukuta, Memebr for Nsukka Division that if the minority groups find themselves unable to cope with the measures of the Government policy they should pray to God to give them more children or they desert the areas of minority and come over to live with the

majority groups so that they can share their full political advantages adequately.

I have one other point to make about this Provincial set-up. It was two years ago that this Government abolished the useless Provincial set-up in the Region and created 12 Administrative Provinces instead. It has not taken long when this new change was proposed. Government will therefore take great care to consider what benefits people have so far achieved since creation of the 12 Provincial set-up took place. Since then, people have started afresh to know and adhere to the new condition of things in their areas; all of a sudden, the proposal for sixteen administrative Provinces has come. Government is asked to take proper care to find out whether these changes mean confusion in the areas concerned. For example, the former Udi, Nsukka and Awgu Divisions were merged as a Province two years ago. Now, it is proposed that Udi and Awgu should be merged to form a Province. If it so happens that these Divisions will be merged, where will be the headquarters of the Udi-Awgu Province? At Awgu or Udi? The answer is that Awgu will never accept joining Udi or any other Division for that matter. Awgu has proved herself more proficient by hard work in the Local Government field for any area to overlord it. Awgu is opposed to merging with Udi or with any other Division unless Government decides to go back to the old administrative system and set-up. Under Local Government set-up, Awgu would like to be administered straight from Enugu.

On page 23, it reads in paragraph 2,

"Originally, the bent of policy was towards the formation of larger, as opposed to smaller, counties, excepting in certain areas in the former Ogoja and Rivers Provinces, where distances are so far and the means of communication so poor. However, when the Local Government Ordinance, 1950, was repealed, a new policy was enunciated as follows: The Government is opposed to the setting up of small financially weak units which will never develop social services without placing an undue burden on the people of the area. It can be said that the Region is still in a period of trial and error, and that both the Government



and the people may still learn, by genuine mistakes, what form of Local Government will best suit the Region."

Here, Sir, I think it is timely that the Regional Government should take time to understand the hardship the working of Local Government has caused the Government and the people, and then make proper enquiry in the areas concerned before the question of amalgamation or any form of change will arise. I suggest that there should be no amalgamation of two Divisions without first inquiring from the people concerned whether they are prepared to work together or not. I am grateful, Sir, to the Minister of Local Government and the Government on the whole that during last week, we in Awgu, received a letter answering the question of Awgu District Council having its own County Court separate from Udi and that is a sure sign that the people of this Region want to handle their business in the best way possible.

Now, Sir, I refer to the proposal of single member constituency at page 30 of this White Paper. Many of the Members who have spoken tried to point out to you how their Divisions received consideration from the Government under the present proposal. I want to point out, Sir, that Awgu, my Division, had two seats and still under this proposal has got nothing other than the two seats. I have here, Sir, population census to mention. In pointing out this to you, I have a case of Umuahia-Ibeku Urban District Council with a population of 12,259 entitled to one seat.

**Dr Okpara:** Is that the only example you see?

**Mr Oko:** I have so many examples. I have here the case of Ikom, 7,058 on page 36; the case of Awgu Council with a population of over 50,000. Sir, if the areas of minorities are being considered for more seats, what consideration is the Government making for Awgu? I have given few examples and it is best known to the Government that Awgu with a population of over 150,000 should have been increased at least by one seat. It should be known to the Regional Government that Achi people, in Awgu Division want to secede from Awgu Division and their case should be considered. The Achi people are, I think,

18,000 and should have a direct seat in this House for their aspiration which I am not here to discuss, whilst the other areas of the Division retain the two seats already in the schedule with the population of over 132,868.

**Mr K. Kiri (Degema Division):** In rising to support the Sessional Paper No. 2, entitled Self-Government in the Eastern Region, I wish to make the following observations:

I congratulate the author and the staff that have made it possible to present this document. I wish to call the attention of this House to note that in every one page that you open and read there is something to say either in favour or against. This shows that the author of this document is fairly impartial and looks at the matter fairly objectively. I would like to criticise it as objectively as I can.

Since we are discussing Self-Government, one has to praise the efforts of those who have made it possible for this age to attain Self-government for the Eastern Region. I refer to men, who in their prime of life, have sacrificed time, money and energy to make it possible. I also congratulate Trade Union Leaders, the indigenous Press of Nigeria, that have also contributed to the achievement of Self-Government in our life time.

Mr Speaker, I have to remind this House, that the previous speaker from Ikom, who happened to be the Chief Whip of the Government Party, made a statement that the Rivers people, compared with their neighbours the Ibos, have not contributed much to the achievement of Self-Government. Another speaker, my hon. Friend from Owerri Division has painfully issued a threat to the Rivers people.

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

**Mr Ogon:** I did not say that the Rivers people have not contributed anything. I said that when others were studying Law the Rivers people were playing cricket.

**Mr Kiri:** I wish to call the attention of this House to note that the materials with which the leader of this Government used in presenting the case of Self-Government came

[MR KIRI]

from the Rivers people, and also to remind the hon. Members of this House that it was the Rivers people who first came into contact with the white men and made partnership agreements with the white men. The Rivers people were the first to send delegation to the United Kingdom seeking for independence in a constitutional manner. We never sold our birthright. It will be wrong for anybody to say on the floor of this House that the Rivers people were play boys. Mr Speaker, I consider such a speech uncalled for and as it has come from the Chief Whip, I feel I should ask for an apology and I hope next time the hon. Member should learn not to be so extravagant with expressions that may easily cause bad blood.

May I also, Sir, at this time call the attention of my hon. Friend from Owerri who felt that as the minority is becoming a problem the rule of "might is right" should be applied. Well, may I draw the attention of Members of this House to realise that in the Eastern House we are practising Cabinet system of Government where the minority, i.e. the Cabinet rules with the consent of the majority.

Mr Speaker, Sir, commenting on the White Paper objectively, in the matter of the proposed provincial set-up, but for the cost of running it, I should have welcomed it. It makes for efficiency, easier administration and effective control. I feel, Sir, that it would be a good gesture if it would be possible for the Rivers people to be constituted as they were, for they have lived together for a very long time and they have created a body known as the Rivers Chiefs and Peoples Conference in the interest of the inhabitants in the Rivers territory.

Sir, finally, I call the attention of the Government of the day to reconsider the new scheme in the light of what the Members of the House have said, and to note whether it will not be less expensive and easier to implement the proposals in the White Paper by adopting the former provincial set-up.

Coming to Local Government set-up as it affects Degema Division, I think the people are very happy that each of the clans that constituted a minority in the Division will in

future be accorded direct representation in the Eastern House of Assembly. I am grateful to the Government. Some might say that we of Degema Division have been specially favoured, but when it comes to urban areas, you find that Okrika, Bonny, Buguma (according to the urban population), should constitute urban areas to be given a direct one seat each and another seat for the clan areas; but they haven't that advantage, and we do not quarrel for it. All I am trying to say is that in every page you would find what favours you and what does not favour you. That shows the fairness of the document; that is what I am trying to prove.

Coming to Local Government set-up, Sir, I would suggest that the Odual people, who still today, constitute a minority in the Kalabari District Council, should be considered for a Council of their own; their language is quite different, their custom and everything quite different.

**An hon. Member:** How many are they?

**Mr Kiri:** They are about 15,000 people.

If you go through their Administrative record, you will find that at one stage they were with Brass, and at another stage with Degema. It has never been convenient for the Odual people to stay within Kalabari influence despite the long and expensive means of transport to Degema. Again, Sir, in Ogoni Division, Eleme people constitute a perpetual minority, and I would suggest that they should be given a Council of their own. Also as a minority, they are quite different people, ethnically, with the Kana people; they do not speak the same language; they have quite different customs. Sir, as we are trying to allay the fears of the minorities, these people should be considered along with others.

About scholarships, I would suggest that we still retain the present policy of distributing 70 per cent of the total scholarships on the basis of Districts; that is, the present District Council areas, and 30 per cent on the basis of merit. Personally, I should have said on merit, but it will be difficult at this stage of our progress to decide it purely on merit, since the aim of the Government is to have equal or at least

even development as much as possible. I maintain that the present policy should be continued. Should I say, also, in matters of providing grants for development purposes, that the same policy should be continued; at least, it will be fair if we are really sincere in our proposal to develop backward areas, that a certain percentage, say, 50 or 70 per cent should be distributed evenly regardless of population to the various District Council areas, and the remaining 50 per cent or 30 per cent should be distributed on the basis of population.

**An hon. Member:** Why?

**Mr Kiri:** If you are actually interested in the even development of the Region, you should have known the reason why it should be so. (*Laughter*).

I would like to remind Members of this House that in distributing amenities, they should not be based only on population, it would be unfair because some of us might be tempted then to apply the principle of derivation; a thickly populated area may not contribute much to the revenue of the Eastern Region. This is quite obvious and I can cite many instances. Owerri may be more populated, but I doubt whether Owerri contributes more than Ahoada Division.

**Hon. Members:** No, no.

**Mr Kiri:** It is true. I will tell you.

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

Interruptions in this House are becoming unbearable. Please proceed.

**Mr Kiri:** On the Civil Service Commission, personally, I would have approved what is being recommended here, but due to our present stage of development, with all the suspicion of tribal bias, it is, Sir, the general wish of the people that the Premier, or the Governor should see if it will be possible to increase the number, so that at least the five old provinces as they were represented on the scholarship board be represented in the Civil Service Commission. (*Hear! Hear!*). To me personally, and to many others, it appears to be the most important body we

have in the Eastern Government. I suggest that the advisability to increase the number to five be considered even if it would mean that allowances to members be a bit reduced. An hon. Member suggested that the Chairman should be somebody who is religiously and politically unbiased. There is no such person in the Eastern Region. Even heathenism is a type of religion. I suggest that Government, knowing the strong feelings of the Eastern Region on the matter, should try and get somebody of integrity, not merely of letter, and wealth, but one who is honest. So I strongly appeal that the Cabinet should cool down and look for a capable African who should chair the Commission. I am not against the white man but I feel if the cry for a white man is to show that we have no capable person I think all attempts should be made to have a black man to chair the Commission.

On the point of education, Sir, I realise that the uneven advantage we have in the different sections of the Region is mainly due to the efforts of Government concentrating on some sections as against the other sections. In areas where the voluntary agencies have invested more money in educational field the people enjoy more benefits of education as Government continues to give more grants to such agencies for development and expansion. For example, it is harder for a student to pass directly the entrance examination to the Ibadan University than it is for him to pass the Higher School Certificate and get admission to Ibadan University. But where secondary institutions in an area have not got the facilities it is difficult for such students to get entrance into the Ibadan University. May I call on the Minister of Education to see whether it will be possible to provide facilities to as many secondary schools as possible in the Region as to make it possible for students to take the Higher School Certificate in order to get entrance to the Ibadan University directly.

Sir, I now have to call the attention of this House to note that it is high time we diversify our educational policy. Up to today we do not have an up-to-date or first-class commercial secondary school in the Eastern Region. These schools are very useful. In seeking for employment, a boy with Class Six certificate

[MR KIRI]

and knowledge of commercial subjects stands a better chance than a boy who has Class Six certificate but without knowledge of commercial subjects. The firms are open to them. The Government, even from the trend of events, want such students. I am suggesting that commercial schools should be encouraged and those that have already started, if they are not up to the standard, should be given grants to improve their standards so that we may have up-to-date secondary commercial schools in the Region.

The same also applies to technical institutes. Now that we are turning out more boys than hitherto under the U.P.E. system, it will be advisable for Government to plan, as funds become available, to provide other training schemes that will keep these children for another two or three years so that the piling up of unemployment may not be very severe on us. That would mean building more technical schools of various standards so that standard six boys would get advantage of diversified education.

Lastly, Sir, I come to the problem of minority. This is a social problem. The answer to it usually presents complex problem. It has been so from ages and it will not be different with our own case. The only advice I can offer is what great men have said, that the government takes the character of the people at the helm of affairs. Once the Cabinet or the Ministers realise that being Ministers they are expunged from their constituencies and that they are to look at the Region as their own—not their constituencies first and other parts secondary—this problem will be half solved. I know that it is not an easy task, but here it is. It is the test for statesmanship. If there is a change of heart, the minority will realise that these people, even though they come from various areas, are there to administer not with any bias. That is the only reason why somebody could say that the white man is better than black man because they know that the white man is not a member of any section in the community; he is an abstract man as it were, so that he is going to give his judgment fairly. That is the only thing. Otherwise, there is no other reason. We have the men who are efficient and who have the calibre to do the work. It is left

for the people at the helm of affairs to show to us the minorities that they have no axe to grind. The party member who hails from the minority group and the party member who hails from the majority have the same political ideology. It is their efforts that make the formation of the Cabinet possible, so that, I feel, Sir, that Ministers will be the only people and they are the only source whereby this question of psychological fear of the minorities could be settled. There is hardly any definite answer to it anywhere. The Jewish problem had been like that. The only way to treat it is to treat it with human touch and the way we can do it is to see that the Ibo man, the Efik man and the Rivers man, when placed before justice and distribution of amenities are treated the same. Fair play is all that is required. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Mr S. G. Ikoku (Enyong Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, my duty is to state as clearly and succinctly as possible, the views of the Opposition on the various proposals contained in the White Paper on Self-Government in the Eastern Region, and presented to this hon. House as Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1957. Several Members have spoken in praise of the White Paper. Others have condemned it in strong terms. All speakers have picked holes in it. In view of the far reaching nature of some of the proposals, I think it will be of some help if the Opposition makes its views crystal clear and admitting of no ambiguity whatsoever. An hon. Member, I think it was the hon. the Government Chief Whip, described the White Paper as a "Charter of Freedom". Our view, Sir, is that this document is nothing other than the blue-print for the hegemony of the majority ethnic group and the supremacy of an individual. (*Interruptions*). The hegemony of the majority ethnic group is to be achieved by the way of ineffectual and impotent Provincial Assemblies which, however, serve the useful purpose of dazzling the unsuspecting, unsophisticated folk. Dictatorship of an individual is to be secured through the absolute control in the Premier's Office. These are the grounds on which we on this Side of the House, Sir, base our uncompromising opposition to certain aspects of the White Paper.

Broadly, the White Paper can be divided into two sections. One section deals with what could

be properly called matters of policy. Chapters II, III, IV, VI, VII, and VIII fall into this section. They merely state the intention and programmes of Government in the years ahead. The second section deals with more fundamental issues which impinge directly on the constitution and organisation of our state. These should properly be called structural matters. The relevant chapters are I and V dealing with the Premier's Office and the devolution of powers respectively. It is not my intention to spend any time discussing the matters of policy. A more appropriate time for this would be the Committee of Supply. I will only touch broadly on two points—Finance and Local Government.

First—Finance. It is a truism to state that the future prosperity of this Region and its 8 million people depends almost wholly on the extent to which we can solve our financial problem. Again, it is a well-known fact that the public finances of Federations are extremely complex and variegated. The problem is how to find distinct and exclusive spheres for raising public revenue for the states on the one hand and for the Federation on the other. A second aspect of the problem is how to widen the financial bases of the State Governments in order to sustain the ever-growing demands for State—financed social services. A third aspect is to discover the categories of public finance best suited to joint action between the State and Federal Governments.

The Commonwealth of Australia began grappling with this problem in the early years of this century and could only find a more or less workable formula in 1926. This problem is ever present, even to the present day, in the politics of the Dominion of Canada. It would be foolhardy if we for one moment believed that Nigeria would escape this problem. In point of fact, the problem is already with us. We therefore suggest that the Government of this Region should immediately plan to investigate this problem in all its ramifications. The best way to achieve this is to send a small team of men to Canada and Australia to make a very detailed study of federal finances in these two sister Dominions. The report of this team could serve the dual purpose of enlightening our people on the intricate problems of public finances in a federal state as well as providing a guide to Government in formulating financial policies.

I now turn to Local Government. It seems Government is very strongly influenced by what I might call the "demand for self-determination" by the various communities in the Region. This factor makes for smaller Local Government Councils. A second factor, working in the opposite direction, is available financial resources to cope with the ever-growing needs of the people within its area. To maintain some semblance of autonomy, Local Government Councils have got to be financially viable to some considerable extent. In view of the great diversities within the Region, we think it would be unwise for Government to hang on any given formula and enforce it unmodified throughout the Region. I refer specifically to the decision to abolish all existing County Councils. I think it would be wiser and safer to have this as a goal but to apply it immediately only in areas which have expressly demanded it.

Again, we believe that of the two principles—self-determination and financial viability—Government should be guided more by the former in setting up new councils. Surely, it is more democratic and the Government is likely to be exculpated of all blame. If communities are allowed to have the Councils of their choice and then decide by themselves and through their experience to join up with neighbouring Councils in order to solve their financial problems, the decision then will be theirs. It is no longer an imposition from Enugu. No scapegoat will be found for all the one thousand and one demands and complaints which abound in Local Government Councils. Here, I am suggesting, Sir, that the Government should take the line of least resistance. Have your Councils. Proceed with them. Let the people break down financially and then let them take a decision themselves to join up with a neighbouring Council. Then nobody will be blamed. Disrespect for local interest which is supposed to exist in Enugu will no longer be in existence.

This is a convenient point at which to consider the proposed regrouping of areas into provinces. For example, Opobo goes to Oil Rivers, Aro-Ibo goes to Bende and Biase goes to Calabar. Let this be said at once that Government has here shown its mischievous intention in deciding to dismember just those Divisions which are counted among Opposition strongholds. I can only assure

[MR IKOKU]

my Friends opposite that this way leads to interminable and dangerous wrangling. This can never engender trust and confidence between the Government and Opposition Parties without which modern parliamentary democracy just cannot work. In the case of Enyong Division, let it be known, Sir, that Aro-Ibo does not intend to join Bende Province, real or imaginary.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I noticed that the hon. the Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier knows all about my constituency. I only advise him, he not being a native of this Region, to come and contest his next election in my constituency.

If the Government doubts what I am saying, let them be fair enough to institute an administrative enquiry in these areas, or perhaps, they might prefer to conduct a plebiscite.

May I now come, Sir, to the second and more important part of my speech. I now wish to deal with what I have referred to as "Structural Changes" outlined in the White Paper. I would like to tackle these under three heads as follows: (i) the Premier's Office; (ii) Electoral arrangements; and (iii) Provincial Assemblies.

First, the Premier's Office. The proposed organisation of the Premier's Office is centralisation carried too far. The first major departure from the time-honoured practice in Whitehall is to take away the control of the Civil Service from the Treasury and to put it in the Premier's Office. In short, Sir, the Premier's Office and no longer the Treasury, is the point from which the control of Civil Service is directed. Why are we departing from the practice of Whitehall? Isn't this an attempt to assume commanding power by an individual? Some might say that we need not follow Whitehall too closely. My reply is simple—we have got to follow Whitehall very closely, particularly in these early stages when we are still in the process of finding our feet. The Government must realise that they have not got the enlightened opinion of this Region behind them in this matter. The Civil Servants are bound to be apprehensive because the new set-up makes it easier to play the diabolical and demoralising game of nepotism.

Again in 1956, the Eastern Summit Conference came out in favour of the British system. At page 61, Sir, if I may refer to the Report of the Summit Conference published as Sessional Paper No. 5 of 1956, we find the following:

"The majority view favours Cabinet System of Government modelled on the British Parliamentary System."

Security and Intelligence Service is to be under the Premier's Office. We again see this as an attempt to usurp the functions of other arms of the State. In Whitehall, Security and Intelligence is handled by M.I. 5 which is housed by New Scotland Yard. For the information of hon. Members, New Scotland Yard is an office separate and distinct from the Premier's Office. It has an independent life of its own and matters relating to it are handled by the Home Secretary (their equivalent of our Minister of the Internal Affairs) and not by the Premier. The other arms of the Intelligence Service are run by the Armed Forces—The Army, the Admiralty and Air Force. The Diplomatic Service is run by the Foreign Office. In none of these cases is the Premier's Office directly connected.

I must add here that for any Premier to control Security and Intelligence which is essentially Police duty is to expose all whom the Premier may regard as political suspects—both the Opposition and Government Members as well as independent circles—to unending inquisition and witch-hunting. The departures proposed in the White Paper as regards the Premier's Office are therefore quite revolutionary and fantastic. They are not designed to bring our position here in line with Whitehall. Instead their aim is to concentrate absolute powers in the hands of an individual. I can do no better than remind hon. Members of the good old adage "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely".

*Electoral Arrangements:* The electoral changes (particularly the allocation of seats in a new Eastern House of Assembly of 124 Members on the basis of single member constituencies) have absolutely nothing to recommend them. They violate the democratic principle of allocating seats on a population basis. At the same time they fail to meet the fears of the ethnic minorities in the Region.

I will summarise Opposition's case against the electoral changes briefly as follows :—

(1) Firstly, the allocation of seats is an abrogation of the democratic principle of representation on a population basis. May I draw attention to a few cases.

#### Group A

Ikot Ekpene U.D.C., 18,070	...	(1 seat)
Oron U.D.C., 13,641	...	(1 seat)
Ikome, 7,058	...	(1 seat)
Ugep, 17,567	...	(1 seat)
Bonny, 10,226	...	(1 seat)
Opobo, 7,391	...	(1 seat)
Owerri Town, 9,331	...	(1 seat)
Abakaliki Town, 12,622	...	(1 seat)

#### Group B

Central Annang, 83,209	...	(1 seat)
Eket County, 66,922	...	(1 seat)
Obubra County, 92,303	...	(1 seat)
Obudu County, 57,602	...	(1 seat)
Kalabari County, 73,283	...	(1 seat)
Eastern Ibibio Ikono, 104,589	...	(1 seat)
Oratta County, 87,547	...	(1 seat)
Ezzikwo County, 88,498	...	(1 seat)

This sort of seat allocation just cannot be justified on any acceptable principle. It is unfair as between communities in the minority area—Ikot Ekpene County and Central Annang, Oron and Eket, etc. It is unfair between the minority areas *vis-a-vis* the majority areas. If this indefinable seat allocation is adhered to, it is bound to leave behind a sense of grievance among many communities in this Region. There will be political pressure in the direction of seeking a redress. Some future government is bound to yield to this pressure. And Members, particularly those from the minority areas, must realise that electoral constituencies are not entrenched in our constitution. Once you agree to enlarge our House to 124, a future Government will be acting within its powers if it re-drew the constitution but taking fine care to have the total number of seats in the Assembly at 124. Members can then see that the so-called protection of the minorities becomes a mere mirage. For Members from the minority areas to build their hope for political redress on the suggested constituencies is to be guilty of self-deceit.

Secondly, the allocation of seats does not in any way allay the fears of ethnic minorities. I think it is convenient at this stage to state briefly what the political fears of the ethnic minorities are. It is not that every minority community does not have direct representation in the Eastern House of Assembly. It is rather that in the Eastern House of Assembly one major ethnic group enjoys an absolute majority over all other ethnic groups. And since our politics still contains a good deal of the tribal flavour, it follows that the Eastern Region will have the Government of the majority ethnic group *in perpetuo*. In the present House, the Ibos have 51 seats as against 33 by all other minority ethnic groups—an absolute majority of 18. Under the new system—which we are told is aimed at appeasing the ethnic minorities—the Ibos have 72 seats as against 52 by all other ethnic groups put together. The absolute majority has increased to 20.

A third criticism of the proposed arrangements is that there doesn't seem to be any basis for designating a community a minority. And behind this studied confusion lurks a sinister plan to strengthen the tribal hegemony of the dominant or majority ethnic group. This hon. House would like to know how Oron town, Abakaliki town, the Ugep town, Ikome town, Ikot Ekpene town and Owerri town come to be termed minority areas as at page 33 of the White Paper. Which ethnic groups within these towns are minorities?

Fourthly, I would like to remind hon. Members that the new electoral arrangements involve amendment to our constitution. The Nigeria Constitution (Order in Council), 1954 fixes the size of the Eastern House of Assembly at no more than 84. A new House of 124 members thus requires constitutional amendment. And as Members know, neither this House nor the House of Representatives could affect any amendments to our constitution. Only the resumed Constitutional Conference can handle the problem. And it is my duty to inform this House that the Opposition will oppose this amendment to our constitution on the grounds that the ethnic minorities are in no way benefited and the basic democratic principle of political representation is flagrantly violated. I now come to Provincial Assemblies. With the avowed aim

[MR IKOKU]

of allaying the fears of ethnic minorities and devolving powers, the White Paper proposes sixteen Provincial Assemblies each with its Commissioner who is of Ministerial rank. Let me say right away that these so-called Assemblies are mere glorified local councils. Politically, they seem to dazzle the unwary; but they are completely impotent. In short, they are white elephants—very expensive white elephants at that. Our uncompromising opposition to the suggested provincial assemblies is based on two grounds :—

- (a) they are politically impotent and hence cannot meet the deep-seated fears of ethnic minorities in this Region;
- (b) they are expensive and impose an unjustifiable strain on the finances of the Region.

Let's consider the powers of these Assemblies. They are, to quote the White Paper, "deliberative and consultative". They have no political initiative; they are circumscribed. They can debate only matters referred to them by Government; their financial power is limited to making suggestions as to how the amount earmarked for their area by Government is to be disbursed. They cannot decide on the amount earmarked for their area; nor can they decide how this amount is to be deployed. They can only make suggestions to Government in the second case.

Again, Government is not bound to adopt or implement the suggestions of these Assemblies. An interesting question to ask is: What happens when the Assemblies make recommendations to which Government is opposed? The answer is simple—the Government's view prevails. Here then we have Assemblies which can debate and make suggestions but Government gives heed to these debates and suggestions entirely at its pleasure. In other words the Assemblies are mere political ciphers.

As the White Paper itself confesses, the Provincial Assemblies are to be used "as an instrument for implementing Government policy"—page 19. They are mere tools to be used by Government in pushing its policies. They cannot exercise the primary function of

legislative assemblies which is to lay down policy for Government to carry through. Power is left absolutely at Enugu.

**Mr Speaker:** Under Standing Orders, the hon. Member has spoken for forty minutes. It is, however, my intention to permit him to speak until interruption time. Is it the wish of the House?

**Hon. Members:** Yes, that's democracy.

**Mr Ikoku:** Somebody said that's democracy. I would like to qualify it as the democracy of the Speaker.

I would like to correct the impression of Members that since we have legislatures we have democracy. It was only in the time of the Divine Right of Kings that we had an individual insisting on ruling by himself. The new technique of dictatorship is to have dummy assemblies. Hitler had the right type. Mussolini had his own parliament, and today, Sir, we have a huge parliament 1,360 strong in the Soviet Union, but behind this top-heavy legislative assembly operates one of the greatest dictatorships in the history of mankind. What I want hon. Members to understand is that they don't automatically have democracy merely by setting up assemblies. You must find out what are the powers of the assemblies. A good example which you all would remember is our old Legislative Council. They represented us, but how much power had they. We don't want a 1958 version of the Legislative Council.

The next point, Sir, is the cost of these Assemblies and this is important. It is stated in the White Paper that every Local Council will be equally represented in the Assembly. I assume that they have only one representation. You take Aba Province—Aba-ngwa U.D.C. I give them 1 seat; Asha County 10; Eastern Ngwa 8; Northern Ngwa 11, Southern Ngwa 8—total 38. When you add all the hon. Members who will become ex officio and the rest of it you have a total of about 50. We can now estimate the cost of each Provincial Assembly under two headings—Recurrent Annual Expenditure and Capital Expenditure. If you give these Provincial Assembly men a solitary £120 a year, which is the rate you pay to chairman of Rural District Councils, you will find that in a



Council of 50 members you will be called upon to pay £6,000 a year in salaries. Take the transport of hon. Members at a solitary £25 a year. This will amount to £1,250. Then of course, you have the Commissioner's Office—this magnificent white elephant. Here is this man at Commissioner rank. Is he not getting £3,000 . . . (*Interruption*). You cannot do otherwise.

**The Premier:** Who will decide ?

**Mr Ikoku:** You will decide.

He must have his Provincial Inspector and the rest of it. Then the Assistant Secretaries. They are not there. (*Interruption—They are there now*). Let me tell you. These fellows who are working in the Divisions will continue to be at the County Headquarters. They are not available for this job. (*Interruption: We will make them available*). As a result, Sir, you have to take all the local transport for the Commissioner and his retinue into consideration, and you cannot budget for less than £1,000. You have a grand and startling total for the year for the Provincial Assemblies and the Provincial Office of £21,000. If you multiply that by 16, you will have £341,000. This is what the Region will be called upon to pay in order to maintain the white elephant.

**An hon. Member:** Not white elephant.

**Mr Ikoku:** Again you turn to capital expenditure. You must build the Commissioner's Lodge. The Chairman of the various Corporations build houses of £12,000 and I do not think any of the Commissioners will agree to put up in one of less than £12,000. Do not forget the Ministers are going to live in those houses when they go on tour. They must make provision for their entertainment. (*Laughter*). We budget no less than £12,000 for that. The Provincial Inspectors' houses must be found. Similarly, the three senior servants' quarters.

**An hon. Member:** Imaginations run riot.

**Mr Ikoku:** The grand total comes to about £42,000 and for the 16 Provincial Assemblies, £672,000 which we must find once and for all.

Now, I would like hon. Members to bear these points in mind when they are deciding on this issue. The whole issue of Provincial Assemblies involves a question of constitutional

amendment. So that what I want all Members to know is that this House is incapable to vote on the side of this Provincial Assembly. If you want these Assemblies, bring them to the resumed Conference and I promise you one thing—ignominious defeat for the proposer. They will be defeated.

Another point I would like to make, Sir, is of constitutional matter. It is the established procedure for the Government and the Opposition and any interested political party that various conflicting plans have to be put to the electorate in order to get their views. I am suggesting to the Premier and the Government with all sincerity that if they want to implement their 16 Provincial Assemblies business, they should go back to the electorate and put the proposal to the electorate.

I would like to tell Members that the so-called Provincial Assemblies do not and cannot allay the fears of the minorities. The question of the creation of the COR State or any other State for that matter, we are not dragging to the floor of this House. We know that this House is completely impotent in handling this matter. We shall raise the issue at the right spot and I hope that our hon. Friends opposite will be able to prove their case and prove us wrong. But we can assure them that we are going to prove our case. And in this connection, Sir, I would like to remind Members that the attitude they bring to the problem of minorities is going to be very important as regards the whole question of Nigerian Independence. I can do no better than refer to the statement of Her Majesty's Government on this issue. With your permission, Sir, I quote only the last sentence. The Secretary of State for the Colonies handed this statement to all delegates at the London Conference. Of course, he was discussing a date for the Nigerian Independence. He said:

"Delegates, I hope you know Her Majesty's Government well enough to be sure that they would not invent reasons for extending the date. Her Majesty's Government would, of course, be very much guided in their choice of date by the way everything was going, by how the two Regions now about to enjoy Regional Self-Government had taken the strains of this great step forward, and by how the country as a whole has

[MR IKOKU]

faced up to the problems of minorities on which the Commission will already have reported”.

My last point, Sir, is to agree entirely with the Leader of the House. When speaking on this Motion, he congratulated everybody who had taken part in bringing Self-Government about, and I would only like to add, Sir, that those chaps he referred to as scattered brains played a very great part and of course, he did acknowledge the fact. In fact, I want to say that many unnoticed people did contribute and contributed significantly, to the attainment of Self-Government in Nigeria.

To give you a very little story, Sir, this group of hot heads decided to hold a mass meeting in Lagos without Police permit. Somebody got up on the soap box and started to speak. He was immediately arrested by the Police. They took him to the Central Police Office. Then one of the Police Officers said: “Put him behind the bars”, and he left. But the constable decided to chat with us. He did not put him behind the bars and when the Inspector of Police came back after about two hours, he heard the young man at the top of his voice discussing nationalism. So he came in and looked at the boy. He couldn't help laughing! So he turned to the Sergeant and said (I will try to quote him, Sir): “I tell you put this man for cell you refuse, now he talk too much political, he convince you”. (Laughter).

**Mr Speaker:** Does any Member wish to speak? Hon. Nalelo, do you want to speak?

**Mr O. B. Nalelo (Ogoni Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I do not have much to say other than the fact that the principles as contained in Sessional Paper No. 2 cannot allay the fears of the minority group in the COR State, where we shall establish and carry out our own principles.

The Ogoni people are in support of the COR State.

**Mr M. N. Yowika (Ogoni Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I do not want to be too long but I have some comments to make and before I do that I would like to remind Members of this hon. House that experience is the best teacher. I have heard the explanation by the

Premier on the Government White Paper No. 2. He said that Government . . .

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

*And it being 2.15 p.m. Mr Speaker interrupted the business and the Debate stood adjourned. Debate to be resumed Tomorrow.*

(2) The Children and Young Persons Bill, 1958—Committee. *Deferred until Wednesday, 26th March, 1958.*

(3) The Eastern Region Local Government (Amendment) Bill, 1958—Second Reading. *Deferred until Wednesday, 26th March, 1958.*

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Minister of Production (Dr M. I. Okpara):** Mr Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until tomorrow, 25th March, at 10 a.m.

**The Minister of Transport (Mr P. O. Ururuka):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

#### ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

**Mr P. A. Onwe (Abakaliki Division):** Mr Speaker, I had wanted to make some of my points during the debate but owing to the fact that my eyes did not catch yours I have therefore waited till the adjournment. I scarcely believe that I have sufficient time to put across what is now in my mind but I will endeavour to give you a picture, at least, of what I mean to say.

**Mr Speaker:** I hope the hon. Member is not debating on the White Paper. You can only debate on non-contentious matters.

**Mr Onwe:** It is not on the White Paper but in any case it is a subject that is inserted in the White Paper.

**Mr Speaker:** Disallowed.

#### Catering Rest House—Chalet No. 4

**Mr E. O. Eyo (Uyo Division):** I am sorry, Sir, that I have to rise again once more. The case is in respect of my friend in No. 4 Chalet . . .

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Adjourned, accordingly, at seventeen minutes past 2 o'clock p.m.*

EASTERN HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 25th March, 1958

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

PRAYERS

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Nsulu Leprosy Clinic

28. Mr W. Abengowe asked the Minister of Health, how many in and out-patients have been admitted and treated in Nsulu Leprosy Clinic since the clinic was opened; how many patients have been discharged from the clinic symptom-free.

**The Minister of Health:** Since June, 1931, 141 patients have been treated as in or out-patients at Nsulu Leprosy Clinic. Of these 141, 48 have been discharged symptom-free.

Surgical Specialists

29. Mr W. Abengowe asked the Minister of Health, how many Surgical Specialists are there in the Eastern Region, and to which hospitals are they attached.

**The Minister of Health:** There are now two Surgical Specialists in the Eastern Region. One is designated Senior Specialist and is stationed at Enugu. The other is designated Specialist, and is at Port Harcourt.

Grants to Voluntary Agency Hospitals

144. Mr M. N. Onwuma asked the Minister of Health, whether Voluntary Agency Hospitals in Eastern Nigeria do now submit particulars relating to expenses incurred in respect of their staff, in order to qualify for grants-in-aid.

**The Minister of Health:** Yes, they do.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

**The Nigeria (Constitution) (Amendment) Order in Council, 1958 and the Nigeria (Offices of Governor-General and Governors) (Amendment) Order in Council, 1958**

**The Premier (Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe):** Mr Speaker, I hereby with your permission

wish to make the following Ministerial Statement:

The Nigeria (Constitution) (Amendment) Order in Council, 1958, the Nigeria (Offices of Governor-General and Governors) (Amendment) Order in Council, 1958, Additional Instructions to the Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief of the Federation of Nigeria, and Additional Instructions to the Governors of the Northern, Western and Eastern Regions of Nigeria were made on 14th March and were laid before Parliament on 20th March to come into operation on 1st April, 1958.

The Instruments will complete the main amendments agreed at the 1957 Constitutional Conference held in London, to give effect to Regional Self-Government in the Eastern and Western Regions, and to make changes in the structure of Government in the Federation, the Northern Region and the Southern Cameroons.

Yesterday, 24th March, the Secretary of State for the Colonies made an announcement which, it is expected, will be published in the British Press today, in the following words:

"The Nigeria (Constitution) (Amendment) Order in Council, 1958, and the Nigeria (Offices of Governor-General and Governors) (Amendment) Order in Council, 1958, have now been made, and will come into operation on the 1st April. These Orders give effect to certain recommendations made by the 1957 Nigeria Constitutional Conference.

"They provide for certain changes in the Northern House of Chiefs, and for the establishment of a Northern Council of Chiefs; for the creation of a Southern Cameroons House of Chiefs as a deliberative body, the enlargement of the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly, the establishment there of a Ministerial system, including an office of Premier, and for an unofficial majority in the Southern Cameroons Executive Council.

"They incorporate some basic financial principles applicable to all Nigerian Governments, and provide for an increase, at the expense of the Federation, in the allocation to the Southern Cameroons of revenue derived from specified import duties.

[THE PREMIER]

"Provision is also made for a Federal Police Service Commission, and for Public Service Commissions and Judicial Service Commissions with executive functions in the self-governing Eastern and Western Regions.

"In these Regions the office of Attorney-General is to be filled on the Premier's recommendation, and there is to be a post in the Public Service of Director of Public Prosecutions.

"There is special provision to protect the tenure of office in the self-governing Regions of Judges, members of the Public Service Commission, the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Director of Audit." (*Applause*).

#### PRIVY COUNCIL IN THE EASTERN REGION

**Mr E. O. Eyo (Uyo Division):** I beg to move the Motion standing in my name on the Order Paper which reads as follows:

"That this House notes the appointment of Dr the hon. Nnamdi Azikiwe of Onitsha, Mr J. C. Anyansi of Onitsha and Sir Francis Ibiyam of Afikpo Division as members of the Privy Council of the Eastern Region and hereby desires that a Humble Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor praying that two Members be appointed from the minority groups in the Eastern Region into the said Privy Council".

Sir, in moving this Motion, I am fully conscious of the fact that in appointing members of the Privy Council, His Excellency did exercise his discretion. I wish it to be perfectly clear that I do not for one moment question the exercise of His Excellency's discretion in the matter nor do I question the integrity of the members already appointed. The object of the Motion is simply to pray His Excellency to consider the minority groups in the Region and accord them adequate representation in the Privy Council.

Sir, in moving this Motion, I am relying on a precedent established in the House of Representatives at Lagos on the 2nd April, 1952, when I moved a similar Motion in the following terms:

"That this House, being dissatisfied with the Regional representation in the new

Nigerian Privy Council, desires that a Humble Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor praying that two unofficial members be appointed from the Northern and Eastern Regions respectively into the Privy Council".

That Motion was carried and from 1952, the Northern and Eastern Regions have had direct representation in the Privy Council of Nigeria.

The persons named in the Motion were appointed by His Excellency the Governor on the 26th October, 1957. The appointments were gazetted in the *Eastern Regional Gazette* No. 55, Vol. 6 of 7th November, 1957—page 499.

Now, Sir, hon. Members may ask the question: What are the functions of the Privy Council? In answering this question I would say that unlike the Privy Council in the United Kingdom which has both legislative and judicial functions, our Privy Council has one function only and that is to advise His Excellency the Governor in the Governor's exercise of the Royal Prerogative of Mercy; and it exercises that function particularly of course in cases where a man has been sentenced to death for the crime of murder. Sir, when a case of murder is tried and the accused person is found guilty, only one sentence can be passed by the presiding Judge and that is a sentence of death. Whenever a man has been sentenced to death that sentence comes before the Privy Council and it is then the Privy Council's duty to advise the Governor whether the man shall be hanged or the sentence shall be commuted. The Court cannot do that. The Court can only sentence a man to death. The power of pardon, the power of exercising mercy is vested in the Governor alone, and I re-emphasise that the only function of the Privy Council is to advise the Governor in the exercise of this power. No question of the man's guilt comes before the Governor in Privy Council. That has already been decided by the court. What is still to be decided, and what the Privy Council is asked to advise on, is whether it is a case in which the Prerogative of Mercy should be exercised. That decision must depend on a number of facts.

The Privy Council is to advise on what kind of advise the Governor needs. The first

kind of advice he needs is the advice of a legal expert hence the Governor chose the Attorney-General to be a member of the Privy Council.

Secondly, Sir, the Governor needs the advice of a medical expert because it is not only the medical condition of the victim but the health—mentally and physically of the murderer—that might be a factor that might persuade the Governor to commute the sentence hence the Governor chose Sir Francis Ibiam—a medical practitioner of very high repute.

Thirdly, I come to the kind of special advice which the Governor needs and this, Sir, forms the whole basis of this Motion. We all know, Sir, that circumstances vary enormously from area to area in the Eastern Region where we have a large number of tribes. We have also a large number of different superstitions and a large number of different kinds of juju and witchcraft. I mention witchcraft because of the widespread belief in it particularly in the Calabar Province and up the Cross River area. What the Governor may require and very frequently does require, Sir, is specialised knowledge of the particular condition that may exist in the particular village from which the accused comes. What were the general conditions of that village? Had they any particular superstition? Was there any particular cause which might have put the accused off balance? Were any particular words used to the accused which in that particular area might be regarded as intolerable and therefore tremendous provocation? These are matters on which, Sir, the Governor needs advice. I respectfully submit, Sir, that only persons with specialised knowledge of the particular conditions that may exist in the various areas of the Region, persons with practical experience and insight into human nature are competent to advise the Governor on such matters hence the composition of the Privy Council should be such as is able to represent a cross-section of the majority and minority groups in the Region in order to ensure that the various interests are adequately protected and the confidence of the Governor that he has the support and goodwill of the people of the Region.

Now, Sir, it will interest the House to know that from the 1st October, 1954 to the 31st

October, 1956 sixty murder cases went before our Privy Council as follows :—

Owerri Province	...	...	18
Onitsha Province	...	...	4
Calabar Province	...	...	13
Ogoja Province	...	...	14
Rivers Province	...	...	10
Non-Easterner	...	...	1
			—
Total	...	...	60
			—

Out of this number, 42 were executed, 3 received life imprisonment, 5 commuted to 15 years imprisonment, 5 to 10 years imprisonment, 1 to 7 years imprisonment and 4 to 5 years imprisonment. I have given these figures, Sir, to show the number of cases handled by the Privy Council from each Province in order to reinforce my case for adequate representation for both majority and minority groups.

Now, Sir, it was only last week that I received the *Eastern Regional Gazette* No. 16, Volume 7 of the 6th March, 1958, in which is reported two recent appointments of new members into the Privy Council—Chief Dublin-Green and J. K. Nzerem—with effect from 1st February, 1958. Chief Dublin-Green comes from Bonny in Degema Division in the Rivers Province and is competent to tender advice on Ijaw customs and traditions.

Mr Nzerem comes from Owerri Division and I am sure he is competent to tender advice on the customs and traditions of the Ibo people in Owerri Province.

Now, Sir, the whole of Calabar Province and the non-Ibo area of the Ogoja Province are left unrepresented. I want to remind the House that now that the new Order in Council has been signed, the Attorney-General designate will soon become Attorney-General proper and he will automatically be an official member of the Privy Council. But the whole of Calabar Province and the non-Ibo area of the Ogoja Province are not represented and it is in these two areas that the belief in juju and witchcraft is strongest in the Region. (*Laughter*).

The appointment of Chief Dublin-Green has only met my Motion half way. There

[MR E. O. EYO]

remains just one more member to represent the Calabar Province and the non-Ibo area of the Ogoja Province to increase the number to what I may regard to be fair and reasonable representation.

Now, Sir, the Motion is worded in simple, clear and correct terms. It merely seeks an Address to His Excellency the Governor praying His Excellency to appoint two members from the minority group into the Privy Council. When the Address is presented, it is up to His Excellency to accept or reject the demand contained in the Address because it is a matter in which he has discretionary power. I believe in the good sense of the Members of the House and so I do not anticipate any opposition.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

**Mr J. A. Agba (Ogoja Division):** Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

**The Premier (Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe):** Mr Speaker, I beg to move the amending Motion standing in my name, that is "To leave out all the words after the first 'of' and insert Dr the hon. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Premier; the hon. the Deputy Governor; the hon. the Attorney-General; as Official Members; and the hon. J. C. Anyansi, the hon. J. K. Nzerem, M.B.E., Chief the hon. W. B. Dublin-Green and Dr the hon. Sir Francis Ibiam, K.B.E., as Appointed Members of the Privy Council of the Eastern Region, and hereby prays His Excellency the Governor to appoint a Member from the former Calabar Province in the Eastern Region into the said Privy Council".

Before going into the merits of my amendment, may I with your permission correct one or two inaccuracies made by the hon. Mover of this Motion a few minutes ago. He left an impression that Chief the hon. Green and the hon. J. K. Nzerem were new appointments. This is not true, Mr Speaker. A reference to the *Eastern Region Gazette* of the 4th November, 1954 will show that as far back as 1954, they were Members of the Privy Council and the notice to which he refers in the latest *Gazette* dated March, 1958 is a re-appointment. He also made

another statement which is not true. He said that the Attorney-General designate will now become Attorney-General and will automatically become a Member of the Privy Council. I have it on the authority of His Excellency the Governor to say that the Director of Public Prosecutions intends to appoint his Deputy as a member of the Privy Council.

My amendment, Sir, is based on four grounds; the substantive Motion rests on a foundation of half-truths; it leaves an obscure impression on the minds of hon. Members; it is calculated to engender a feeling of restiveness among minority groups; it seeks to impinge upon the prerogative of the Governor.

The hon. Mover failed to give the House the full implications regarding the Constitution and functions of the Privy Council. Rather, he mentioned the appointment of three Members of the Privy Council whose places of origin are incoherently described. Then he called attention to the latest appointment of Chief W. Green and Mr J. K. Nzerem as if they were new appointments. This, Mr Speaker, is an unfortunate error which my friend is in the habit of committing in order to gain an unfair advantage. It must be resisted by my stating the plain and unvarnished truth.

Section 18 of the Offices Order, 1954, is the relevant constitutional provision for the exercise of the power of pardon. With your permission, Sir, may I for the purpose of clarity, refer hon. Members to it. It reads as follows :—

"The Governor of a Region may, in Her Majesty's name and on Her Majesty's behalf—

- (a) grant to any person concerned in, or convicted of, any offence to which this section applies a pardon, either free or subject to lawful conditions; or
- (b) grant to any person a respite, either indefinite or for a specified period, of the execution of any sentence passed on that person for such an offence; or
- (c) substitute a less severe form of punishment for that imposed by any sentence for such an offence; or

(d) remit the whole or any part of any sentence passed for such an offence or of any penalty or forfeiture otherwise due to Her Majesty on account of such an offence."

"(2) The offences to which this section applies are offences against any law enacted by the Legislature of a Region or having effect under the Constitution Order as if it had been so enacted."

According to paragraph 22 of the Royal Instructions, His Excellency is vested with the power to grant pardon or reprieve to any offender condemned by any civil court in Nigeria for committing an offence for which he had been penalised to suffer death.

In the exercise of this prerogative the Governor is enjoined, "acting in his discretion," to consult with the Privy Council, and whilst not necessarily acting on their advice, to do so if "it appears expedient to him". The instructions specifically enjoined the Governor "to decide either to extend or to withhold a pardon or reprieve according to his own deliberate judgment, whether members of the Privy Council concur therein or otherwise; entering nevertheless, in the minutes of the Privy Council, his reasons, in case he should decide any such question in opposition to the judgment of the majority of the members thereof".

The instructions then explain the constitution of the Privy Council to consist of such number of Official Members and Appointed Members as the Governor, acting in his discretion, may from time to time appoint by Instrument under the Public Seal of the Region, provided that the total number of the Privy Council shall not at any time be less than four. It is necessary for me to distinguish Official Members from Appointed Members. The former include persons in the public service of the Region and may be appointed by office, whilst the others are appointed by name. Privy Councillors hold office at the pleasure of Her Majesty.

In exercise of the powers vested in him by the Instructions, the Governor (Sir Clement Pless) appointed Dr the hon. Nnamdi Azikiwe (Premier), the hon. Deputy Governor, and the

hon. Attorney-General to be Official Members of the Privy Council (*vide* Notice No. 369 in the *Eastern Region Gazette* of 4th November, 1954). His Excellency also appointed the hon. Sir Francis Ibiam, the hon. John Anyansi, Chief the hon. W. B. Dublin-Green, and the hon. J. K. Nzerem, M.B.E., to be Appointed Members of the Privy Council.

On October 26th, 1957, His Excellency (Sir Robert Stapledon) re-appointed Dr Azikiwe, Sir Francis and Mr Anyansi (*vide Eastern Region Gazette* of 7th November, 1957), and on 1st February, 1958, he re-appointed Chief Dublin-Green and Mr Nzerem (*vide Eastern Region Gazette* of 6th March, 1958). In other words, the Privy Council, as at present constituted, consists of the Governor, the Premier, the Deputy Governor, the Attorney-General, Sir Francis Ibiam, Mr John Anyansi, Chief Dublin-Green and Mr J. K. Nzerem. Mr Speaker, I submit that the hon. Mover in framing his Motion the way he had done is guilty of resting it on a foundation of half-truths, and for this reason, I call upon the House to reject it.

My second point is consequential on the first. It is natural for half-truths to obscure human understanding. From his analysis of his Motion, the hon. Mover has left an obscure impression on the minds of hon. Members. They are left to wonder why the Governor appointed only Nnamdi Azikiwe of Onitsha, John Anyansi of Onitsha and Francis Ibiam of Afikpo Division (all Ibos) to assist him in exercising the prerogative of mercy. The mischievous intent of the hon. Mover is the more to be deplored when my constituency, Onitsha, was emphasised in the first two cases, and in the case of Sir Francis, his home town is left out and his Division was emphasised. Mr Speaker, I have proved my point, that the Motion leaves an obscure impression on the minds of hon. Members, and for this reason, it should be rejected.

My third point is that the Motion is calculated to engender a feeling of restiveness among minority groups. From my analysis of the steps taken by the Governor to satisfy the provisions of the Constitution, it is quite obvious that His Excellency acted in his discretion, which is not subject to question by anybody. Even at that, I submit that in

[THE PREMIER]

exercising his discretion, the Governor did take into consideration local feelings. I mean no harm and I do not speak with disrespect when I say that Chief Dublin-Green is from a minority group. We know that that hon. Gentleman is from Bonny in Degema Division, Rivers Province. The mischievous intention of the Motion thus becomes obvious. It is calculated to engender bitterness and discontent among minority groups, and the hon. Mover is a pastmaster in the art of inciting hatred among communities. Again, Mr Speaker, I have proved my point and I respectfully ask the House to throw out this Motion because it is frivolous and is calculated to embitter the relations of majority and minority groups.

My last reason for opposing the substantive Motion is that it seeks to impinge upon the prerogative of the Governor. Here I must admit that the hon. Mover toned down a bit. His use of the word "pray" has made me not to join issues severely with him on this score. My main point is that this House has no right to tell the Governor what to do. The nature of the Royal Instructions makes this clear and my hon. Friend admits it. But I appreciate that the hon. Mover desires the House not only to pray but to prepare a Humble Address. Here, I will part company from him. Since all we can do is to pray, there is no need to prolong the agony by preparing an Address. Let us pray and be done away with the frills. (*Laughter*).

Because the substantive Motion rests on a foundation of half-truths; because it leaves an obscure impression on the minds of hon. Members by leaving our material particulars and emphasising immaterial ones; because it is calculated to stir up ill-will among the communities of this Region and thereby engender a feeling of restiveness particularly among the peaceful loving minority and majority groups; because it seeks to impinge upon the prerogative of the Governor, I feel that my amending Motion should be accepted.

Sir Francis Ibiam is from Afikpo Division in Ogoja Province. I agree with my hon. Friend that it is necessary that we should pray His Excellency to consider including somebody from Calabar Province but it is

quite obvious that if we follow this line of argument, Ogoja Province has been represented, Onitsha has been represented, Owerri Province has been represented and Rivers Province has been represented; although I must submit that I am not quite sure that it would be correct to infer that His Excellency in exercising his discretion, bore in mind the provincial origin of those concerned.

However, I agree with my hon. Friend that in order not to give the people of the former Calabar Province an impression that they are being discriminated against some one should be appointed from that area. But I must say that I still oppose the substantive Motion because the amending Motion will enable the hon. Mover to get what he seeks—that is, to see that all the various communities are adequately represented in the Privy Council. I must make it quite clear that His Excellency is not bound to make his decision on such criterion. I therefore uphold the amending Motion and ask the House to be good enough to support it.

**The Minister of Local Government (Chief A. N. Onyiuke):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed—That the words proposed to be left out, be left out.*

**Mr S. G. Ikoku (Enyong Division):** In the hon. Premier's amendment Motion, Sir Francis Ibiam is left out, so that as the Motion stands, Sir Francis Ibiam is not a member of the Privy Council. So, I think that you can put in that now before we go on with the debate.

**The Premier:** I am advised that it is a typographical error.

**Mr Speaker:** We assume that the name, Sir Francis Ibiam, will be included.

Apart from the explanation given by the hon. Premier, we assume that there are no ulterior motives which we as Members of this House cannot look into. I believe that the prayer of the Motion by the hon. Mover is to attain a certain aim that may ensure that the area from which he comes, that is Calabar, is represented. The hon. Premier had gone to a great length to correct what he considers misrepresentation in order to avoid any misunderstanding of the true position. The



hon. Premier's amendment also seeks to ensure that somebody from Calabar Province is, if possible, included among the membership of the Privy Council. That being so, it appears to me, unless there is other reason contrary, that no useful purpose will be served by having a long debate on the issue. But I should like to ascertain from the hon. Mover whether the amendment satisfies him. If it does satisfy him, I think I will proceed to put the question so that we proceed with other business of the day and get on with the other Motion on which many Members wish to speak.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** I accept the amendment. (*Hear! Hear!*).

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Question proposed—That the words proposed to be inserted, be there inserted.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

Resolved: That this House notes the appointment of Dr the hon. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Premier; the hon. the Deputy Governor; the hon. the Attorney-General; as Official Members; and the hon. J. C. Anyansi, the hon. J. K. Nzerem, M.B.E., Chief the hon. W. B. Dublin-Green and Dr the hon. Sir Francis Ibiām, K.B.E., as Appointed Members of the Privy Council of the Eastern Region, and hereby prays His Excellency the Governor to appoint a Member from the former Calabar Province in the Eastern Region into the said Privy Council.

#### EASTERN REGION DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Mr Speaker, I beg to move: "That this House hereby urges the Eastern Region Development Corporation to implement its declared 'Co-partnership' policy for the construction of oil mills for or sale of existing oil mills to producers' Co-operative Societies or private individuals in the Eastern Region".

Sir, I have to go a little back into the history of pioneer oil mills in the Region. For a number of years before and throughout the last war, the problem of how to improve the standard of palm produce, and in particular

palm oil for export, engaged the close attention of Government. It was realised that when world conditions returned to normal after the end of the war the Nigerian producer might find himself in competition with other world producers and in particular with the output of plantations using the most modern methods and that he would be at an impossible disadvantage unless improved methods of production could be introduced and the grade of oil available for export thereby improved. The nature of the industry itself, with the palm bush spread, over large, thickly populated areas and owned by thousands of different villages and peasant farmers created special difficulties. In these conditions and to meet these difficulties, the Pioneer Oil Mill was designed and produced as the best means which could be devised for introducing more modern and efficient methods of production in the industry without disturbing the present system of individual holdings.

Now, Sir, the first mill was installed at Amuro in the Okigwi Division and came into operation in 1946. As a result of its success, further orders were placed and plans prepared for the erection of many more mills by the then Eastern Region Production Development Board. From the very beginning the Board enunciated its policy which was made public—I am referring to the first Annual Report of the Eastern Regional Production Development Board, 1949-50—with your permission, Sir, I read from page 4, paragraph 12:

"When the mills were first mooted it was decided to adopt a policy whereby the Department of Commerce and Industries should run them while experience was being gained and staff was being trained, with the intention of handing them over to private Nigerian enterprise if they proved themselves an economic success. As the result of this decision the mill was designed as the smallest economic unit possible, and an attempt was made to keep the cost of machinery and installation within the figure of £5,500, as it was considered that an outlay greater than this would not attract Nigerian capital at that time. In fulfilment of this policy the Amansi mill was handed over to the Ibez Trading Company of Onitsha in 1948, and negotiations have been in progress for transferring the Amuro mill to the Okigwi Industrial Company. Two other

[MR E. O. EYO]

mills are at present being built at the request of private companies—at Mbawsi and Ndi-zuogu: in all four cases the necessary loans having been approved by the Eastern Regional Development Board.

“It became apparent that a great expansion of the programme of mill installation was necessary if their primary object, of improving the quantity and quality of oil throughout the area of production and thereby ensuring a safe market and good prices for the producers, was to be achieved. An order for a further fifty mills for the Eastern Region was therefore placed.

“The scheme was therefore put before the Regional Production Development Board and it decided to take over the existing mills owned by the Nigerian Local Development Board and to ratify the order of the additional fifty mills of the type already erected and in addition to order two mills of double capacity.

“As stated above some of the mills completed or begun when the scheme was financed by the Nigerian Local Development Board have been sold to private African enterprise, but the Board has decided that it is not justified in selling any more of its mills for some time to come”.

That, Sir, was a declaration of policy in 1949-50 until 1955 when the E.R.D.C. decided on its co-partnership policy. That policy has been approved by Government and it has been enunciated in the Annual Report of the Co-operative Department of the Eastern Region of Nigeria for the year 1954-55, paragraphs 69-70 as follows:

“At the Staff Conference in March, the problem was discussed at length and the conclusion reached that (a) the key to the problem is processing (b) our aim should be the establishment of as many Co-operative Oil Mills as possible (c) Co-operative Marketing of output of Co-operative Oil Mills should enable a co-operative organisation to become a licensed buying agent of the Marketing Board for palm produce, (d) when a co-operative buying agent exists the problems of Co-operative marketing of home processed oil and kernels will become somewhat easier.

“In February the Eastern Region Development Corporation announced what it called a ‘co-partnership’ policy for the construction of Oil Mills for or sale of existing Oil Mills to producers’ co-operative societies on credit, with an initial deposit of £2,000 and the balance payable over 10 years at interest of three per cent. The Eastern Region Development Corporation will provide assistance with management and maintenance of the Mills on payment. This new policy should make it possible within the next two years to establish several Co-operative Oil Mills”.

At this stage, Sir, may I add that the policy extends to private individuals on payment of deposit of £3,000 and the balance payable over ten years at 3 per cent interest. I will also refer to the Annual Report of the Co-operative Department for 1955-56—paragraphs 65 and 66:

“Co-operative Oil Mills—In paragraphs 69 and 70 of the 1954-5 Report, the conclusion is stated that the key to successful co-operative marketing of oil palm produce lies in processing (Oil Mills), and the ‘Co-partnership’ Scheme of the Eastern Region Development Corporation was mentioned. During 1955-6, the first Pioneer Oil Mill to be owned by a co-operative society in the Region was erected, and two other Mills also came under Co-operative management. The first agreement under Co-partnership Scheme was between the E.R.D.C. and the Asutan-Ekpe Co-operative Community Development League for the erection of a Mill at Ikot Iyan. The League contributed £2,000, and the balance was treated as a loan by the E.R.D.C. at three per cent. The Mill was erected in record time by the German firm, Beton Monierbau, and opened in November. During four months, it had the excellent throughput of 726 tons of fruit and made a profit of £1,730 for the League. This, of course is not exactly co-operative processing and marketing”.

“The E.R.D.C. agreed to a special arrangement for two other existing (unsuccessful) Mills, by which for an experimental period of three or four months the co-operative society could operate the Mill on a rental basis. The Ikeduru

Co-operative Oil Mill Union took over the Inyishi Mill in October under this arrangement, and the Okon-Ika Co-operative Oil Mill Union took over the Ikot Ama Mill in November. The latter Mill had been so unsuccessful that it had actually been closed for several months and it was the C.O.M.U. that got it reopened . . . ”

Now, Sir, that is the declared policy of the E.R.D.C. in respect of its co-partnership scheme. That scheme is well received throughout the Eastern Region and my complaint is that there has been some delay in the implementation of the policy. In my clan in Uyo Division, there is a large co-operative organisation that has been negotiating for the last ten months with the E.R.D.C. over the co-partnership scheme and the people are becoming rather impatient over the delay in reaching agreement in supply of an oil mill. The people of the Region want these mills. It would be a breach of faith if they are denied these mills in view of the declarations made in 1949/50 and the declared policy of the E.R.D.C. in 1955.

We must reckon on the role of the co-operative movement in a socialist society. We must integrate the co-operative movement into our socialist structure. I wish to ask the Minister of Production to urge the E.R.D.C. to hand over 50 of its Mills to Co-operative Societies. I understand that the E.R.D.C. is now making losses on some of these mills. The first Annual Report of the E.R.D.C. 1955-56 showed some profit. But the second Annual Report 1956-57 shows a loss up to date by the Pioneer Oil Mill Scheme of £141,488. Government must decide on its future economic policy. My suggestion is that at least half of the E.R.D.C. mills be handed over to Co-operative Societies. There are up to 100 at the moment. I am sorry my hon. Friend, Mr Ihekwoaba is not here because the E.R.D.C. sold one of the mills to him in Ahoada Division and from discussions I have had with him he is making good use of this mill. If 50 of these mills are handed over to Co-operative Societies at £10,000 each, then the E.R.D.C. would have £500,000. I think the E.R.D.C. is very much in need of £½ million at the moment because I understand that the E.R.D.C. is not getting grants from the Marketing Board. That will help the farmers, the producers, those who own

the palm fruits in the Region and will be an incentive to others to establish producers' co-operative societies. The people who will benefit under this scheme are really the producers' co-operative societies. These societies having been organised by the Co-operative Department should be in possession of a number of these mills in order to control production. As proposed in the Annual Report of the Co-operative Department, we are thinking of a time when these Producer Co-operatives will become licensed buying agents to the Marketing Board and not until we reach that stage will we be able to provide more incentive to palm oil production. I am not interested in the present licensed buying agency. I am thinking of reaching down to the people at the village level and organising them into producers' co-operatives because they own the palm fruits and they should be able to control production of palm oil. They should then be appointed licensed buying agents to the Marketing Board. Then, and only then, shall we have done something to protect the interests of the producers.

I note that the Minister of Production has put down an amendment to my Motion. Something must be done to encourage production of palm oil by handing over some mills to Producers' Co-operative Societies and individuals who are able to satisfy the conditions laid down by the E.R.D.C.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

**Chief I. I. Morphy (Ogoja Division):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

**The Minister of Production (Dr M. I. Okpara):** Mr Speaker, I beg to move an amendment Motion standing in my name in this wise: "To leave out all the words after 'that' and insert 'this House notes the existing policy of the Eastern Region Development Corporation to dispose of its oil mills, by outright sale or by hire-purchase agreement, to proved Co-operative Societies or private enterprise, and urges the Eastern Region Development Corporation to explore ways and means of accelerating the implementation of that policy' ”.

[DR OKPARA]

Mr Speaker, Government is always appreciative of any constructive suggestion towards the E.R.D.C.'s development in this Region. The hon. Mover of this Motion who was himself a member of the E.R.D.C. from 1953 to February, 1955 and later Chairman from 1955 to April 1956 has based this Motion on a misconception. You will notice, Sir, that he has quoted at length from a document which does not belong to the E.R.D.C.—from the Annual Report of the Co-operative Department of the Eastern Region of Nigeria. One would say that if his motives were entirely pure, he would not now suggest his ideas to the House when he could have carried them out or suggested them when he was intimately connected with the affairs of the E.R.D.C.

The original Motion as it stands in the name of the Mover urges:

- (1) The E.R.D.C. to implement its declared Co-partnership policy for the construction of Oil Mills;
- (2) That the oil mills should ultimately be put up for sale or given out to producers' Co-operative Societies or private individuals in the Eastern Region.

This House must now know, Sir, that the E.R.D.C. has never formulated a Co-partnership Policy for the construction of oil mills for sale or disposal to Co-operative Societies or to individuals. Notwithstanding what the hon. Member has quoted from a Co-operative Society's document, what the policies of the E.R.D.C. are towards the Pioneer Oil Mills Schemes are:

- (1) to build and run mills while experience is being gained and staff is being trained with the intention of handing them over to private Nigerian enterprise if they proved themselves an economic success.
- (2) to instal mills and sell them to proved Co-operative Societies or private enterprise on a hire-purchase system.
- (3) to give technical assistance to private oil mills throughout the Eastern Region.

I am surprised, Sir, that the hon. Member who has had such very close connection with the E.R.D.C. can be so ignorant of the policy of the body he was charged to run. It boils down to two things—either the hon. Member was ignorant of the declared policy of the E.R.D.C. or he has set out not only to mislead the House, but also to disrupt the affairs of the E.R.D.C. with which he is not now connected.

It is my duty, Sir, having explained the real declared policy of the E.R.D.C., to ask the hon. Member from Uyo to accept the amendment Motion.

Basically, Sir, the original Motion, besides being entirely based on wrong premises, makes one fundamental assumption which is entirely unacceptable. It urges the E.R.D.C. to implement its declared policy which implies the declared policy is not being implemented.

To bring the truth forcibly to hon. Members, I ask two very simple questions from the Mover of this Motion :

- (1) To deny that the policy of the E.R.D.C. of handing over its mills has not been accelerated since he ceased to be connected with that body.
- (2) To quote from any document or letter, or publication where it has ever been stated that the E.R.D.C. has a co-partnership policy for the construction of oil mills.

If he cannot quote from the official E.R.D.C. documents perhaps he will give us a single example of a case in which an oil mill was jointly constructed between 1953 and April, 1956 when he was connected with the oil mill and the E.R.D.C. Perhaps he can give us one example even before 1953. Perhaps the alleged policy is contained in the E.R.D.C. Law, 1954.

The hon. Member from Uyo has introduced a degree of confusion hitherto unknown in this House.

For my part I will refer this House to the First Annual Report, Paragraph 12, of the Regional Production Development Board, 1949-50, the forerunner of the E.R.D.C., in which the E.R.D.C. present policy towards

the Pioneer Oil Mills was first formulated as follows: and Sir, I wish you to listen again because it says nothing whatsoever about the vague co-partnership.

“When the mills were first mooted it was decided to adopt a policy whereby the Department of Commerce and Industry should run them while experience was being gained and staff being trained with the intention of handing them over to private Nigerian enterprise if they proved themselves an economic success.”

This is still the declared policy of the E.R.D.C. and it requires no imagination that this policy differs in marked degree from that put forward by the hon. Member from Uyo.

The difficulties inherent in the policy which this Government and the E.R.D.C. both accept were fully discussed at the First Meeting on the 28th of July, 1949.

At this meeting, Sir, it was decided that due regard must be paid to two main factors:—

- (1) That where a private Company wished to buy a mill and to erect and to run it the Board should not interfere.

This decision is relevant in the sense that the E.R.D.C. is not holding a monopoly over the development of Pioneer Oil Mills in this Region. Each Co-operative Society or private enterprise which is vigorous and enterprising enough can set up its own mills. I know, Sir, that as a matter of fact three people have already done so on their own initiative. These people are doing very well.

The second, Sir, is that great deal of care must be exercised in handing over oil mills to private enterprise.

It was feared that some private enterprise, in an endeavour to maximise their profits, will pay maximum prices for fruits to real producers, and reduce labour and wages, at the same time setting aside nothing towards depreciation.

The inherent assumption in the Motion is that its terms benefit necessarily all producers. We, however, recognise that there are a number

of conflicting interests—there are the interests of individual private enterprise, the interests of real producers of the palm oil and palm kernels, (both men and women who own the palm trees and harvest them) and, of course, the interests of the E.R.D.C. itself. What this Motion has failed to do is to recognise these difficulties.

Since the first installation of the Pioneer Oil Mills by the E.R.D.C. seven oil mills have been handed over by the E.R.D.C. for Co-operative Societies in the Eastern Region. These Oil Mills are also being supervised by the E.R.D.C. technical staff to ensure maximum efficiency.

This year alone two Oil Mills have been handed over to Co-operative Societies. Since the Mover of the Motion ceased to be connected with the E.R.D.C. 6 of the 7 Oil Mills have been handed over to Co-operative Societies. But, Sir, between 1953 and 1956, when the Mover of this Motion was connected with the E.R.D.C. only one was handed over to the Co-operative Societies or to private enterprise. Thus, within two years six Mills have been handed over as against 1 in seven years. And yet the Mover of this Motion urges the House to instruct the E.R.D.C. to implement a policy which is being so vigorously implemented.

The House can therefore see that the Mover of this Motion has been a cog-in-the-wheel of the policy he now enunciates and for this reason I cannot say his Motion is good-intentioned.

The other relevant question is: Does the Mover wish all the Mills to be handed over immediately to private enterprise and to Co-operative Societies? If that is his idea of benefiting this Region let him say so. The answer to this is that no responsible Member of this House, even from the Opposition Side, will concede to this request, and if they think that way, they can bring a Motion to this effect.

As hon. Members know, not all the Oil Mills make profits. In point of fact, due to exceptionally wet season last year, every Mill was run at a loss. Under normal conditions, however, the oil Mills around Ahoada area are generally profitable. In addition, profits from Mills are usually made only in the dry

[DR OKPARA]

season between January and April of each year. Over 90 per cent of normal Oil Mills run at a loss for the 8 months of the year. In view of the nature of the Oil Mills trade, it follows that due caution must be exercised before handing them over wholesale to private enterprise or to Co-operative Societies. It stands to reason that very few people can afford to run the Mills at some considerable loss for 8 months in a year. The temptation to underpay producers for their fruits and of retrenchment of labour and of resort to sweated labour is therefore great. Those who stand to lose thus are also producers and the E.R.D.C. as a responsible body, must pay heed to their interests.

There are some other difficulties. Suppose the E.R.D.C. sells all its Mills which are running at a profit, what could be the result? It means that the E.R.D.C. will have to be subsidised further by the Eastern Region Marketing Board—that is, from the funds of the producers—in other words, we will rob Peter to pay Paul. This is a vicious policy because it robs the many to pay the few. This policy is decidedly not in the interests of the producers as a whole.

Suppose further, Sir, that the E.R.D.C. sells all its Oil Mills which are now being run at a loss to private enterprise, the consequence is that the buyers will be economically jeopardised and, in the circumstances, they can hardly be expected to pay for the Mills. Such policy will defeat the whole purpose of the Scheme and expose the private buyers to economic danger.

In the circumstances, we must resort to a practical and effective policy, and this, Mr Speaker, requires some emphasis. The Mills will be sold to Co-operative Societies or private enterprise with due regard to their interests as well as to the E.R.D.C. interests. Any other policy is as false as it is wrong.

Sir, I am glad to tell the House that at this moment, while this Motion is being debated, the Chairman of the E.R.D.C. tells me that further considerations are being given to proved Co-operative Societies to have Oil Mills from the E.R.D.C. Mills on a hire-purchase basis.

I would like to end by referring to one or two points the hon. Mover made. The Co-partnership Policy he has talked of at length, is not seen anywhere in the E.R.D.C. records. We are not, Sir, going to consider selling 50 per cent of our Oil Mills to voracious private enterprise. We are going to consider all the factors of E.R.D.C., producers and private enterprise. And incidentally, Sir, this is my first time of hearing that the Opposition Party has an ideology—it is a step in the right direction.

Sir, I beg to move. (*Applause*).

**The Minister of Commerce (Mr J. U. Nwodo):** Sir, I beg to second.

**Mr Speaker:** The question is that the words proposed to be left out be left out.

Does the hon. the Leader of Opposition accept the amendment?

**Mr Ikoku:** We do not accept the amendment; we are speaking on our Motion.

**Mr Speaker:** Does the hon. Mover accept the amendment? They all seem to be the same thing in the interests of the Region as a whole, the Co-operative Societies and also the producers.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** I am sorry, Sir, I do not accept the insinuations.

**Mr Speaker:** Shun all the insinuations and accept the principles.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** I would rather wish the debate to continue.

**Mr Ikoku:** Mr Speaker, Sir, it is true that there is a lot of overlapping in the statements made by the Mover of the substantive Motion a few minutes ago and by the Leader of the House, but certain clarifications have to be made. I would like to draw attention to this difference, Sir, that the Minister of Production was very emphatic on the point that the E.R.D.C. has no Co-partnership Policy.

I would like to clear that off immediately. We appreciate the fact that his Ministry is a new one and that he has not had time to go through the files. We also appreciate the fact

that there has been a lot of mess in the E.R.D.C. which is only being cleared by the new competent Chairman. You remember that on a former occasion when we had to talk of the E.R.D.C. we did mention the fact—that the files were not in the office; they were away. It is quite likely that this partnership policy is in one of these missing files.

Sir, I would like to draw attention to this publication. It is a fact that it is not an E.R.D.C. publication but it is an Annual Report of a Government Department and the Government must be held responsible for what is here at page 12 of the 1954 Annual Report of the Co-operative Department. It is stated there and I quote:

“In February the Eastern Region Development Corporation announced what it called a ‘co-partnership’ policy for the construction of Oil Mills for or sale of existing Oil Mills to producers’ Co-operative Societies on credit, with an initial deposit of £2,000 and the balance payable over ten years at interest of 3 per cent.”

Now, if the Minister says that this is not correct, I think he has to ascertain from the Minister responsible for the Co-operative Department how he got this information and allowed it to be printed and laid on the Table of this House.

**Dr Okpara:** We haven’t the time to do those things.

**Mr Ikoku:** You won’t have time to do it because it is not a very palatable exercise. The fact remains that this policy has been enunciated by the E.R.D.C. and it has been passed to the Co-operative Department that has made use of it and put it in the Government publication; and as you know, all reports of Government Departments are automatically papers laid on the Table of this hon. House so that you have a collective responsibility for these things; if not, then you have got to tell us, like the Minister responsible for the Co-operative Department who just did not know what it was all about.

Another point I would like to draw attention to is this: that in the original Motion, the House urges the East Regional Development Corporation to implement its policy. In the

amendment, the hon. the Minister of Production wants this House to note the policy, and then went on to say that we should urge the Eastern Region Development Corporation to explore ways and means of accelerating the implementation of that policy.

May I say, Sir, that the whole idea of this hon. House being urged to note the policy of the E.R.D.C. does not arise because the policy is contained in their papers and the papers were laid on the Table of this House. Everything which is laid here is noted by us and so it is completely frivolous and unnecessary. The request of the hon. the Minister of Production is another way of initiating delaying tactics. Tell the people to do the thing. You say: no, let us ask them how they are going to do the thing. What is the difference? The first one is clear-cut and says: gentlemen, proceed with this thing. The second one is dilatory. Sir, the hon. Minister is a Fabian. As you know, Sir, that term means a man who practises delaying tactics. We wouldn’t like to mark time unnecessarily. The proper thing to do in the circumstances is firstly—it has been admitted that the Mills are running at a loss and I am submitting that when a Co-operative Society comes and buys a Mill, it will exert every effort to see that the Mill runs at a profit because it is now a question of private interest—private profit motive. With the Mills remaining under the E.R.D.C. nobody loses when the Mills are not doing well. It is the taxpayers’ money and you know how we all regard it—it is free money to be used at will. But immediately the Mill is handed over to a group of people, they know that they either sink or swim depending on the success or failure of that project. It is like a private business man who decides to put a thousand pounds into a business. He must have sleepless nights and see that that business succeeds. That is the main reason why private enterprises get on much better in the commercial field than Government sponsored enterprises. That is the main reason for our demanding that private enterprises should be given a chance of developing the economy of this Region because Government enterprises are not very much impressed by the hard facts of the commercial world.

The second reason why we support these Mills being handed over to private enterprises

[MR IKOKU]

is this: that you bring in more people into a position where they can make profits. Do not forget that these people own the fruits, the palm kernels. They go out and cut them, and if you hand over the Mills they are going to use every means possible to make the fruits available to the Oil Mills. The reason why the Oil Mills are running at a loss is that the fruits are not coming in sufficient quantity and that is why we say that they should hand these things over to the people who own the fruits. How then can they argue seriously that the fruits will no longer be forthcoming? The policy, Sir, of handing the things over to the owners of the fruits is better both for them and for us. The E.R.D.C. will not stand or be exposed to the risk of incurring these losses. Even if the thing does not succeed when handed over to the Co-operative Society we have succeeded, Sir, in shifting responsibility for the loss from ourselves on to another company or another body. (*Laughter*). They will laugh; but ask businessmen and they will tell you. If they cannot make a profit then they must minimise their loss and one of the accepted ways of minimising one's loss in business is to look for the insurance company. Try to hand over responsibility to insurance company. In this case, this is a simple advice to the Government. Let these Co-operatives take over these Mills. Surely, Sir, somebody who gets up and says he is ready to purchase the Mill—it is a business enterprise, a business gamble—let him take the thing and proceed. If he makes profit, very good; if he makes a loss, well, he has to be responsible for the loss. But right now, what is happening is that we have all these civil servant Mill Managers, civil servant Mill labourers, civil servant fruit carriers and the rest of it. Very bad circumstances, Sir, to employ civil servants and they just keep loitering about. The thing does not produce enough; at the end of the year we have a loss and what do we do? What can we do? It is only to write off the loss.

**Dr Okpara:** There will be no further losses.

**Mr Ikoku:** The Minister of Production did say that there will be no instances of the policy of co-partnership being given effect. I would like to make it clear that the Asutan

Ekpe Pioneer Oil Mill has been handed over under this co-partnership scheme to the Asutan Ekpe Co-operative Community Development League and that the Mill at Inyishi and also the Ikeduru Co-operative Oil Mill have been handed over to the Okon-Ika Co-operative Mill Union. So that it is not quite correct that these things have not taken effect.

**Dr Okpara:** On point of correction, Mr Speaker. What I did say was that there was no co-partnership policy for construction. But I did say that the E.R.D.C. had handed over quite a number of the Mills because I mentioned seven. The hon. the Leader of the Opposition is misquoting me.

**Mr Ikoku:** This policy of co-partnership was first initiated in 1949-50 by the Old Production Board and I just like to quote a sentence from that report on page 4. "In fulfilment of this policy..." (*Interruption*).

**Dr Okpara:** There is no mention of co-partnership.

**Mr Ikoku:** "...the Amansi Mill was handed over to the..." (*Interruption*). What does the Motion say? It says: the policy of construction or sale... (*Interruption*).

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order! I think you have made your point.

**Mr Ikoku:** Another point I would like to make, Sir, is that if we accept the belief, and I think it is a belief based on sound common-sense, that private enterprise is generally more efficient than public enterprise. I think we have a very strong case for urging the E.R.D.C. to proceed very rapidly in handing over as many of these Mills as possible to private businessmen and/or Co-operative Societies. Another point is that if a Co-operative Society purchases a Mill and can run on successfully, the tonnage of palm produce would be quite respectable in a year. As a result, these Co-operative Societies could be licensed buying agents to the Marketing Boards, in which case they would sell their produce at enhanced prices and the commission that would normally accrue to the... (*interruption*) would now accrue to these Co-operative Societies. This, in fact, means that the profits that would have



gone into a single pocket would now go into a group pocket. I would like to address the Minister of Production on a point because he was giving the impression that he does not want to benefit a few at the expense of the many. This is a case where he would benefit the many at the expense of the few, and he should try at least for once, to put his declared—I emphasise the word declared—socialist policy into effect. This is his chance of proving himself a socialist.

**Dr Okpara:** That is why I want it to stay in the E.R.D.C.

**Mr Ikoku:** There can be no real socialist movement without a Co-operative Movement; and if we follow this question of Fabianism, you will find that the Fabian . . . (*interruption*) in England or rather Britain and the Co-operative Movement are all allied to the so called Labour Movement.

**Dr Okpara:** How about private enterprise?

**Mr Ikoku:** I would like to make just one last point. It is that the Mover of the substantive Motion when Chairman of the E.R.D.C. did not give effect to this policy. I would like, Sir, to make it clear that in fact he was the person who resuscitated the policy from the declared policy statement in 1949-50. It came into effect in 1955; so that your citation that nothing was done in 1953 does not apply because the policy was re-affirmed in 1955 and carried out. You cannot, therefore, go to 1953 and 1954. The hon. Member, Sir, reminds me of a sailor who was asked the question: why was America discovered so late. He replied that it was due to the Monroe Doctrine. (*Laughter*). You know very well that America was discovered in 1492 and the Monroe Doctrine was enunciated in 1823. It is the same thing that the Minister is doing.

I would like the Minister to take our points very seriously.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Question proposed—That the words proposed to be inserted be there inserted.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

Resolved: That this House notes the existing policy of the Eastern Region Development Corporation to dispose of its Oil Mills, by outright sale, or by hire-purchase agreement, to proved Co-operative Societies or private enterprise, and urges the Eastern Region Development Corporation to explore ways and means of accelerating the implementation of that policy.

## ORDER OF THE DAY

### Self-Government in the Eastern Region

*Order read for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question (20th March)*—That this House approves in principle the proposals contained in Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1957—Self-Government in the Eastern Region.

*Question again proposed.*

**Mr M. N. Yowika (Ogoni Division):** Mr Speaker, what I was saying yesterday is that Government has decided to devolve its power on its constituents in such a way as to empower them to exercise greater measure of control over their local affairs, and to develop the present Local Government structure and to use it generally as an instrument for implementing Government policy so as to allay the fears of communities. In this connection, Mr Speaker, I have to say that the intention of Government here will not in any way allay the fears of communities—rather it will aggravate them. I say so because membership of this hon. House will increase to 124—an increase of 40 Members. The membership of the Provincial Assemblies will be over 200. Each Provincial Assembly will have Inspectors and Supervisors, and each of these Houses will also have their staff. There will be more than 100 District Councils and Local Councils. There will be councillors in these District Councils and Local Councils. These people will all be paid, and it will require a great deal of money. Government will have to find a great deal of money in order to pay all these people. Where will the money come from? I have to advise hon. Members in this House that they must look before they leap; this is a very wise precaution. The policy statements in this Paper require a little thought and a very close examination—a close examination will reveal that they are far, very far from allaying the fears of any communities.

[MR YOWIKA]

It will be interesting to note that the Provincial Assemblies will have no sources of revenue of their own. They will be dependent on District Councils or the Regional Government.

This kind of arrangement is bound to fail like the U.P.E. Scheme or bring grave inconveniences and sorrows to the governed because if Government insists on carrying the plan through, it will raise taxes in order to meet up the expenditure of Government. This will in effect aggravate the fears of communities rather than allaying them.

Another point, Mr Speaker, is that this arrangement has been carefully and craftily planned to show favouritism to certain areas and to impede others.

I am referring to the single member constituencies. Ogoni consists of five main tribes with distinct languages, culture and traditions.

Southern Khana, about	44,000 people
Northern Khana, about	34,000 people
Gokana, about ...	46,000 people
Tai, about ...	21,000 people
Eleme, about...	14,000 people.

What I want to point out, Mr Speaker, is that since the introduction of the Ministerial system of Government, only the two largest clans have always had direct representation to this hon. House. Northern Khana, Tai, Eleme are not directly represented.

This White Paper allocates them only two seats instead of five. Like other places like Bonny, Opobo, etc., with less population which have been considered and given direct representation to this hon. House—Bonny has a little over 10,000 and Opobo a little over 7,000 and they have their representatives but Eleme which is over 13,000 and Tai over 20,000, Northern Khana over 33,000 have no representatives. They want direct representation. A resolution by the Khana District Council on this topic, a copy of which is with me has been sent to the Premier and I hope he has it. The people of Ogoni claim that they are entitled to five seats and they are therefore craving for reconsideration and re-adjustment of the number of seats to five instead of two. Throughout these Policy

Statements and even throughout the Governor's Address, Ogoni has been practically neglected—no mention has been made of Ogoni.

Mr Speaker, I now turn to the dissolution of Councils. The Government has announced that all County Councils and District Councils will be dissolved . . .

**An hon. Member:** No, no. Which Government ?

**Mr Yowika:** The Minister of Local Government said it and therefore it is Government. If a statement has been made by one of the Ministers it is a statement made by the Government.

It is rather surprising that Ogoni has not been included in the schedule of Councils to be dissolved despite the agitation of the people in a resolution to the Minister of Local Government asking him to dissolve the Khana District Council. I have a copy of that resolution with me.

One more point, Mr Speaker. The so-called devolution of power is no real power. It is an intention to split the country into small and weak units so that they may be unable financially to do anything on their own without seeking aid from the main Government. It is also interesting to note that in these policy statements, references have constantly been made to the Northern Region. I do not see anything in the Government of the Northern Region that this Government should copy as to make constant references to that Government. The only thing I see in that Government is the mass dismissal of Southerners from the services of the Northern Government. Is that what we are going to copy from them ? Therefore, I think that the real intention of Government in this Sessional Paper is not revealed; it is hidden.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, I beg to oppose.

*Sitting suspended at 12 noon.*

*Sitting resumed at 12.30 p.m.*

**Rev. Okon Efiang, C.B.E. (Calabar Division):** Mr Speaker, I rise to congratulate the hon. the Premier and his colleagues for the production of this Sessional Paper. Self-government wherever and whenever it is

pronounced is a charming and fascinating phrase. There is a peculiar pride and respect attached to any self-governing people and I humbly share that pride. It is, therefore, difficult or rather irrational for any freedom-loving person to oppose a White Paper laying out policies respecting self-government. (*Hear! Hear!*). Except, of course, it is a form of self-government that is not appealing to the people—they can oppose such definitely. I think, it may be due to our limited vocabulary in debates; we either oppose or support. In the present circumstances, the Sessional Paper should be received by this House and subjected to severe criticism and examination—thrown out or adjusted for adoption at the end. Self-government is the pride of any people who love the four-fold or all round freedom of the people. I allude to economic, intellectual, spiritual and political emancipation, our method of approach notwithstanding. The Eastern Region has managed to get a conditional Self-government. We have hoisted a symbolic flag and we have autonomy on subjects within our competence and Easterners exclusively form the Executive Council and the House of Assembly. We make and execute our laws and therefore if we do not achieve any of our projects or objectives the fault is entirely ours. Nigeria as a Federation wants Self-government in 1960. The question is which is more important, Nigerian Self-government or Regional Self-government? What will happen when Nigeria achieves Self-government? Will she accept dismemberment of herself by three independent and autonomous countries within her geographical boundaries? Will the self-governing Regions be within or outside the control of the self-governing Nigeria? If within, then what is the meaning of Regional Self-government? Does it consist only of exercising autonomy on allotted functions and therefore, quasi or limited Self-government? It cannot at all be on the same footing with Ghana or any other self-governing territory within the British Commonwealth. That is patent and clear. If the Regions are truly and fully self-governing where is the significance of Nigeria's independence and Nigeria's oneness? It is shocking to note that we can accept Self-government on these terms. Maybe this quasi self-government suits a section of our politicians in order to give them a loop-hole to exercise certain functions or do certain things which otherwise

cannot be done. Will the Regions in the face of Nigeria's independence have three Governors, three Regions and three Premiers and three Ambassadors or Commissioners in the countries with which we have established diplomatic affinity? When States are created and Regions renamed States, will the Regions, Federal Commissioner apart, send six Ambassadors to these different countries? Where is the money to maintain these institutions? What will be our relationship with the other Regions? Nigeria, of course, is not getting independence until the minorities problems are properly and squarely settled. (*Applause from Opposition Bench*). We would like to know whether this Sessional Paper is for the fully self-governing Region or for the quasi or conditional one. I submit, Mr Speaker, that this is not fair to this House or the constituencies to debate on this White Paper with the whole position bristling with unsettled problems like these, while in fact a section of the Eastern Region is still saying "no Separate States no Self-government". My Friend, the hon. the Minister of Production said that when States are created he would not mind any reorganisation or even reshufflement. Mr Speaker, I have two cogent reasons to tender to show why this debate should be postponed.

Firstly, this House will not be doing justice to this subject being of so great importance and magnitude, if we debate it during this Budget Session with its overcrowded programme. A special House should be convened for it.

Secondly, this House is not sufficiently prepared for this debate. Therefore, I think it is premature to enter into it. I venture to make two suggestions a more satisfactory approach to this debate.

Firstly, a conference of this **House** should be convened for the Members to discuss among themselves the implications of this Sessional Paper primarily to be better informed and to assimilate the full significance of its contents Chapter by Chapter and Appendix by Appendix.

Secondly, we should then go out in teams to discuss it at all levels with the constituencies when the local governments intended to be instruments of implementing Government Policy should have a say. At the all level

[REV. EFIONG]

conference, comprehensive minutes should be taken to serve this House for the required debate. It must be remembered that Self-government is of special and paramount importance and it is not Self-government for the politicians alone; it can never be. It is Self-government for the whole Region and this Region has not been informed about it sufficiently. The hon. Premier acknowledging this, prefaced his speech by saying that hon. Members must have discussed this Sessional Paper with their constituencies, but not a single hon. Member said "No". I am saying "No" because I got mine just only last month.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier (Mr J. O. Umolu):** We gave it to you in August during our meeting with Council at Calabar.

**Rev. Efiang:** It never came to me. I had mine from the Clerk of the House last month. Hon. Arikpo is actually this month calling for his own. The Clerk of the House can bear me out. I want to say, Sir, that the success of this scheme depends upon the co-operation of those in our constituencies who are not politicians. If we do not secure their co-operation we shall all suffer in the end. I am submitting, Sir, that this Government had suffered a lot on account of lack of sufficient consultation with their constituencies before implementing some of their schemes. An example is the Region's Finance Law and the U.P.E. Scheme. It is time that this Government became more cautious, prudent and circumspect in matters of this nature, so as to retain the confidence of the public. Here is a classical illustration: if this U.P.E. scheme was to be launched out by more advanced countries—U.K. for example, they would have taken at least three years to prepare it. There would have been sufficient time for registration, the training of extra teachers, building and equipping of new schools, exploration of the sources of revenue, consultation with the people to be affected and their Local Government Councils, so as to know what part they were required to play.

Finally, the scheme would have been studied comparatively in order to call into play the experience of other countries which had tried it. But the Eastern Region took less than a year to launch out such a scheme.

There is no surprise, Sir, that it collapsed. The effect of this unpreparedness is still with us. It is the imperative duty of this Government to discuss this Sessional Paper at all levels, especially when you remember that a major portion of the population of the Eastern Region is still backward, highly undeveloped, indigent, ignorant and superstitious. They have fantastic ideas of what Self-government means. Some believe that when Self-government comes that will surely end their ills—there will be plenty to eat and drink, everyone in his own car; they will have less to do; probably taxation will be reduced to the barest minimum. There will be no white man to molest or check this liberty; some are saying that the worst Home-Rule is better than the best Foreign Rule; while others still say: "We don't want to exchange White Imperialism for Black Imperialism." To this complex society Government surely owes peremptorily the duty to educate and correct these notions. Self-government is never a gift from a benefactor; it is an acquisition fought for every inch and achieved after strained efforts. It is not for the Government alone to fight; it is a melee for all the people.

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order! May I interrupt the hon. Member? What you are saying is that the discussion is premature; that we have not sufficient time to debate this White Paper; and that you really do not want to debate it?

**Rev. Efiang:** I am just proving, Sir, the reason why we should adjourn this debate.

**Mr Speaker:** I am satisfied that you have made your point very well. Do you still wish we really ought to postpone it? If that is your view I put it to you that you have made your point abundantly clear; but you can go on if you want to debate the substance of that White Paper now.

**Rev. Efiang:** I just want to give examples to prove the proper steps which have preceded this debate.

**Mr Speaker:** Will you be good enough to wind up?

**Rev. Efiang:** I want to say that when the Richard's Constitution was being advanced to Macpherson's level, it was necessary to hold

conferences at all levels throughout Nigeria and the Cameroons. It was discussed on the Divisional, Provincial, Regional, and Central levels before it was debated in the House of Representatives. When local government for the East—the Community Development Project under Mr Chadwick, O.B.E., for the East—and when the East was examining the conditions of service of N.A. staff, in order to see that they were brought into parity or conformity with those of their opposite numbers in the Government, these same steps were taken. We had first to acquaint ourselves. For instance, if a certain Member said “I do not want this particular chapter, I agree to the other chapter”, at the end the whole question will be put to this House—those in favour will say “Aye”; those not in favour will say “No”. We will approve the whole. Mr Speaker, I might be called a conservative, an isolationist, or anything. Whatever it is, I will accept any name for the interest of this Government and for the good of this Region. That is my stand.

**Mr J. W. E. Anaba (Obubra Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I rise to support the Motion on Self-Government in the Eastern Region which was so ably proposed by the hon. the Premier. In doing so, I would like to associate myself with the views expressed by the hon. the Leader of this House who during the course of his speech supporting the Mover, expounded the actions of early explorers, missionaries and adduced concrete reasons to show that the necessity for Self-government is urgent.

We should be very grateful to God who has given us the hon. the Premier to ferry us across to the shore of Self-government and finally to independence.

It was the hon. the Premier who ran up the modulator of events in Ghana when he was Editor-in-Chief of the then Gold Coast famous newspaper, *The African Morning Post* with a headline motto “Independent in all things, neutral in nothing affecting the destiny of Africa”. His effort in 1947 when he led the Pan Nigerian Delegation to London brought about the building of Universities in West African Colonies which the Elliot Commission was hitherto opposed to. So that it might not sound in the ears of the protagonist as if I was singing his praises, the few reasons which

I have so emphatically been able to outline are sufficient enough to make any patriotic citizen without selfish aims accept the policy as laid down in the White Paper as very useful.

#### *Ogoja Provincial Headquarters:*

Although the provision in the policy paper favours Obubra to be the Administrative Headquarters for the other three Divisions of Ikrom, Ogoja and Obudu, we are opposed to splits. In consultation with the masses of my constituency, a general agreement has been reached that the six Divisions should continue to function as of old but with the Administrative Headquarters at Abakaliki and not Ogoja as before or Obubra as was proposed in the policy.

In view of population, we are not prepared to agitate for more seats than as prescribed in the Policy Paper but would earnestly wish the Minister of Local Government to lead Ugep town with a population of well over 17,000 to the promised land by granting her instrument to function as Urban District unit as is provided in the Policy Paper.

#### *£9,000 Lump Sum Compensation:*

The lump sum was a communal agreement signed in London and the policy must continue to be followed in order to maintain our prestige. Not only for prestige—it pays the price of bloodshed.

#### *District Council Elections:*

My people are opposed to any other system of election into the District Council other than the usual adult suffrage method. Unless the Minister of Local Government is prepared to change his mind, he should be prepared to entertain petitions of chaos from nearly all over the Region.

#### *Mixture of Sex:*

That which is sauce for the goose is also sauce for the gander is becoming a proverbial phrase in this hon. House and under that headline I would like to ask Government to consider our women folk to take part in politics and administration of justice in the proposed new customary courts on the same footing with men.

Mr Speaker, Sir, these are my humble submissions.

**Mr V. K. Onyeri (Port Harcourt Division):** Mr Speaker, I rise to support in principle the Motion praying this House to approve the White Paper—Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1957.

Mr Speaker, without wasting the time of the House, I have to go straightaway to the section of the White Paper which deals with Port Harcourt. First of all, Sir, I have to pinpoint one defect in the White Paper—the inadequacy of seats allocated to Port Harcourt as contained in page 37 of the proposed membership in the new Eastern House of Assembly—and to say that I am mandated by my people to say that the one seat allocated to Port Harcourt must be changed; we are not only claiming two seats as we have at present, but we are demanding four seats to be allocated to Port Harcourt.

Mr Speaker, you will notice that the White Paper in itself is an attempt to allay the fears of the minorities and I will say this, Mr Speaker, that if we are considering the minorities, there are so many factors to be taken into consideration before we arrive at an equitable definition of what we call minorities. In the Region, I am afraid, I have seen that we in Port Harcourt are in the minority and as such, if you consider all the arguments that have been adduced inside and outside this House, from the protagonists of the idea of the C.O.R. State, you will agree that they have based all their arguments on the sea port of Port Harcourt and its ownership. They want Port Harcourt to be included in their C.O.R. State and once they have got Port Harcourt in their new State they have achieved their political desire in the Eastern Region. Their desire to have Port Harcourt at all costs is well known. Sir, to enlighten the people who are now claiming to be in the minority in the Eastern Region, let me just give them a brief history of Port Harcourt to show that it is an Ibo town and must remain with her Ibo Divisions in the Region in case of more States in the whole country.

Port Harcourt was a farm land known as "Ogbomoto land" in Ikwerre clan of Ahoada Division. In 1913, Mr Harcourt came to Port Harcourt and wanted a piece of land where they would pitch their tent and trade. Unfortunately, when they met the then Chief Nwogbo who was the Head Chief of Diobu people in Ikwerre District of Ahoada Division,

he refused to give the piece of land to them. They went to Okrika, the neighbouring town, and the Okrika people told them to go back to the people of Ikwerre because the land belongs to the people of Diobu. Sir, with the usual British technique . . .

**Mr Amaefunah:** On point of information, Sir, Mr Harcourt was the Secretary of State at the time and that was the reason why it was named Port Harcourt.

**Mr Speaker:** I am not interested in the issue of the history of Port Harcourt, but I am only interested in the relevance of debates of this House.

**Mr Onyeri:** They got the late Chief Nwogbo who signed away the land which is now known and called Port Harcourt.

**Mr Speaker:** I am not interested in the origin of Port Harcourt.

**Mr Onyeri:** I am happy, Mr Speaker, that you now know that those who are now claiming Port Harcourt had neither consulted with the people who originally owned Port Harcourt, nor with us, the people of Port Harcourt about our future. We who are the residents of Port Harcourt are saying that Port Harcourt is a crown land which originally belonged to Diobu people of Ahoada Division—an Ibo speaking tribe and must join their brother Ibos.

Mr Speaker, during the Richard's Constitution, Port Harcourt was given a seat in the old House of Assembly. During the Macpherson Constitution, Port Harcourt had two seats in this very House and we are still two in this hon. House. By that time, Port Harcourt was considered not only by its geographical position, but also its commercial importance in the administrative structure in the whole of the Federation of Nigeria. Sir, during the revision of the Macpherson Constitution, the Eastern Region was given an additional 17 seats to our 80 seats. Two of us by that time were mandated—myself and Dr Mbadiwe—to go and see how the remaining 17 additional seats would be shared. At that meeting, Sir, the Opposition, that was the U.N.I.P. and the Action Group, argued that Port Harcourt and Ikom had a very negligible number of people in their Divisions and as

such, these Divisions should not get two seats in the proposed House. But you will remember, Sir, the argument put forward yesterday by the hon. Member from Ikom—the Govern- Chief Whip; that was the very argument put forward by the N.C.N.C. at that meeting. It was decided that no Division would be made to lose her present seats as already allocated to her because of her population. What I am saying, Sir, is for the Government to make amends in the White Paper, because if we take into consideration the importance of Port Harcourt in the scheme of things, Port Harcourt is not only entitled to over two seats but requires a representation in the Cabinet of the Region.

**An hon. Member:** What are you talking about?

**Mr Onyeri:** Yes, I know what I am saying. I can even argue that out in this way: that Port Harcourt stands in the same parallel as Lagos and recently Lagos was allocated not less than 4 seats in the new House of Representatives and a Member in the Federal Cabinet, and not less than two seats in the proposed Federal Senate for their Obas. I am even strengthened in my argument about Port Harcourt for in the Governor's Speech from the Throne in page 29, paragraph 103, this was said about this important Division. With permission, Sir, I quote:

"Owing to the speed with which Port Harcourt is growing in size and economic importance, resulting in part from work of the company exporting mineral oil from there, previous population forecasts, and therefore the water supply requirements, appear to be underestimated and the population of the town is at present, nearly what it was expected to be in 1965 . . ."

I am saying also, Sir, that the present population of Port Harcourt, if you argue in terms of population, is actually double what it was during the census and I hope that the Government will listen to my plea.

**Mr Speaker:** Are you thinking about the question of population?

**Mr Onyeri:** I have left the question of population, Sir, but according to the last census it was above 58,000. It has doubled that figure now.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I want to make another point and that is the question of representation of urban areas. My own idea, Sir, is that in some of these municipalities you see another minority section. Take for example, Onitsha, etc. If you take the contributions made by various towns and people in this country and then according to the Government views in the White Paper you lump up their representation in the proposed House, I feel these areas will be cheated. They will never see this House even though they have made equitable contribution in the form of sacrifice in bringing about this Self-government which we are now enjoying. What I am saying, Sir, is this: that in a place like Onitsha you must give two seats—one to the stranger elements and one to the Onitsha indigenes.

Mr Speaker, I come now to another minority area that is in Ahoada Division—what you have as Mile 2 Diobu is just a question of 10 feet away from Port Harcourt administrative division. I am just saying, Sir, that the area known as Mile 2 Diobu is sufficient to be given one seat representation in the new House and also should be created an Urban District Council with County powers. Mr Speaker, Sir, the population of Mile 2 Diobu is over 50,000.

Sir, I go to another Division and that is Awka. In Awka Division, Sir, you have two big District blocks—what they call Njikoka District Council and the Aguata District Council. In the Aguata District Council I know that there is a section there called the Enugu Ulo. They have actually petitioned that they want to be separated from Aguata. I have been mandated as a son from the area to say that the Minister of Local Government should not entertain that petition because the people of the area have not picked up any quarrel with the Aguata District Council. They want to remain as one; they have lived as one for long now and I hope the Minister concerned will take that into consideration that there is a section there known as Ndienu Clan who have actually petitioned against any separation from the Aguata District Council.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I pray that when the Government will prepare the final draft of the White Paper they will take into consideration the points I have made about Port Harcourt

[MR ONYERI]

and other Districts in the Region and I hope they will make adjustments accordingly where necessary.

Mr Speaker, I support the Motion.

**Mr N. L. P. Apreala (Brass Division):** Mr Speaker, I rise to support this Motion. Before I contribute my quota directly to this White Paper on Self-government I would like to refer to some of the points raised by some of my hon. Friends, especially that from Onitsha, Mr P. N. Okeke. Here in this House he told us that Government, in that White Paper, had made an appeasement to people of the minority areas and another language he used was that Government had capitulated to the agitations and parochial clamour of the handful of people of the minority areas. I never expected that from an hon. Friend on this Side. I would like to point out that this White Paper has not only favoured the people of the minority areas. We should have been satisfied if other Divisions in the majority areas have not been increased by even one and that only minority areas have been increased. There have been general increase in all the Divisions and there are minority groups even in the majority areas. Many hon. Members who have previously spoken in this House saying that Government had done this at the expense of the majority areas are just trying to fetch water for us with a basket. (*Laughter.*) Mr Speaker, you will see that while some said that only the minority areas were favoured, some Members had gone as far as to mention some other places in the majority areas, and not satisfied, still require direct representation and these as far as I can remember are Ogbaru and Anambra in Onitsha Division. Now, if minority requests are not genuine and that Government has only favoured us, what is still the necessity of reminding Government of some places that seem to him an omission. Now, even if you go into details, the petitions if brought to the floor of this House, will show that the more have come from the people of the majority areas who also agitate. On the whole, Mr Speaker, I presume that many of the speakers to this effect are just like mothers who had entered another house as strangers with young babies in their hands and when the babies were crying for food kept quiet and even pretended

satisfied but when the food was brought, in disguise of tasting the food even wanted to eat more.

I want to say, Mr Speaker, that in this very House expressions have been made by Members in a way which likely caused those of us from the minority areas to be ashamed. But I would like to remind Members that to me, all that uncalled-for noise is empty pride. Some of them have made insinuations which I consider disgraceful. Why is it that they do not compare themselves with the Hausa tribe which is the largest in the whole country? Why is it that there was not much talk about representation in the proposed Senate—when it is said that 12 members will come from each Region? Everybody was silent then but Members talk so much about representation on population basis when it comes to the question of Divisional representation. Some Members who claim to be mathematicians have even tried to give us figures, but they have not deducted the number of Ibo elements who live in the minority areas.

On the whole, Sir, I would call this White Paper on Self-government in the Eastern Region, a response and not an appeasement favouring only those of the minority areas, but an honourable response to the humble cries of the people of the minority areas and also of the minority elements in majority areas. If this White Paper had come to the people two years earlier and enough opportunity had been given to the people of the minority areas to scrutinise it carefully, I can assure you, Sir, that we should have contributed a lot and many of the unsolved problems of the minority fears should have been embodied in it. It could then have been a "Natural Court of Justice". But at the moment, considering the extent of agitations and demands for separate States, it appears to me that this White Paper is an application of medicine at the eleventh hour. (*Laughter.*) I will not like the Opposition to put words into my mouth. I said that it would appear to me to be an application of medicine at the eleventh hour, I repeat.

**Mr E. O. Eyo (Uyo Division):** What is the eleventh hour?

**Mr Apreala:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I should not be regarded ungrateful for some of the



sentiments I have expressed. I appreciate the increase in the number of legislators in the Rivers area—Brass no exception. I am glad that we have been given a separate Province of ours. I hope that a good Post Office will be built in the area—it is of paramount importance.

**Hon. Members:** Ask the Federal Government to do that for you.

**Mr Apreala:** Our Regional Government acts as agent for the Federal Government.

I do know, Sir, that a Commissioner almost of Ministerial status will reside in every Provincial Headquarters and I hope there will be a very fair distribution of amenities. In the past, there had been an uneven distribution of amenities as all good things have been going to Port Harcourt which is now a bone of contention between the Rivers people and the Ibos. This White Paper, if approved, or as it will be approved in principle and its proposals are practicalised, it will entirely solve to a certain extent lots of our fears. That is why in some parts of my speech, I said that if it had come earlier and opportunity given us to rectify or embody more of our fears, it should have been the "Natural course of justice". These are just my contributions in supporting the Sessional Paper No. 2 for Self-Government in the Eastern Region.

**Mr D. E. Akilo (Udi Division):** Mr Speaker, I rise to support the Motion on the Self-Government White Paper. This is really the encyclopaedia to the political advancement of this Region.

I have only two main points to develop, and these are mainly Local Councils and Scholarships. Starting with Local Councils, I have observed that in my own constituency there are two towns that have been combined to have one Local Council, and these towns concerned are Udi and Abudu. I suggest that in the present set-up these two towns should be made to have each a Local Council of its own. As regards those big towns with large populations having at present only one Local Council in their area, I agree with those hon. Members that have spoken that these towns should either be given more Local Councils or have more representation to their District Councils and Provincial Assemblies on population basis.

As far as devolution of powers is concerned, this arrangement has naturally fallen in line with the wishes of my own Division. I must deny the statement made by the hon. Member for Awgu, Mr G. I. Oko, that Awgu should not be joined with Udi. If the hon. Member is afraid of this, Sir, I have to compare the distance between Udi and Awgu and between Awgu and Onitsha. After all said and done, in the old set-up Onitsha was the capital of Onitsha Province and if we compare their distances—between Onitsha and Awgu and Awgu and Udi, we will see that Awgu is nearer to Udi than Onitsha. Therefore, in this case, this argument does not hold water and the hon. Member's fear is well allayed.

Secondly, Sir, if on the line of population Awgu is very well populated, and even more than some of the County Councils; for example, Awgu is 150,800 whereas within that Province you have some Counties that have only 74,000 people and yet in that Province there is no fear of one town dominating another.

On the line of Local Council elections, Sir, I agree *in toto* with those hon. Members who said that elections to the Local Councils and District Councils should be held on adult suffrage. I should suggest to the Government that permanent registers of voters should be created in order to avoid tiresome registrations during the time of elections; and these registers should be revised from time to time and they should last for at least 10 years.

Again, Sir, more polling stations should be created according to the wishes of the people. I say this out of experience. During the last general election, so many people did not cast their votes because of distance and secondly because of congestion so that in this case we should have to create more polling stations.

Coming to the question of scholarship awards, Sir, I am going to say what will affect not only my own constituency but the whole of the Region; and that is, that all the County Councils that have come to make up the divided provinces are not equally developed. In all the new Counties that make up the new provinces these Counties are not equally developed educationally speaking. Those highly developed Counties will continue to have more scholarships if they are allowed to compete with their under-developed areas so that I should expect in the White Paper to see that

[MR AKILO]

those under-developed areas should be compensated on the level of County scholarship awards. In the figures given here, Sir, it is said each of the Counties should have 10 scholarships; I should suggest to the Government that these should be given proportionately; 10 scholarships to the more advanced areas, 15 to the next advanced areas and 20 to the more under-developed areas. This will make the awards comparable as time goes on, so that those backward areas will be able to compete with the more advanced areas and gain entrance to various universities which hitherto were not obtaining in those areas.

I am glad, Sir, that scholarship has been extended to our technical education. This type of education seems to have been forgotten or neglected in the past, but now we have seen its usefulness among the communities concerned. I should suggest to the Government to make expansion of the present existing technical institutes so that many of our boys coming from the schools will be absorbed in these technical institutes.

We should also examine the likes and dislikes of our children in these institutes in giving them the type of things they are going to learn and not to cause them to learn the less profitable trades. Such trades as masonry should be dropped in all the technical institutes inasmuch as the Government is bent to give major works out to contractors and the P.W.D. has already been labour-saturated and they cannot employ these children again. I observe that children who came out from these institutes in 1957 or as far back as 1956 are still wandering about with their grade two technical certificates. These children, Sir, are just accepting insults and abuses from the big contractors whom they go and beg for employment. These contractors don't know that cheap labour is always unpopular and instead of employing these "experts" of the institutes, they employ poor masons because they are afraid of giving them the specified wages according to their trade. There are certain trades to be encouraged strongly and these are cabinet making, shoe making, carpentry and motor mechanism. If on the other hand, they fail to have employment from the Government Department, they should establish their own trade and the Government should help them by giving them loans to establish their own trade.

Last time, while I was touring my constituency, I came across a young man from the Technical Institute, Enugu, producing very fine cabinet cases comparable with those ones that are sold in the shops and this young man, has on the other hand, about ten apprentices and these boys have done their standard six in various schools. This is the way to tackle unemployment in this Region. So, I beg the Government to encourage these children to have money and establish their own trade which they have learnt.

Sir, I should not fail to say a word or two about the conditions of sanitation in this our township. Many people come from different areas to see the capital of the Eastern Region, Enugu. We should begin now to teach our less fortunate brothers decency. It is shameful to see some of the night-soil men doing their business during the day time—during the hours one is on the table either taking his breakfast or supper. I have to remind the Minister of Health that it is now time the Ministry should introduce a law that will specify the hours of removing the pails from the back-yards and then allow these night-soil men to do their business during those hours. So, Mr Speaker, Sir, if we begin now to teach them decency, we shall not be afraid of any stranger coming into this capital.

With these few remarks, I beg to support the Motion.

**Mr P. A. Onwe (Abakaliki Division):** Mr Speaker, I rise to support the Motion on the White Paper on Self-Government in the Eastern Region of Nigeria. In doing so, I want to make certain observations on matters, I think, are very important to this Region and my Division in particular.

I should make straightway to the Ministry of Agriculture. Agriculture, we all know, is the life blood of this Region and Abakaliki, we should all know, is the Trinidad of the Eastern Nigeria. I want to say, Sir, that in Abakaliki, you have the most fertile soil in the Region. There is hardly one crop that does not thrive in that Division.

Mr Speaker, the quarrel I have, is that enough attention is not paid to this Division as far as agricultural expansion is concerned. I want to say that even in the annual crops

(letting alone the major cash crops) such as yams, rice, etc., the people are not being encouraged at all.

I think this is because they are naturally producers and whether the Agricultural Department does anything about this or not, they will thrive. But I am telling you that as far as my knowledge about soil is concerned, if you cultivate soil every year—year in year out—it will be partly losing its fertility and if something is not done to resuscitate the state of its fertility, there is bound to be depression in production. This is exactly what is happening today to yam and rice. If you seize the opportunity of standing by the motor park at the later hours of the day you will see that almost all the lorries—about fifty in a day come from Abakaliki and have yams and rice in them. These yams and rice do not stop here but go as far as to Lagos and from there to Dahomey and other places like Ghana. Of recent, it has been noticed that there is a sort of disease attacking our yams. This disease makes the yams grow spotted and the body hardened so that hardly can you get anything from any yam attacked by this disease.

My submission is that this new disease, if cured, will do us good, because there is nobody here who does not feed on yam.

I am coming to say something, Sir, about livestock industry. In my Division, you cannot call yourself a full-fledged farmer without having to keep cattle. You must keep livestock as well as yams and other crops. In Abakaliki, we have the Headquarters of the Veterinary Department, and this Department is calculated to be carrying on research work at the moment. I do not say that they are not doing their best; they are really doing their best. I think that at the moment, they have got to a stage where we can boast of having discovered the cause of the disease on our livestock. But what I do not like about this Department is that it has no prestige. In the first place, you have only one officer there. He is the Principal Veterinary Officer and he is all and all about the Veterinary Services. I am submitting that this Department ought to have a Director as all other Departments in the Eastern Region. If you compare this Department as it obtains in the Eastern Region with other counterparts of its kind

in other Regions, you will see that the lull in progress is due to the fact that they are not given adequate encouragement.

I want to say, Sir, that this Department ought to be encouraged, because apart from the Veterinary Department we have no other Department that caters for our livestock industry.

I want now to go into the case for Ogoja Province as mentioned by our hon. Friends opposite and also some of my hon. Friends on this side of the House. In doing this, Sir, I want to say that the mandate has been given by my people to Ogoja States Movement before they gave evidence at the Willink's Commission, and there should be no question of either dragging them into Calabar Province or Rivers Province. Our aim is to remain intact in Ogoja Province.

I want to repeat that our aim is to remain intact in Ogoja. Already there is a move by our hon. Friends opposite to carve us into bits. Some of them say they favour Abakaliki and Afikpo coming together as an entity and the rest going over to Calabar Province. This is exactly the opposite of what my people think. The fact is that the whole Province is intact and no force on earth can disunite us. (*Hear! Hear!*). What we want is a Province and a Provincial Assembly. This Province as usual should have its headquarters at Abakaliki. When this is done we will be able to get on as we have done before. You will remember, Mr Speaker, that during the time of the old Provincial Administration we had always lived together, irrespective of culture and language diversity for more than 50 years and therefore anything new will be new to us.

I want now to congratulate the Government for the good turn they have done in my Division in scrapping the County Council. If you have known anything about Abakaliki you will know that for the past six months there has been a grave unrest. This unrest was precipitated by the crisis within the Abakaliki County Council. Mr Speaker, I want to say, Sir, that this misunderstanding in Abakaliki was caused by a handful of people who constituted themselves as the lords of creation in Abakaliki. I want to say, Sir, that events today have proved us right because when this trouble

[MR ONWE]

was started we cried out and made representations to the appropriate quarters; but unfortunately, Sir, there was no heed paid to us by the Ministry of Local Government. Instead, what we experienced was an unflinching support of those whom we were accusing. I have seen accusations levelled in this Region. I have seen allegations made from several quarters and all these allegations, Sir, were always investigated, hence it beats me to hear people start now to talk in disfavour of commission of inquiry. I am saying, Sir, that our own is not a unique affair—it has a resemblance to other allegations and these allegations were always investigated. I am saying, Sir, that our own is not a unique affair. It has a semblance to other allegations and why should ours be treated with contempt. I am saying that unless the troubles in Abakaliki be gone into, they will continue like this because I know the sort of people we have. The fact that we mentioned that about £62,000 grant given to this Council was not well used by the hands that be, is sufficient for the Government to express concern. At the moment, the Council is abolished and we are grateful for that. But even if it is abolished we still require something to be done about it, because the effects of what happened in the Council are still living and will ever live in Abakaliki Division. There is not one man who is friendly with the other. If you go there today you will see not less than 50 C.I.D. men drawn from different points of the country. Some innocent people now suffer. I have seen in the White Paper under the Ministry of Justice where it is said that the policy of this Ministry will be, not only to prosecute the offenders, but also to see that justice is done and to protect the innocent ones, who it is evident are suffering, if not here, somewhere else. I am saying that a circle has been created and this circle is day and night conspiring against individuals who do not share their view, no matter who you are, because they have the support of a few people in Abakaliki Division. I am saying that a look should be made into the affairs of Abakaliki and what is happening today. I do not want to bother you, Sir, about how all these things are carried on. All I am concerned with is that there is trouble in Abakaliki which if not gone into will damage our reputation.

In conclusion, Sir, may I further say something about this Ministry. Of late, I told you that complaints were made against certain individuals in the County Council and I told you that the whole of Abakaliki and the entire people of Abakaliki are against this County Council and those that run it.

Some Local Councils made representations about these malpractices and injustice. But what are we seeing? Fresh complaints springing from other quarters about a new rough deal being meted to the people on this very issue. I know Abakaliki Division very well, Mr Speaker. This Division is heterogeneous and not homogeneous. You can do something to offend the entire Division collectively and get away with it. But it is definitely inviting trouble to mishandle the affairs of a section and find them lying low with it.

What I am trying to say, Mr Speaker, is that the staff of the County Council are now being placed, and the Secretary against whom the people have repeatedly protested is now being forced against them. May I inform you that the "rubicon" of our patience is now crossed.

**Mr Speaker:** If I may interrupt the hon. Member, I believe you have made your point.

**Mr Onwe:** I have made my point but one. The point is that, we want the Minister of Local Government, or the Government for that matter, to make a categorical statement before the House rises. This Secretary is one of those who brought about this problem about which we are now complaining. The removal of the Secretaries of the District Councils in favour of this man is obnoxious. We want to know what these Secretaries have done and why they are being removed. This is being done at the expense of the people and Secretaries of other County Councils. Protests have been sent in to the Minister of Local Government against this particular man. If he is so good, he should be sent elsewhere to give his good services to other Divisions. I would very much welcome a statement for us to take back to our people.

Before I sit down, Sir, I want to say a word or two about the Ministry of Commerce. I want to say . . .

**Mr Speaker:** I am afraid you have exceeded your time.

**Mr Onwe:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I will reserve my comments on this Ministry and others until during the debate on the Budget.

**Mr Speaker:** I would like to be informed if there is any Division whose representative has not been heard. Order! Order! We will hear Bende tomorrow. Meanwhile, I will call on the hon. Nwankwo to speak.

**Mr V. A. Nwankwo (Abakaliki Division):** Mr Speaker, thank you for allowing me to speak at all. I have warned myself not to speak in a manner which would give the impression that I have been provoked by the false allegations made against me, the Police, the Abakaliki County Council and its Secretary by hon. P. A. Onwe. I must proceed first on the lines I have prepared to speak for the interest of my people. I shall then make some points on the speech made by my hon. Friend from Abakaliki to disclose to the House why he is scared about the Police.

I am supporting this Motion wholeheartedly. (*Hear! Hear!*). I am doing this for many reasons. I am the Chairman of the Abakaliki County Council. (*Laughter*). But the fact remains whether we are prepared to encourage lawlessness in the Council or whether law should not be interpreted to its full measure.

I am also the Vice-Chairman of the Eastern Region County Councils Association. Both these organisations have tried one way or the other to persuade Government not to abolish County Councils, but on the long run Government insisted, and after I had examined the reasons and read the White Paper, I came to the conclusion that it is wise that County Councils should be abolished.

There is one thing, Sir, uppermost in my mind which I want to put first to the Government to note seriously; that is in case the Government wants to make some sort of change apart from the present policy, to certain areas that claim to have belonged to one stem or forefather—that is whenever Government thinks of adopting different attitude by joining big

areas comprising of people from one stock to form one County Council, the Abakaliki people should be one. A Member from Aba tried to make out the other time that Ngwa people came from one stock and, therefore, they would like their three District Councils to be merged into one County Council. This, I think, is sound if Government thinks in that line. I want to make Government understand that Abakaliki is a composition of people comprising of mainly four brothers begot by one forefather called Nwanakiriba. This man in those days had four children; viz: Nnodo, Nnoyo, Ezekuna and Agba. The Ezzagbos are part of Nnoyo. The present District Councils are Izi children of Nnodo, Ezzilano; the children of Nnoyo and Ezekuna and Ishielu; the sons of Ezziagbo and Agba.

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order! I am not interested in the history.

**Mr Nwankwo:** The point I am trying to bring out is to show how the people of Abakaliki came from one parentage, and what Abakaliki Division is. Government should look at Abakaliki as one that has the same similarity with Ngwa people and if Government yields to the Ngwas to have their way then Abakaliki which by far has better claims should be allowed to form a county of their own. A Member from Abakaliki has said something about the natives living round the U.D.C. Abakaliki. We have about five villages that live round the township itself. These villages are Agbaja Unuhu, Nkaleke Unuhu, Achara Unuhu, Inyinafu Unuhu, Abaoffia Unuhu, Agba. These villages, all of a sudden, were merged into the township without being consulted two years ago and since then they were forced to pay their tax and rate into the Urban District Council. We thought that the intention was to make them represented as well if these villages will form part and parcel of the township; but up to this moment nothing has been done. These people have complained to the Izi District Council about this high-handedness. The people do not for one moment want to be merged with the township which is strangers settlement and then break off from their kith and kin. I repeat that they want no representation in the Urban District Council nor do they want to be merged with it for any reason whatsoever.

[MR NWANKWO]

The most embarrassing of it was that each of five villages was broken into two sections. One section went to Izi District Council area and the other was merged with the Abakaliki Urban District Council notwithstanding that these five villages are what we call mother towns where other different villages were born or emigrated to form their respective clans within Izi. One could imagine how harmful it would be to separate brothers and relatives in this manner. In view of their backwardness they cannot at present cope with the laws of the Township such as bye-laws and regulations. If they were to ask for representation in the Urban District Council they would have been in majority but that does not solve the problem. I would be very much grateful if the Minister of Local Government in trying to implement the Policy Paper should not force the people to the Urban area and that if he doubts our pleading in this matter he should set up an inquiry by way of plebiscite.

I very much support what other hon. Members said about the representation in the Provincial Assemblies by way of population basis instead of equality. I would like to point at Chapter 5 section 8 page 20 which states "Each County Council area shall be a constituent unit of the Government for purposes of Local Government and Administration. It shall maintain direct contact with the various Ministries of the Government, through a County Inspector, who shall be appointed by the Government from the rank and file of Administrative Officers". This, Sir, I would suggest to the Government to think twice before allowing it to remain unchanged because this is actually the old method during the days of the old Native Authority system where the Resident who was then the Provincial Head was only the avenue of communication between the Native Authority and the Regional Authority.

I am afraid that by using such bottle-neck method that communication should be through the Administrative Officer who shall

be styled Inspectors, the business of the Council shall suffer unnecessary delay and also shall be subject to confidential reports from the Administrative Officers to the Ministries behind the back of the Councils.

I suggest the following powers to be given to Local Councils: power to levy and collect rates for community services, licences, registration of births and deaths, sanitation, maintenance of roads and cleaning of markets. If these powers and functions are given to them in their local areas I think they would be sensitive about the policy of their Government. This will in addition inspire in them the desire to meet together to carry out their functions. Let us not use Local Councils as electoral colleges only and at times, as means of informations to the rural areas.

I agree that there may be some Local Councils in some areas that hold their monthly meetings but the number of such Councils will be comparatively poor. If my suggestion is taken into consideration and put to practice, our Local Councils will be of immense help to us governmentally and bring a rapid and progressive result to backward areas. It is not going to be expensive if proper care is taken to experiment it.

In our area, Court Clerks are Secretaries to our Local Councils and where this is not workable in an area then a clerk in their District Council area could serve them as their Secretary.

*And it being 2.15 p.m. Mr Speaker interrupted the business and the Debate stood adjourned. Debate to be resumed Tomorrow.*

#### ADJOURNMENT

Resolved: That this House do now adjourn  
(The Minister of Production, Dr M. I. Okpara).

*Adjourned accordingly, at sixteen minutes past 2 o'clock p.m.*

EASTERN HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 26th March, 1958

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

PRAYERS

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Cinema Corporation

21. Mr S. N. Alo asked the Minister of Commerce, where in the Region has the Cinema Corporation built cinemas, and when will one be built in Abakaliki.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Commerce (Mr E. W. Udonkim): I am directed to answer as follows: No static cinema has yet been built by the Cinema Corporation. Sites for static cinemas have been acquired in

Abakaliki  
Ikot Ekpene  
Okigwi  
Onitsha and  
Port Harcourt;

and the Corporation is negotiating for sites in Calabar  
Enugu  
Oguta  
Orlu  
Oron and  
Uyo.

Government has at present under consideration the financial position of the Cinema Corporation. If it is found possible to facilitate the raising of additional capital on acceptable terms it may be possible for the Corporation to make a start on its construction programme. But if additional funds cannot be obtained this year, then no early progress on building cinemas can be looked for.

Mr Alo: Has the Corporation no money to start at least one cinema?

Mr Udonkim: The Corporation's fund is fully committed.

Urban District Council, Abakaliki

111. Mr P. A. Onwe asked the Minister of Local Government, whether he does not

consider it advisable that the nine villages now included in the Urban District of Abakaliki, should have direct representation on the Council, as well as the Natural Rulers of Abakaliki.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Local Government (Mr M. U. Obayi): I am directed to answer as follows: The boundaries of the Abakaliki Urban District Council are defined in its Instrument by lines drawn on a map and these boundaries include parts of nine small villages. The area of the Urban District Council is divided into nineteen geographical wards which is the only practicable method for an urban area. The inhabitants of those nine villages are entitled, like any one else living in the area, to vote in the wards in which they live. I do not consider that they should be given any special representation on the Council.

It is Government's policy that natural rulers should be appointed members of Local Government Councils where this is the desire of the people. I have not yet received any proposals from Abakaliki for such appointments, but when I do so I shall take the necessary action.

Traffic Congestion

116. Mr S. E. K. Iwueke asked the Minister of Transport, whether in view of Traffic congestion, he does not consider that the time has come to organise or reorganise the one-way traffic system in some big towns such as Enugu, Onitsha, Port Harcourt and Aba; and whether he will consider setting up an expert committee to prepare a long-term plan for the relief of traffic congestion in the big towns of the Region.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Transport (Mr D. O. Anu): I am directed to answer as follows: Local Government Councils are empowered under Regulation 11 of the Road Traffic Ordinance to restrict the use of vehicles on specified highways and to control traffic generally in townships and elsewhere in their areas of authority. It is therefore the responsibility of the various Municipal Councils and/or Urban District Councils concerned to regulate traffic in their areas. However, the Ministry of Transport will pass a circular to this effect for consideration of the Councils concerned.

**Okigwi-Ezinachi-Uboma-Etiti Road**

117. **Mr S. O. Achara** asked the Minister of Transport, when does Government intend to take over responsibility for the Okigwi-Ezinachi-Uboma-Etiti Road, in view of the fact that it reduces the distance between Okigwi and Umuahia by 15 miles.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Transport (Mr D. O. Anu):** I am directed to answer as follows: Government is considering seriously a general survey of the Road System of the Region. When this is undertaken, the advantages of Okigwi-Ezinachi-Uboma-Etiti Road over other roads in that area will give it a priority consideration, in view of the recently completed community Bailey Bridge.

**Okigwi-Isuikwuato-Ahaba and  
Okigwi-Owerri Roads**

124. **Mr S. O. Achara** asked the Minister of Transport, when is it proposed to tar the Okigwi-Isuikwuato-Ahaba and the Okigwi-Owerri Roads.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Transport (Mr D. O. Anu):** I am directed to answer as follows: The Okigwi-Isuikwuato-Ahaba Road is not yet scheduled for tarring. The Okigwi-Owerri road will be tarred when funds become available.

**ORDERS OF THE DAY****(1) Self-Government in the Eastern Region**

*Order read for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question (20th March)*—That this House approves in principle the proposals contained in Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1957—Self-Government in the Eastern Region.

*Question again proposed.*

**Mr E. Ita (Calabar Division):** Mr Speaker, the problem we are dealing with is of such tremendous importance that we should keep party politics and frivolous heckling out of our deliberations. We are today laying foundations for a sound democratic life in our section of the Nigerian Federation. Our deepest concern should be not merely to allay fears, but to create enthusiasm by producing conditions which guarantee equality of opportunity

for all, to be sure we have been living under conditions that naturally produce fears and discords. Now at liberty to shape our destiny, we should seek not only to remove those conditions, but to create others that will go far enough to convince every member of our community that self-government is real and meaningful. The aim of the White Paper should be to create a new democratic society in which there is unity and harmony because the smallest person feels himself as big and significant as the biggest. Goodwill automatically displaces ill will and mutual distrust as soon as every individual feels that the path of progress is open equally to him as to anybody else in his community. Foundations of democracy were so clear on this that they accepted it as their principal task: (i) to remove every artificial obstacle from the path of all persons and (ii) to provide equal opportunity for everyone to make the most of his inherent powers. Self-Government means this or it has no meaning at all.

The individual is after all the ultimate unit of the community. Whether we come from the majority group or from the minority group, it is what happens to us as individual persons that matters most. The individual is the smallest minority. Whether the group is large or small it is the safety and happiness of the individual that determines the safety and happiness of the group. Thus, group conflicts and disharmonies disappear as soon as every individual feels safe and happy.

To produce this we must work not on the basis of fear but on something far more positive—to arouse enthusiasm in all, because everyone is equally provided for to meet his own needs. The excesses and anomalies in White Paper have already been indicated in the speeches from both sides of the House. Hon. S. G. Ikoku has shown where those excesses fail to satisfy from the point of view of majority as well as of minority, e.g., the electoral changes. Fear of the minorities is thus a bad guide.

Chapter one of the White Paper shows so much power in the Premier's Office. This must have been inspired by some fear though a useful purpose is the co-ordination of the activities of the various Ministries. It is impossible to achieve high efficiency if too



much is handled in a single office. Moreover, the risk of nervous tensions and high blood pressure must be avoided.

Detailed description of the Ministries and their activities is not of much value in such Paper. What is more important is an indication of the degree of responsibility and power a Minister may exercise under his Portfolio, and a broad statement of the major policy of showing briefly how each will operate to secure equal opportunity for all especially, education, commerce and industry.

Local Government system is the very life blood of self-government and should receive the greatest reform in the whole fabric of Government. Their power and vitality should be kept at the maximum level. Failure to do so has to a large degree been responsible for the U.P.E. crisis and other dissatisfaction. The Local Government bodies should enjoy real power adequate and suitable to their functions and responsibilities. Never should the initiative and the opportunity to exercise creative imagination be taken away from them.

This strategy of surrender of power is the real key to federalism. If the strategy is correct, if only enough and adequate power is surrendered, the result is integration. If more or less is surrendered the result is either complete separatism or over centralisation and oppression and dictatorship. Creation of new States interests me only as it makes for integration and "more perfect union". We must read and interpret the "signs of the times correctly". The drive for creation of States has come to stay. Whether we like it or not, we cannot escape it. Numerous powerless 16 Provinces may delay the day, but may not kill the waking power driving towards the creation of States. The ultimate integration of the Nigerian Federation may rest on the basis of the Provinces and Divisions as we have had them and with the exception of very large and populous Provinces like Owerri, the East is destined to evolve into five States or six States.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Education (Mr L. O. Uzoigwe):** Mr Speaker, I rise to support the Motion, That this House approves in principle the proposal contained in the Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1957—Self-Government in the Eastern

Region. I have also to congratulate the Government for producing such a Paper for the better Government of the Region.

I should like, Mr Speaker, to seize this opportunity to say a few words about the opinion of the people of my constituency. Long before the move to abolish County Councils it has been the opinion of my people to have a single County to hold the whole of Ngwa together because it is generally believed that Ngwa people come from one stock, and hitherto the Aba-ngwa County Council had fulfilled this function. Since the move to abolish Aba-ngwa County we have received petitions from various people, particularly the members of the County themselves, protesting against the proposed dissolution. Excepting the Owerinta people who at one time petitioned for a separate district, there is no other section of Ngwa land asking for a district. Moreover, Owerinta people only asked for a district, not district with County powers. They have made that very definite—and their reason for demanding a separate district is that they do not get their due share in the question of scholarship and employment in the Northern Ngwa District Council. They constitute the minority in the Northern Ngwa District area, but they made it very clear that they were not asking for a district with county powers.

**An hon. Member:** What of the South ?

**Mr Uzoigwe:** To the best of my knowledge, there is no move in the South to secede from the Aba-ngwa County. If there are some discontented elements in the South, definitely it is not the opinion of the people of the South to secede. As a representative of the people, I know what they want and what they are talking about. It is not the opinion of the South to secede from the Aba-ngwa County, and when I say that the whole of Ngwa should have a single County to hold them together, that should not prejudice their claim to the single member constituencies as proposed by the White Paper, and also that should not prejudice their claim to the number of scholarships to which they are entitled on account of their population.

With regard to U.D.C., Mr Speaker, I remember in 1956 the Coatswith Commission of Inquiry was instituted to look into the

[MR UZOIGWE]

question of excising the Aba Urban District Council from the Aba-ngwa County Council, and during the inquiry it was proved beyond doubt that the people were opposed to the excision of the Aba U.D.C. from the Aba-Ngwa County. But with the move now to give the Aba Urban District Council county powers, I have to say that the people, particularly the indigenous people of this area, will constitute a minority group, and as such another minority problem will arise. As I said before in this House, long before the coming of the White man, Aba was a village owned by Aba people, but it is not for me to go into the way and manner the land was handed over to the Crown. I will speak about that later; but whatever happens, it is the intention of the indigenous people that they be given nominated members in the Aba Urban District Council. It is the policy of this Government to grant one-third membership of Councils to natural and traditional rulers. It is wrong to say that there are no natural rulers at Aba; certainly, we have natural rulers.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in every organisation there is a system of getting somebody at the head. It is true that the Eastern Region is almost democratic to a fault, but we had some people who were ruling us at Aba before the White man came, and with the coming of the strangers the indigenous people have been reduced to the minority section of the community. As the Government has it as a policy to give one-third representation to the indigenous people, my people feel that they have the right to claim such a representation and, in fact, this point was made clear during the visit of Mr Jones. Some people may argue that Aba is Crown land though the indigenous people do not regard it as such. If you look at other places like Onitsha, the Fegge layout is a Crown land; the Government reservation is also Crown land. This did not prejudice their chances of getting about one-third representation of traditional rulers. Furthermore, Mr Speaker, around the so-called Crown portion of the township, you have what they call the Urban areas, but those are actually not Crown lands. For instance, the Eziukwu area, the Ogbo area and what they locally call Amammuo area. Mr Speaker, they claim that the Ezeala of Aba

should be the President of the Aba Urban District Council. (*Hear! Hear!*).

**Hon. Members:** Who is the Ezeala?

**Mr Uzoigwe:** When the time comes, we shall show you who he is.

With regard to the Local Councils in the proposed Assembly, I feel that representation should be according to population. (*Hear! Hear!*), and not just according to the number of Local Councils. This is in conformity with democratic principle. Coming to Ndoki, Mr Speaker, I received petitions and resolutions from the Ndoki District Council as well as from the people stating definitely that they do not want to discontinue their association with Aba Division. (*Hear! Hear!*). Since the inception of Divisional Administration in Aba, the Ndoki people have been with Aba Division.

It is true that they constitute about 1/10th of the Division but in the proposed Oil Rivers, they will constitute about 1/20th. They will be moving from the frying pan into the fire. This matter was brought up during the sitting of the Minorities Commission and I can assure this House that the people who trumped up this agitation against this move, in fact, are very few people. It is only one village and that is at Akwete, not even the whole of Akwete. The other six local councils are in support that Ndoki should be in Aba Division. But in Akwete, not up to half of the people who are in one Local Council area oppose this. The Ndoki people are Ibos. If you go to the proposed Oil Rivers, you will find various types of languages. Originally, they were agitating for a representation in this House and they have been assured of a representation and the people are satisfied. Mr Speaker, coming to the question of Nto Etudo in Azumini, I must say that I was rather surprised when an hon. Member of this House stated that the land belongs to the settlers. This question came up before the Public Petitions Committee of this House and a Commissioner was sent to enquire about the ownership of the land on which these people settle. A report came back to say that this land belongs to indigenous Azumini people.

Following this report, it was decided that wherever the landlord goes, the tenants must

go. That is how these people were asked to remain in Aba Division. I was startled when my hon. Friend said just the opposite. In fact, the land belongs to the indigenous Azumini people. Wherever the Azumini people go, their tenants must go also.

Coming to the number of Provinces, Mr Speaker, I would suggest that we leave the present Provincial boundaries as they are because multiplicity of Provinces may result in more expenses for the Region. The people are learning to live together and I feel that if the present boundaries are left as they are, it will go a good way for better administration in the Region.

Coming to the Ministry of Town Planning, Mr Speaker, I must sound a note of warning that on no account should compulsory acquisition of land be forced on the people. Before any land is acquired, the owners must be well informed and their consent must be obtained because already in Aba Township, you know what we are suffering. When our land was taken over by the White men, we did not know and we are still looking on the Government of the people to redress the wrong done by the former imperialist Government.

I must seize this opportunity to thank the Ministry of Works for installing and extending water supply in Aba Township. His Excellency the Governor in the Speech from the Throne announced that water supply will be extended to the outlying areas and I am very happy about it because my people who live on the outskirts of the so-called Crown Land have been paying their taxes and water rates all this time and have been complaining that they have paid up their water rates without getting any return. I was very happy when His Excellency the Governor stated that water supply will be extended to the outlying areas because there are two important things in life—air and water and these two elements are not bought.

**An hon. Member:** Water is bought.

**Mr Uzoigwe:** Water is bought only in places where it is not easily obtainable.

With regard to allocation of assets to Local Councils and County Councils, Mr Speaker, I must say that every care must be taken that

servants who have worked for these County Councils for some considerable time, from twenty to thirty years are not paid off and removed from office because I have heard rumours that there is some likelihood of paying off some servants. It will be very inhuman, very unfair to servants who have served or who began their service from the time of Native Administration to be paid off. Some of them now have very large families and probably have only just a few pounds every month to maintain their families. It will be very unfair for some of these people who have not reached the age for retirement to be paid off. So I am advising that whatever happens every effort should be made to see that these people are well fixed in the new set-up.

**An hon. Member:** What of your Ministry?

**Mr Uzoigwe:** With regards to education, Mr Speaker, I must say that I am very happy that the problem of the U.P.E. has been settled once and for all and as the Minister said, with the introduction of Assumed Local Contribution, I think the problem has been completely settled. We look to the Minister for future developments. There is no doubt that we have very good plans for this Region as far as education is concerned. (*Hear! Hear!*).

Mr Speaker, with these few words I beg to support the Motion.

**Mr N. O. Onwudiwe (Okigwi Division):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise to support in principle the proposals contained in Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1957—Self-Government in the Eastern Region. I support the Motion wholeheartedly because the aims and objects are carefully set out and are calculated not only to drive home self-government to the people of the Eastern Region but also to improve the lot of the people and to accelerate development and progress. (*Hear! Hear!*). It is outlandish and contradictory to be negative and critical as has been the case with Members of the Opposition. This has clearly indicated that there is no iota of truth in the statement once made by my hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition that the Government of the Eastern Region is one of planlessness. Such a statement, Mr Speaker, is nothing but a bundle of inconsistencies, or a bundle of contradictory voices.

[MR ONWUDIWE]

The second point I want to make, Sir, is on equal representation in Local Government Councils. I want to say, Sir, that it is the view of my people that representation in Local Councils should be based on population. I want to draw the attention of the House to the fact that at the commencement of the Local Government set-up a distinct clan or clans of well over 30 to 40 thousand, united in order to form one Local Council instead of splitting into smaller parts. In my Division, for instance, we have a clan called Ugili with a population of 34,000. This clan, Sir, had one united and undivided Local Government Council. There is another known as Obowo in Eriti District with the same population of 34,000; this clan was split up into three distinct Local Councils. Suppose the Government were to follow this policy of equal representation, what justification is there in allowing 5 representatives to each Council? That is, one Local Council with 34,000 has 15 representatives while the other with the same or identical number has only five. There is no justice in this at all and I say, with all the emphasis at my command, that Government should leave no stone unturned to see that representation is determined on population basis and I think it is right and just that it should be insisted upon.

The next point, Sir, is about the allocation of seats in the House of Assembly in respect of the Okigwi Division. I consider it to be inadequate. A careful study of Sessional Paper No. 2—Self-Government in the Eastern Region—shows clearly that the C.O.R. areas have a lion's share while the majority areas are at a disadvantage. Let me give an example: in Abakaliki Province according to the new set up, we have Abakaliki Urban District with a population of 12,000, one seat; Edda County with 38,000, one seat. In Calabar Province we have Akpabuyo County 35,000, one seat; Biase 28,000, one seat; Calabar Urban District 46,000, one seat; Ejagham County 16,000, one seat; Odukpani County 15,000, one seat; Western Calabar County 34,000, one seat. In the Oil Rivers Province, we have Bonny County, 10,000, one seat; Okrika County 70,000, one seat and so on. Let us compare them with Okigwi Province. Eriti County which consists of three distinct clans, Obowo with a population of 34,000,

no seat; Uboma with a population of 20,000, no seat; Ihitte 19,000, no seat. It means, Sir, that all three have no seat. (*Laughter*). Okigwi Northern County with a population of 205,000 had only 3 seats.

A few moment's reflection, Mr Speaker, will clearly show that there is no justification in making the distribution. If justice is to be counterbalanced, due consideration should be given to areas that are at a disadvantage.

May I draw the attention of hon. Members to the fact that Mbano District in Okigwi Division consists of 4 distinct clans:

Ehime has a population of 58,000.  
Osu has a population of 35,000.  
Ugiri has a population of 35,000.  
Ubama has a population of 18,000.

Mr Speaker, is it not astounding to see that all the 4 distinct clans have but 2 seats while the population of each distinct clan warrants 1 seat? By right, Mbano District ought to have 4 seats. I appear so plainly to ask Government to give this matter its closest attention and to see that it reconsiders its decision before it is irrevocable so that Mbano will have 4 seats, Eriti 2 and Okigwi Northern County, 4 seats.

It is quite unfair to allocate 67 seats to the C.O.R. State areas which amounts to 55 per cent of the total number of seats to the Eastern House of Assembly. This tantamounts to sacrificing majority interest to satisfy the interest of the unappeasable minority. I can assure this Government that such is not free from adverse repercussion in the near future. Minority fears are endless.

The next point, Mr Speaker, Sir, is education. It is the aim of Eastern Nigeria Government to make Local Government schools model ones. This cannot happen unless they have proper supervision and adequate management. To the best of my knowledge, mismanagement and improper supervision exist in our Local Government Schools. It is quite unfair for the Secretary and the Chairman of County Councils to supervise and manage schools because they have no idea or experience to penetrate into their work. Consequently, we cannot expect efficiency and proper organisation from them. For instance, the Chairman and Secretary cannot know when the school is

under or over-staffed. The proper thing to do is to hand over schools to Voluntary Agency Managers who are specialised in the art of management.

In accordance with the Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1957—Self-Government in Eastern Nigeria page 6 paragraph 2, may I read.

**Mr Speaker:** Don't read.

**Mr Onwudiwe:** In this, Sir, the Government made no reference to Voluntary Agency schools as to offer the same courses free of charge, to the children of the inhabitants of the same area. In my own considered opinion, I think the Government would give out the same measure and equal opportunities to all schools, both County and Voluntary Agency schools.

The transfer of Local Government Council staff cannot be over emphasised. Time without number, we have pointed out in this hon. House that there is necessity for transferring the staff of the Counties. This will do much to enhance efficiency and also sound the death nail of "son of the soil policy". The "son of the soil policy" is attended with dangerous precedent. It breeds discrimination and favouritism and influences badly the local politics of the area of authority. It is hoped that in due course or in the immediate future, Government will make it a point of duty to effect the transfer of the Local Government staff so as to enhance efficiency and accelerate progress. It is a well known dictum that variety is the spice of life. Self-government based on change is the need of our day.

Devolution of powers is a welcome plan for the people of this Region. The proposed Provincial Assembly for Okigwi Division is purposeful and considered to be much valuable to the people of my Division. It is the view of my people to stand alone when the Provincial Assemblies come into operation in the Region. It is also the wish of the people of Okigwi Division that Government sets up a substitute to serve as a kind of link in the whole Division before the abolition of former County Councils and before Provincial Assemblies come into existence.

Okigwi Division is gifted with mineral resources because it has the same nature of

land as Enugu which has such minerals as coal, lead, zinc, etc. The Government should explore the possibility of tapping the resources of such a Division. It has rich and fertile soil favourable for the growth of rice and oranges.

There is heavy mortality among our domestic animals annually. But there is no mention of this in the Sessional Paper No. 2 concerning this dangerous and death consuming disease and how best to eradicate it. Let Government do something immediately for immediate eradication of the disease. In the past few weeks fowls have died in great numbers and something should be done in order to facilitate this. If allowed to continue any longer the fowls in the Eastern Region will soon be completely annihilated.

**Mr K. J. N. Okpokam (Ikom Division):** Mr Speaker, in supporting the Motion by the hon. the Premier that this House approves in principle the proposals contained in Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1957—Self-Government in Eastern Nigeria—I wish first of all to thank those Members who had paid tribute to Dr the hon. Nnamdi Azikiwe for instilling the spirit of nationalism and self-realisation into the youths of West Africa in general and those of Nigeria in particular. It was due principally to this courage and hard work that internal self-government for Eastern Region has become a reality.

Mr Speaker, I am only sorry that I have to speak for only ten minutes on the important question of self-government. I must oppose and condemn in very serious words the inference made by a Member from Owerri Division when he said: "unless those from minority areas are taught to know that they are on the minority there will be no peace in the Eastern Region". That goes to mean that he was suggesting to Government to rule with aggression. We shall oppose and resent any attempt to rule by aggression.

It was suggested that Ogoja Province should now be divided into two parts, the Abakaliki Province with headquarters at Abakaliki, and Ogoja Province with headquarters at Obubra. There is no need opposing the headquarters being at Obubra since the whole idea of dividing the old Ogoja Province is not acceptable. We are 1,082,211 people strong, and we had lived together for

[MR OKPOKAM]

many years; we had never quarrelled; we had always lived in peace and we had enjoyed provincial council under the Richard's Constitution. There is no reason at all for us to be split into two separate Divisions as is proposed in the White Paper. We realise that the Ibos in Abakaliki and Afikpo Divisions are 706,642 as against all other tribes in Obubra, Ogoja, Obudu and Ikom Divisions, with a population of only 433,167. We are quite satisfied; we know that the Ibos there have never ill-treated our people. People do not seem to know what the word "minority" as used by politicians means. The major tribes in the Federation of Nigeria are the Hausas of the Northern Region, the Yorubas of the Western Region, and the Ibos of the Eastern Region. The Ibos in the Eastern Region live principally in Owerri and Onitsha Provinces.

Well, Mr Speaker, hon. Members from these two Ibo Provinces asked Government for more concessions. They referred to family groups in Owerri and Onitsha Provinces, living among their own Ibo people as minorities. I think it was just politics. They were only trying to mislead Government. Ibo families could not be minorities in the midst of their own Ibo people. The intention was to make it possible for Owerri and Onitsha Provinces to have more seats in the House of Assembly. That is selfishness. I hope that such demands would not be listened to by Government. Let me tell the hon. Members of this House that no favour has been done to the people of Ikom. The Macpherson Constitution laid down that every Division must be represented by two Members. Ikom is a Division and, therefore, has two seats in the House of Assembly.

In the 1957 Constitution the provision made was that no Division would lose as a result of the new basis of representation and that is why under the new Constitutional arrangements Ikom continues to have two seats. What has really happened is that the Ikom town with a small population of 7,000 has been favoured at the expense of the rest of the Division, but the number of persons representing the Division has not changed at all. We of the Ikom Division are still where we were, so that all the insults we received and all the comparisons people have been

making are as base as they have no foundation. Mr Speaker, I want to say that we in Ikom Division are really not happy about these new arrangements, unless it is not the intention of Government to give only one seat to the rest of the Division (43,000), remembering that our population has increased by the addition of three clans from Obubra Division. Unless it is the intention of Government to increase representation for the rest of the Division by one seat, it would mean that one of our two Members would represent 7,000 people and the other 43,000 people spread over an area of over 40 miles square. The Member for Ikom town could pass across Government policy in only one lecture while it would take his colleague, the Member for the rest of the Division, over one month to go round from village to village disseminating Government policy. This should be carefully considered by Government and the rest of the Division accorded an extra seat, if Ikom town must form a constituency.

Sir, the position of Boki people is a sad one. They have had the misfortune of being split into small groups in Ikom, Ogoja and Mamfe Divisions. Excluding those of Mamfe Division, the Bokis number 26,000 people. They strongly want to come back together again and form one administrative unit and to be accorded representation in this House. The same is true of the Agbo people who are on the minority in Afikpo and Obubra Divisions.

In Afikpo Division, out of a population of 109,000, they are only 12,000. In Obubra Division they are only 13,000. The two groups in Afikpo and Obubra Divisions want once more to come together because they have been together before the British came there.

They want one Council and a seat in the House of Assembly. What we would suggest as more appropriate is single member wards for Ikom Division and that the Division be divided as follows:—All those people who live on the left bank of the Cross River and their kinsmen on the right bank of the same River should form one constituency. We have the Ofutop people with a population of 8,734, Olulumo people with a population of 2,482, Southern Etung people with a population of 3,428, the Nde people with a population of 3,993, Udu people with a population of 1,504, Abanyi people with a population of 3,849

and Nnam with a population of 1,332. These groups will form a total population of 25,252. Then the rest of the people on the right side of the Cross River the Ikom Clan, Northern Etung Clan, Boje Clan, Abo Clan, all together numbering 25,590. It would be seen that constituencies arranged on these lines would be fairly equal in size. On the other hand, if my suggestion for a Boki County is acceptable to Government, we should then rule off the two Boki Clans from the second constituency suggested above. In this case, the alternative suggestion would be: The Ofutop Clan, Olulumo Clan, Southern Etung Clan, Nkum and Nde Clans with a total population of 20,171—one constituency. The Ikom, Northern Etung, Akparabong, Nnam and Abanyum Clans with a total population of 21,989—the second constituency.

In connection with the question of scholarships, Sir, I wish to say that I think it would still be possible under the old system to award these scholarships according to the needs of the Region. I see in the White Paper that under the former policy, it was not possible for Government to award scholarships which would meet the immediate needs of the Region. Government has therefore decided to go strictly on merit. Under this new policy, it would be possible and very likely too that all the best that Government wants could be selected from one Division with a population of 450,000 before Government finds time to look into a Division with say 45,000 or 50,000 as in the case of Ikom in which case there would be uneven development resulting from uneven distribution of scholarship awards. What I want to suggest is that if you do not want to keep strictly to the old policy, you could modify the system by awarding 50 per cent on merit and 50 per cent on Divisional basis to make sure that every Division would have something.

**Mr M. U. Etuk (Uyo Division):** I am very grateful for the opportunity to make my contribution to this most important debate. Before I go too far I would like to correct the faulty impression that most of the Members have made on the floor of this House. In most cases it goes to show that they do not understand what is called democratic form of government.

**An hon. Member:** As you understand it tell us,

**Mr Etuk:** In the pamphlet or booklet by Sir Ivor Jennings on page 9, Mr Speaker, with your permission, I would like to quote three sections.

**Mr Speaker:** In connection with what?

**Mr Etuk:** In connection with what they have said and in support of what the Premier has done.

**Mr Speaker:** What is it?

**Mr Etuk:** To be able to make democratic system of government work three things must be done, otherwise it cannot work successfully. Firstly, "the several communities must be reasonably equated in respect of social, economic, and educational development", otherwise it does not work. "Secondly, the active politicians must be patriotic enough to subordinate their communal ideas to their national ideas". (*Hear! Hear!*). "Thirdly", and this is very important, Mr Speaker, "the minority communities must believe that public policy is carried on in the national interest and not in the interest of the majority community. If it is suspected that there is any favouritism in respect of public expenditure, or contracts, or jobs, the minority will go into opposition with the intention of offering not constructive criticism but obstruction. This will be so even if the allegations are in fact quite untrue".

Mr Speaker, it is here (in comparison) that I must forget I am speaking from the Opposition Bench, and offer my genuine appreciation to the Premier, who with all his shortcomings as a human being is a born leader, for his broadmindedness. (*Loud applause*). The utterances of those who advertise victimisation of the minorities, I am sorry to say, Mr Speaker, are products of little minds.

I will now speak mainly on the proposals in the White Paper. My constituency has four main fears about this White Paper, because instead of allaying the fears of the people, it has increased them. I am happy however, that the Premier in his earlier speech made it quite clear that they are proposals which can be altered, amended or even shelved, if they were found to be unworkable.

The first fear of my people is on the proposals for the devolution of powers. Their fear is

[MR ETUK]

that they will constitute them into a permanent minority incapable of exercising the basic human right of self-determination.

The second fear is that the Government never keeps strictly to its words. The proposals give the impression that power is being transferred to some community or a body of people, but when you examine them critically, you will discover that no power is transferred at all; rather powers are being taken away from them. They are saying one thing and doing another. It is just like a child asking the father for a fish but is given a snake, which in turn bites and poisons the child to death. (*Laughter*). Thirdly, if the proposals contained in the White Paper are meant or intended to replace the persistent demand of the minority for a separate State, my people say: that will not do, because they believe that the granting them of a separate State will give them the opportunity of progressive development which they cannot achieve under the proposals as laid down in the White Paper.

The fourth and last fear is that, the whole intension of the Government is rather obscure and looks like the old imperialist role of divide and rule—breaking the Region into 16 Provinces with very small or no powers at all, in order to put them under subjugation perpetually.

As I said before, the Premier made it clear that these were mere proposals. If really they are genuine attempts to govern properly, in other words, a good thing being done in a bad way, then we must make suggestions in order to make it workable. In this connection, the first suggestion is that we do not want the name of a tribe to be given to Uyo, as put down Ibibio Province. It gives the wrong impression that the whole Ibibio people are living in Uyo Province. In other words, let Uyo be Uyo.

**An hon. Member:** There is no Ibo Province!

**Mr Speaker:** The hon. Member for Uyo should be given adequate time to express his views and I should be grateful if he is not interrupted unnecessarily.

**Mr Etuk:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. The second suggestion is that there is nothing wrong, unless it can be so proved, why we should not retain the former five provinces, as a basis of our future development. This is politically potent, and it is economically sound. Take for instance, you are going to have only five Commissioners. It is much more economical than having sixteen. You can retain your Councils, but for goodness sake, conduct your elections and let representation be according to population as it is laid down; because anything that is done without a laid down principle is always flooded with suspicion. Then, you have your five Provincial Assemblies, five Provinces and five Commissioners, instead of these multiple Inspectors and Provincial Assemblies. The suggestion is that within a division in each Province you can create a central body, as we did during the time of native administration, divisional councils, whose members are drawn from these county councils or local councils. Then the Provincial Assembly will be a large body which will be given executive and adequate powers to manage its own affairs within the Province. Not as suggested in the White Paper that everything will be done in Enugu and passed on to them to carry out. It will then be a real dignified body with large powers to cater for the interests of the Provinces.

Mr Speaker, I have already indicated that if it is to replace the wish of the people for a separate State, this White Paper cannot be accepted by my constituency.

With this emphasis, I resume my seat.

**Chief G. N. Agbasiere (Orlu Division):** Mr Speaker, so many hon. Members have spoken about minority and majority, but my own speech is different as I am going to enlighten many of the speakers on what I find out between minority and majority.

Mr Speaker, if you look round the hon. Members who have spoken in this House, it will be noticed that none from the minority areas has got up to thank the Government for what is contained in the White Paper in their favour. Such speakers who have shown no gratitude are like the nine out of the ten lepers whom Jesus Christ cured of their leprosy. The nine of them ran away and only one returned



to thank Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ condoled this man for appreciating what was done for him.

The case with the minority areas is that none of the speakers from there shows appreciation to the Government.

Mr Speaker, I beg to draw the attention of all hon. Members to what I have seen in the White Paper. I think it was started by the Minorities Commission of Inquiry. This Inquiry was appointed to help look into the fears of the minorities, but as far as I can understand from this White Paper, it has failed to stamp out the fears of the majority. It has given way to the entire domination of the majority by the minority (*Hear! Hear!*).

Mr Speaker, the Government is about to make a big mistake, because of the Minorities Commission due to the fact that they are afraid of the fears of the minorities.

Mr Speaker, if the majority lodge their own complaint or have their own commission, where will the Government stand? Will they fly to the air? (*Laughter*).

Mr Speaker, I shall tell you that the Government is preparing for the majority or minority but if anyone lodges a complaint, the Government should first of all think of what is the cause before they give their judgment. They should not fear any Minorities Commission; they should know both the majority and minority and find out what they will do in giving judgment so that both the majority and minority should have the same equality and not to allow the majority to suffer because of the minority. (*Applause*).

Mr Speaker, I want to give two examples out of many of them because time waits for nobody. At page 30 in the White Paper under Calabar Province, we have:—

*Counties:*

Akpabuyo County	...	35,609 (1)
Biase County	... ..	28,722 (1)
Calabar Urban District	...	46,705 (1)
Ejagham County	...	16,117 (1)
Odukpani County	...	15,011 (1)
Western Calabar County	...	27,464 (1)

The total is 169,628 with 6 seats. Now, I come to my Division, Orlu Province.

Isu Clan	...	109,838 (1)
Mbanasa Clan	...	36,950 (1)
Ndizuogu and Nwabosi	...	48,656 (1)

Orsu Clan, 67,015—one seat; Oru Clan, 93,752—one seat; total 366,211—five seats. That is, Mr Speaker, for the whole of Orlu Province with a population of 366,211 we have only 5 seats. Subtracting the total number in Calabar Province (169,628) from the total number in Orlu Province (366,211), the remainder is 186,583 with no seat at all, and this is above almost the total population of Calabar Province. On the basis of the number of seats in Calabar Province, Orlu would have had 13 seats, Onitsha about 19 seats, Owerri about 22 seats.

Mr Speaker, I suggest that Government should look into this matter. We are not prepared to sell our rights any longer. This is a democratic Government, ruling by majority.

What I have said earlier applies to Local Councils as well. Government should not please minority groups at the expense of the majority groups. We cannot continue to suffer in order to favour the minority areas.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Finance (Mr A. O. Chikwendu):**

Mr Speaker, I beg leave to congratulate Government for the foresight and ingenuity displayed in the production of the White Paper on Self-government. Despite the views that have been expressed in this House, it is a worthy effort to solve finally the minority problems. The peoples of the Eastern Region are given a fair opportunity to participate fully in Government activities. Self-government becomes more real because it is brought within their reach.

Bende people approve generally the policy contained in the White Paper. They approve without question the proposed Provincial set-up. It is to them more than an adequate substitute for the existing County Council.

The idea of sixteen Provinces in the place of the former five Provinces, I am persuaded to believe, is aimed at achieving the even, equitable and rapid development of the entire

[MR CHIKWENDU]

Region. The projected Provinces appear comparatively equal both in population and in area. By accepting equal responsibilities and achieving similar and equal functions, they will accelerate even and ordered progress. The resultant effect will be amity at the top and the older jealousies which characterised the proceedings of the House of Assembly due to disparities in population will disappear. A reversion to the former Provinces will, in my opinion, tend to defeat the aims and objectives of Government.

Bende people welcome the inclusion of Aro-Ibo in the Province. They will urge Government to endeavour to raise the requisite funds to implement the proposal. In the event, however, of Government finding it desirable to make further adjustments in the Provincial structure due to financial difficulties, Bende people will elect to merge with Okigwi Division to form what should be known as the Imo River Province. The Imo River, Sir, forms a natural boundary between Bende and Okigwi Divisions.

The people of Ariam in Ariam-Usaka clan, the people of Azu-iyi, old Umuahia block, and the people of Umuhu Ezechi in Ohuhu clan have applied to be constituted into separate local councils. The Minister of Local Government should examine their cases objectively. Government should assign functions and responsibilities to local councils.

Bende people would prefer the allocation of seats in Counties and in the Provincial Assembly on the basis of population. We shall fail to attract foreign investors and capitalists to this Region if we are hostile to aliens of sound mind and of reasonable character who may choose to settle here and practise their trades or professions.

Mr Speaker, I support the Motion.

**Mr H. U. Akpabio (Uyo Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I rise to support the Motion and before I go on to touch some of the points affecting my own constituency, I should like to discuss some of the things said by some hon. Members. The Member for Opobo Division said some time ago that the Region is being run by a dictator. I hope he was not very

serious because where you have dictatorship, there must be distinct conditions present such as the nature of party apparatus and organisation which must reflect the conditions that will lead to dictatorship; the psychology of the people of the particular country or Region must be such that will yield itself one way or the other to being led by one man. Then again Sir, the cell system of party organisation which is absolutely absent in the Government Party in the East. One may only find this in the new party in the Region. Again Sir, there must be a secret Police Force. This is completely absent in the East. There must be present fanatical prosecution of the Opposition Members. We do not have it here. There must be intimidation of the public. We do not have it here too. There is always in any dictatorship the subjugation of the dominant ruling class of the people to rigid and strict discipline under regulations and decrees from the Government. If we look through this list, we find that we do not have any of these things in the East. But if you look round the Federation, we have heard of prosecutions and imprisonment and intimidation either in the North or in the West and we do not have it in the East. Therefore the hon. Member should have no fear that the East is heading towards dictatorship. Again, I want to make mention of what the Leader of the Opposition said some time ago. He said that the White Paper is a White Elephant.

**Mr S. G. Ikoku (Enyong Division):** I did not say so.

**Mr H. U. Akpabio:** But I can assure him that this white elephant is a problem child. It is a child that we have to think about. It is a problem that will be present even if we create 20 States in Nigeria. We still have to solve this problem of the white elephant, the devolution of powers, or the problem of the minority in the Region. Now I am glad that this Government has taken steps to solve this problem. It is not only this Government which has tried to solve the problem. The Government of the Western Region did try to solve the problem by appointing Chief Enahoro to take care of the problems of the minority groups in the Mid-West and the North did the same thing by devolution of powers. The East is doing its best to introduce new administrative and legislative measures in order that powers may be delegated to secondary organs

of Government in the Region. This is not only a problem that exists in this country alone. Even in the United Kingdom in the nineteen forties, a Special Committee of the House was set up to study the question of devolution of powers and we find that in the United Kingdom, the Province of Ulster has got a Parliament, and within the British Parliament, there is a Committee for Scottish Affairs and another Committee for Welsh Affairs. It is because of these problems of minority in the society that these people have devised means to solve some of these problems. It is these problems, Mr Speaker, that people have been telling us that we will not be able to rule ourselves because the country is made up of different peoples, and I am glad, Sir, that this Region has started to solve these problems one way or the other. I come to devolution of powers as is put down here in the White Paper.

At page 21, Section E the Provincial Assembly shall express opinion on draft legislation. I want to draw the Government's attention to the Constitution of the Weimar Republic of Germany, that it was due probably to an encroachment of land on the authority of the central government that made the constitution almost unworkable. Mr Speaker, the Eastern House of Assembly as a Parliament should have no encroachment from outside. If we have about sixteen Provincial Assemblies all over the Region, all those sixteen Assemblies would wish the central Legislature of the Region to do their biddings and we know the condition of things in this Region. It will not be very long when every Assembly will claim a right that the Government should do whatever it suggests to the Central Legislature. For this reason, Sir, these Assemblies should have assigned functions rather than having to take part in the deliberations of the Central Legislature.

Then again Section F "expressing opinion on any matter referred to them by the Regional Government". This is another overlapping authority. If we refer to them they would like their suggestions to be heard, and I know that the Regional Government will legislate on matters it thinks fit.

Then "making suggestions for the good Government of the Region on subjects within their competence". I think that section is right.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I pass now to matters affecting my own constituency. The people of Uyo accept the White Paper except that they reject the name, Ibibio Province. Ibibio people are made up of Eket, Ibie and Annang. They would feel very badly about the name of the three groups of Ibibio being given to one group, and even that one group is not made up of all the members of the group. I am suggesting, Sir, that the name should be changed from the Ibibio Province to Uyo Province.

The administrative area of Uyo is really very large except as suggested by some of the Members that we should go back to the five Provincial system so that instead of having sixteen Provinces we should have five Provinces. If we want to keep what is in this White Paper—sixteen Provinces—the Uyo Province extends from a point two miles from Eket to a point a few miles from Arochuku and embraces about 502,343 people. The people of Enyong Division and those from Eastern Ibibio Ikono of Ikot Ekpene would like to form a Province.

**Mr A. G. Umoh (Enyong Division):** Are you speaking for Enyong Division?

**Mr H. U. Akpabio:** Yes; I am speaking for Uyo Province; and then Uyo Province will be made up of the people of Uyo District and possibly Ibekwe.

Then again, Mr Speaker, Iman clan is a big clan in Uyo Division and is made up of Iman of Uyo Division, Iman of Eket Division and also Oniong of Eket Division. Now, the Oniong Section of Iman Clan had been in Eket Division for many years since the beginning of British Administration in Nigeria. The Iman Clan of Awa Court area went over to Eket Division in about 1951 because they thought that the District Headquarters was quite close as it was situated about ten miles away. With the present reorganisation of the system, and since the Minister of Local Government, has directed that anything in one area should be assigned to that area, it means that the Iman of Uyo will have to run the expenses of the T.T.C. there. Apart from this, Sir, most of the people in Awa Court area would like to come back to Uyo Division to form one county and Okon Clan of Western Nsit would like to come to Uyo Division to join their brothers of Western Nsit in Uyo Division. They will then be able to run some of the amenities they have within

[MR H. U. AKPABIO]

the clan. I also think, Sir, that if the Government will consider this, it would be a great help because if Government will not group us together, it means that it will have to give us enough money to run most of the institutions we have got within the clan. But if we are grouped together the Government will only give the grants as it does now for the purpose of running these institutions.

I want to draw the attention of the Government to the Ministry of Health. I said some time ago that we have done a lot of experiments on Agriculture and on how to get new food supplies, but it appears that in the Policy Paper no provision has been made for studies or research into some of the tropical diseases that worry us. I am suggesting that with the new policy, the Government should think seriously on converting at least two hospitals in the Region to medical research institutes, so that we may have doctors there to do some research work on tropical diseases and so on. We cannot wait until we have a medical school here in the Region before we start. We must do so right now.

With this, Mr Speaker, I beg to support.

**Mr I. U. Imeh (Abak Division):** Mr Speaker, I have but a few observations to make on this White Paper. The first is that my people in Abak Division are very grateful to the Government for tabling this Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1957; for in the past, the people living in this particular division had always been despised by their neighbours. I do not intend to open old wounds, but I am quite sure that those I have in mind understand what I mean. I am sure they still remember what I said during the Minorities Commission at Port Harcourt. My people are very grateful that today they have been shown on the map of the Eastern Region as a separate and distinct set of people.

My people in Abak Division have mandated me to speak and place on record before the Government that there be created an Urban District Council in Abak, with well over a population of 18,000, and as the Abak township is developing commercially, educationally and socially, it is the wish of my people that such an Urban District Council be created in

the new proposal. My people demand this because if an Urban District Council is created, they will be able to have 5 representatives in the new House of Assembly instead of 4 as it is at present. With a population of 18,000 or more, I think they are justified to have such an Urban District Council as compared with Ikot Ekpene, (my neighbours) and other places with 7,000.

Now, Sir, I am speaking on the question of the headquarters for the Annang Province. I am fully mandated by my people, the Annang County Council, the Eastern, Western, Northern and Southern Rural District Councils, to place before the Government and to demand that when Annang Province will be created the headquarters should be sited at Abak.

*Sitting suspended at 12 noon.*

*Sitting resumed at 12.30 p.m.*

**Mr Imeh:** Mr Speaker, before we adjourned for the recess, I was trying to say that the Annangs in Abak Division number well over 200,000, the Annangs in Ikot Ekpene Division 180,000 and the Annangs in Opobo Division about 29,000 so that I was trying to make out the reason why the Annangs from Opobo Division and the Annangs from Ikot Ekpene Division should not be merged and come to the central place in Abak Division which has the largest population among the three.

I would also like Mr Speaker, to place on record that there are some Annangs in Aba Division and they live in a village called Nto Etok Urom. "Nto" means children; "Etok" means small in our language and "Urom" means shrine. A group of people worship that shrine. There has never been an expression in Ibo language as "Nto Etok Urom".

Now, the land on which these people live is Annang land and not Azumini land. As a representative of my people I want to place on record that when the Annang Province would be created, the Government should bring these people from Aba Division into Abak Division. I have nothing more to say than to add that my people in Abak Division embrace wholeheartedly this White Paper on Self-government.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Local Government (Mr M. U. Obayi):** Mr Speaker, I rise to support the Motion for the adoption of the proposals contained in Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1957—Self-Government in the Eastern Region and have very few observations to make.

I associate myself with the views expressed by many Members to the effect that representations in all the councils and House of Assembly should be on population basis. This equally applies to scholarship awards which should be on population basis. Post secondary school awards should also be considered on Divisional level.

We are also grateful to the Government for the increase in the number of seats for Nsukka Division from 5 to 7; but Sir, considering the population as enumerated in the White Paper, you will see with me that my Division has been slighted in that Nsukka Division comprises a population of nearly half a million people. We claim that we should have more representation in the Eastern House of Assembly and I submit, Sir, that in the population of nearly half a million people Igbo-Etiti County area with a population of 146,404 having been given two seats, should be entitled to three seats, Igbo-Eze County area with a population of 122,359 having been given two seats are also entitled to three seats, Isi-Uzo County area with a population of 130,402 given two seats should be entitled to three seats and Uzo-Uwani County area with a population of 50,180 having one seat should be entitled to two seats.

Mr Speaker, you are quite aware that we, the representatives, from Nsukka Division are not noise makers. You will appreciate this fact and it seems to us that because we do not make such awful claims, Members from other Divisions seem to think that anything good is not good for Nsukka Division. Apparently we are satisfied with whatever measure the Government thinks fit to give to us with the hope that one day the Government and Nature would show mercy on us.

Now, Mr Speaker, we are very much offended by the utterances of some hon. Members in this House together with the annoying statements being made by rascals over the N.B.C. network and the Press. I have therefore concluded that

it would not be to our interest without making a statement to show that what is sauce for the goose is also sauce for the gander.

**Mr Speaker:** Order, Order. Are you suggesting that those who make statements over the N.B.C. are rascals? Will you be good enough to withdraw the statement?

**Mr Obayi:** I withdraw it, Sir.

It is now clear that those who are bitterest in their speeches over the siting of the University of Nigeria at Nsukka are those from the former Owerri Province. Sir, I will begin this rebuttal by showing that those provincialists who have shouted loudest in this matter had from time to time got various Government grace to develop their Divisions without much revenue to pay to the coffers of the Government than Nsukka. I will also show that whereas Nsukka is the fourth largest Division in this Region the revenue which the Government got in taxes during the period 1952-57 from Nsukka Division is by far greater than what was derived from these Divisions which rank first or second in Divisional population. Here I have comparative figures to show that more taxes were collected from Nsukka Division in these years than in any of these talkative and demonstrative areas. Mr Speaker, Aba Division—Government Capitation Tax 1955-56 £2,315; Tax under Finance Law 1956-57—£99,000, Total £101,215. Port Harcourt Division—Capitation Tax, 1955-56 only £540; Tax under Finance Law, 1956-57 only £74,000, a total of £74,540. Bende Division, Government Capitation Tax 1955-56 £1,259, Tax under Finance Law 1956-57 £60,000, a total of £61,259. Owerri Division, Government Capitation Tax 1955-56 £2,497, Tax under Finance Law 1956-57 £113,000, a total of £115,497. Nsukka Division, Government Capitation Tax 1955-56 £2,835, Tax under Finance Law £113,000, a total of £115,835.

**Chief I. I. Morphy (Ogoja Division):** On a point of order. Mr Speaker, Standing Order No. 25 (2) reads: "A Member should confine his observations to the subject under discussion and may not introduce matter irrelevant thereto". The University to be built at Nsukka is not embodied in the White Paper and as such the Member should confine himself to what is contained in the White Paper.

**Mr Obayi:** Mr Speaker, you will see that in the two years mentioned, Nsukka Division was contributing more to the Government coffers in comparison with what came in from Owerri, Aba, Port Harcourt and Bende Divisions. (*Interruptions*).

**Mr Speaker:** If the hon. Member is not satisfied with addressing his remarks to me, he might as well resume his seat.

**Mr Obayi:** Mr Speaker, you will be surprised to hear of the amount of money spent in these areas by the Government without any grudge from Nsukka representatives. I ask for your indulgence to allow me to go further to examine our position in the way of amenities and I will start with all the Ministries from Agriculture to Works.

**Ministry of Agriculture:**—Government disbursement of expenditure 1952-58: Aba £50,518, Port Harcourt £10,320, Bende £77,016, Owerri £44,518, Nsukka £52,611.

**Ministry of Education:**—Aba £458,639, Port Harcourt £204,086, Bende £354,178, Owerri £758,052, Nsukka £168,360.

**Ministry of Commerce:**—Aba £59,567; only Aba has usurped all of Government money in this respect in connection with Co-operative development. The Government has established industries in large scale, namely, Soap factory, Brewery, and Textiles, etc.

**Ministry of Health:**—Speaking on Health, you will appreciate the fact that apart from the grants-in-aid to the only Mission Hospital at Nsukka, Government has nothing to spend in Nsukka on health as compared with the four Divisions which have Government and other hospitals.

**Ministry of Local Government:**—Aba £199,915, Port Harcourt £86,134, Bende £129,629, Owerri £220,502, Nsukka only £201,403.

**Ministry of Production:**—Aba £52,000, Port Harcourt £48,000, Bende £31,000, Owerri £30,000, Nsukka £9,000.

Mr Speaker, these figures represent the amount of loans for agriculture and Nsukka is

the least of all the five Divisions. Mr Speaker, you will appreciate another fact that not a single Pioneer Oil Mill is situated at Nsukka while most of the palm produce in this Region come from Nsukka Division. One plain fact is that it is the oil from Nsukka Division which goes to enrich the people of Aba, Oguta, Orlu and Owerri. This is a simple fact and we are proud of same, knowing fully well that it is our kindness to those Divisions; yet no Pioneer Oil Mill can be found in Nsukka Division.

**Ministry of Transport:**—Aba Division received £162,000, Port Harcourt £201,503, Bende £539,030, Owerri £76,000, Nsukka only £64,200.

**Ministry of Welfare:**—Aba Division £4,025, Port Harcourt £16,600, Bende £3,500, Owerri £2,920, Nsukka £3,752.

**Mr Speaker:** Order, Order. What points are you making?

**Mr Obayi:** I am going to show that these Divisions I am naming have received almost all Government amenities.

**Mr Speaker:** You have made your points. Will you now turn to another issue?

**Mr Obayi:** Sir, before I conclude this phase of my speech it will not be complete until a total expenditure is given for these Divisions for them to compare with the revenue so derived and tell me the reason why Nsukka representatives should not regard the statements of these hon. Members as full of jealousy and signs of ingratitude. As I said earlier on, Government's revenue from Nsukka surpasses those from the other four Divisions; they should listen and hear the expenditure during the period under review.

(1) Aba £1,353,213, (2) Port Harcourt £1,246,643, (3) Bende £1,175,153, (4) Owerri £1,187,988 and (5) Nsukka £482,363 only.

Now, Sir, you have got at the picture and it is left to you to see whether Nsukka which contributed the most in revenue and has the least in expenditure from Government in the way of amenities when these Divisions are compared, has on any occasion made such complaints of maltreatment in this hon. House. Now that it is Nature's call that Nsukka should be blessed because of the beautiful atmosphere and congenial condition of the place, people

whose artful ambition to have everything to themselves have come to the floor of this hon. House to lay every kind of accusation on that blessed land.

May I say, Sir, with your permission, that my people have asked me to condemn in the strictest language any attempt by any hon. Member to label Nsukka with the accusations so far made, and have also asked me to invite any hon. Member to come and see that rosy land which has been very envious to the unwieldy. (*Laughter*).

While it is not my intention to have made these facts so easy for you to understand our position, I am mindful to say that whereas the only University which will cost this Region some £5,000,000, and which will cater for this Region and Nigeria as a whole has Nature's blessing to be sited at Nsukka, and has become the day to day talk among the so-called uninformed of the geographical situation of Nsukka, and its lively atmosphere, and to be built on a somewhat free land as compared to what it would have cost this Region elsewhere to acquire the land for this purpose, the former Divisions which have been loudest in this matter have made profits in amenities ranging from £1,000,000 and over only to their own credits and developments of those areas. In short they have made a profit of £4,000,000 and over in amenities from Government.

I am not prepared to go into very much details on what hon. Members have had to say in the matter of this University and its siting; yet it is my humble opinion to say that as you go through this exposition, you will see that as humble as we the representatives of Nsukka Division are, we are the most patient people.

I re-iterate that the only thing that hon. Members should do is to agree to have a look at Nsukka and its suburbs so as to give them an insight of what we are saying.

Lastly, Sir, I am satisfied that with the best of all intentions, Government in agreement with Nature have found it fit to listen to the advice of prominent experts.

My hon. Friends from Onitsha Province also oppose Nsukka as a suitable site yet in their heart of hearts they have no land for this

purpose as stated by one of the hon. Members from Onitsha Division and so I will not take them seriously.

Sir, I beg to support the Motion.

**The Minister of Justice (Mr R. O. Iwuagwu):** Mr Speaker, Sir, during the present sitting of this House many searching questions have been directed by hon. Members to my Ministry. When debating the Motion on the Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1957, most of the questions were centred round the proposed Customary Courts which would be established as soon as arrangements were completed.

The hon. Member for Nsukka Mr C. A. Abangwu would like a White Paper on the qualifications of members of the courts to be laid before the House. With due deference, I have to state that such a White Paper is unnecessary.

**Mr C. A. Abangwu (Nsukka Division):** On a point of personal explanation, Sir, I never said that.

**Mr Iwuagwu:** By subsection 5 (3) of the Customary Courts Law No. 21 of 1956,

"No person who has been sentenced by a court in Nigeria to death or to imprisonment for a term exceeding six months for any offence involving dishonesty and who has not received a free pardon shall be qualified to be appointed to be a member of a customary court within a period of five years from the date of such sentence."

With regards the appointment of court members of the proposed courts, it is the intention of my Ministry to give preference to the present seasoned members of the existing native courts. To this end Administrative Officers in the field have been requested by me to submit the names and qualifications of all the native court members in their area of authority. It is from the lists so submitted that the majority of the members of the proposed courts will be selected. In so far as District Courts are concerned, those native court members who are proved to be honest, and to have a high sense of justice will be retained in the proposed system. As regards the County Court which shall be established in each administrative division, men of integrity with a reasonably long experience of human relationship will be

[MR IWUAGWU]

appointed as members of the court. Members of the existing native courts will not, however, be excluded from the membership of County Courts. (*Interruption*). Listen, so that when you go home you will be able to educate your people.

Hon. Members are well aware of the existence of the Customary Courts Rules, 1957, reprinted from the *Eastern Regional Gazette* No. 60 of 12th December, 1957. These Rules are designed to modernise the practice and procedure in our proposed courts. In those Rules, hon. Members will notice that those duties which are now performed by Administrative Officers in so far as native courts are concerned, will, on the introduction of the Customary Courts be performed by the presidents of those courts. One of such duties is the endorsement of committal warrants or orders.

In accordance with the provisions of the Customary Courts Law, 1956, Administrative Officers will cease to exercise judicial functions on the introduction of the courts.

Arrangements are now in progress for the training of Court Presidents in the Community Centre, Awgu. In view of the training, it is imperative that the prospective presidents should be literate persons.

Teachers are excluded from the membership of Customary Courts as it is thought that their inclusion will necessitate a conflict of interests.

The hon. Member for Orlu, Chief Agbasiere, wanted Chiefs to be considered for appointment as court members. At page 18 paragraph 59 of the Speech from the Throne on the 11th of this month, it was stated that the introduction of the courts would necessitate changes in the present judicial system, and that the position of chiefs in a judicial capacity would not be overlooked. This, I think will allay the fears of our Chiefs.

Mr Speaker, Sir, before I leave the question of the personnel of the Customary Courts, I have to refer Members to subsection 4 (5) of the Customary Courts Law, 1956, which provides thus:—

“Before making an appointment under this section the Minister shall consult the inhabitants of the area concerned and shall

consider any advice or recommendation made to him by the Customary Courts Adviser.”

The mode of consultation is at the discretion of the Minister. With your permission, Sir, I have to state that I have never at any time delegated my powers of appointment to any person or persons.

The appointment shall not be based on representative or sectional basis.

Hon. J. E. Eyo, Member for Abak wanted the first implementation of the Customary Courts Law, 1956, to be at Abak, and hon. Apreala, Member for Brass would want his constituency to be the first to be so honoured. Their plea is quite understandable. Every Member of this “August” House will like his own constituency to be the first to be favoured with the introduction of the Law. Unfortunately, it will not be possible to satisfy every Member of the House on this point, but every Member will be well assured that sooner or later the courts will be established in his area. They have all seen the order of introduction as is specified at page 18 paragraph 58 of the Speech from the Throne. Many factors including administrative convenience necessitated the amendment of subsection 70 (1) of the principal law so as to allow the law to be introduced piecemeal.

The hon. Member for Onitsha, Mr Chidolue wanted a new High Court to be built at Onitsha. I have to assure my hon. Friend that my Ministry is fully aware of this urgent need and is very anxious to see that the building is erected within a reasonable time. A reference to this was made at page 17 paragraph 56 of the Speech from the Throne. Likewise at page 17 paragraph 56, it was stated that the completion of the new High Court buildings at Enugu had made it possible for the Federal Supreme Court to arrange to be holding periodical sittings in this Region. This, no doubt, will not only necessitate a speedy trial of appeals from the High Courts, but will also minimise the expenses hitherto incurred by litigants when attending the sittings of the Federal Supreme Court holden at Lagos.

As regards the proposed Jury system, I have to assure the hon. Member for Awka, Mr M. C. Awgu, that a full consultation with all



shades of opinion in the Region will be undertaken before a draft Bill is introduced to this House.

My hon. Friend from Aba, Mr Onwuma, referred with an air of sarcasm to my circular letter No. MJ: 52/59 of 2nd December, 1957. I do not, of course, intend to be disrespectful. With your permission, Sir, I will read the contents of that circular which deals with Adjudication without authority.

Subsection 43 (1) of the Native Courts Ordinance Chapter 142, volume 4, Laws of Nigeria as amended by the Adaptation of Laws (Judicial Provisions) Order, 1955, provides thus:—

“Any person who shall exercise or attempt to exercise judicial powers within the area of the jurisdiction of a duly constituted native court, except in accordance with the provisions of any ordinance or who shall sit as a member of such court without due authority, shall be liable, on conviction before the High Court, a Magistrate’s Court or a Native Court of grade A1 to imprisonment for a period not exceeding twelve months or to a fine not exceeding £100 or to both such imprisonment and fine . . .”

The same provision is contained in section 10 of the Customary Courts Law, 1956.

Sir, there has developed in this Region a practice of trying cases unlawfully by some Chiefs, Councillors and tribal unions. This practice not only hampered the work of our courts in the administration of Justice, but also affected adversely the Region’s revenue which otherwise would be augmented by court fees. To stop this unlawful practice, my Ministry issued a circular to all Administrative Offices to assist in the drive to eradicate the evil.

With these, Sir, I beg to conclude my answers.

**Mr E. O. Eyo (Uyo Division):** Mr Speaker, I rise to oppose the Motion before the House which seeks approval in principle of the proposals contained in the Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1957 entitled “Self-Government in the Eastern Region”. One would have expected Government to be prepared to stand or fall on its proposal in this Sessional Paper by moving a formal Motion calling upon the House to accept

*in toto* the proposals outlined in the White Paper. That would have been a clear cut line—take them or leave them. Rather the House is only called upon to give approval in principle. I have never heard anything so vague and meaningless.

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** We shall spend almost four or five days here in debating approval in principle of the proposals contained in the White Paper. But Sir, when shall we be called upon to approve the actual proposals? At this stage we are only concerned with the approval in principle. I suppose next year or 1960 we will be called upon to debate the actual proposals. We on this side of the House are getting tired with this type of tactics. Last time we were called upon to approve in principle the need to modify the U.P.E. and we now know what that has cost us. At one stage, we were told that the scheme required only £1.4 million by way of Assumed Local Contributions but just overnight the figure rose to £2.4 million.

Now Sir, I ask: how many Ministers saw the draft of this White Paper before it went to the Government Printer? How many Ministers can defend effectively the proposals contained in this White Paper? How many of the hon. Members who speak in support of this Motion really understand the implications of these proposals? The author of this White Paper is asking us to do two things: (1) to deliver into his hands the Imperial pass-keys, (2) and this is a very serious one, he is asking us to put our heads on the execution block. Those of us who represent the C.O.R. area refuse to deliver the Imperial pass-keys into the hands of the author of this White Paper because we know for certain that once inside the door the author will carefully lock us out; we refuse to put our heads on the execution block because we know that the author will not hesitate to swing the axe.

I use the word Imperial pass-keys because I happen to know the avowed political ambitions of the author of this White Paper, namely, the establishment of a financial empire and an Onitsha Empire. Those of us who do not want to come under this new empire want to back out just at this stage. I will acknowledge, Sir, that the author of the White Paper is a very

[MR E. O. EYO]

clever man; he should also credit us on this side of the House with some intelligence to see through his game. The author has thrown two baits: the first is the offer to increase the seats in this House from 84 to 124, and I regret that most of the hon. Members on the Government Bench have swallowed this bait. I just want to dispose of that right away. Those who think for one moment that this proposal will be given effect too soon should remember that these proposals will, in the first instance, be discussed at the Resumed Constitutional Conference, and if that Conference gives its approval and the Constitution is amended, no effect will be given to it until 1962 when this House is due for dissolution. Why make so much fuss in 1958 over a hypothetical question which in all probability is yet to be determined and if determined at all will not be effective until 1962?

Oh yes, we shall increase the number of seats to allow every Local Government Council in the Eastern Region to be represented. Which Eastern Region, this present one? (*Laughter*). I just want Members to understand what the position is. At the last Constitutional Conference held in London, the N.P.C. proposed to increase the membership of the Northern House of Assembly from 131 to 174. They submitted a memorandum to the Conference and the proposal has been incorporated in the Amended Constitution. The Cameroons National Congress (K.N.C.) also proposed an increase in the membership of the Southern Cameroons Assembly from 13 to 26. They submitted a memorandum to the Conference and the proposal has been incorporated in the Amended Constitution. Since when did the N.C.N.C. decide to have an increase in the membership of this House? Because the Premier knew that the Minorities Commission which the Action Group asked for in London had arrived, then he considered himself very clever in producing the White Paper to allay the fears of Minorities in the Eastern Region. (*Laughter*). It is true that the amended Constitution has made provision for increase in the membership of the Northern House of Assembly and the Southern Cameroons Assembly but the fact remains that there will be no change in the present membership of the two Houses of Assembly until the next general elections to the Northern House of Assembly

and the Southern Cameroons Assembly. (*Government supporters: We know*). Well, if you know this, why then do you make all the fuss about the intention to increase the membership of this House?

Section 9 of the amended Constitution provides for the increase from 131 to 174 in the membership of the Northern House of Assembly, but subsection 2 of section 9 says "This Order shall come into operation on the day after the dissolution of the Northern House of Assembly, next following the commencement of this Order." The same applies to the Southern Cameroons House of Assembly under section 3 (a) and (b) of the amended Constitution. So that there is no need for any jubilation over the mere fact that the Premier of the Eastern Region has expressed his intention to seek an increase in the membership of this House in order to give representation to every Local Government Council in the Eastern Region.

I will now deal with the proposal for the creation of sixteen Provincial Assemblies. Here again some Members jubilate as if the proposal would be effective today or tomorrow or even this year. In this connection may I remind hon. Members of the procedure adopted by the Northern People's Congress (N.P.C.) at the last Constitutional Conference in London. The N.P.C. before leaving Nigeria had decided on a new system of Provincial Administration in the Northern Region and they submitted a memorandum to the Conference clearly setting out the new proposals. The Conference accepted the proposals which have been incorporated in the amended Constitution. I am referring to section 234 of the amended Constitution which says:

"The Governor of the Northern Region may by instrument under the Public Seal establish for any province of that Region a provincial administration . . ."

Here again may I ask: Since when did the N.C.N.C. decide on provincial administration in the Eastern Region? If the Premier is really serious over his new idea about provincial administration let him prepare a memorandum for submission to the resumed Conference. It is interesting to note that in March, 1955, I moved a Motion in this House calling for the

abolition of the provincial system of administration in favour of divisional system of administration. That Motion was unanimously passed by this House and up till now, it has not been rescinded. Then, of course, we had five provinces with five Residents.

The new proposal is in favour of 16 provinces each with a Provincial Assembly to be headed by a Commissioner. The difference now, as I see it, is that the Premier objected to five provinces in 1955 because at the head of each province then there was a Resident who was a Civil Servant directly responsible to the Governor. Now the Premier favours 16 provinces to be headed by 16 Commissioners appointed by him and directly responsible to him. These Commissioners who will be Government agents will not be Civil Servants. They will hold political appointments and we have our fears in view of certain things happening now even in our Civil Service. We have an idea as to those who have been already earmarked for these political appointments. (*Interruptions: You are one of them*). The Premier will appoint his Commissioners and post one of them I imagine to my Division—Uyo. I do not grudge anybody who is in a position to rule as he pleases but we made our position as minorities quite clear before the Minorities Commission. Those of us who belong to the Minority Group in the Eastern Region do not want to be ruled by the majority tribe. What beats me Sir, is this: There are two slaves—a huge slave and a small slave (*Laughter*); both of them do not want to be ruled by the British. All along, these two slaves have been fighting together against the British and yearning for freedom, but just when there is a glimpse of hope of a possibility that these two slaves will soon be set free by the British, the big slave would like to rule the small slave (*Laughter*). That is exactly how I see the position at the moment and those of us who are the small slaves will do everything in our power to be free also from the big slaves. (*Laughter*). It may sound funny but that is the picture as I see it.

Before the the white man's arrival in this country, every ethnic group lived side by side with each other, independent of one another. It was the white man who grouped all the ethnic groups together under the name Nigeria.

Now that the white man is going away everybody is asserting his rights. But these people . . . (*Laughter*).

Now, Sir, I know of the inclination of the big slaves to rule the small slaves, but we just want to make it quite clear to these people that we shall have nothing to do with these big slaves besides the fact that we are all Nigerians.

**Mr Speaker:** I thought slavery had been abolished. You refer to slavery.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Well, I was just making an illustration. Slavery might have been abolished in principle but I think . . . (*Laughter*). However, as I have said, I was only just making an illustration.

If you examine the proposed provincial set-up as contained in the White Paper, Sir, there is something very shocking and revolting. You will see that the whole of Uyo Division with certain sections of Ikot Ekpene and Enyong Divisions have been grouped under the proposed Ibibio Province. That, to my people in Uyo Division, is very insulting and revolting. There is a proposal for an Annang Province, an Ijaw Province, an Ibibio Province, but no proposal for an Ibo Province. We from the Minority Group do not accept these proposals and while we are only bidding for time, we hope sooner or later, we will be saying goodbye to our Ibo brothers. (*Applause from the Opposition Bench*).

Reading through the White Paper at page 19—devolution of powers—the first thing that strikes me is the fact that the author of this White Paper has drawn inspiration from Ghana and Northern Nigeria. No wonder then why this document is produced in this form and our attitude on this side of the House to the whole White Paper is one of repulsion. Sir, I appreciate the fact that the N.C.N.C. is Nigeria's counterpart of the C.P.P. in Ghana. I also appreciate the fact that Mr Krobo Edusei, the Minister of the Interior in Ghana recently visited Nigeria to lecture the N.C.N.C. on "Organisation". But then, Sir, is that sufficient reason why new proposals for the self-governing Eastern Region should be modelled after Ghana? And is it not rather derogatory that our new self-governing Region should draw inspiration from the Northern Region of Nigeria which is not yet self-governing? I just cannot understand it. I am referring to page 19 of the White Paper:

"In the circumstances, Government has had to take into account the efforts of nearby

[M E. O. Eyo]

territories to devolve powers on their constituent units, particularly Ghana and Northern Nigeria. It is clear that these territories did face certain realities of politics and administration, which are not alien to Eastern Nigeria, but we cannot afford to over-simplify them."

And then it goes on . . . In other words, we have nowhere else to look to but Ghana and Northern Nigeria.

**Hon. Members:** Why not?

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** A self-governing Eastern Region issuing a White Paper which has been sold to the public as a Charter of Liberty on what obtains at the moment in Northern Nigeria!

What I am saying, Sir, is that those of us who belong to the C.O.R. area do not want to be administered as the people of Northern Region are being administered now.

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order! I think you have made your point.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Before I leave this issue of the creation of States, I would like our brothers to understand that they have no State to give to the people of the C.O.R. area. The question of creating new States does not lie with them. We want the State; we made our representations to the Secretary of State in London at the last Constitutional Conference. The Secretary of State (our master) (*Laughter*) sent out the Minorities Commission; we presented our case before the Minorities Commission and we are only waiting for the report of this Commission. How does that concern other people who do not want the creation of any new State in Nigeria?

**The Minister of Agriculture (Mr P. O. Nwoga):** On a point of Order, Mr Speaker. Standing Order 31—the hon. Member started at five minutes to one o'clock.

**Mr Speaker:** The hon. Member may continue.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Mr Speaker, some Members of the Government Bench have expressed the

view that the Government has been over-generous to the minorities. We thank the Government for any desire now to be over-generous to the minorities in Eastern Nigeria, but we do not need this over-generosity. We are only remaining here to wind up the estate of the Eastern Region, distribute its assets and liabilities before we leave the Eastern Region to form our C.O.R. State. To those who think we are a liability, my reply is that sooner or later they will be happy to get rid of this liability.

I will now proceed with my comments on the structure of the Premier's Office. There is nothing to quarrel about the Premier being the head of the Treasury as this is in keeping with the practice at Whitehall where the Prime Minister is the First Lord of the Treasury. But after copying Whitehall in this respect of making himself the head of the Treasury, the Premier says: "I do not want to follow the pattern whereby the Permanent Secretary of the Treasury is head of the Civil Service. Somebody else must come into my office, be made Chief Secretary to the Premier and become head of the Civil Service." He has refused to give any explanation for this departure. All he said the other day was that he was not bound to follow the practice at Whitehall, but he did copy from Whitehall when he made himself head of the Treasury. The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Finance should be the head of our Civil Service. The whole purpose is concentration of power in one hand. As far as we on this side of the House are concerned, it is only a question of time and we shall be free from the ambition of one man to concentrate all powers in his hands. Then the Premier will be able, I hope, to exercise all his prerogative powers.

The White Paper, I must say, Sir, is unacceptable to us. There is nothing in it to be proud of. The two major proposals which have dazzled the eyes of Government supporters are yet to be determined and as I have already indicated, when determined, have to wait till 1962.

I hope when the Government supporters return to their constituencies they will not mislead their people into believing that every Local Government Council is going to send a representative to the Eastern House of Assembly at Enugu. I hope they will tell their

people what they now know to be the true position regarding the setting up of Provincial Assemblies and appointment of Commissioners.

Sir, I beg to oppose the Motion.

**Mr Speaker:** I think both the Leader of the Opposition and the Chief Whip have been accorded every opportunity to put across their points of view; now that the hon. Premier will speak, I will not tolerate any interference.

**The Premier (Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe):** Mr Speaker, the debate on the proposals contained in the White Paper on Self-Government in the Eastern Region has enabled the House to dissect some of the principles involved in the formulation of these policies. It has also clarified to the Government the changes desired by the various communities concerned. As the duly accredited representatives of their constituencies, hon. Members did not hesitate to criticise these proposals in accordance with the democratic tradition established in this House.

I propose to examine these criticisms and to make appropriate replies. I have caused to be circulated among hon. Members a schedule which shows the nature of the political fears of 35 Local Government bodies which are organised in majority and minority areas. (*Turn to the end of the speech for the schedule.*) These have been brought to the notice of Government through the official channels of communications.

The Opposition speakers fell far short of my expectations. Generally speaking, some of them were negative in their approach, some were irresponsible in their utterances, and some were very constructive indeed. Their main speakers clouded issues and dragged in their demand for a C.O.R. State which, I may respectfully say, is quite irrelevant to this debate. They would have poisoned the atmosphere of this hon. House with their peculiar brand of parochialism had you, Mr Speaker, not used your good offices to ensure that they conformed with the rules of debate as contained in our Standing Orders. I will not repay those of my hon. Friends opposite who committed this egregious error in their own coins, but I will join issues with them in order

to show them that their criticisms have been mostly unjustified and therefore unfair.

The hon. Member for Opobo (Mr A. J. Ekpe) opening for his side of the House proceeded to expatiate on English Constitutional Law, and in this process, he quoted Ivor Jennings and Hood Phillips upside down. Because of the faulty premises which were responsible for his faulty opinion, he argued falsely that it is wrong for the Office of the Premier to be the Treasury even though the Premier is supposed to be the First Lord of the Treasury in the United Kingdom. He thought that since Westminster is our model of parliamentary government and democracy, therefore, it is one hundred per cent perfect. But my Friend does not realise that with all its reputed perfection, it was not until 1906 that Westminster borrowed from Canada the idea of officially recognising and paying a salary to the Leader of the Opposition.

My point is that it is a sheer waste of the time of the House for the hon. Member to come here and denounce what this Government has decided will be the official policy that will suit this Region, just as any other Government has the right to adapt any practice to suit its peculiar temperament. If even my Friend is right, and he is far from being right, we are not bound to swallow the practice at Whitehall hook, line and sinker.

The same gentleman accused this Government of implementing the proposals contained in the White Paper without Parliamentary sanction. In his opinion, it is autocratic for the Executive to act on its policies before Parliamentary discussion. I do not know from where my Friend learned these strange lessons of Political Science, but my answer is that, so long as this Government retains the confidence of the Legislature, it can formulate any policy and implement it. If, of its own free will and volition, Government feels that certain measures are fundamental and should be placed before the House for a full-dress debate, as we have done in this respect, I am of the opinion that we have not done anything amiss.

I strongly resent the allegation that we had started implementing the proposals contained in the White Paper. The fact that precautionary measures were taken to give due

[THE PREMIER]

warning to the County Councils of Government's intention does not necessarily justify the allegation of my Friend. Surely, he does not mean that Government should wait until after this debate is over before the various County Councils are warned. If that had been the case, it is clear that my Friends opposite would be the first to come here and accuse us of planlessness.

The hon. Ekpe committed two errors by accusing Government of victimising Opobo in the interest of an Ibo minority. In the first place, Opobo people do not admit that they are Ibo, although they speak Ibo in addition to their mother tongue which is akin to Ibani. In the second place, Government's proposals in the White Paper are based on representations made to it from time to time by the Amanyanabo, Chiefs and people of Opobo. As a matter of fact, after the publication of the White Paper, His Highness the Amanyanabo of Opobo addressed a letter to my office in which he renewed his argument on the need to merge Opobo and Egwanga. With your permission, Mr Speaker, may I quote at length from it as follows:

"With all due deference to your authority I make, on behalf of the Chiefs and people of Opobo and myself, certain representations, believing that your good nature would incline you to a kind consideration of the points submitted. I refer to the administrative position of Egwanga in Opobo District.

"2. In the 'Protection Treaty' concluded on the 19th December, 1884 between Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom, etc. and the King and Chiefs of Opobo, mention is made of 'The Territory Under their authority and jurisdiction' (*vide* Parliamentary Paper Africa No. 2 1888); and the area of the territory is defined as:—

"The limit of Jaja's country on the West in the left bank of the Andoni River from the sea to a point ten miles from the mouth of the River. Thence the boundary strikes East-North-East across the lower portions of the Ogoni country to the Opobo River, which it reaches at a point opposite the mouth of the Esseni Creek. Crossing the Opobo River, the boundary follows the left bank of the Esseni Creek for a distance of eight miles;

thence it is drawn in a straight line to a point on the sea-shore eight miles distant Eastward from East point and then, turning Westward, it follows the sea-coast to the sea-coast to the left bank of the Andoni River'. (*vide* Parliamentary Paper C.—5365 page 66-7).

"3. Attached to this humble memorial is a copy of a 'Sketch Map of the Lower Course of the Opobo River' prepared by Consul (afterwards Sir Harry) Johnston, an erstwhile British Consul on Opobo River, showing the 'boundary of Jaja's country as defined August 5th, 1887'. Egwanga is situated between 'Essene Creek' and another 'Creek' (south of the Essene Creek) not named on the Sketch M p but popularly called 'Jaja's Creek'.

"4. It must be obvious that the British Government, as far back as the eighties, acknowledged 'Egwanga' as within 'Opobo' territory, and this acknowledgment forms a part of the Protection Treaty. Your attention is respectfully invited to the relevant section of the Laws of Nigeria whereby the Government of Nigeria (including the Government of the Eastern Region) pledges itself to recognise Treaties contracted between any town or country in Nigeria and the British Government. Under and by virtue of the Treaty, and according to the Consul's definition of Jaja's territorial boundary, you will, I believe, accept Egwanga as within Opobo territory.

"5. By a formal proclamation by a notification in the *London Gazette* of the 5th June, 1885 (*vide* Parliamentary Confidential Paper No. 5588, page 158) a Protectorate was established on the 'Niger Districts'—one of which is the 'Opobo District' including Qua Iboe (now Ibekwe County), Ndoki, Ogoni and Andoni with headquarters, for twenty-one years (1885-1906), on Opobo soil. Egwanga has, since then, been a part and parcel of Opobo Town, administratively and politically.

"6. The transfer of the British Consulate in 1906 from Down Below (Opobo) was with the express consent of the Chiefs of Opobo who conditioned their consent with the naming of the new location 'Opobo' as distinct from 'Opobo Town' the native location.

"7. 'Iguanga', (an Ibani word meaning a 'place of rock' because of rock under the River), corrupted into 'Egwenga' was founded long before the Bonny Civil War of 1869—that is, during the time the people now called 'Opobos' established at Bonny. It was a rendezvous for oil-canoes plying between the interior markets and Bonny. The Ibekwes inhabiting the interior of the land on which Egwenga is situated migrated from Ibekwe-Akpan Nya (twenty-three miles from Opobo) sometime in the last century. The trade between Bonny and the Interior markets was established before the dawn of the last century at which time, also, Egwenga was established. Obviously, the Opobos have occupied Egwenga, established themselves, and settled on it, prior to the immigration of the Ibekwes from Ibekwe-Akpan Nya. Here is an evidence that Egwenga has been, from time immemorial, a part of Opobo.

"8. That Egwenga has been a part of Opobo, the Chiefs of Opobo have not desired the name to have a commercial or political significance; otherwise it would give a wrong impression of two independent and unrelated localities. The name 'Egwenga' has been a local address, and, to overshadow this local address, the more popular name 'Opobo' is given to the headquarters of the government in the District. It happened that in 1907 some packages from oversea countries were addressed 'Egwenga' by some commercial firms. Promptly the Opobo Chiefs took a serious objection and the *status quo* was, and has been, maintained. Not only the Government but even the commercial firms have long recognised the fact of Egwenga as part of Opobo Town.

"9. Your attention is respectfully invited to the recent policy of the Government of the Eastern Region as enunciated in the Part 1 of the Sessional Paper No. 2 laid on the Table of the House of Assembly on the 18th November, 1957—Chapter VI (Local Government page 23, paragraph 7). According to this policy Local Government area would be determined by consideration of 'Social intercourse, blood relationship, language, and geography'. A large majority of the Egwenga community are people who have one and the same 'social intercourse, blood relationship, and language' with the people of Opobo

Town. The population of Egwenga Township, according to the 1953 Census Report is 5,106. Minus the Ibos (who speak the same language with the Opobos) other Nigerian tribes and no-Nigerians total 714. The Ibibio population is negligible as they live to a man in their various villages in varying distances from the Township. The population of the Ibekwes (Ibibio), separately given, is 3,806. The distance from Opobo Town to Egwenga is five nautical miles; regular and quick means of transport exist.

"10. It appears, from the White Paper, that it is not Government's proposal to constitute Egwenga a County, and it is not proposed therein to allocate to Egwenga a separate seat in the House of Assembly. Inferentially, Egwenga is not proposed to remain independent. To merge Egwenga (5,106) with Ibekwe County (40,399) is to create the inhabitants of Egwenga, most of whom are Opobos, into a permanent minority with all its repercussive effects. If the submissions that Egwenga is a part of Opobo were accepted, there shall be no hesitation to constitute it (under the present reorganisation) a Local Council under Opobo Town County.

"11. The British Local Government system is, I observe, the prototype of the Nigerian system. Hasluck, in his 'Local Government in England', page 132, says:—"In England the reasons for the existence of several divisions, some of which are anomalous, are mainly historical". With your permission reference is made to the constitution of several Counties in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, of the Counties of Isles of Wight and Ely, and even of the great metropolitan area known as the County of London formed by cutting away portions of Middlesex, Surrey, and Kent. Your graciousness is implored that, in the Opobo Town-Egwenga Merger consideration of history should be paramount.

"12. I hope I am not presumptuous or trespassing on your authority in stating a principle of local government in respect of constitution of a Local Government area. It is a principle that a Government (Regional or Central) considers or respects the view of a Council in an adjoining district that wants eventually to absorb in its own area a local

[THE PREMIER]

unit (such as Egwenga is), or the feelings of the local community. You would appreciate the fact that in support of Opobo Council's desire of absorption of Egwenga, the community, the vast majority of whom are Opobos, would have a strong opposition to the complete independence of Egwenga. It is also a principle that the opposition of as many as five *per centum* of the electors in a locality should influence the judgment of Government."

Thus it is quite obvious that the allegation of Mr Ekpe is completely false and without foundation.

Another Opposition speaker, Chief the hon. I. I. Morphy, in a long-winded prattle asserted that instead of bringing blessing to the people of this Region, self-government has been a bane because it had brought hardship on the middle classes. In one breath he accused Government of formulating policy in the interest of plutocrats, and in the next he reproached that in formulating policy for the devolution of powers, Government did not bring Chiefs into the picture. I affirm positively that the Government of this Region is not administered in the sole interest of any particular class, as had been charged. I submit that the White Paper intended that Chiefs should play an important part, along with other elements of the population, in implementing the policies contained therein. For example, at page 24, paragraphs 14 and 15, it is written, under the heading of "Local Government":

"Mr G. I. Jones of Cambridge University recommended that with reference to the role of Chiefs and Natural Rulers in the Local Government structure, they should be appointed as traditional members in the Local and District Councils in the ratio of one traditional member to five elected members. Mr Jones also recommended that where they are traditionally recognised, such Chiefs and Natural Rulers should act as Presidents and Vice-Presidents of District and Local Councils, and they should be accepted as *ex officio* members of such councils. Government has noted these recommendations and will amend the Instruments of the newly-created County and Local Councils in due course.

"In view of all these changes in policy and structure, Government intends to amend the Eastern Region Local Government Law, 1955."

The hon. Member for Ogoja Division (Mr J. A. Agba) appeared to be virtually opposed to our recognition of Obudu as a single-member constituency in the White Paper; he thought that the creation of a Provincial Assembly was a means to encourage dictatorship. Mr Speaker, this is a rather naive interpretation of the best intentions of Government. The basis of the proposals before the House is to *devolve* power on to the constituents of the Region from the Government. The ordinary dictionary meaning of the word "devolve" means "to dispossess" and "to disinherit." By devolving certain powers on to the Local Authorities, we dispossess ourselves of such powers. But Mr Agba interprets this to mean vesting ourselves with absolute powers. Devolution is retrogressive and my Friend knows that, but the Member for Ogoja is an honourable gentleman.

Finally, the Member for Enyong (Mr A. G. Umoh) in a tattle which was full of innuendoes indicted the Government of failing to tell the people the truth. He did not adduce one positive evidence to substantiate his wild allegation. Then he had the impertinence to stigmatize the Government of using public funds to improve the Ibo areas. Again, he failed to lead evidence to justify his seditious utterance. Mr Speaker, I do not propose to waste the time of the House by replying to such childish effusions. A glance at the data and statistics incorporated in our Official Document No. 1 of 1958 will expose the utter falsehood of these allegations.

Other speakers were more restrained in their appraisal of the proposals contained in the White Paper. The hon. Member for Abak (Mr J. E. Eyo) testified that it is "a medium of salvation to the suffering people of this Region." The Government Chief Whip described it as "a charter of freedom and unity" because it guaranteed the continued existence of parliamentary institutions, namely, the right of discussion, the right to oppose, the freedom of speech and the freedom of assembly. The hon. Member for Brass Division (Mr N. L. P. Apreala) identified the White Paper as a response to what he described as the "honourable



cries" of the people in minority areas as well as the minority elements in areas occupied mainly by majority groups.

In the same vein, the hon. Member for Owerri (Dr A. N. Obonna) suggested the retention of the former five Provinces but castigated minority groups for being truculent and ungrateful to the Government which had honestly attempted to guarantee safeguards to them, he asserted, at the expense of the majority. In this connection, the hon. Member for Onitsha (Mr P. N. Okeke) gently rebuked Government for capitulating to the agitation of the minority elements. In his opinion the White Paper is mainly a policy of appeasement to the minorities at the expense of the majority groups. Otherwise, he reasoned, why should Calabar Division with a population of 140,906 have six constituencies and Onitsha Division with a population of 466,080 have only five?

In a splendid speech, the Leader of the Opposition defined the White Paper as a blueprint of what he anticipated to be the hegemony of an ethnic group and the supremacy of an individual. In his considered opinion, Mr S. G. Ikoku thought that the proposals were not only an attempt to strengthen Ibo domination over the minorities of this Region, but also the emergence of a concurrent dictatorship of the Premier, through the centralisation of his powers and responsibilities.

The hon. gentleman then turned to the proposals for the grouping of the various Local Government bodies for purpose of implementing the policy of single-member constituencies. Here, again, Mr Ikoku impeached the Government of being mischievous because, he said we definitely sought to dismantle Opposition strongholds through a gerrymander process. For his evidence, the Leader of the Opposition cited the case of his constituency and warned Government not to meddle with the present organisation of Aro-Ibo Rural District Council, whose geographical alignment with Calabar Province is, he averred, satisfactory to the people of that Local Government area.

In short, Mr Ikoku's case against the White Paper proposals is as follows: the aim of Government is to enthrone the dominant Ibo-speaking people and to crystallise them into a permanent majority; the proposals for the

organisation of the Premier's Office will facilitate an iron-clad control of the Government by the Premier; Government seeks to victimise Opposition strongholds by dismembering them into innocuous entities; the system of electoral representation that is envisaged in the proposals runs counter to the cherished principles of democratic government. Mr Speaker, I will reply to these propositions point by point.

The allegation that the White Paper seeks the enthronement and crystallisation of Ibo hegemony is absurd. Contrariwise, the proposals are expected to create an anomaly which certain speakers have rightly or wrongly regarded as a dictatorship of the majority by the minority. One speaker described it as the "unappeaseable minority." May I respectfully refer to the statements made by four hon. Members on this score. The hon. Member for Awka (Mr P. U. Amaefuna) shows that the so-called C.O.R. State areas with a population of 3.3 millions will control 55 per cent of the seats in the House, whilst the other areas with a population of 3.9 million will manage with 45 per cent. The hon. Member for Okigwi (Mr S. E. K. Iwueke) referred to the fact that Uyo County with a population of 502,343 will have nine seats, whilst Okigwi County with a population of 542,645 will have only six seats. The hon. Member for Orlu Division (Chief G. Agbasiere) showed that whilst Calabar Province with a population of 169,628 will have six seats, Orlu Province with a population of 356,256 will have five seats. Hence the hon. Member for Nsukka (Mr R. O. Ukuta) described this aspect of the proposals as "a tyranny of the majority by a minority who should cry to God to increase their population."

The issue that the proposals would strengthen the grip of the Premier on his Government admits of no debate since it is the natural wish of all Premiers, under the Cabinet system of Government, to control their machinery of Government effectively but legitimately. In the books published by Sir, Ivor Jennings and Professor Hood Phillips on English Constitutional Law and Practice, it is universally acknowledged that the Premier is the First Lord of the Treasury and is its titular head. My hon. Friend knows that the Prime Minister of Britain and his Party Whips, who are the Parliamentary Secretaries to the Treasury, are

[THE PREMIER]

the Lords of the Treasury. The Premier's Office is usually identified as the co-ordinating Ministry to enable the Premier to control the machinery of Government until it is replaced. Therefore, the argument of dictatorship is extraneous and positively off the tangent.

The Leader of the Opposition labours under a great misapprehension when he fears the dismantlement of what he claims to be Opposition strongholds as a result of the proposals contained in the White Paper. I beg to differ. If hon. Members would refer to the Schedule which has been circulated to them, they will find the reason why Aro-Ibo is proposed for excision from Enyong Division in order to form an accretion to Bende Division. I do not wish to beg issues on this matter, but I am bound to inform the House that when I conferred with the Aro-Ibo Rural District Council on 30th August, 1957 at Arochuku, an address of welcome was presented to me, signed by the Chairman and Secretary of the Council, for and on behalf of this Local Government body, seeking complete excision from Calabar Province.

Mr Speaker, I do not intend to bore the House with a long citation, but in view of the serious allegation of my hon. Friend, to the effect that Government intends to dismantle his constituency, I beg your indulgence to allow me to quote from the representations which include the resolutions passed by this Local Government Council, made to me by this section of his constituency in Enyong Division. With your permission, I read:

"Whereas the Aro-Ibo District Council is composed of elected representatives of the people of this area.

"And whereas the Council can find neither common ethnic nor economic relation among the three Provinces of the proposed C.O.R. State.

"And whereas Arochuku District forms an integral part of Ibo Nation.

"And whereas the Lower Cross River County has not been workable as a result of the diffusion of different cultural groups.

"And whereas some leaders of the U.N.I.P. have used tricks to get the thumb impression

of some illiterate Chiefs and the signatures of some inconsequential members."

I think my hon. Friend appreciates the implications.

"The Aro-Ibo District Council resolves and makes it clear to the Public that any document on the said C.O.R. State which bears the names and finger impressions of anybody from this area does not express the wishes of the people.

"Consequently the Council makes it crystal clear that the people of the District do not, and will never, support the politicians who use the C.O.R. State movement for political and selfish ends. The common seal of the Council was affixed in the presence of the Chairman and Secretary."

Mr Speaker, in the face of such incontrovertible evidence, it is patent that the allegation of the Leader of the Opposition imputing to this Government the commission of certain positive acts is completely abstruse and unfounded. We believe in democracy as a way of life, and we believe in a reign of law and order in our society. We maintain that in organised society, this can only be accompanied through the medium of the constituted authorities, and the Government is bound to take into consideration the wish of such a constituted authority as the Aro-Ibo Rural District Council. I submit that this is exactly what Government has done in the White Paper before the House.

The last indictment which the Leader of the Opposition made against the Government is that our system of representation runs counter to the cherished principles of democratic government. I must join issue with my hon. Friend. According to Chapter VI Paragraph 11 of the White Paper, we explained clearly the criteria of electoral representation. If each County Council shall be a unit of the Government for the purpose of Local Government and Administration, it is a corollary that it should enjoy complete equality with all other County Council areas, despite their population strength. After all, the aim of the White Paper is to ensure fairplay and equity to all who live in the Region, irrespective of their communal attachment or linguistic group.

Whilst I have noted the well-considered objections made by various speakers on the

need to use population figures as a basis of elections, nevertheless, it must be admitted that the minority groups are entitled at least to a basic minimum quota of representation, which must not be ignored, if their loyalty and devotion to the Government must be retained. That is what Government has borne in mind and it cannot rightly be described as a travesty of democracy, as my Friend opposite would have the House to believe.

To show that the opinion of the House is with the Government on this issue, may I refer to the frank views expressed by three speakers, who are leaders of their communities in their own right. The hon. Member for Degema Division (Mr Kalada Kiri) praised the Government for being fair and sympathetic to the aspirations of minorities. The hon. Member for Calabar (Professor Eyo Ita) emphasised that if there were guarantees of equal opportunities for all, it would minimise the fears of minorities against majorities. The hon. Member for Ikot Ekpene (Mr J. M. Ito) hailed the White Paper as satisfying the yearnings of his people. His political twin brother, the hon. J. A. Etuhube candidly admitted in a fine maiden speech that his Division was not particularly keen on political parties but that the desire of his people is to have a Government which will provide them with social services.

Mr Speaker, I am fair in interpreting this innocent remark to mean that the good people of Ikot Ekpene demand fairplay and justice from the Government in all its relations with them. My emphasis is that having taken all these factors into consideration, it would be wrong for the Leader of the Opposition to overlook the need to give minority groups an adequate minimum representation.

One thing has emerged from this debate: that the Government has ascertained the fears which exist among the various communities of this Region and has faced the issue frankly, fairly and fearlessly. As I indicated earlier on, during August 1957, I toured certain areas in Brass, Calabar, Degema, Enyong, Ogoni and Opobo Divisions to discover and see for myself the nature of the alleged fears of minority groups. I became convinced that these fears really exist and I made up my mind that, without prejudice to what may be the recommendations of the Minorities Commission,

this Government must recognise the immediate need to allay fears which had enabled mischief-makers to incite communities against one another.

A glance at the attachment to this Speech will show that these fears are not only communal. After all, this Government was not responsible for the demarcation either of the present Provincial or Divisional boundaries, and none can with justification accuse us of deliberately encouraging majority groups to oppress their minority neighbours. The proposals contained in this White Paper are the answer of this Government to whatever may have been the mistakes of the past and I make no apology for advocating their adoption by the House.

I have noted the suggestions made by many speakers regarding the arrangement of Provinces. I note the desire that Annang Province should have Abak as its capital and not Ikot Ekpene and *vice versa*. I notice that the terminology, Uyo Province, would be more desirable than Ibibio Province, and also that it would be much more preferable to those concerned if Calabar Province, minus Annang, remained intact. I observe that "Central Ijaw Province" would be more welcome than "Ijaw Province" and that Yenagoa should be its capital, although I have here with me a telegram requesting that Brass should be the capital since it has many Government buildings and quarters. I have taken cognisance of the demand of the Ngwa, Asa and Ndoki to the effect that the title of Aba Province would be much more preferable to the communities concerned than Ngwa Province. The views of hon. Members in making suggestions for the better alignment of Local Government bodies have been noted. The need to have Ogburu and Anambra Counties have been jotted down. The desire of the Ngwa to remain in one County has been impressed upon me. The wish that Andoni should remain with their Ibibio neighbours will be considered as well as the case made out so convincingly to divide Western Ahoada into three counties (Ogba and Egbema, Abua, Ekpeye and Engenni). I will also bear in mind the representations made for granting Ndizuogu and Nwabosi clans two separate seats, as well as the case made to grant Eleme, in Ogoni Division, and Odual, in Degema Division, separate County status.

*Eastern House of Assembly Debates*

551 [Self-Government in the E.R.] 26 MARCH 1958 [Self-Government in the E.R.] 552

[THE PREMIER]

Among other suggestions made for the good government of the Region are as follows: Ikom should not be made a separate urban area and Ikom Division should not lose its two seats; the Bokis of Obudu, Ogoja and Ikom desire to be grouped into one Local Council; Awgu Rural District Council should be split into two Counties; Achi, Inyi and Awlaw in one County and Anike in another; Abakaliki should not be split into four Counties but should remain intact since their descendants are children of one ancestor; Orumba should be a separate County; Port Harcourt should not be deprived of one of its two seats. The hon. Member for Abakaliki (Mr V. A. Nwankwo) suggested that County Inspectors should not be the medium of communication with the Government. In his opinion, there should be a direct channel of communication.

In conclusion, may I thank all those who have participated in this debate. I am specially grateful to the hon. Member for Onitsha

Division (Mr Ejike Chidolue) for his suggestion that we should consider the advisability of altering the title of County Inspector to read County Adviser so as to distinguish him from the Provincial Inspector. I can assure the House that before the proposals are implemented not only will the constructive criticisms made by the hon. Members be borne in mind, but the financial implications will be carefully examined, as suggested by several speakers. I must take this opportunity also to thank the hon. Member for Obubra (Mr J. W. E. Anaba) for his kind reference to my humble efforts to serve my country. His words do me a world of good.

Mr Speaker, this debate has given scope to all who caught your eyes—in fact, almost all Members caught your eyes—to express their views and those of their constituencies. I am not wrong when I say that all sides of the House have had a fair opportunity to scrutinise the various proposals contained in the White Paper, and I, therefore wind up by urging the House to approve them in principle. (*Applause*).

DEMAND FOR CHANGE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE

<i>District Council</i>	<i>Division</i>	<i>County Council from which Secession is sought</i>	<i>Reasons for wanting to secede</i>
Abua Clan ..	Ahoada ..	Ahoada .. ..	Desire to manage own affairs.
Aguata .. ..	Awka .. ..	Niger .. ..	The same type of argument as is put up by Njikoka.
Akpabuyo ..	Calabar ..	Calabar .. ..	County Council a wasteful organisation. Gives District Councils no services in return for the precepts they pay to it.
Ala Ala .. ..	Bende .. ..	Bende .. ..	Three-tier system wasteful and unnecessary.
Annang .. ..	Opobo ..	Ibekwe .. ..	Denied amenities because a MINORITY in the area.
Aro/Ibo .. ..	Enyong ..	Lower Cross Rover	Historical association and linguistic affinity demand that Aro/Ibo should join their kith and kin in Bende Division. Alternatively, they desire to manage their own affairs.
Asa .. ..	Aba .. ..	Aba-Ngwa ..	No amenities from County Council.
Bonny .. ..	Degema ..	Oil Rivers ..	Derives little or no benefit from being in the Oil Rivers County Council.
Central Annang ..	Ikot Ekpene ..	Ikot Ekpene ..	No reason of its own adduced. Merely agrees with the Local Government Association that Counties should be abolished.

DEMAND FOR CHANGE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE

<i>District Council</i>	<i>Division</i>	<i>County Council from which Secession is sought</i>	<i>Reasons for wanting to secede</i>
Eastern Ibibio Ikono	Ikot Ekpene ..	Ikot Ekpene ..	Not well treated in the distribution of amenities and offices. Area too vast and people too different in outlook for these to be one County.
Engenni Clan ..	Ahoada ..	Ahoada .. ..	Desire to manage own affairs.
Etche .. ..	Ahoada ..	Ahoada .. ..	Too much precept aid to the County Council, a wasteful organisation, for too little return by way of amenities.
Ezzikwo .. ..	Abakaliki ..	Abakaliki .. ..	County Councils wasteful and redundant.
Ibesikpo Asutan ..	Uyo .. ..	Uyo .. ..	Too much precept paid to the County Council, a wasteful organisation, for too little return by way of amenities.
Ibiono .. ..	Enyong ..	Lower Cross River	The existence of the County Council makes people pay too much money in rates.
Ikeduru .. ..	Owerri ..	Owerri .. ..	The County Council has failed to maintain roads and bridges in Ikeduru area.
Ikwerre .. ..	Ahoada ..	Ahoada .. ..	County Council wasteful and redundant. Amenities not evenly distributed by County Councils; a luxury.
Itu-Itam .. ..	Enyong ..	Lower Cross River	The County Council is a "waste pipe".
Izi .. ..	Abakaliki ..	Abakaliki .. ..	County Council inefficient. Staff not co-operating with the Council. County Council not working in the interest of Izi people.
Mbaitoli .. ..	Owerri .. ..	Owerri .. ..	County does not maintain roads and bridges and would not respect public opinion.
Ngor-Okpala ..	Owerri .. ..	Owerri .. ..	Their roads and bridges not maintained by the County Council.
Njikoka .. ..	Awka .. ..	Niger .. ..	County Council too unwieldy and gives very little services for the heavy precepts it demands.
Northern Annang	Abak .. ..	Annang .. ..	The County Council has become an expensive luxury.
Odukpani Road ..	Calabar ..	Calabar .. ..	Increased annual precepts by the County Council and want of amenities from the County Council.
Ogbia .. ..	Brass ..	Central Ijaw ..	No benefits from County Council in spite of the precepts it pays to the County.
Ohaji .. ..	Owerri .. ..	Owerri .. ..	Not satisfied with the County Council in the way it discharges its functions with regard to roads, bridges and water supply.
Okigwi Northern ..	Okigwi ..	Okigwi .. ..	Lack of amenities from the County Council.

*Eastern House of Assembly Debates*

555

[*Self-Government in the E.R.*]

26 MARCH 1958

[*Self-Government in the E.R.*]

556

DEMAND FOR CHANGE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE

<i>District Council</i>	<i>Division</i>	<i>County Council from which Secession is sought</i>	<i>Reasons for wanting to secede</i>
Onitsha Northern	Onitsha ..	Niger .. ..	Heavy precept by the County Council which itself is very unwieldy.
Onitsha Southern	Onitsha ..	Niger .. ..	Three-tier system wasteful and Niger County Council unwieldy.
Opobo .. ..	Opobo ..	Ibekwe .. ..	Historical association of Opobo and Egwanga demands that Egwanga should be merged with Opobo District Council. Vide letter dated 19th December, 1957, from the Amanyanabo of Opobo to the Premier's Office.
Oratta .. ..	Owerri .. ..	Owerri .. ..	No reasons—merely wants an Inquiry to decide whether two or three-tier should be accepted.
Owuwa Anyanwu	Bende .. ..	Bende .. ..	Heavy precept to County Council and little from County Council in return by way of amenities. People of the area not consulted when the County Organisation was being set up and geographical convenience, ethnic affinities, population and revenue not taken into consideration.
Southern Annang	Abak .. ..	Annang .. ..	Desire to manage own affairs.
Southern Ngwa ..	Aba .. ..	Aba Ngwa ..	Three-tier system expensive. District Councils can easily do work of County Council which are not in touch with the people.
Western Annang	Abak .. ..	Annang .. ..	Cheated by the County Council in the distribution of amenities.

*Question put. House divided.*

*Ayes 48. Noes 13.*

**Division No. 4**

**2.15 p.m.**

*Ayes*

Mr C. A. Abangwu  
 Mr S. O. Achara  
 Chief G. N. Agbasiere  
 Mr D. S. A. Agim  
 Mr D. E. Akilo  
 Mr H. U. Akpabio  
 Mr D. O. Aligwekwe  
 Mr S. N. Alo  
 Mr P. U. Amaefunah  
 Mr N. L. P. Apreala  
 Mr R. O. Anoke  
 Mr D. O. Anu  
 Dr N. Azikiwe  
 Mr E. Chidolue  
 Mr E. Emole

Mr N. Nweze  
 Mr J. U. Nwodo  
 Mr P. O. Nwoga  
 Mr M. U. Obayi  
 Dr A. N. Obonna  
 Mr C. A. Okafor  
 Mr J. O. Okeh  
 Mr G. E. Okeke  
 Mr P. N. Okeke  
 Mr O. Oketa  
 Mr G. I. Oko, M.B.E.  
 Mr E. P. Okoya  
 Mr K. J. N. Okpokam  
 Mr B. C. Okwu  
 Chief S. E. Onukogu

Mr U. Enyi  
Mr J. O. Ihekwoaba  
Mr I. U. Imeh  
Dr S. E. Imoke  
Mr R. O. Iwuagwu  
Mr S. E. K. Iwueke  
Mr S. O. Masi  
Mr D. A. Nnaji

Mr P. A. Onwe  
Mr N. O. Onwudiwe  
Mr M. N. Onwuma  
Mr V. K. Onyeri  
Mr E. W. Udonkim  
Mr R. O. Ukuta, M.B.E.  
Mr P. O. Ururuka  
Mr L. O. Uzoigwe

*Tellers for the Ayes:—*

Mr K. Kiri  
Mr W. Abengowe

*Noes*

Mr J. A. Agba  
Mr S. J. Amachree  
Rev. O. Efiang, C.B.E.  
Mr J. A. Etuhube  
Mr M. U. Etuk  
Mr E. O. Eyo

Mr S. G. Ikoku  
Mr E. Ita  
Mr O. B. Nalelo  
Mr A. G. Umoh  
Mr M. N. Yowika

*Tellers for the Noes:—*

Mr A. J. Ekpe  
Chief I. I. Morphy

Resolved: That this House approves in principle the proposals contained in Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1957—Self-Government in the Eastern Region.

(2) The Children and Young Persons Bill, 1958—Committee. *Further deferred until Friday, 28th March, 1958.*

(3) The Eastern Region Local Government (Amendment) Bill, 1958—Second Reading. *Further deferred until Friday, 28th March, 1958.*

(4) The Criminal Code (Amendment) Bill, 1958—Second Reading. *Further deferred until Friday, 28th March, 1958.*

(5) The Magistrates Courts (Amendment) Bill, 1958—Second Reading. *Further deferred until Friday, 28th March, 1958.*

(6) The Riot Damages Bill, 1958—Second Reading. *Further deferred until Friday, 28th March, 1958.*

(7) The Acquisition of Land by Aliens Bill, 1958—Second Reading. *Further deferred until Friday, 28th March, 1958.*

(8) The Public Lands Acquisition (Amendment) Bill, 1958—Second Reading. *Further deferred until Friday, 28th March, 1958.*

## ADJOURNMENT

**The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke):** Sir, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until 9 a.m. on Friday, the 28th of March.

**The Minister of Commerce (Mr J. U. Nwodo):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

## ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

### Death of Alhaji the hon. Adegoke Adelabu

**Mr S. G. Ikoku (Enyong Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am sure that all hon. Members must have got the news of the tragic death of hon. Adegoke Adelabu. This loss means a lot to parliamentary democracy in this country, and I hope both sides of the House will join in paying their tributes to the hon. Adelabu.

In bringing up this matter, Sir, I like to draw the attention of the House to certain qualities in the late Adelabu. He has been referred to as the stormy petrel of Western Nigerian politics. I can assure you, Sir, that without that quality the Western House of Assembly would have been a steam-roller and it

Eastern House of Assembly Debates

559

[Death of Alhaji the hon.  
Adegoke Adelabu]

26 MARCH 1958

[Death of Alhaji the hon.  
Adegoke Adelabu]

560

[MR IKOKU]

was his determination to stand up and fight for what he believed, and he has succeeded in putting the Western House of Assembly on the right direction.

Again, Sir, we all miss his sharp whip, his ability to see where you are going even before you arrive there, and we also miss his political actions. Those who knew him very well must have been impressed by his sincerity and determination and above all his unflinching devotion to a chosen course of action. Whether you agree with him or disagree with him, you have to respect Adelabu's ability to map out a line of action and to stick it. I think our sister Party in the Western Region deserves our sincere sympathy, because it will be hard to replace the hon. Adelabu in the Western Region, particularly in the Western House. Some of us, no doubt, did not agree with his political tactics, but he was a dynamic, volatile and versatile politician, and even though you did not agree with him, you must accept the fact that he was a candid politician; his candour was beyond question. I do not know what we can do here to show our appreciation but I gathered in the morning that the hon. the Government Chief Whip and the Leader of the House have gone to Ibadan for the funeral ceremony. I think it is right and proper that this House should wish hon. Adelabu's relatives well.

**Mr W. Abengowe (Aba Division):** Mr Speaker, it is with grief that I rise to speak on the death of Alhaji Adegoke Adelabu. It is a loss that Nigeria will mourn for a very long time.

Alhaji Adelabu lived a militant political life, and died in harness. He was the N.C.N.C. Leader of the Opposition in the Western

Legislature—a post which he held very creditably. He was also Leader of the N.C.N.C. Parliamentary Party in the Western House of Assembly, and Chairman of the Western Working Committee.

As a politician and leader of Ibadan people, Alhaji Adelabu was a man of the masses. He fostered parliamentary democracy in the Western Region, and entrenched the N.C.N.C. in that Region. By his death, the N.C.N.C. and the entire nationalists of this country have been thrown into a situation which only God can appease.

How can we mourn Alhaji Adelabu—a young energetic nationalist of 43 years old? How can we mourn the "Rock of Gibraltar", who until his death, stood firm and loyal to the cause of Nigerian freedom? Death has been extremely unkind and unfair to Nigeria by snatching Adelabu at this crucial period when his services are best needed. He died when Nigerian independence, which he had fought so much to achieve, is in sight. He died without reaping the benefits of his political struggles.

But it has happened. Death did not fear great Ade. He is no more with us. This is a moment when all of us, and his political opponents should do honour to his memory. May we continue the fight for Nigerian nationhood, and work hard to achieve the cause for which Ade laboured and died.

Finally, Mr Speaker, May I, on behalf of the Government Party in this House, wish the children and relatives of Alhaji Adegoke Adelabu God's guidance and God's comfort.

And may his soul rest in peace.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Adjourned, accordingly, at twenty-seven minutes past two o'clock p.m.*



## WRITTEN ANSWER TO QUESTION

*Wednesday, 26th March, 1958*

### **Fishing Industry in Oguta**

46. **Mr G. C. Okeya** asked the Minister of Agriculture, whether Government will not consider the advisability of developing the Fishing Industry in Oguta, in view of its position as the fish trade centre for Orlu and Owerri Divisions.

**The Minister of Agriculture:** The Department of Fisheries is interested in an examination of the fish population of Oguta Lake and improvements which might be made in the fishing Industry there.

It is necessary, in view of the small stretch of water, to institute a survey to ensure that fish can be provided daily.

At present, however, only the Federal Fisheries can provide the necessary staff to conduct the form of careful scientific research which is required, and it is hoped that as soon as arrangement can be made for a joint research with the Fisheries Department of the Eastern Region, such a survey will be started.

EASTERN HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Friday, 28th March, 1958

(The House met at Nine o'clock a.m.)

PRAYERS

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

PAPER

**Presented:** The Draft Estimates of the Eastern Region, 1958-59, together with the Memorandum thereon. (*The Minister of Finance*).

Ordered: That the said Paper do lie upon the Table.

BILL PRESENTED

1958-59 Appropriation Bill

Bill to appropriate the sum of thirteen million, two hundred and thirty-five thousand, one hundred pounds to the Service of the year ending on the thirty-first day of March, one thousand nine hundred and fifty-nine; presented by the Minister of Finance, read the First time; to be read a Second time Now.

ORDER OF THE DAY

The 1958-59 Eastern Region  
Appropriation Bill

*Order for Second reading read.*

**The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I rise to move that a Bill entitled "A Law to appropriate the sum of thirteen million, two hundred and thirty-five thousand, one hundred pounds to the service of the year ending on the thirty-first day of March, one thousand nine hundred and fifty-nine" be now read a Second time.

Later on in this speech I shall refer to the momentous decision taken by this House during February in connection with Universal Primary Education. At this juncture I wish only to observe that the implementation of that decision had all-embracing effects on the services of the Region and therefore on every

detail of the Estimates that direct these services. Consequently, it has been impossible to present the Estimates sooner. As it is, by prodigious effort, they have been prepared in about a third of the usual time.

I am sorry that it is only now possible to proceed with the Appropriation Bill. However, Members have been able to study their Estimates for a day or so. While the Government wholeheartedly agrees that the earlier Members get their Estimates the better, nevertheless I should like to draw hon. Members' attention to Standing Order 66 (1). This Standing Order lays down that the Estimates shall be presented at the same time as the Appropriation Bill. So we would not have committed any breach of the rules of this House had we delayed until the presentation of the Bill.

Before leaving this topic, I should like to observe that had my Friends on the opposite Side of the House succeeded in reducing the Assumed Local Contribution to the cost of education earlier this Session, I should not be moving the Second reading today. That proposal would have given us a one-million-pound deficit which would have meant again completely redrafting the Estimates.

The Budget which I am presenting is a modest one: revenue £13.9 millions, expenditure £13.7 millions, surplus £200,000. I am confident the House will agree it is also a sound one. Revenue has been estimated with caution. Expenditure has been proposed with prudence and economy. The aim is to make a start in rebuilding the reserves.

The policy behind this Budget was outlined in His Excellency's Speech at the beginning of this Session. It was declared to be to limit public spending in order to give the revenues a breathing space and allow our reserves to recover from the heavy drain caused by trying out Universal Primary Education in 1957. This led to an expenditure of nearly £10 million on education grants-in-aid in two financial years. Such heavy expenditure as this inevitably depleted our General Revenue Balance, and it is to stop this that an Assumed Local Contribution to the cost of education has been reintroduced. Now we must persevere in thrift and sacrifice. Only so can we hope to return to free education—step by step—in the future. But thrift

and sacrifice are no easier for Governments than for individuals. Indeed, they are harder. In this Lenten season, some of us are constrained to sacrifice some pleasures. But while an individual can with only slight difficulty sacrifice this and that, the Government machine is voracious. Reduce the vote for travelling and our agricultural services will suffer. Cut on road maintenance, and our revenues drop because produce cannot be moved.

In the year ahead, the Government envisages no expansion in general above the level of the approved estimates for 1957-58. To achieve this, most branches of the Government have made great sacrifices—sacrifices that to the conscientious officer—and they are happily in the majority—will mean a curtailment in services that will be felt as a personal blow. And the rate of our development must slow down a bit.

Before examining the estimates for the coming year, it is customary to review the financial year which is now closing. The mounting cost of education has been the principal factor in shaping our finances over the past two years, and it will continue to influence them in 1958-59. Because of this it has not been possible to allow any margin for unforeseen contingencies in general expenditure. Consequently we have witnessed the phenomenon of a frequent need for supplementary expenditure over the past two years, some of which has had to be borne from the reserves.

The financial picture for 1957-58 is set out at rather more length than usual in the Memorandum on the Estimates. It is important. I invite Members to turn to the passage in the Memorandum dealing with the financial year 1957-58.

Two years ago we had a General Revenue Balance of £7 million. Then we drew off nearly £1½ million into special funds. This, and a deficit of just over £400,000, gave us a starting balance a year ago of £5 million. As I shall go on to explain, we expect to start the coming year with £3½ million.

Members will see from the financial statement at page 9 of the Estimates that the indications are a deficit of £1½ millions for the year

1957-58. This may be compared with the deficit of £2½ millions appearing in the accounts for December, 1957. As was explained during the debates last month, by no means all of that deficit was real. It is hoped that the deficit on the year as a whole will not be as great as the figure of £1.68 millions shown, but it is better to err on the side of caution. We do not like to over-estimate revenue knowingly, and it is always difficult to judge the element of under-expenditure.

In examining the factors making up the deficit in view, I have caused the revenue and expenditure connected with Colonial Development and Welfare Schemes to be extracted. These Schemes are self-financing and do not affect the balance of the Budget. Whatever the expenditure on C.D. and W. Schemes, the receipts in respect of them exactly match it.

The estimated deficit is made up of a shortfall in revenue and an excess in expenditure. Regionally controlled revenues are expected to be down by £966,000 and our share of Federal revenues up by £386,000, making a net shortfall of £580,000. On the side of expenditure, education is expected to cost £418,000 more than estimated and other expenditure £914,000 more, making a total excess of £1.3 millions in expenditure. Adding the shortfall in revenue and deducting the original budget surplus of £225,000, we are left with an estimated deficit of £1.68 millions.

The drop in Regional revenue is due mainly to an over-estimate of the Regional Income Tax. Members will recall that this has been the second year of the Finance Law. In the nature of things, the estimate had to be made long before the first year's collection was complete, and it has proved to be over-optimistic. Subsequently tax rates were lowered, and thus the over-estimate was accentuated. Members will have noted that the West also over-estimated their income tax by a million pounds. Fortunately Federal revenues have turned out better than expected, and this has partially redressed the balance for us.

Members know all about the way education has proved more expensive than estimated. Indeed, there has been a lot of ingenious and convoluted arithmetic about it. As for the increase in general expenditure, I have already referred to the phenomenon of frequent

[DR IMOKE]

supplementary expenditure. The heaviest items contributing to this increase were revotes totalling nearly £½ million against under-expenditure in the previous year, partly for unfinished capital works but mainly for grants to Local Government Councils on account of salary arrears. Then there was the large supplementary item of £350,000 for the Lump Sum Compensation Scheme which was introduced in August, 1957.

As I said, we estimate a deficit of £1.68 millions. To offset this, the House will be asked later today to transfer £280,400 from the Colonial Development and Welfare Local Contributions Account back to the General Revenue Balance. If Members agree, the net reduction in the General Revenue Balance during 1957-58 will, it is estimated, be £1.4 million. We will start the year with £3¼ millions.

That sounds a handsome sum. But the House should know that approximately £1 million of this is committed in various advances, including the advance account at Appendix J of the Estimates, which has been financing the Road Integration Programme. A further £1 million is required as current cash in the Sub-Treasuries—that is, one month's expenditure. The remaining £1¾ million is therefore our revenue equalisation fund. As Members will have appreciated from the debates last month, some of our revenues do not accrue until late in the financial year. But our expenditure goes on all the time. So it is necessary to finance a part of expenditure from the General Revenue Balance until those revenues begin to come in, since we are not yet in a position to build up a separate Revenue Equalisation Fund.

Those are the broad financial lines of the year 1957-58. I cannot repeat too often—the main concern has been the snowball effect of the Universal Primary Education Scheme. This has strained our finances and would have permanently impaired them but for its timely modification. We have nevertheless achieved much in other fields, as is patent as one moves over the length and breadth of our Region.

Before leaving the Financial Year 1957-58, I wish to mention our disappointment that no

improvement in the system of allocating Federal Revenues was secured during the year. Our revenues from that source have been better than was estimated. They will be again better in 1958-59. But these improvements are not because of any change in revenue allocation. They result from the present happy buoyancy of the Federal revenues.

As you know, Sir, this Government pressed at the Constitutional Conference last May and June for a complete revision of the system of revenue allocation, and we had hoped for an early change. A Commission was appointed to review the fiscal arrangements of the Federation. They paid a preliminary visit to all Regions during November, but no interim changes were agreed upon except for the Cameroons. They will be paying us another visit early in April, when an eminent economist will present our views. However—it would be imprudent to count on any changes in allocation during 1958-59, and we have not done so. The Fiscal Commission's report has to be prepared, considered, debated, agreed at a resumed Constitutional Conference and only then implemented. The likelihood is therefore that changes in allocation will not be felt until 1959-60.

I now invite Members to turn to the passage in the Memorandum on the Estimates dealing with the financial year 1958-59 and to look at the table giving an outline of the Budget as compared with the Approved Estimates for 1957-58. As I have said, Colonial Development and Welfare revenue and expenditure are self-balancing and do not affect the Budget. Ignoring this, therefore, our total revenue is estimated at £12.14 million—a reduction by £88,000 on 1957-58. This is surprisingly good when it is remembered that Regional Income Tax was over-estimated by approximately £1 million in 1957-58. This is offset partly because of the continued buoyancy of Federal revenues and partly because of the continuing improvements in the revenues we collect ourselves.

The increase in our Federal revenues is not as great as the figure of £900,000 shown, because mining revenue of about £½ million has been transferred from the category of Regional revenues to the Head for statutory shares of Federal revenues. That is where they properly belong, since they are allocated

by the terms of the constitution and are not collected by the Region itself. Compared with 1957-58, the net increase in Federal revenue is £688,000.

For the same reason the decrease in revenues Regionally controlled is not as great as would appear from the figure of £1 million shown: a quarter of this is due to the transfer of mining revenues. In this connection, Members will be pleased to hear of a newcomer—Royalties from Oil—£65,000. This is quite small but most welcome. As we all know, the oil company is still appraising the wells, and until their appraisal is complete it will not be known whether oil is there in commercial quantities.

Oil—mineral oil—is our crock of gold. But palm oil has sustained us for generations. The market here is uncertain. There has over recent years been a tendency for export tonnages of palm produce to drop, not only from the Eastern Region but from the whole country. In 1955 the East exported 162,000 tons of oil, in 1956 157,000 tons and in 1957 151,000 tons. In the same years the rest of the country exported 22,000, 19,000 and 14,000 tons respectively. However, the rate of drop in the East is not so great as in the rest of the country. In 1955 the East exported 87.9 per cent of the oil: in 1957 the proportion had gone up to 93.1 per cent. The picture for kernel is similar: in 1956 the East exported 213,000 tons and 201,000 tons in 1957, while the rest of the country exported 250,000 and 210,000 tons in the two years respectively. In 1956 the Eastern proportion was 46 per cent but in 1957 it had increased to 48.9 per cent. I understand that price factors have not brought about these drops. They are said to be due to the exceptional weather of the last few years and to the ageing of our palms.

Since palm products contribute the greater part of our produce purchase tax, we have therefore been unable to estimate any great increase above the revised estimate for 1957-58. We must also remember that the decline in export tonnages (under the present system of allocation) affects our statutory share of the Federal Revenues, through our share of Export Duties. The Federal Government estimate that this year we shall receive about £97,000 less from this source than for 1957-58.

I have already mentioned the over-estimate of Regional Income tax for 1957-58. We have revised the estimate for 1957-58 to a conservative total of £2¼ million, and have allowed for another hundred thousand in 1958-59. This time we hope it will prove to be a slight under-estimate. Up to the end of February we had collected a little over £1.9 million, and before this meeting is over I hope to have an approximate figure of collection up to 31st March.

It is not proposed to put any additional burden on the Income Tax-payer, who has to find his share of the Assumed Local Contribution to the cost of education. I shall, however, be introducing a motion later today to increase indirect taxation. It is Sub-head 11 of Head 401, Taxes under Regional Laws, £42,000.

Finally, we are getting a windfall of £178,000—our share of the value of the assets sold by the Custodian of Enemy Property.

Turning to expenditure, as the cost of education is still dominant, it is shown separately in the comparative table in the Memorandum on the Estimates. Education is reduced by £176,000. I need hardly remind you, Sir, that the cost would have been £2½ million higher had we not reintroduced an Assumed Local Contribution. The effects of this on the enrolment of pupils cannot be known until next term begins. So, again, it is impossible to estimate accurately the cost of education grants-in-aid in 1958-59. Our forecast is £4½ million, or 37½ per cent of our total estimated revenue excluding C. D. and W.

I wish to mention here a change in form which we have instituted. If Members will turn to page 55 of the Estimates, it will be seen that the provision for education grants-in-aid is split into two parts—one for April to December and the other for January to March. This has been done for two reasons: firstly because the cost of education changes with the calendar year, and secondly, to give an advance indication of the possible cost in the following financial year. Members will easily see that an increase of £1 million in 1959-60 is likely. However, we hope the provision in 1958-59 may prove to be an over-estimate, and we propose to review the position in two or three months' time when the effect of the Assumed Local Contribution will be clearer.

[DR IMOKE]

Looking at the outline of the Estimates for 1958-59 as a whole, it will be seen that it is substantially the same as in 1957-58. General expenditure, like education, shows a slight reduction when the new item of £350,000 for Lump Sum Compensation, provided for under the Constitution, is deducted. This must mean some restriction in services. The cost of Government normally increases unavoidably every year. Increments immediately spring to mind. But it is often overlooked that most capital expenditure brings its tail of recurrent costs. Build a house or a road and you have to spend on maintaining your asset. Build a hospital and you have to staff and run it. I have had to resist this tendency to the utmost compatible with the minimum interference to existing services.

There are two technical points that I should like to mention.

Firstly, Members will note a difference of £489,720 between estimated expenditure and the amount that this Law will appropriate. This is because some expenditure is a direct charge on revenue, either by existing laws or by the new Constitution. This sum will indeed, increase because we did not know that the Director of Public Prosecutions, for example, would also be so charged. Consequently, it will be necessary later to amend the Bill.

Secondly, every year there is under-expenditure on staff salaries. This is because it always takes time to recruit new officers to fill vacancies. In order not to tie up funds unnecessarily, the provision for all staff salaries takes this into account.

As I said earlier, Colonial Development and Welfare Schemes do not affect our Budget. However, accounts have to be kept and hitherto these have been merged with the accounts for expenditure from Regional sources. This does tend to blur the picture. For example, C. D. and W. under-expenditure also means that less C. D. and W. receipts will be credited, and this might lead one to think there has been a heavy shortfall in revenue. I have accordingly had the figures for C. D. and W. Schemes separated from truly Regional expenditure in the summaries both of expenditure and of revenue, and I propose to show

this distinction in our published monthly accounts.

No C. D. and W. Scheme is more dear to our hearts than that for roads. As His Excellency indicated in the Speech from the Throne, the cost of the Scheme exceeds the money available. Taking this fact into account and bearing in mind the cost of continuing the works in hand, certain projects have been temporarily placed in cold storage. We hope thereby to secure the approval of the Secretary of State to the transfer of certain well advanced projects to the C. D. and W. Scheme.

On the 8th August last year the Region became self-governing, and a number of changes in Ministerial organisation took place. It may be that further changes will be necessary. For these, and to implement the Self-Government proposals we have just debated, a supplementary budget will be presented to the House later in the financial year. We hope that before then the Fiscal Commission will have reported.

As experience strengthens and invigorates our Ministerial system, changes in the organisation of the Government become necessary. One that is imminent is the integration of Ministries and Departments. This will ensure that the Ministry dog wags the tail.

Whilst it is essential that the Ministers should firmly control the activities for which they are responsible to the House and to the people, we are all agreed that certain things must be independent of Ministerial control. That is why Audit, the Judiciary and the Public Service Commission are a Non-Ministerial group. So also is the Legislature.

To sum up, Sir, this Budget represents a period of marking time in the determination to restore our reserves. This is, and must be, our prime objective in financial policy. Everything, including the prospects of raising loans and attracting foreign investment in the furtherance of our development plans, depends upon maintaining healthy reserves. We have had to take the painful decision to limit Government's contribution to the cost of education for this reason, and I am glad to say we took it in time. Our reserves are still sound—we have £4½ million of investments up our sleeve, some within and some outside the General Revenue Balance itself—and we

are determined to keep them sound. And our revenue prospects are far from discouraging. Our wealth lies in the industry and initiative of our people. But we are not yet a rich Region in terms of money and are constantly obliged to trim our sails accordingly. This is not a bad thing, because prudence and economy in public finance is a valuable attitude of mind which will stand us in good stead in later years when we are a fully self-governing nation. This attitude of mind, this unflinching resolve to plan our affairs soberly and with a proper regard for the public interest, is amply reflected in the Estimates which I have the honour to present to the House today with the Appropriation Bill. I am confident that this Government's wise policy will be fully endorsed.

Before closing, I wish to pay tribute to the small staff of my Ministry for the long hours of work they have devoted to the intricate task of compiling the Estimates and also to the Government Printer and his staff for their untiring labour in producing the printed volume against time.

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Town Planning (Mr E. Emole):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed. And under paragraph (3) of the Standing Order 66—Appropriation Bill—the Debate stood adjourned.*

*Debate to be resumed on Monday, 31st March, 1958.*

#### FINANCE LAW, 1956: VARIATIONS TO THE FOURTH SCHEDULE

**The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke):** Mr Speaker, I rise to move that this House resolve itself immediately into a Committee of the Whole House to consider certain variations to the Fourth Schedule to the Finance Law, 1956, in accordance with section 66 of that Law.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I rise to move a Resolution imposing a tax of 9d per gallon on Diesel Fuel Oil from the 1st of April.

I should first explain the mechanics of the process. In order to preserve secrecy, section 66 of the Finance Law provides that a measure such as this can be imposed by a Resolution of a

Committee of the Whole House and that Resolution becomes immediately effective. It is, however, necessary to pass a Law in conformity with that Resolution within ten sitting days. If this House passes the Resolution, as the Government certainly hopes it will, I shall therefore be presenting an Amendment Law within the next few days.

I have considered levying purchase taxes on a great range of products. It would be possible to impose them on all manner of consumer goods, including such things as soap and food-stuffs, but it is felt undesirable to inflate the cost of living by the imposition of taxes upon the necessities of life.

I have also considered the imposition of taxes on luxury goods. The House will recall however our unfortunate experience in connection with the taxes on beer and liquor, whose evasion became a popular racket, which the Government was constitutionally incapable of preventing. I believe that a similar situation would arise were a worth-while tax to be imposed upon things like cigarettes, which have a high value relative to their bulk. Either a worth-while tax is imposed, which encourages people to indulge in what I can only describe—inaccurately but aptly—as smuggling; or the tax is so low that the revenue does not justify the natural public irritation to any tax measure.

Nevertheless, the Government must make all possible effort to increase its revenue, and in consequence it is proposed to tax Diesel Fuel Oil.

One's first reaction is that the operator of a diesel vehicle should pay the same tax as the operator of petrol driven one that is 6d a gallon, but an examination of the relative operating costs shows that this is not logical. In Enugu it is roughly three times as expensive to run a petrol vehicle as it is to run a diesel vehicle. For those who are interested it costs 5.1875d a mile to run a petrol lorry but only 1.7d to run the same diesel vehicle. On that basis if there was to be equality of sacrifice between the two lorry owners, diesel oil could carry a tax of over 4s a gallon. Such an imposition is quite impracticable since the importation of untaxed fuel oil into the Region would then be enormously profitable, and therefore attractive.

I understand that the present price of diesel fuel in Onitsha is 1s 11d and in Asaba 2s 2½d.

[DR IMOKE]

Bearing these figures in mind, the Government considers that a tax of 9d per gallon should be imposed. It is more than the petrol tax, but the diesel owner will still be operating at a far lower cost per mile than his opposite number. On the other hand, the tax is not so high as to encourage widespread evasion.

From the latest consumption figures available it is believed that a tax of 9d should yield £71,250. In estimating the yield from the tax, Government must, however, regretfully accept that there will be evasion. Furthermore, diesel lorries can go a very long way on one tank of oil. Long distance vehicles will fill up in Asaba and rely on their very great range to do their business in the Eastern Region and return back across the Niger. Consequently, diesel sales may drop. It is for this reason that a conservative estimate of £42,000 is shown in Head 401, Sub-head 11.

Mr Speaker, I commend this proposal to the House and beg to move.

**The Minister of Town Planning (Mr E. Emole):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*House in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

**The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke):** Mr Chairman, I beg to move that a new Item be added to the Fourth Schedule to the Finance Law, 1956, as follows:—

Item	Unit	Rate of Tax
Auto Gas Oil	Gallon	9d

**The Chairman:** Hon. Members, the procedure is quite clear. You are in Committee to discuss this proposal and if you stand on your feet to overthrow it, it will never see the light of day at this stage. If you are in favour or against, this is your opportunity before you permit the House to give its sanction to the proposal.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr J. O. Ihekwoaba (Orlu Division):** Mr Chairman, I feel that this is bringing a Motion that will make the businessmen of this Region

to pay tax again on diesel oil whereas they were expecting that the present tax imposed on petrol will be taken away during this Budget Session.

**The Chairman:** Do you say all taxes should be removed?

**Mr Ihekwoaba:** Taxes on petrol should be removed during this Budget Session. I think an appeal has been made to this House from several angles of this Region asking us to remove petrol tax and now we have come again to impose tax on diesel oil.

**The Chairman:** Do you not agree with the proposal?

**Mr Ihekwoaba:** I do not agree, Mr Chairman.

**Mr O. Arikpo (Obubra Division):** Mr Chairman, Sir, I only rise to make the Minister aware of the fact that if this proposal is going to end in the same way as other indirect tax proposals, I have very grave misgivings. I hope no sane man will obstruct the Minister of Finance in efforts to find ways to raise more funds for the services of the Region. (*Hear! Hear!*). But—and it is a very important “but” every sane man expects the Minister of Finance to show plenty of commonsense in the administration of our public finances. If, as the Minister has submitted, each time an indirect tax is imposed on the community, it results in what is to borrow the Minister’s figure of speech “a financial muddle”, I just wonder how sensible it is to continue imposing these taxes when the Minister knows perfectly well that the imposition will be ineffective and that the cost of collecting them will most probably result in a loss of actual revenue. I am not in a position to say definitely, but going by past experiences, I have very grave doubts about the value of adding to the 4th Schedule by the imposition of a tax on diesel oil. As I said, if the Minister were sure that he would collect the estimated £41,000 or £42,000, I can assure him that he will have my fullest support; but from the very defident way the Minister introduced this measure, I do not believe that it will be effective and it is only for this reason that I am sounding this warning.

On principle I do not think any one can oppose this Motion. If there is tax on petrol



I do not see why there should not be tax on diesel oil. There should have been one as far back as 1956. But if we go by the experience of the tax on petrol, I do not know how wise we are in further increasing these ineffective taxes.

As the Member for Orlu has said, I am one of those who believe that if for no other reason but for prudent financial administration we should be very very careful in proposing new taxes else we go too far with the schedule of the Finance Law. But once a tax is approved it should be effective; and I think it makes a mockery of the whole system of taxation and budgeting if we can never be sure of what we are going to expect. If the Minister of Finance is sure, and I hope he has had plenty of expert advice on this, that he can collect even the minimum of £42,000 then I support the proposal; but I have very grave doubts that the proposal will be effective.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*The Resolution to be reported.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Resolution reported:*

*Question put—That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution—and agreed to.*

## GENERAL REVENUE BALANCE

**The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke):** Mr Speaker, I rise to move a resolution that this House approves the transfer from Appendix A: Colonial Development and Welfare, Local Contributions Account of £280,400 to the General Revenue Balance, during the year of Account, 1957-58.

In moving the Second Reading of the Appropriation Bill, I referred, Sir, to a deficit of £1½ million in view for the current financial year, 1957-58, and mentioned that the House would be asked to approve the transfer of £280,400 from the C.D. and W. Local Contributions Account to the General Revenue Balance as a partial offset to this deficit. I also referred to the fact that an excess of £418,000 is expected in education expenditure as a whole in 1957-58, mainly as a result of under-estimating the cost of Universal Primary Education.

In implementing the approval of the Standing Committee on Finance for supplementary expenditure for education grants-in-aid, my colleagues and I considered that every possible saving in other education expenditure should be made in the interest of economy. A very considerable economy in the cost of grants-in-aid had already been made by re-introducing an Assumed Local Contribution, and the full supplementary authorised by Finance Committee was not needed; in fact it was reduced by nearly £400,000.

The main opportunity for effecting other savings in education at this late stage of the financial year lay in the Education C.D. and W. Scheme, which had only recently been approved and on which expenditure was only just beginning to be incurred. It was accordingly decided to suspend certain items of the Scheme. We can save £280,400 from the Regional Contribution Account. My colleague, the Minister of Education, will give details of the items suspended and explain their effect on the Scheme as a whole. We are informing the Secretary of States of the modifications and are asking that the United Kingdom's percentage contribution to the remainder of the Scheme may be increased in such a way that we still obtain the full benefit of the grant allocated to it.

Savings from a C. D. and W. Scheme cannot be treated in the same way as savings in truly Regional expenditure, that is to say in expenditure from current revenue. As I explained this morning, C. D. and W. Schemes are financed from two special funds—the United Kingdom C. D. and W. fund and the Regional C. D. and W. Local Contributions Account, shown as Appendix A to the Estimates at page 111. The Regional Contributions Account was created by a Resolution of the House in March, 1956, setting aside and appropriating a sum of money from the General Revenue Balance for this purpose. The financial statement at page 111 shows that the balance in the Account is now £1.68 million. Our Regional contribution to these Schemes is therefore outside the General Revenue Balance. In order that savings from a C.D. and W. Scheme may have the same beneficial effect as savings in expenditure from current revenue, it is necessary to transfer them back into the General Revenue Balance. This is the purpose of the Resolution I am moving.

[DR IMOKE]

A last point is that if this saving of £280,400 from the Regional contribution Account is to be applied to the purpose for which it was made, namely to offset in some degree the supplementary expenditure on grants-in-aid and thereby reduce the effect on the General Revenue Balance of the deficit for the year, it is necessary to make the transfer in the accounts for 1957-58. In signing the warrant for the grants-in-aid supplementary I indicated on it that it was intended to seek a Resolution of the House to do this.

I am sure that Members will approve the motives of economy which led the Government to modify the Education C.D. and W. Scheme in the interests of reducing the drain on our General Revenue Balance caused by trying out free primary education last year. I therefore have no hesitation in asking the House to approve this resolution.

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Information, temporarily holding the Portfolio of Education (Mr B. C. Okwu):** Mr Speaker, I beg to second the Motion which has just been moved by my colleague the hon. the Minister of Finance. Members will recall that the total cost of the C.D. and W. Scheme for Education is exactly £1 million. Of this amount £84,720 represents recurrent expenditure chargeable against the ordinary revenue of the Region. This leaves a balance of £915,280, one third of it is derived from funds provided by the United Kingdom Treasury and the remaining two-thirds, that is £610,200 approximately, comes from East Regional revenue. The scheme consists of the following nine projects:

- (1) The erection of Secondary Technical School at Port Harcourt at an estimated cost of £147,510.
- (2) The addition of technical wings at Government College, Umuahia, and Government Secondary School at Afikpo at an estimated cost of £127,000.
- (3) Handicraft Centres, at an estimated cost of £29,200.
- (4) Establishment of four Domestic Science Centres and additions to existing centres, at an estimated cost of £18,250.

(5) Building and equipping of machine at T.I.T.C., Enugu, at an estimated cost of £11,000.

(6) Expansion of Rural Education Centre at Umuahia, at an estimated cost of £38,200.

(7) Adult Education, at an estimated cost of £2,120.

(8) Conversion of five Primary Schools at an estimated cost of £240,000.

(9) Capital grants to Voluntary Agencies and Local Government Bodies for the expansion of Secondary Education and Teacher Training, at an estimated cost of £310,000.

Total ... .. £915,280

My colleague the hon. the Minister of Finance has given the reason why it has been found necessary to effect a substantial reduction in the deficit for the current financial year.

Faced with this intractable situation, we have had no alternative but to effect the maximum possible reduction to the level of expenditure under the Education development scheme. The matter has been given the fullest consideration and after an examination of all the factors involved, it has been decided to suspend the following six projects:—

- (1) Technical Secondary School, Port Harcourt.
- (2) Technical Wings at Umuahia and Afikpo.
- (3) Domestic Science Centres.
- (4) Adult Education.
- (5) Rural Education Centre, Umuahia.
- (6) Conversion of Primary Schools.

The combined cost of these schemes is £565,080, of which the Regional element of £ is £376,720. The whole of the amount will not, however, be available for payment into the General Reserve Balance. Certain liabilities have already been incurred, mainly in connection with technical education schemes at Port Harcourt, Umuahia and Afikpo, for which quantities of building materials and equipment have either been received or have been prepared for shipment from the U.K. It is not possible at this stage to give the exact figure for these liabilities, but it can be said that the total will not exceed £96,320, which means that the sum of at least £280,400, the figure quoted in the Motion, will be available for payment into the General Revenue Balance. I should like to make it clear to the hon. Members that it is not

Government's intention to abandon any of its projects that comprise the scheme. The position is that it has been decided to suspend a number of projects until such time as they can be reconsidered for reinsertion in the light of the Region's financial position.

Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr Arikpo:** Mr Speaker, I fully appreciate the need for economy but I would like the Acting Minister of Education or the Minister of Finance to give the House a little more detail about what factors decided that these schemes should be suspended.

I do not claim to know why this has been done. The Government may have perfectly good reasons why they should prefer one scheme to the other, but I am a little perturbed about the fact that, of all things, the Government should want to suspend any schemes for technical education. As I said before, the Government may have very good reasons, but I would like the House to be told. I do not think anybody can doubt the fact that it is generally agreed that one of the greatest needs of this Region and of the whole country is trained technologists and technicians. I would, therefore, have thought that the Government would give that priority in all its educational expansion schemes.

*Question put and agreed to.*

Resolved: That this House approves the transfer from Appendix A: Colonial Development and Welfare, Local Contributions Account of £280,400 to the General Revenue Balance, during the year of Account, 1957-58.

### PRODUCE INSPECTION BOARD

**The Premier (Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe):** Mr Speaker, Sir, owing to the unavoidable absence of the hon. the Minister of Production, I beg to move, That the Members of this House appoint Mr N. U. Ofem of Obubra, to be a member of the Produce Inspection Board in accordance with section 5 of the Produce Inspection Ordinance, 1950.

A vacancy has occurred and in accordance with the provision of the relevant Law, it has become necessary to fill it.

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Transport (Mr P. O. Ururuka):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

Resolved: That the Members of this House appoint Mr N. U. Ofem of Obubra to be a member of the Produce Inspection Board in accordance with section 5 of the Produce Inspection Ordinance, 1950.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### (1) The Children and Young Persons Bill

*Order for Committee read.*

*Considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

**The Chairman:** It is quite a long Bill and it does not seem that anybody is particularly anxious to speak; nobody has given notice of any amendment. It might be treated more quickly by taking five or six clauses at a time. Is that acceptable to the House?

**Hon. Members:** Yes.

*Clauses 1-5 agreed to.*

*Clauses 6-10 agreed to.*

*Clauses 11-16 agreed to.*

*Clauses 17-25 agreed to.*

*Clauses 26-30 agreed to.*

*Clauses 31-35 agreed to.*

*Schedule agreed to.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported without amendments, read the Third time and passed.*

*Sitting suspended at 10.30 a.m.*

*Sitting resumed at 11 a.m.*

#### (2) The Eastern Region Local Government (Amendment Bill)

*Further deferred until Monday, 31st March, 1958.*

#### (3) The Criminal Code (Amendment) Bill

*Order for Second reading read.*

**The Minister of Justice (Mr R. O. Iwuagwu):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move, that the Bill for a law to amend the Criminal Code be now read a Second time.

The Bill contains two clauses namely:—

- (i) The Disclosure of official secrets by a person not employed in the public service; this shall be inserted as subsection (3A) of section 97 of the principal law.
- (ii) The amendment of section 1 of chapter 1 of the principal law by extending the definition of "person not employed in the public service" to include any company or association of persons corporate or incorporate.

By section 97 subsection (1) of the principal law, it is a criminal offence punishable on conviction by imprisonment for any person employed in the public service to disclose official secrets to unauthorised persons.

As you all are well aware, there has been a number of leakages of official information by civil servants employed in the services of this Region. I need not reiterate the amount of damage this vicious act has done to the reputation of this Region.

Mr Speaker, Sir, it is unfortunate that there is no provision in our criminal code whereby it is made a criminal offence for a person who is not employed in the public service to be in unlawful possession of a secret Government document, or to make unauthorised disclosure of any information contained in such a document. The proposed amendment will supply the necessary provision.

The second clause is consequential, and it is intended to widen the definition of "person employed in the public service" in section 1 of chapter 1 of the principal law to embrace "legal persons" such as a company or an association of persons corporate or incorporate.

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Agriculture (Mr P. O. Nwoga):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr M. U. Etuk (Uyo Division):** Mr Speaker, I think all Members of this House do agree that the time has come for us to tighten up this law. But in doing so, I do not seem to see that any provision has been made to protect Members of this House, if in the course of their duty they have to apply for certain information from those employed in the Public Service.

**Mr Speaker:** Anything said in and within the precinct of this House—you are protected; outside, you do not need to be protected—you are an individual.

**Mr Etuk:** Well if it is understood that we are protected in that sense, I withdraw my objection.

**Chief I. I. Morphy (Ogoja Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, hon. Members of this House are not protected by this Bill for during the course of their duties they are supposed to have in their possession documents that might be private.

**Mr Speaker:** Have you anything else to add to that? Have you read your House of Assembly Law? You passed it. Does it give you any protection? You better seek legal opinion—it is something quite technical.

**Chief Morphy:** Yes, I have read the House of Assembly Law.

**Mr Speaker:** Mr Nwankwo, have you got anything to say?

**Mr V. A. Nwankwo (Abakaliki Division):** Not on the line that has been brought up by the previous speakers; but I am speaking on the question of penalty.

**Mr Speaker:** This House has been in session about three weeks—we are not moving on as we should. We cannot afford to waste any more time. What is the penalty?

**Mr Nwankwo:** What I wanted to say is that 2 years imprisonment should be increased to something higher than that. There has been much damage usually done by . . . (*Interruption*). It should be extended to 7 years.

**Mr Speaker:** You have made the point. I will accept the notice to increase the penalty. Write out the notice.

**Mr V. K. Onyeri (Port Harcourt Division):** Mr Speaker, you have given a ruling that we have to seek legal advice . . .

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*

*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

*Clause 1 agreed to.*

*Clause 2.*

**Mr Nwankwo:** Mr Chairman, my reason for moving this amendment is that it is wrongly interpreted by people outside. They think that when a sentence or penalty of imprisonment or fine is made or as a penalty for breach or violation of the law, that it means that the Judge or Magistrate is bound to exercise his full right to the fullest degree in passing judgment. It does not mean so. What I am trying to amend is that two years to be the maximum is too small compared with the damage that the revelation of official secrets may bring to this Region, because revelation of official secrets may not only mean an ordinary information, it may be a decision taken in the Cabinet. It may be that there is something that may happen between this country and another country and somebody by virtue of his office is in the know at that time, and makes use of that opportunity to disclose it to another person; and the other person—that is, the man outside the service of the Government—will have to go and get money with it, or cause a very big war or something like it. That is why I am moving, Sir, that in page C 36 line 12, the words “two years” be left out and “seven years” be inserted.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr J. A. Agba (Ogoja Division):** Mr Chairman, I should like to say that the Minister of Justice is considerate in having two years as a maximum punishment instead of seven years.

**The Chairman:** Do you agree with him?

**Mr Agba:** I do not agree with the amendment. I agree with the suggestion in the Law—that is two years.

**The Chairman:** Any other speaker to that amendment?

**The Minister of Justice (Mr R. O. Iwuagwu):** Mr Chairman, I oppose this amendment because the end of any punishment is to mention the law. No maximum punishment can avert the damages done, but the fact that one has been punished or even fined a penny brands the one's name. So the maximum punishment of say 100 years will not change the damages done. Bear in mind that the objects of any punishment are reformatory, preventive and retributive. (*Hear! Hear!*)

*Question put and negatived.*

*Clause 2 agreed to.*

*Clause 3 agreed to.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported without amendments, read the Third time and passed.*

#### (4) The Magistrates Courts (Amendment) Bill

*Order for Second reading read.*

**The Minister of Justice (Mr R. O. Iwuagwu):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the Bill for a Law to amend the Magistrates Courts Law, 1955 be now read a Second time.

I am going to be quite formal in introducing this Bill; it contains only one clause—the Revisional jurisdiction of High Court over Magistrates Courts, and shall be inserted as section 57A of the Principal Law.

Section 45 of the old Magistrates' Courts Ordinance Chapter 122, volume IV of the Laws of Nigeria 1948 (which was repealed by section 88 of the Magistrates Courts Law E.R. No. 10 of 1955) empowered the Chief Justice to request specified Magistrates or all Magistrates to forward at the expiration of every calendar month to him or to any other Judge as he might designate, in such form as rules of court might direct, a list containing all criminal cases or specified criminal cases decided by or brought before such Magistrates. The Chief Justice or the Judges were vested with wide powers to deal with such cases. This is quite different from rights of appeal which aggrieved parties in a criminal case may exercise.

[MR IWUAGWU]

This revisionary jurisdiction of the High Courts over Magistrates Courts worked to a great advantage to the prosecutor, the accused and the public in general.

Unfortunately, perhaps due to an oversight, this revisionary jurisdiction was not reproduced in the Magistrates Courts Law, 1955 which is the law now in existence in this Region.

By an administrative direction the more junior Magistrates have been requested since the regionalisation to send in returns of criminal cases to the High Courts as they were doing under the Magistrates Courts Ordinance (since repealed).

These returns show that while there is a reasonable standard of competence and care among the Magistrates, yet errors of jurisdiction, at times very serious, and other errors, do occur. Occasionally, Magistrates imposed imprisonment for an offence for which the penalty was fine only.

Sir, it is not my intention to criticise the Magistrates. To deal daily for 5 or 6 days for about 5 hours a day with a mass of penal rules, regulations and sections, is not a light task, and the most careful man can err on an occasion.

The conferment of revisionary powers to deal with at least the more obvious errors at once, and with proper safeguards as are contained in this Bill will save much time and paper, and would cause less hardship to both the prosecutor and the accused.

Mr Speaker, Sir, one may be inclined to say that there is right of appeal—admitted—but we have to realise that there are some accused persons who, perhaps due to illiteracy or poverty or other unavoidable circumstances are unable to avail themselves of this right of appeal.

The Government is always satisfied on seeing that justice is done, and that the course of justice is not defeated by factors such as poverty or illiteracy.

The standard of development of any community or people is partly judged by the many safeguards which are embodied in their legal

system. We have attained our Regional autonomy and this must be reflected in our law.

Our High Courts should, therefore, have broad powers to call for the records of any Magistrate's court in a criminal case. Power to grant bail while the record of the proceedings is being prepared should be given to the High Court.

A time limit for the exercise of the powers should be limited to six months from the date of conviction in the Magistrate's Court.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Agriculture (Mr P. O. Nwoga):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*

*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

*Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported without amendment, read the Third time and passed.*

### (5) The Riot Damages Bill

*Order for Second reading read.*

**The Minister of Justice (Mr R. O. Iwuagwu):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the Bill for a Law to make provision for payment of compensation in respect of damage caused by riots, 1958, be now read a Second time.

I am going to be quite formal in introducing this Bill which contains four parts.

In our statute book, we have the Collective Punishment Ordinance, 1915, Chapter 34, Volume I of the Laws of Nigeria which provides for the imposition of fines on villages and communities in certain cases. This Ordinance operates after cession of the disturbance whereby there is a long and wearisome

inquiry in which evidence is adduced and council is invariably heard. The provisions of this Ordinance were applied in the unfortunate Ogoloma—Okrika disturbances.

The present Bill provides for a speedy and simple method of punishing villages or communities in a Local Government Council area, where such communities in defiance of law and order not only cause a violent breach of the peace, but also direct their unruly actions to wanton destruction of private or public property. Where such damage occurs the people responsible for the invasion of property must be made to make good by way of compensation any loss occasioned by their reckless acts.

One of the fundamental functions of this Government, particularly now that we have attained Regional autonomy, is to maintain the security of all persons and property, and to provide protection of persons and property from violence, robbery and wanton destruction.

Every person has a right to conduct demonstrations within the law, but where a demonstration degenerates into a state which is calculated to endanger the security of the Government, the Government must do something to check it.

This Bill runs deep into our very existence, and Mr Speaker, Sir, I am appealing to all concerned to give it a very serious consideration.

It is the inalienable right of any person in a democratic society to own and retain property and to preserve it from wanton destruction except the damage is caused by an Act of God. Any damage thus caused to any property by any person must be adequately compensated, and with this in mind, this Bill is being introduced to make provisions for the payment of compensation in respect of any damage caused by riots.

Part I of the Bill makes provision for the payment of compensation (not fine) in respect of damage caused by riots. In section 2 of this part "Council" means a Local Government Council established or deemed to have been established under the Eastern Region Local Government Law, 1955.

Part II enumerates the power of the Governor. The Governor is defined as the Governor-in-Council. This part gives the Governor

power to declare a riot area, and to direct recovery of any damage caused by riot, and also the recovery of any expenditure incurred by Government in suppressing it. It also empowers the Governor to give directions in respect of—

- (a) the assessment of damages;
- (b) the apportionment of an amount recoverable in respect of any damage among the persons resident or owning property in such area;
- (c) the classification of persons for the purpose of such apportionment;
- (d) the dates upon which the sums recoverable in respect of damage shall be paid and the instalments, if any, in which they shall be paid;
- (e) the exercise of any powers and the performance of the duties of the commissioner appointed by the Governor for the assessment of the damages.

Part III deals with the appointment, duties and powers of such commissioners. The commissioner shall not be liable in respect of any act or omission done by him in good faith in the course of his duties.

Part IV deals with notices to be served by the Commissioner before assessing damage. Any assessment duly made will be conclusive as to the amount of such damage provided that the Governor may direct a reassessment.

Part V makes the amount directed to be recovered to be a charge upon the revenue of the Local Government Council in such area.

By subsection 16 (1) "A council may frame and submit to the Governor a scheme for the liquidation of the charge imposed upon its revenue under section 15."

In the fifth line of section 19 insert "Eastern Region" before "Local" and "1955" after "Law".

A Local Government Council shall not, however, raise loans to meet the obligations.

Part VI makes provisions for the creation of a scheme to be known as a "Riot damages fund" which shall be kept and administered by the Accountant-General. Into this fund shall be paid by the Local Government Council all moneys collected in connection with riots.

[Mr Iwuagwu]

Any compensation and any expenses incurred by Government shall be paid from this fund.

Mr Speaker, Sir, our recent change of status whereby we are no more a subject but an object in international relations must be reflected in our law, and this has been happily demonstrated in the present Bill.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Agriculture (Mr P. O. Nwoga):** Sir, I beg to second.

**Mr Speaker:** Should I gather that the Minister intends to make some amendments in Committee stage?

**Mr Iwuagwu:** Well, if it is necessary.

**Mr Speaker:** You have to make up your mind now. If there are any amendments to be made, you ought to give a notice.

**Mr Iwuagwu:** I think I will do that in writing.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr Arikpo:** Mr Speaker, I wish to point out one very important omission. The object of this Bill is understandable—to minimise the incident of public disturbances; but as it stands, it offends against a very important fundamental principle of law and that is, that punishment shall be only according to law. The old Collective Punishment Ordinance which in itself has been very severely criticised, at least makes provision to the effect that before any punishment is meted out, there shall have been a fair and proper inquiry into the incident which resulted in the damage. This Bill makes no provision for such inquiry, all that it says is that when and wherever there is a disturbance or riot and damage is done to property, irrespective of those who caused that damage, irrespective of the cause of the riot, the Government will simply send a Commissioner there. The Commissioner will proceed to assess the damage and punish the people. That, Sir, is a most oppressive method of maintaining law and order in a Region, and the irony of it all is that the Minister says "that it accords with self-government status". If self-government means punishment without trial, then I am afraid the

people of this Region are in for a very bad time. I do not like to believe that the omission is intentional and I hope that at Committee Stage, the Minister will take steps to repair that omission to ensure that before any community is punished, that community shall have been subjected to the fair process of law by means of an inquiry set up by the Governor in Council. To do otherwise would be to punish innocent people unfairly merely because they happen to be unfortunate enough to live in a turbulent area. Furthermore, it should be borne in mind that the responsibility for law and order is equally that of the Regional Government as well as of the Local Government Councils and the only difference is one of degree and one of proximity. Therefore to say that because Local Councillors happen to be on the spot, they are more responsible and they should be liable for the acts of their fellow citizens is to my mind an undue burden on the Local Councillors. No one wants to encourage lawlessness but when riot takes place, that is an offence. A riot is an offence under the Criminal Code of Nigeria and all those who take part in that riot should be dealt with according to law. To punish innocent people merely because some members of their community have committed an offence is to my mind a most oppressive thing to do, and I am asking the Minister to consider seriously introducing an amendment which will make it possible for punishment to be inflicted only after an inquiry or only after due process of law has taken place. Apart from that, I have no quarrel with this Bill and I hope the Minister will take this into consideration and introduce an amendment to it.

**Mr M. N. Onwuma (Aba Division):** Mr Speaker, the essential part I would like to touch is Part V and that deals with charging whatever levy the Commissioner decides to charge, to the local councils. Already, as Members of the Government know, the local councillors' cordial relationship with the people of a local council area has become alienated. It appears that anything that the people think is very difficult for them to do such as taxes, bicycle licences, etc., that the local councillors are responsible. It seems to me that this part of the Bill implies that any local council area should be able to prevent a riot. If that is accepted, it means that they should have the necessary force to prevent such a situation from arising. Consequent upon that, it leads to establishing a sort of local police force. That



in the nature of things of course, is not acceptable. As far as I am concerned, it is not necessary for any local council to have police force in any form whatsoever. Therefore, it seems to me that it will be better for the payment of these damages to be obtained by the Government directly from the people of the areas declared riot areas instead of passing the responsibility of collecting the levy unto the local council.

It will create some enmity between the people of the areas concerned and the councillors. As a matter of fact, the consequences of Part V of the Bill will not be obvious to us at the moment; but, if any such situation arises, I am quite sure that evil effects will become more obvious. I am suggesting that whereas the amount of damages can be recovered by the Government, it should be done by its agents—those agents of Government that collect taxes. If any such levy is imposed the tax officers or officers of Internal Revenue should go directly and get the money and I am not in agreement that the responsibility should be passed on to the local persons because already far too many things are being saddled on the local councils. Roads are on them; medical services, schools, and a large number of things and the personnel required, I am sorry to say, are not as educated as you would expect and they are not qualified to carry on most of these responsibilities.

In this particular instance it will create a lot of ill feelings between people in some areas. Apart from that, Mr Speaker, I beg to support.

**Mr K. Kiri (Degema Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am speaking to this Bill out of experience. You will all believe that Degema Division has been probably in the whole of the Eastern Region, the worst sufferer under this Collective Punishment Ordinance and whatever advice I give, I am doing so with good intentions.

I am in sympathy with the Minister who wants somebody at least to be held responsible for the payment of such damages and he has passed it on to the local council areas. I can assure him that in some sections, probably it will work, but with experience I am telling him, Sir, that it will not work in some sections of the Eastern Region.

I happened to be in the country during the Okrika-Ogoloma trouble. The Resident then advised us that it may be safer to apportion the damage on taxable adults. We found it was not workable within the time to pay such damage because all the young men then were prepared to leave the place; they could go to the Cameroons, French territory and other places. We were baffled and could not take the advice. So we had to decide on some other workable medium which I am not in a position to disclose at the present. Further, the Minister has indicated that the Council shall not go into loan. What would happen if the council area is unable to provide the damage and at the same time shall not go into loan? Well, property around that area may be sold. But do not forget that it is not like Okrika and Kalabari where the towns or council areas are quite distinct. In some areas you might find that some of those who should be rewarded for the damage done to their property reside in the guilty council area themselves, and according to this law as long as they have property in the affected area they are compelled to pay the damages. I am calling the attention of the Minister that whereas we all are happy that those who suffer damages in riots should be compensated the medium whereby the compensation could be raised and made should be carefully gone into, otherwise it may create more confusion for I have witnessed and I have experienced it. Thank you.

**Mr Agba:** Mr Speaker, Sir, speaking on this subject of councillors paying compensation for the damages done by rioting, I want to analyse the sources of the revenue of the council.

According to the present Constitution, the council derives its revenue only from two sources—from the grants-in-aid given by the Government, and by way of rates. Now, the rates collected by some councils are so insignificant that they cannot even meet up with the development in their areas much less to enable them undertake anything outside what I have so far named. The grants the Government also gives to the councils are meant for specific business. I like to say: if the Government or the Ministry of Justice means that the councils have got to use the Government grants in paying the compensation, it means that Government is paying back the compensation instead of the people who have caused the riot

[MR AGBA]

and damages suffering for what they have done. I think that point is not very cogent as far as I can see it, because the man who does the havoc should suffer for the havoc, instead of another person being held responsible merely because he is present in that area. I agree with the previous speakers that the area concerned with the riots and the damages in consequence of the riots should be held solely responsible for making good what they have so far caused.

Again I remember, a couple of weeks ago, there was a Motion made by one of the hon. Members on the Opposition Bench that the Government should conduct an inquiry into the shooting, the riot and damages done as the result of the modification in the U.P.E. Scheme. That Motion was defeated in this hon. House, but just a few days after, this Bill now comes up. If the damages done by rioting are going to be assessed so that appropriate compensation be made, it will call for an inquiry into the area where these damages have been effected; it will call for an inquiry into how many people have taken part in the rioting and in devastating certain people's properties. In other words, while one Motion calling for an inquiry into the shooting, looting and the like is defeated, it is put up by way of a Bill, and the House is now being called upon to pass this Bill which seeks to castigate people who have taken part in the rioting and causing damages to other people's properties. It seems to me we are playing hide and seek in this House. The Government is playing hide and seek with the Opposition. Why was the Motion defeated? Was it because it was moved by an Opposition Member? The Bill in effect is untimely, it is unnecessary and improper.

I do believe that you just can't go into the assessment of damages and rioting in a particular area without conducting an inquiry into the area. The mere choosing of a Commissioner to go into it, and finding out what damages have been done, what people or what area have taken part in the rioting, is not sufficient. A body of men will do it far better than a single person under the name of a Commissioner. I think sections 4, 5, and 6 of the Bill should be revised and perhaps I may take the opportunity to say that the Government may very well recall that Motion by an hon. Member of the Opposition, which was defeated a couple of

days ago. Even though that Motion was defeated, you now accept it directly or indirectly.

*And it being 11.45 a.m. Mr Speaker interrupted the business and the debate stood adjourned. Debate to be resumed on Monday, 31st March, 1958.*

**(6) The Acquisition of Land by Aliens Bill—Second Reading**

*Further deferred until Monday, 31st March, 1958.*

**(7) The Public Lands Acquisition (Amendment) Bill—Second Reading**

*Further deferred until Monday, 31st March, 1958.*

**ADJOURNMENT**

**The Premier (Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe):** Mr Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Monday, 31st March, at 10 a.m. May I, in doing so, announce with pleasure to the House that another athlete from the Eastern Region has scaled the heights of pugilism by winning the Middleweight Championship of the British Empire. (*Applause*).

At Liverpool, last night, Dick Tiger, of Amaigbo, Orlu Division, knocked out Pat MacAteer of Birkenhead, the titleholder, in the ninth round, to become the undisputed Middleweight Champion of the British Empire.

The fight was scheduled for fifteen rounds and the bout was even until the seventh round, when Dick's heavier punches began to sap Pat's energy. Dick kept up his pressure until the ninth round when he landed the K.O. punch.

This news is of interest to us in this Region, because one of our sons, Hogan Basse, also blasted his way to the top by winning the Featherweight Championship of the world, which he will be defending at Los Angeles, in California, on 1st April.

I am sure hon. Members will join with me in expressing our pride and congratulations on the worthy achievements of this athlete who, by his great courage and skill, has brought fame and glory to Nigeria. (*Applause*).

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke):** Sir, I beg to second.

**Mr Speaker:** Before proposing the Question, I would like to say that there will be a meeting of this Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association immediately after the House rises. Members are requested to remain in their places to enable both the Speaker and the Clerk to discuss the affairs of the Association with them. It was fixed last week, but Members were anxious to go and they did go away, and there was nothing to do about it. I do hope you will remain this time.

*Question proposed.*

#### ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

##### Dismissal of Workers by a Foreign Firm of Building Contractors

**The Minister of Welfare (Mr E. A. Chime):** Mr Speaker, I wish to make a statement on the recent press reports with regard to the dismissal by a foreign firm of building contractors of locally employed labour at Port Harcourt and the replacement of this labour by workers of Northern origin.

The part of the contract awarded to the firm of contractors concerned, the laying of a raft of facines over swampy ground, the covering of this raft with about 7 feet of sand dredged from the river; the construction of a levelled site for the purpose of laying out railway lines for the marshalling yards for the wharf extension.

The work commenced on 19th February, 1958, the company engaging 425 local workers for the preliminary levelling process. On the 15th March, the company brought from Lagos

120 workers who were working for the company on the Ebute Metta causeway as they were skilled in the making of facines.

Facines are bundles of brushwood tied in rolls of some twenty feet in length and then laying them interlacing on the swampy ground to make a raft. These 120 semi-skilled workers consisted of 83 workers of Northern origin, 37 workers of Eastern Region origin and 5 others. On the day of the arrival of these workers all of the 425 local workers were paid off. These men had been engaged on a casual day to day basis and it had been agreed to pay them off each Saturday and then to engage such unskilled workers as were required on the following Monday. On Monday the 17th March, 1958, local workers were re-engaged and a disturbance was caused by the persons not re-engaged marching both to the Labour Office and to the office of the Chief Administrative Officer, Port Harcourt protesting at the employment of the persons from Lagos. The men concerned also took up the matter with a local newspaper.

I am told that the laying of facines is an expert job and the locally employed men, having not had the experience in this work, were not suitable for employment at this stage of the work. The position at the moment is that the labour force consists of 120 men brought from Lagos and 245 locally engaged men. I am also informed that the present phase of the work would likely be completed in two weeks time and the 120 men brought from Lagos will be returned there immediately thereafter.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Adjourned, accordingly, at eight minutes to 12 o'clock noon.*

WRITTEN ANSWER TO QUESTION

Friday, 28th March, 1958

**Schools in the Eastern Region**

43. **Mr G. C. Okeya** asked the Minister of Education, what is the number of Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and Training Colleges or Centres in the Region, giving their enrolment and staff for the period 1954-58, run by: Government, Roman Catholic

Mission, Protestant Missions, Local Authorities and Private Voluntary Agencies.

**The Minister of Education:** Particulars requested are as listed below. The hon. Member would appreciate that it is not the practice to break down educational statistics in denominational groups.

**Primary Schools**

Year	No. of Schools	Enrolment	No. of Teachers
1954 ...	3,987	664,707	23,260
1955 ...	4,309	742,542	25,860 (Approx.)
1956 ...	4,772	904,235	29,671
1957 ...	6,654	1,330,000	37,397
1958 ...	6,874	1,500,000 (estimated before re-introduction of fees).	40,000 (estimated before re-introduction of fees).

**Secondary Schools**

No. of Schools

GRAMMAR

COMMERCIAL

Year	Private				Enrolment	Enrolment	
	Govt.	V. Agency	V.A.	L. Govt.		All Private V.A.	Enrolment
1954 ...	3	24	18	1	9,821	11	1,793
1955 ...	4	27	19	1	10,045	13	2,107
1956 ...	4	33	19	2	11,118	12	2,325
1957 ...	4	38	22	4	12,068	13	2,378
1958 ...	4	44	29	6	—	18	—

No. of Staff: Only the following figures are available:

YEAR	GRAMMAR SCHOOLS	COMMERCIAL
1955 ...	674	—
1956 ...	691	125

**Training Colleges**

Year	Govt.	L.G.	V.A.	Others	Total	Enrolment
1954 ...	2	—	48	—	50	3,976
1955 ...	2	—	51	—	53	4,395
1956 ...	2	3	75	—	80	5,767
1957 ...	3	8	103	—	114	7,885
1958 ...	4	8	113	—	125	Not available.

Figures for staff are not available.

EASTERN HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Monday, 31st March, 1958

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

PRAYERS

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Farmers in Ogoja and Obudu Divisions

24. Mr J. A. Agba asked the Minister of Agriculture, what encouragement he has given to the farmers of Ogoja and Obudu Divisions, in view of the fact that these are major food producing areas.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture (Mr D. A. Nnaji): I am directed to answer as follows:—

Government interest for the farming communities in the Ogoja and Obudu Divisions is shown by the fact that 8 field staff of the Agricultural Department have been posted to these two Divisions. In addition, a Senior Officer tours these Divisions at least every month.

Further services are provided as follows:—

- (1) The provision of Nurseries producing subsidised seedlings of oil palm, cocoa, coffee, citrus, etc.
- (2) The supply of new and pure planting material of annual crops such as rice.
- (3) Provision of fertiliser.
- (4) Provision of improved poultry.
- (5) Pest and disease controlled on farmers' crops.
- (6) And finally the carrying out of propaganda and advice, in regular tours by staff and at the annual Agricultural shows at Ogoja and Abakaliki.

School Population in Abakaliki

37. Mr S. N. Alo asked the Minister of Education, how many children have been registered for admission in respect of each school in Abakaliki in 1958; and how does this compare with the number on the roll for the first term in 1957.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Education (Mr L. O. Uzoigwe): I am directed to answer as follows:—

Details of registration in 1958 with comparative figures in 1957 are set out:—

School	No. Registered in 1957 for admission in 1958	Infant I Roll 1957 (1st term)	Total Roll 1957
St. Theresa's, Abakaliki ... ..	181	168	927
C.S.M., Abakaliki ... ..	155	212	763
Convent, Abakaliki ... ..	55	149	459
R.C.M., Agbaja Onubu, Abakaliki ...	50	69	133
St. Patrick's, Kpiripkiri, Abakaliki ...	105	120	421

Hope Waddell Training Institute, Calabar

53. Mr M. N. Onwuma asked the Minister of Education, whether he has investigated the circumstances which led to the dismissal of two boys for Post Secondary Course and the suspension of the rest in the Hope Waddell Training Institute, Calabar, in May, 1957.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Education (Mr L. O. Uzoigwe):

I am directed to answer as follows:—

The incident in Hope Waddell Training Institute in May, 1957 was fully investigated, and findings revealed that all the striking students were taken back in their classes with the exception of one student who had previously applied for a Leaving Certificate but later wished to be re-admitted. His application for re-admission was not successful.

**Women's Training College, Enugu**

55. **Mr J. O. Okeh** asked the Minister of Education, how many tutors are at present on the staff of the Government Women's Training College, Enugu; what are their names, qualifications and scales of salary; how many of them are in the Senior Service.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Education (Mr L. O. Uzoigwe):**

I am directed to answer as follows:—

There are altogether 12 tutors on the staff of the Government Women's Training College, Enugu. Of these 8 are holders of Senior Service appointments and 4 are in the Junior Service. Names, qualifications and scales of salary of each will be circulated in the Official Report.

WOMEN'S TRAINING COLLEGE, ENUGU: TEACHING STAFF, FEBRUARY, 1958

Name	Grade	Qualification	Salary	Scale
<i>Senior Service:</i>			£	
Miss N. Beck ..	Ag. Principal ..	Higher Froebel Certificate .. ..	1,380	Group 8.
Miss M. Cure ..	W.E.O. ..	Ministry of Education Teachers' Certificate; Member of Royal Society of Teachers; Associate of Royal College of Preceptors .. ..	1,380	A
Miss B. Enene ..	W.E.O. ..	Higher Elementary Certificate; Senior Teachers' Certificate; Professional Certificate Institute of Education, London .. ..	696	A
Miss P. Cooney ..	W.E.O. ..	Higher Elementary Certificate, Ministry of Education Teachers' Certificate .. ..	696	A
Mrs T. Henshaw ..	W.E.O. ..	Higher Elementary Certificate, Ministry of Education Teachers' Certificate with Diploma in Domestic Subjects .. ..	696	A
Miss M. Elijah ..	W.E.O. ..	Higher Elementary Certificate, Ministry of Education Teachers' Certificate with Diploma in Arts and Crafts .. ..	624	A
Mrs O. Odinamadu (Temporary)	W.E.O. ..	B.A. Lincoln University, M.A. Columbia University, U.S.A. ..	£57 10s per mensem	—
Mrs E. Collins (Temporary)	W.E.O. ..	Ministry of Education Teachers' Certificate (6 years' experience) ..	£57 10s per mensem	—
<i>Junior Service:</i>				
Miss T. Johnson ..	Master, Gr. I ..	School Certificate; Higher Elementary Certificate, Ministry of Education Teachers' Certificate ..	540	D 5A
Mrs E. Obi ..	Teacher Gr. II	Higher Elementary Certificate; One year Professional Course, Durham ..	282	D 3
Mrs A. Ukpana (Temporary)	Master Gr. I ..	Higher Elementary Certificate; Professional Certificate, Institute of Education, London .. ..	516	D 5A (fixed)
Mrs A. Oko (Temporary)	Teacher Gr. II	Higher Elementary Certificate; Ministry of Education Teachers' Certificate .. ..	270	D 3

**Mr Ikoku:** Is the hon. Minister aware that there are discrepancies in the salaries paid to the staff in the Women's Training College?

**Mr Uzoigwe:** The hon. Minister is not aware.

**Shanahan Memorial College, Uboma**

59. **Mr S. E. K. Iwueke** asked the Minister of Education, if he is aware of the fact that the Shanahan Memorial Higher Elementary Training College, Uboma, is the only Higher

Elementary Training College in Okigwi Division, and that this College was built by community effort; if so, can he say why Elementary Training Colleges built in far more developed areas received building grants up to £3,000 whilst this college received nothing until 1957, when a meagre sum of £860 was granted.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Education (Mr L. O. Uzoigwe):** I am directed to answer as follows:—

I am aware. The fact is that the college was opened under special circumstances and when permission to open was given on 26th August, 1955, it was clearly stated that no guarantee could be given that any capital grant would be forthcoming.

The college opened with 18 students and only rose to 40 students in its second year of operation. Meanwhile, training colleges with full classes had priority for grant from the limited Government funds available.

**Mr Iwueke:** I wish to know whether the Minister is prepared to give the circumstances that warranted the opening of the college.

**Mr Uzoigwe:** I have already told you that the Ministry had limited resources.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Will the Minister be good enough to tell the House under what special circumstances this school was opened?

**The Minister of Information temporarily holding the Portfolio of Education:** Mr Speaker, I was informed that this College was built under community effort and it will be recalled when I spoke here during the latest sitting of the House it was pointed out clearly that the number of training colleges we have now in the Region is more than sufficient to serve the needs of the Region and the Ministry pointed out early towards the close of last year that no grants would be forthcoming for Teacher Training Colleges that were being opened. Before a college starts to function the first stage is to ask for permission to open and then the Ministry normally points out that in most cases permission can only be given on the understanding that no grants will be forthcoming.

### Women's Training College, Enugu

65. **Mr J. O. Okeh** asked the Premier, whether he is aware of the disparity in the treatment of the two Nigerian tutors in the Government Women's Training College, Enugu, who, in spite of their qualifications, experience and responsible position in the College, have been denied appointment to the Senior Service of the Department.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier (Mr J. O. Umolu):** I am directed to answer as follows:—

No Nigerian tutor in the Government Women's Training College, Enugu, who possess the required qualifications, has been denied appointment to the Senior Service of the Department. The qualifications required for *direct* appointment to the grade of Woman Education Officer are either

- (i) An honours or good pass University degree: a post-graduate diploma in education and post-graduate teaching experience will be advantages.
- (ii) Successful completion of a three years' course at a specialised training College in Physical Education or Domestic Science or Froebel Method or Music or Art.

Neither of the two tutors on the Permanent Staff of the Women's Training Centre, Enugu, possesses the required qualifications.

### Iyi Oji Cult

101. **Mr M. C. Awgu** asked the Minister of Local Government, whether he is contemplating suggesting the replacement of the Iyi Oji Cult in Onitsha Division which has been banned, with another cult, acceptable for its moral and traditional safeguards; if so, how soon; if not, why.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Local Government (Mr M. U. Obayi):** I am directed to answer as follows:—

The Iyi Oji Cult in Onitsha Division has not been banned. As a result of an inquiry which the hon. Minister of Justice and I held at Onitsha, the Onitsha Urban District Council has been informed that it may draft bye-laws for the suppression of the cult in its own area.

[MR OBAYI]

It is not proposed to take any action against the cult outside the area of the Onitsha Urban District Council. There is no question, therefore, of replacing it by any other cult.

#### Teacher Councillors

102. **Mr J. A. Agba** asked the Minister of Local Government, whether Teacher Councillors lose their seats on the Councils when they become students in Colleges and Institutions.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Local Government (Mr M. U. Obayi):** I am directed to answer as follows:—

No Sir, Teacher Councillors do not lose their seats on councils when they become students in colleges and institutions so long as they continue to attend council meetings. If a council member does not attend any council or committee meeting for six months, his seat becomes vacant under the Local Government Law.

#### Western Ahoada Rural District Council

105. **Mr J. O. Okeh** asked the Minister of Local Government, if it is true that the Western Ahoada Rural District Council will have no working balance at the 31st March, 1958; if so, does he still intend to extend the life of the Council despite persistent agitation from the people for its dissolution and the substitution of a Caretaker Committee; if it had a working balance, what is the amount.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Local Government (Mr M. U. Obayi):** No, Sir, it is not true that the Western Ahoada District Council will have no working balance on the 31st March, 1958. The exact financial position of this council is not clear, as the council has been without a substantive Treasurer for some time, and the acting Treasurer has been unable to balance his accounts. But at the most conservative estimate the council's working balance at the 31st March, 1958 will be £2,830 and may well be considerably more than that. I may add that, on the dissolution of County Councils, I propose to allocate a competent officer from the staff of a County Council to Western Ahoada to fill the vacant post of Treasurer.

In view of the fact that fresh elections are due for this council by the end of September, I do not propose to take any action now towards dissolving this council.

**Mr Abengowe:** What effort has been made by the Minister to clarify the financial position of the council before replacing it with a County Council?

**Mr Obayi:** That is a different question altogether.

**The Minister of Local Government:** Mr Speaker, the request to verify the question of the financial position of this council came rather very late, and in view of the fact that the District Councils will take over County Councils' responsibilities and the Treasurer will be replaced by the outgoing Treasurer from the County Council, we thought it not wise to waste money to go and set up an inquiry for this purpose.

#### Ogoni Education Rate

107. **Mr M. N. Yowika** asked the Minister of Local Government, apropos answer to question No. 61 of last session, whether the balance of unpaid and uncollected Education rate will be collected and paid to the Voluntary Agencies concerned; and whether the overpayment to Lutheran Mission will be refunded; if so, when.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Local Government (Mr M. U. Obayi):** I am directed to answer as follows:—

I approved in February a request from the Khana District Council for supplementary expenditure in its estimates to enable it to pay the amounts due to the Voluntary Agencies. The Khana District Council is responsible for the collection of any unpaid rates and for recovering the over-payment made to the Lutheran Mission. I cannot say when this will be done, but I shall be grateful for any assistance that the hon. Member can give to see that all unpaid rates are collected.

#### Khana District—Rates 1957–58

108. **Mr M. N. Yowika** asked the Minister of Local Government, whether he is aware that the Khana District Council levied on the taxpayers in Ogoni Division rates ranging from 8s in certain clans to 13s in others; what is the



reason for the disparity and what was the total sum collected.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Local Government (Mr M. U. Obayi):** I am directed to answer as follows:—

Yes, Sir. In 1957-58 the Khana District Council levied a general rate of 3s per head and a secondary education rate of 5s per head. In addition, for the Northern Khana Local Council area only, a further special education rate of 5s per head was imposed. The purpose of the latter rate was to assist a private student from the area who was in difficulties in the United Kingdom.

The total sum collected is not yet known as the Council's rate returns for the financial year 1957-58 are not yet due.

#### Railway Coaches—Modernisation

114. **Mr S. E. K. Iwueke** asked the Minister of Transport, whether as an agent of the Federal Government in matters pertaining to transport, he will not make representations to the Railway Corporation on the need for replacing outmoded and dirty coaches still being used in this Region with modern coaches.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Transport (Mr D. O. Anu):** I am directed to answer as follows:—

The Railway Corporation is doubtless alive to the need to provide modern coaches on its services but I am prepared to represent the views of the hon. Member to the Corporation.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### (1) The 1958-59 Eastern Region Appropriation Bill—Second Reading

(First Allotted Day)

*Order read for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question (28th March)—That the Bill be now read a Second time.*

*Question again proposed.*

**Mr S. G. Ikoku (Enyong Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, the Budget before the House is a grim one. The speech of the hon. Minister of Finance was a flat one. There is nothing in it, Sir, to inspire anyone. There is no ground whatsoever on which to base a feeling of optimism however cautious. However, we thank the hon. the Minister of Finance for the great

pains he has taken to preach caution and level-headedness in our approach to financial matters. Let us hope that this budget really marks the end of adventurism by the Government and a return to financial realism. There are just two little points I want to dispose of before going on. The first is reference to Standing Order 66 (1). I like to make it clear, Sir, that our objection is not to the simultaneous presentation of the Estimates with the Budget speech. Our objection is that the two are presented so late in the year. You will realise, Sir, that today is the 31st of March and today is the first day of the debate on the Appropriation Bill! Secondly, Sir, I will like to thank the Minister of Finance for clearing the air, as it were; for in his statement, in the second paragraph, thanking the officials in his department for their prodigious effort and also in the penultimate paragraph thanking them for the devotion and trouble taken in compiling the Estimates. The Minister has succeeded in erasing the impression that these officials had been responsible for the delays and difficulties connected with the presentation of the Estimates.

To proceed, Sir, this is a "mark time" budget and it vividly brings out two facts. Firstly that our finances are in a bad state despite the claims to buoyancy by Government spokesmen.

Secondly, that the Government in the past few years has indulged itself in overspending and today stands face to face with the hard fact of the situation which are with it. We just cannot go on spending recklessly without proper financial planning. We on this side of the House oppose the Appropriation Bill now before this House on three grounds.

Firstly, it reveals that Government is not at all aware of the real nature of the Region's financial problems. Secondly, the measure proposed by the Government completely fails to get at the heart of the Region's financial problem. Thirdly, the present budget will create more unemployment, poverty and hardship in the Region. Government's financial strategy is that in order to cut down its recurrent budget deficits all it had to do is to cut down on expenditure. This is a short term panacea which does not and cannot cure the disease. Reduced expenditure means reduced services and curtailed projects and these reduced services and projects will lead to diminution in revenue-earning capacity and a fall in revenue

[MR IKOKU]

collected. With a fall in revenue you again have to cut expenditure in order to avoid or reduce deficit. This downward spiral just will not stop. Where does it end? Frankly it ends in financial asphyxia.

I am not saying, Sir, that cuts in expenditure are not necessary. They are absolutely necessary. What I am driving at, Sir, is that the tax only gives a temporary relief, and the time thus gained should be fully employed in putting into effect bold measures which will strengthen and raise the Region's revenue.

I would like to thank the people who prepared the Estimates because they have saved us a lot of controversy. Many matters on which both sides of the House are divided and could not agree have now been cleared up by these Estimates before us. I mention just a few. Firstly, we say that our finances are not as healthy or to use the official term "buoyant" as the Government would like us believe. There is a revenue drop in 1958-59 as against the current financial year. There is a revenue drop of £370,230, despite the fact that we have two new sources of revenue which were non-existent and these sources of revenue are £42,000 from tax on diesel oil and £52,000 on oil royalty. Despite these two sources of revenue our revenue for the forthcoming financial year has dropped by nearly £400,000. Secondly, our general revenue balance has been so depleted that we are compelled to transfer money from our capital account in order to buttress or sustain the general revenue balance.

I refer to the sum of £230,400 which is being transferred from the Colonial Development and Welfare local contributions account back into the general revenue. That in itself Sir, shows clearly that all is not well with us because we have been compelled to fall back on our capital in an attempt to keep going.

The current financial year 1957-58 is ending with a budget deficit. The admitted figure is £1,686,561 despite the fact that the budget which was presented to this House 12 months ago estimated the budget surplus at £225,550. We are ending very badly. Fourthly, the general revenue balance had dropped steadily. On April 1st 1956 we stood at £7,161,790; April 1st, 1957 we stood at £5,159,607 and

now April 1st, 1958 the hon. Minister of Finance points out that we will stand at £3,573,206. Government has been running at a deficit for three years now. In 1956-57 financial year there was a deficit of £423,135; in 1957-58, current financial year, a deficit of £1,686,581 and in the ensuing financial year 1958-59 there is still a deficit. But, Sir, we are told that we shall have an estimated surplus of £201,940. £350,000 had so far been allocated towards the payment of lump sum compensation and we are told in the Speech From The Throne that the total project will cost us in the neighbourhood of £1,000,000. Where has Government made provision for the balance of £650,000? There is no provision at all in the Estimates.

**Hon. Members:** They are not going all at once.

**Mr Ikoku:** It is commonsense that if these gentlemen are going to leave us at all they will leave us in the ensuing financial year. I will like it to be noted that the official view is that it does not follow.

Sir, you will remember that a year ago the Opposition made it clear that the estimates before us were pointing at a deficit because the provision for the Universal Primary Education Scheme was a provision for nine months and not for the whole year. That was easily "refuted" by the Government. But what is the position today? We are face to face with a deficit of £1.6 million. We are told that the lion's share of that deficit is the handwork of the U.P.E. scheme. Sir, we are told that expenditure on the U.P.E. scheme is responsible primarily for our financial difficulty. We challenged that view here last month and the Government opposed us. That view now has been confirmed by the very estimates and at page E 2 of the memorandum, Sir, it is clearly stated that out of a deficit of £1,332,036, education, which is the U.P.E., will be responsible for £417,950 and other items of expenditure will be responsible for £914,086. Now we held that view last month that education is the sole cause of our financial difficulty; we were laughed at and now it is stated in their Memorandum.

Sir, we made it clear during the last Budget Session that the proposal to raise £1 million

as loan from Overseas to finance our road development project is unrealistic. We were told that the money would be found. We would like the hon. Minister of Finance to refer to any portion of his speech or to the estimates to draw attention to where that money has been found. Not a penny has been got.

Sir, we made it clear that the estimates of revenue, particularly revenue from income tax were grossly over-estimated. Of course then, nobody said anything about these so-called experts in the Ministry of Finance; everything was shifted to the Minister. Now that it has gone bad—that things were not as good—we suddenly realise that we had experts in the Ministry of Finance! I would like, Sir, to draw attention to page E 4 of the Memorandum where the Minister himself or rather his Department states as follows:

“In 1957–58 Approved Estimates all Regional Income Tax was shown under a single Sub-head of £3,300,000. This figure had to be estimated before the results of the first year’s collection under the new Finance Law could be foreseen and has proved to be an over-estimate”.

In his own speech, Sir, page 4 we read that: “In the nature of things, the estimate had to be made long before the first year’s collection was complete, and it has proved to be over-optimistic”.

Sir, we have been told here that money is going to be taken from our capital assets to buttress the general revenue balance. We had made it clear, Sir, that we are running into difficulty because we are now living on our assets. That of course was challenged. Lastly, last Budget session, we made it clear, Sir, that Government was not going to get the proposed amount from tax on palm produce because their price policy would not encourage an increase in output. Of course there again we were treated with derision.

Page 5 of the Memorandum reads as follows:

“The rise in the export tonnages forecast in 1957–58 Estimates has not materialised. Consequently revenue from the Produce Purchase Tax is estimated to fall as the export tonnages fall”.

The reason why I have taken this trouble is to try and make Members realise that it is not

always that Opposition criticism of financial matters is meant just to discredit the Government. Our attempt has been, I must say this quite sincerely, to bring Government back to see our financial position as it is and to put away its rosy spectacles. We have always been challenged on that point and I am only glad that our Estimates have confirmed our stand.

I turn to the more constructive side of my speech and that is the way out. We maintain, Sir, that our financial problem arises from our limited and diminishing revenue. That is the crux of the matter and Government proposals have not focussed attention on this side of the equation. Government has focussed attention on the expenditure side of the equation and our view, Sir, is that if our financial problems are to be solved both in the short-term and long-term the revenue side of the equation should attract our full and undivided attention. I maintain, Sir, that we can undertake a three pronged attack on the problem. Firstly, a cut in expenditure. Secondly, improved efficiency in the collection of revenue. And thirdly, bolder and more far-reaching measures designed at stimulating the Region’s economy along the desired line. That aspect of the problem is completely lacking either in the Estimates or in the speech of hon. the Minister of Finance. I will not take your time, Sir, on the first which is cut in expenditure because that is the line which the Government has undertaken. Obviously it cannot improve the problem in the long-term; it can only provide some temporary relief. Here I must add that we support the move to cut the salaries of Ministers and officials of this House, and we only hope that the Government will know that that is a signal given by this House for the application of the axe in other spheres of public expenditure. We are not calling for any reduction in the salary of hon. Members for the simple reason that I personally do not believe that our hon. Members are over-paid at £800 a year. I would also hope, Sir, that this start at an economy in the field of public spending will be carried into other aspects of Government expenditure, and I refer particularly to the Ministries. I think some sort of economy could be made in the Ministries, not just in the salaries of Ministers. I suggest further cuts in the expenditure in connection with public corporations.

The second remedy is improved revenue collection. This is very important and I

[MR IKOKU]

think Members should now agree that tax issues should be taken out of our syllabus for political propaganda. This, Sir, suits us in the Opposition to conduct propaganda on tax issues, but I think, Sir, that the position has reached such dangerous extent that I think we should sign a truce on that matter (*Laughter*). This will give us a breathing space to go to our people and really preach the need for prompt and full payment of taxes. Somebody has said that we will land in jail if they didn't do that. Please, Sir, I think that we have given them our offer and I just want to listen to them and know whether they will accept the offer; if not, when we go back we will conduct our campaign against tax and nothing is going to happen to us (*Laughter*).

Now, Sir, the question of tax machinery. This is very important—an improved tax machinery. I know that a lot is being done in the Divisions to set up tax offices, but I think it is about time we took this question of tax collection away from the over-burdened District Officers. The problem is so important to us that I don't see why full-time tax officers of the calibre, status and qualification of District Officers should not be posted to each Division solely and wholly responsible for tax matters. I think, Sir, that at the moment the tax offices should refrain from or rather should pay less attention to achieving a 100 per cent efficiency in tax assessments. Their goal right now should be to bring as many as possible within the net. Even if they are under-assessed, bring them in to the net. Once they are within the net in the future years we can then improve our assessment. My estimate is that less than a million people pay tax in this Region, whereas, in fact, the taxable male adult population should be in the neighbourhood of 2½ million. That is why I do not agree with the view that tax evasion has been the practice of businessmen. There are not 2½ million businessmen in this Region. Tax evasion is a common thing running through all social strata in the Region and tax officers should concentrate on bringing as many people as possible within the net. Once they are in the net then we can go into the secondary question of whether they are paying as much as they should pay. I suggest, Sir, that the system of pay-as-you-earn is working satisfactorily with the workers and something similar to it should be introduced in the rural

areas. I am suggesting, Sir, that tax card system which enables tax-payers to pay their taxes by instalments should be extended to the rural areas. Imagine somebody, Sir, who is called upon to pay £1 2s 6d or £1 10s a year. Give him a card at his own expense. Charge him say sixpence for it. He is to take the trouble to go to the tax office once every month to pay his £1 10s divided by ten or six as the case may be. You will get your tax.

I suggest, Sir, that tax notices should go out much sooner than it is the case today. The position today, Sir, is that round about September of every year tax notices go out in a flurry and before even you get your demand notice you are told you must appear before an Appeal Board if you want to appeal or you must pay your tax within 14 days. It brings about a lot of rush and the staff just cannot cope with the problem. But if you look at it from the other side it gives the tax-payer an opportunity to migrate from home during the tax season. They now know the tax season and so they go to Fernando Po and come back after the tax season and they are covered. What we are suggesting is that demand notices should go out very early in the year and the people should be given the whole year to go and pay their taxes. Those who want to pay instalmentally will naturally go to the District Office and take their tax cards and begin to pay. Those who do not want to pay instalmentally will still have six months or so at their disposal within which to pay their taxes. As regards the urban areas, we suggest that all owners of shops and lock-up stalls should be assessed for payment of tax whether they are male or female. When the tax has been collected from them indiscriminately then they have to lodge an appeal to prove that a particular stall or particular shop is owned by a woman and then you can make a deduction and pay her back when you are satisfied. The first thing is to get the money from all of them and then put the onus of proving that the shop is owned by a woman on them. Right now, Sir, every shop owner has a woman in whose name the shop is registered. If you go here it is a woman, if you go there it is a woman. I do not know women are so much business people in this Region. So the best thing, Sir, is to rope in the whole lot, collect your money and then let them come one by one to prove that they are really women and then you hand them back their tax.

Still on the question of tax machinery I would suggest that in respect of indigenous companies—we are having quite a few of them now—the taxes due from them should be directly collected. Take this tax from registered companies of Nigeria away from the District Office or from the local tax office. Let this tax be collected by the Department of Internal Revenue here at Enugu because then they will have a much greater equity in assessment and collection of tax. That brings me on to my third and last point—the question of financial policy. Measures must be put into effect by Government with the sole purpose of stimulating production in the Region and thereby eventually raising revenue. The Government, Sir, must realise that financial policy is the instrument, the medium, by which certain excesses or dangerous tendencies in the economy of the Region could be arrested and stimulus given to the Region's economy as something existing in itself. What can we do to collect as much revenue as we can? The financial policy of the Government must be so designed as to give stimulus in the right direction to the Region's economy.

You will agree, Sir, that certain facts stir us in the face today in the Region. For example, the general poverty in the rural areas, heavy burden of taxes and rates, etc, and a slackening in retail trade. I think all hon. Members here will agree that there is a slackening in retail trade and now we are being called upon to embark on a policy of contraction in public expenditure particularly expenditure in public construction.

Again, Sir, firms, commercial firms are now reluctant in making advances to their factors. The stubborn attitude on the part of these firms these days is not because of any politics but because they are hard-headed businessmen. The banks are adopting what we might call a tight squeeze on credit policy. They just will not give credit these days. These are the facts that stir us in the face. As regards the Region's economy, I think the Government should do something to break into this problem and enable our businessmen to have a new lease of life and above all the new confidence borne of an upward swing in the Region's economy. To this end Sir, we recommend as follows:—

That the Government should be bold enough to increase the price paid to primary

producers for palm produce. They should make that attempt. I know the receipts, the level of world prices is rather discouraging and may impose the limit on Government's action. The aim is that we want to stimulate palm produce production in the Region and I think we should take the risk of paying a little bit more enticing prices even where our earnings from world markets are reduced to zero. I would like to say this, Sir, before I go on, that the palm produce business is the economic foundation of this Region and if we succeed in stimulating that trade all aspects of the economic life of this Region will receive a new stimulus. Increased prices for palm produce means more people in the villages will be encouraged to go and cut their fruits and sell. It means they have a little bit more money in their pockets. It means therefore they can purchase merchandise and retail traders are in business. It means then that there will be more tonnages being exported and our produce purchase taxes will increase as well as our quota of Federal Taxes. Thus not only the people in the rural area but the businessmen, retail traders, the State and the Government will benefit from an upward trend in the palm produce trade.

Secondly, Sir, is this question of credit policy for Nigerian businessmen, particularly Nigerian licensed buying agents. They are just not getting enough money from the banks and because our Nigerian businessmen cannot give out sizeable sums of money by way of advances to factors, these factors have to turn to the expatriate firms, and these expatriate firms, knowing that the Nigerians cannot produce these advances, become taciturn to the demands for more advances. As a result there is a standstill. Many of the factors cannot get any more money from produce and if the Government went out of its way cautiously, no doubt, to make credit available to our licensed buying agents, these men will be in a position to finance a larger number of factors and immediately the firms (expatriate firms) will realise that more factors are beginning to buy for Nigerian L.B.As. they will be compelled in the interest of their own business, in an attempt to get a good quota of the produce trade, to make more liberal advances to their own factors and thereby stimulate the palm produce trade. So we suggest that Government should consider seriously ways and

[MR IKOKU]

means of making credit available to these L.B.As. Probably the Eastern Region Marketing Board could be an appropriate medium for carrying this out. Of course the interest could be kept artificially low in order to encourage our businessmen to borrow.

Thirdly, we are suggesting that the Government should introduce some sort of investment bonds ranging from 5 to 10 years and 20 to 25 years. I am not quite clear in my mind, Sir, what the position is in regard to our Constitution, but I think that should be investigated. Businessmen should be encouraged to purchase these bonds thereby making money available to Government, and if they purchase these bonds the amount of their annual income which is diverted towards the purchase of these investment bonds should be exempt from income tax so that they will be satisfied that if they earn a profit of £3,000 a year and decide to throw in a thousand pounds into this investment bond, they will only be assessed for tax purposes on £2,000 and no more. Again, Sir, anybody, even civil servants, can purchase investment bonds of £50. But what we are saying, Sir, is that not only should the amount be exempt from taxation but the earning on the bond when they become due should also be exempt from taxation, because if you tell these businessmen or these intending investors that if they put in a thousand pounds in the way of bonds they will get 3½ per cent on it and the 3½ per cent is again subject to taxation there might not be sufficient inducement. We want to exempt both the margin ploughed into the business and the earnings from the investment from taxation. If that is done, I think the Government will soon well realise quite a handsome sum of money with which it can get into partnership either with local enterprises or with foreign enterprises in the development of industries in the Region. My view, Sir, is that our cry for capital has become so persistent that we have to try all sorts of methods to raise this capital.

You remember, Sir, that in the Speech From The Throne, His Excellency told us that domestic capital will be mobilised. Well, he did not tell us how it will be done; but this at least is one method I am suggesting for mobilising domestic capital, and if we can get away from

this persistent budget deficit and really balance our budget from year to year in the next two or three years and then begin to accumulate tidy sums of money by way of this investment bond, I think we would have given the money market of London and elsewhere the necessary confidence and optimism as regards the economy of the Eastern Region, and then we would be in a position to raise a few sums of money from the World Market.

In conclusion, Sir, I will like to make it clear that financial matters are matters which concern every Member of this House. They are matters on which party politics, carried to extreme, just will not help this Region. (*Hear! Hear!*). There must be a certain amount of ground—common ground—between the Government and Opposition and over this common ground you can then have your minor fluctuations of the pendulum in keeping with party politics. The financial state of the Region, Sir, is such that, to use the words of Lord Nelson: "England" (in this case the Eastern Region) "expects everybody to do his duty".

**Mr Speaker:** Mr Etuhube, I interrupted your speech the other day and promised that I would give you ample opportunity to resume your discussion when this House met again today.

Are you ready to debate now?

**Mr J. A. Etuhube (Ikot Ekpene Division):** I am not ready yet.

**Mr G. C. Okeya (Owerri Division):** Mr Speaker, I rise to support the Motion on the Budget Speech. Before doing so, I have the following observations to make. In the first place, I thank the Government on the integration of Ministries and Departments as shown at page 10 of the Budget Speech. I think this system is really very necessary, because most of our officers do not seem to identify themselves with our interest. I would also like to suggest to Government that Regional Economic Planning Council should replace the Economic Planning Commission as shown in the Budget. This is necessary to ensure the desired implementation of policy and co-ordination of the various activities of the Ministries. The Regional Planning Council becomes a desideratum or

a necessity. The functions of the Regional Planning Commission are to advise the Executive Council on the effective planning of Agriculture, Industry, Commerce, Education, Social Services, Health and other matters relating to the Regional economy. This Council, drawn from the Government Departments and outside bodies with the Premier as the Chairman or President, must study the Government projects from the various Ministries of present practical plans for the Region on which Government will embark.

Now, Sir, I want also to make a reflection on Education, Head 346, Page E 52. I feel, Sir, that the Government is gradually bleeding itself to financial death by trying to run schools. It is an anomaly for the Government to try to found schools. My heart leaped with joy when the Premier said that the three or four Government Secondary Schools would start as nucleus for the University College, with Headquarters at Nsukka. From the Budget as shown, it seems Government is spending too much on Education, particularly on what I call the Government Schools. We are all quite aware of the fact that the Government took the step in 1882, just to educate the West Africans when Nigeria was under Gold Coast. In 1882 an Inspector was informed to run all these schools for the Government, but ever since that time in 1886, when Nigeria broke away from the Gold Coast, the Government has been spending too much to run schools for itself. I think it is high time the Government allowed the County Councils and the Voluntary Agencies to run these schools.

**Hon. Members:** No, no.

**Mr Okeya:** Well, Members who are not students of Education will say, no. I have my reasons. Time shall come when the Government will come to realise its folly in founding these schools. Now, you all know that teachers are not civil servants. In this Region, Government teachers are looked upon as civil servants. If you define the term civil servant you will find that soldiers, seamen, teachers and so on are excluded from the Civil Service, but in Nigeria, particularly in this Region, teachers are looked upon as civil servants. This is an anomaly in education. In this connection, also, I thank the Acting Minister of Education very much for the wise proposal of reducing

or cutting down some of the expenses run by Government schools. I remember last month when I spoke on this, I suggested that this cut should be made, and I am very glad that he has done so.

Now, Sir, I should like to advise the Government (I won't say warn) that teachers, particularly the Primary teachers are suffering a lot for the past two or three months—most of them have not got their pay. I must suggest that time shall come when the Government will consider the scales of salaries of these teachers, taking into consideration what is happening in the West or in the North.

Sir, I want particularly to use this Budget Speech to bring clearly to the Government the position of Owerri Division. I feel, Sir, that Owerri Division has got a good case. Head 457, page E 97, in the £448,000 estimate for Road Construction, Owerri Province with a population of 2.1 million was advertently omitted. If you consider also the rural water supply of £353,350, estimated for construction, Owerri Province with a population of 2.1 million people on £32,600—that is, 9 per cent of the estimate on rural water supply was given Owerri, and 91 per cent for the four remaining provinces. Of the £32,600 Owerri County has £6,000, Mbaise District £2,000—total £8,000—whereas other districts and counties have shares ranging from £2,000 to £16,000 for water supply. Now Owerri town, is the only urban area without pumped or piped water supply. In the Estimates under my analysis, Head 467 page E 110 the Government has voted over £70,000 for pump and pipe water supply, for Nsukka town, Ovoko, Ogidi, and so on, and none for Owerri. I feel that the people of Owerri complained incessantly without bitterness that the Government seemed to close its eyes at their requests and demands for social development.

I humbly crave the indulgence of the Government to cite a few instances. It is on record that since 1955, Owerri Division has been unsuccessfully applying for special grants and loans of about £24,000 for the maintenance and repairs of roads and bridges. For example, the Owerri County Council maintains a network of 881 miles of roads and 25 bridges, with 500 labourers, 90 section men, 8 overseers, and 1 road foreman, at an annual cost of about

[MR OKEYA]

£40,000. In 1957-58, there was a short fall of about £14,000 and this was met by reducing the number of working days to three in the week. The County Council thus petitioned the Minister of Transport on the 18th of September, 1957, to take over some trunk "B" roads—for example, Olakwo-Ngwa-Okpala Road, Owerri-Nekede 18-mile road and Oguta-Umunaoha Road. A fair estimate for repairs and construction of 25 bridges came to £12,000. Even the Minister of Transport could not loan the Council a road grader to improve the roads. No wonder the people felt quite discouraged to think that in the development scheme Owerri Division has been inadvertently or otherwise left out. Sir, I remember the Shell-BP at Owerri is planning now to leave Owerri. This Company spent £69,000 last year on roads alone between Owerri, Aba and Port Harcourt and they complained also of having no proper telephone system to contact other companies or send cablegrams from Owerri and they complained bitterly of these bad roads and now they have decided to leave Owerri. The Council also applied unsuccessfully for the establishment of Trade Centre at Owerri, Teacher Training Centre at Oguta, Tourist Centre at Oguta tarring of Owerri-Umuahia road, and Oguta-Mgbidi Road.

Now, coming again to rural water supply, the request of Owerri Division for water supply was turned down on grounds of scarcity of materials and regrettable absence of engineers but according to Head 467 sub-head 5 of the Estimates, 19 new engineers are being employed this year, but yet not much provision is made for Owerri. The Government could imagine the plight of the District Council as shown by these figures. The population of Owerri County Council is about 390,000 with 16 court areas and 107 wells. These figures work out on the average, one well for every 3,850 people. All being good, 6 wells for one court area. The depths of these wells vary from 67 feet at Umunezeocha Obinze to 247 feet at Owaelu in Uratta. Now 50 of these wells need repairs. The Council applied for funds in vain and as a result 40 of these wells dried up. 10 of good water and 7 of bad water. Actually, 5,970 people to a well or four wells to a court area and the people deposited about £14,000 for wells and still the Government has not paid much heed to their request.

Another point, Sir, which the people are complaining of is the question of electricity. Now we want electricity in the urban areas of Owerri Division. This matter was pursued with the Federal Government. The Regional Government is required therefore to give an undertaking with regard to any deficit in operation costs. The deficit will be negligible in view of the huge consumer population of Shell-BP (*Interruption*). When the Council approached the Shell-BP last May, the General Manager offered the following suggestions:—

The Manager advised the Council to purchase a National Brush 230 kilowatts generator with necessary switch panel, synchronising panel, power-house building, and so on and they would cost about £17,000. The Shell-BP will operate the deisel generator in conjunction with its own. No economical proposition could be better for Owerri. The Shell-BP is ready and willing to co-operate.

Now Sir, I want us to make this observation. In the first place, we thank the Government for giving Oguta an urban status. The people are really very pleased to have this urban status.

I would like also to draw the attention of the Government to the fact that the people of Oguta are anxious to have Oguta lake and Urasi-Abonnema waterways dredged. Representations have been made by the U.A.C. and they are waiting for the Government to contact the Federal Government so that this River will be dredged.

Coming to the question of reports, about the Annual Report on Fishery Department given to this House, I would like further to call the attention of the Government to its trial and error method and lack of foresights in the locating of Fish Ponds. This would not help the Region. It is surprising to find that where we have rivers and lakes in the Region, Government does not take proper measure to find where fish ponds should be established. There was not sufficient investigation of places best suitable for fish ponds. That is why the experiment so far has failed. If you read the pamphlet, you will find from pages 2 to 4 the Government's experiments and how they failed. Oguta Lake would serve as a better basis for Fishery in Owerri Province.



Now, Sir, I want to use this occasion to thank the Government heartily for allowing me to visit Fernando Po and as regards Head 409, page E 6 of the Memorandum on the Estimates, it is really very surprising that where labour is a concurrent subject and where it is the responsibility of the Federal Government to staff or finance the Consulate in Fernando Po, the Region is suffering for the Federal Government. I do not see why the Federal Government gave no reason according to the Estimates—reason not given—for reducing the capitation fee. So, I am putting it forth as a suggestion to this House that Government should take active step to see that capitation fees are taken 100 per cent by this Region and not to allow about 40 per cent to go to the Federal Government because it is the concern and responsibility of the Federal Government to see about the staffing of Fernando Po Consulate and subsequent expenses.

Now, I want also to make a remark about the two kinds of schools in Fernando Po. You have the Anglican, running one school, and the Catholics, running another school. Last year the Federal Government gave a grant of some thousand of pounds to the Anglican school and the Catholic school had no grant and they appealed very strongly to the Regional Government to give a little donation or grant to that school.

Let us thank the Spanish Authorities in what they are doing to educate those Eastern Nigerian children, about 400 of them, in one school and they need grant from the Region. I will like the Government to take up the case.

With these observations, I beg to support.

**Mr N. L. P. Apreala (Brass Division):** Mr Speaker, I rise to speak in support of the Appropriation Bill. I will like to make few comments on some of the points raised by the Opposition Leader. It is only a pity that he is not on his seat.

It is almost the first time within my four years of experience in this House to hear the Opposition making some suggestions on how revenue will be received. In many cases, they are always out to give destructive criticisms but are never able to make any alternative suggestions at all. Mr Speaker, I will also like

to mention that a few years ago, we were only able to budget between five and seven million pounds but within this short period, the Government have been able to go so far to thirteen million pounds and over. This is entirely very much encouraging for many times we have been told, especially by Members of the Opposition, that the Government is in great financial difficulty. It is a happy thing, for Members, mostly of this side of the House, to note that our Government is budgeting on thirteen million pounds.

Now, Sir, it will be noticed that many Members of the Opposition are always happy when there are financial troubles or crises but now, that the Leader of the Opposition has spoken in favour or praise of the Government, or made some few concrete suggestions about the revenue of this Region, I hope many speakers of that side will also follow suit. Otherwise, I am inclined to believe that they are grand-sons of the then autocratic retired Governor who only smiled when there was political crisis.

Mr Speaker, in praise of the budget before us, I will like to say that I am greatly encouraged for despite our disappointment in future to carry on the U.P.E. Scheme, a lot of money is still being allocated for education.

If you look into the Estimates on education over £5 million have been allocated to the education of this Region. This is not the only department that has been well cared for but other essential social services are adequately supplied with funds.

Mr Speaker, I will like to point out a matter which worries the heart of many of the people of Brass Division, mostly those of the Ogbia area—the soil from which oil is being extracted by the Shell D'Arcy; that is the way of extracting it. It will interest you to note that, as far as I am aware, it is only land rent that is paid to them but if you read the magazine and bulletins of the same Company, you will notice that there are three important provisions made—the land rent is one, compensation for food crops or buildings so damaged, and thirdly, the people should be entitled to some form of compensation for the very particular exploitation that is being done in their land. These are not done and, therefore, I appeal to the

[MR APREALA]

Government to see that some redress is made, otherwise our people will feel that they are being cheated.

Mr Speaker, another point I will like to make is that petrol oil is very important to the Government and Government has had its own share which is £65,000, increasing the revenue of the Region or of this very particular Government, and the thing we are sad to notice is that this oil is being evacuated through pipelines to Port Harcourt. We suffer two important things: one is that we are just left undeveloped in the particular area and secondly, the people have no chances of employment which could have been done if there were other means of evacuating the oil.

I should also like to mention that considering the importance of petrol not only in this country but all over the world, the people of Ogbia Clan should be considered with the possibility of making a road to connect it with the proposed Ahoada-Yenagoa road, for it will only take nineteen miles to join up with the proposed road at Ebin-ama so that it will be possible for traffic to run from the main-land to that very spot where oil is exploited.

I will like the Government to create Rice and Cocoa Marketing Boards also in order to give more attention to the production of rice and cocoa in the Region. We notice that if this is done, it will encourage the farmers in this Region and productions will increase considerably. If there is palm kernel Marketing Board why not one for rice and cocoa and other important economic crops? This will cause the Government to consider giving loans to farmers as such Board will pay due attention to the farmers of the Region.

In the Budget Speech a lot of mention was made about palm oil and palm kernel of this Region. We produce more in the Eastern Region compared with other Regions, including even the Federation. I wish to reveal how we lose some revenue through some unnecessary corruptions that do exist. In my place, Brass Division, we have a common boundary with the Western Government, and when producers of palm oil and palm kernel come to sell their produce at the U.A.C. stations and if these farmers refuse to give in to corruption,

the only alternative is that they are not attended to for days and days. As a result, many people are forced to yield to the temptation of corruption, and where they refuse to give bribes they are compelled to go to the nearest station which is the U.A.C. at Patani—a town in Western Ijaw. If you count the tonnage of palm oil and palm kernel that occasionally go over to the West on account of some servants who will only like to better or make their ends meet, we are losing a lot in that respect.

Mr Speaker, I would like to say that looking into the Cameroons, the people are proud of their Banana Plantations. The soil in Brass Division and many places near us is so fertile that Agricultural Officers have mentioned it. Therefore, I would suggest to the Government to establish Banana Plantations in Brass Division; local industries, such as sugar and salt-making industries should also be encouraged. The salt is always there and if made, is always in very large quantity. The question of changing colour from black to white is all that we require.

Mr Speaker, coming to the conclusion of my speech, I would like to make mention about pensioners in this Region. A lot of these people had worked for many years and Government thought it wise to give them rest, but in many cases when they approach our Sub-Treasury officials they are always faced with the temptation of corruption. Unless they give little "dashes" which they call cigarettes, they are often unattended to; sometimes they will be told to come back, while some had travelled from very many places. This, compared with clerks in the Local Council areas, is even better. A lot of them do suffer and if they refuse to give bribe, they are always told that there is no money to pay them at that moment, but where they yield there is money to pay them immediately, even though the money had just arrived in their presence.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion, I would like to mention, Sir, that we as a people have the right to live, but we are badly cut off from the mainland. The only opportunity for us is for the Government to link us with the mainland by constructing the Yenagoa-Ahoada road. If you look into the Estimates page E 97, the provision is still there; something in the neighbourhood of £652,100 has been allocated. This has been outstanding since 1956 and

nothing has been done. I wonder whether it is there for window-dressing. If the money is still there, as I do believe it is, it is high time this road was constructed for it is the only road which the people will enjoy. I urge the Government to take this matter into serious consideration. We as Members representing the constituency are unable to travel in any part of the Division to convince the anxious people. The only question which the people put to us always is nothing but this road. If this is done, I think we will be satisfied. Our patience is exhausted; please make this road for us.

**Mr J. E. Eyo (Abak Division):** Mr Speaker, I rise to speak in support of the Appropriation Bill. In doing so, I want to associate myself very closely with the Leader of the Opposition when he said that before this Region can come to its legs as far as finances are concerned, there should be some truce signed by the Opposition and the Government so that we might not play politics so much to our detriment. It must be admitted, Sir, that failure in the collection of taxes in this Region is due chiefly to playing politics with the rural people, and before we can have efficient means of collection we should go out and tell the people that the Government must get money and that one of the means of getting money is by taxes. If you go about telling the people that this Government is taxing the people too much, you will discourage them and therefore they will not pay their taxes. For us to get money we must strengthen the Ministry of Finance.

When we look into the Board of Internal Revenue, I must say, Sir, that we are losing a good deal of money because there is lack of adequate supervision in that department. We have so many clerks working that this Region cannot rely on them. They lack self-confidence. I am suggesting that if we appoint some of these County Secretaries, some who are now having no job but who were supervisors from native treasuries, to go and do all they can to supervise tax collection, we shall be able to get a lot of money coming in. Most of these clerks go with some tricks and pranks to collect this money and make use of it. I know of a recent instance of two or three being arrested who collected about £1,000 of these taxes and they have not paid it in. When you have a thorough supervision it will help and will

reduce the number of clerks that we are having. They appear in their offices to be working too much with their papers, but definitely speaking they are not doing anything at all. Some of these supervisors of native treasuries are aware of these tricks and if they are put in authority or in a position to check, they will be able to do it. The treasurers who are having this money paid to them have no control over the staff of the Board of Internal Revenue. They only receive the money which is paid to them and they can do nothing more. So I think there should be a more rigid control over it. We should thank some of these Administrative Officers who are doing their very best to supervise tax collections, but their work is too much and too big for them. We need more hands to do it. We should reduce some of the staff in the Board of Internal Revenue, and there should be a check also on the Commissioner. But before touching this point I want to say that I have a thorough knowledge of the County Secretary from my Division and his ability. If such people with their clear knowledge of the localities, are appointed Inspectors in the Board of Internal Revenue, they can best check and rectify things.

I do not think there is a good deal of harmony existing between the Commissioner of the Board of Internal Revenue and the staff of the Board. There are too many instructions—too many bullies going on and when there is no sufficient chain-working between the Head of Department and the subordinates, the Government cannot be run properly. So there should be some investigations made in that Department to see that our money is not spent unwisely as is being done at present. The moment the Opposition and the Government get together to fight the common cause of this Region to see that money comes in, that will greatly help us.

I do not very much agree that this question of tax card system will be very useful in some areas. There are people who live very far away from District Headquarters and they cannot go in there to pay their taxes. I would suggest that the time these people are called upon to pay their taxes should be in the early part of the year; say during rich months of May, June and July. By so doing, we shall be able to get more money. I believe that people are taxed on their past year's income and not on the present

[Mr J. E. EYO]

year's so that the delay in assessing these people and calling on them to pay is not helping the people to pay at all. When we draw near to November, December and January, they think of being merry in Christmas and so they cannot afford to pay their taxes at that time. So, an early assessment should be made and people should be called upon to pay their taxes in the rich months of the year.

I think this question of paying as you earn is not very much helpful for Government to collect the amount required as far as people in the rural areas are concerned. There was much agitation and that has caused too many people to evade tax. It is very hard to call upon a young boy who has just come to taxable age and convince him that he should pay £1 10s and tell his father to pay £1 2s 6d. The people in the rural areas are complaining that there should have been a flat rate on all those people who have their income from £1-£60. There should be a flat rate, so that when there is estimate that Government is going to collect so much from the people, we are sure to get something in that neighbourhood.

When there is estimate on group one of £1 10s; Group two, £1 7s 6d, and so on down to group 4, there is bound to be a disappointment at last. It creates a tendency for people to run down and make false assessments and declaring that this year, they have no wife and child but in the following year, they have been able to get a wife and four children and they all climb down to £1 2s 6d. This makes the Government to lose a great deal of the revenue. There should be a standard rate for these people because it affects a great mass of the people. Where we have standard rates of £1 5s or £1 7s 6d for them, then we shall be sure of collecting this money from the people but if you still continue with the present system, I am afraid we shall not be able to get all the money that we require.

I think that another Head which is helping very much to spend the revenue comes under Education. During registration, Sir, headmasters of schools were paid £1 10s for all the days they helped in registration and local people were also appointed to be their assistants and to help them. Those people simply went there to watch those headmasters do the enrolment. Both the headmasters and their

assistants were paid £1 10s each. (*Interruptions*). Well I am telling you what I know. This does not help the revenue of the Region. Normally, it should have been the duties of this headmaster to do the registration and there is no need of any person being appointed as a local man to watch him write down what he is to write on the paper. This item of expenditure should be discontinued and that money will be saved.

**Hon. Members:** No. It is £1 10s for the whole period.

**Mr J. E. Eyo:** If it is £1 10s throughout, count the number of schools we have in the Region and calculate £1 10s multiplied by the number of schools. It will be at least equal to two, three or four hundred pounds and that is something. So I am suggesting strongly that there should be no registration fees paid, whether a shilling a day or a pound a day.

When you look into the speech from the Minister of Finance, you will note that he says there is a decline in the tonnage of our oil. This decline I think is also due to a decline in the prices paid to producers. It should be commonsense in giving a little thing to these producers, encouraging them to bring in more tonnages which will bring in more money to the Region, but when Government ties its hands and refuses to assist the people, they then refuse to go to their palm trees so that the palm oil is being wasted for nothing. I suggest very strongly that, just to stimulate these people to produce more oil and kernels which shall bring in more money in the Region, there should be some increase in the price of palm oil and palm kernels, which will encourage the people to bring in more tonnages as they can produce.

When we come to this question of Licensed Buying Agents, I think, as far as E.R.D.C. is concerned, there has been a policy where some of these Licensed Buying Agents are being given loans or grants from the E.R.D.C. just to finance their trade. If the people of this Region are rich, they will be able to pay their taxes in time. So I suggest that the loans should be extended to the petty farmers as well. It should not only be reserved or concentrated on big businessmen or those who are opening plantations only. If petty loans of one or two or five hundred pounds, as the case may be,

are being given to petty farmers it will help them to be rich; when they are rich, they will pay any assessment that is required of them; but when they are poor they cannot pay anything at all.

*Sitting suspended at 12 noon.*

*Sitting resumed at 12.30 p.m.*

**Mr J. E. Eyo:** Agricultural people are being given loans; there should be loans also given to petty farmers so that they can establish their farms and that will help to improve and increase the economy of the Region, for even these people who are dealing on Agriculture and so on, the policy of giving them loans, I don't think, is continuing again. When speaking, I was saying that it was a paper promise and that there has been an order from the Ministry not to give loans. I mentioned one special person who applied for loan for his palm wine. I was expecting to get a good reply from the Minister on that account but nothing was forthcoming.

Turning to the question of Local Government, it is interesting to note that in the Estimates, having abolished all the County Councils, there has been a saving of £99,500 as after the grants have been shared among the Rural District Councils now with County powers, there has been a saving of £99,500. But the savings, however, should not be a help to decrease the efficient running of the Councils. I notice only about £10,000 has been allocated to Northern Annang District Council which is expected to run Teacher Training Centre. I am appealing that there should be more money allocated to this Council and to all such Councils that have got major establishments; otherwise we shall be compelled to call upon such Councils to levy more rates on the inhabitants before they can carry on normally.

There is one anomaly I seem to discover from this Ministry, and that is in connection with salaries and conditions of service of Health Visitors and Midwives of the Local Government. I know of a case at Ikot Ekpene. This girl had a very good educational qualification and has gone on a course of training, and came out to be a Grade I Health Visitor. Her salary in comparison with her counterparts in the Government appeals for apology. Local Government conditions of service provide

that there should be parity in the conditions of service of employees in the Local Government Councils with those in the Government, failing that, they should look into this to see that such disparity does not continue. Things should be put right with retrospective effect.

Last year, Mr Speaker, there was a provision of £8,000 in the Estimates just to construct a bridge across Ikot Okoro. This year that same sum has appeared again. I can observe from that Head that most of the provisions for tarring of roads and construction of bridges are just a revote; there has been no new thing at all. I am to say that it is a very bad policy to have this sort of delaying tactics, repeating these things over and over again.

There had been some engineers who came and investigated and said the bridge will cost £21,000 to construct. It is not in the least encouraging if after the experts said it would cost £21,000 to build a bridge, we have only £8,000 inserted in the Estimates. I am inclined to believe that this money is there just on paper and will not be used at all. We have got an hospital which was built by the people. The condition of the bridge is hopeless and nobody can cross over to attend the hospital. To get to the hospital one adopts some sort of Israelites journeying before one gets to the hospital. If the Government does not come to the people's aid and build this bridge, I am afraid it will not be in the interest of the people. *(Laughter)*.

**An Opposition Member:** You will resign from the N.C.N.C.

**Mr J. E. Eyo:** I will not resign from the N.C.N.C.

However, I congratulate Government for the vigorous road policy it has undertaken, and we praise the Government for all the tarring of roads and all the bridges built in the Region. *(Hear! Hear!)*. But there is still something more to be done. I am saying that the Minister of Transport should see to it that the Ikot Okoro bridge is put up at once. In last year's Estimates there was some provision under the same Ministry for a road—Oron-Eket-Uyo-Ikot Ubo Road. We waited to see whether we shall see that vote again, but it is not there—the previous provision was £97,000. Here again, there is something happening in Eket;

[MR J. E. EYO]

the Eket people need roads and bridges just to go on with the elections just at hand, and if we do not have all these roads made for the people, they cannot be able to campaign well. (*Hear! Hear!*). This road is very important because it connects two Divisional Headquarters—Uyo and Eket (that is the business of my Friend Eyo who goes to Eket frequently). We have another road from Ikot Ubo to Opobo which connects Opobo and Eket. We need a bridge just in between; if that bridge were put up it should give an easy means of transport from Opobo to Eket.

Turning to the Ministry of Education, Mr Speaker, on page 6 of the White Paper on Self-Government in the Eastern Region, under Ministry of Education, I really do not understand what is expected of this paragraph. We have several schools in this Region. Those that we have for the county districts, formerly rural district councils have not yet run up to senior primary. A good many of the schools belong to voluntary agencies, but in that paragraph it seems that counties should control and open schools which shall be free of charge. It seems to imply that only county council schools established in the Region shall be free and that schools established by voluntary agencies shall be paid for. I would wish clarification on that paragraph, because it is very bad if the Government policy wishes only local council or county council schools to be free and those that should be established by voluntary agencies to be paid for. I do not encourage what we observe to be happening at present.

It is expected that there should be a ratio of 2:1 trained to untrained teachers, and for this purpose there has been a number of training centres and colleges opened in the Region. Many boys, some of them who have their elementary certificates were encouraged to go in for further training. But just last month, or rather this month, there has been a circular from the Ministry of Education to all the schools or teacher training centres that those boys who were elementary teachers going in for higher elementary course will no more be paid their salaries as from the 1st of April. This is shocking indeed in that these people before going to the Training Centres have been people of families and responsibilities. They

have got some undertakings before. They have got their wives, some have got their children in schools. The understanding was that when they got to these Colleges, they would have to pay their fees, and they would have to maintain their subordinates. This condition within the twinkling of an eye is reversed; just with a circular letter: "no more". I think it is very much embarrassing to the people. We might call upon the Government to stop this system of circular because it is giving this Region a lot of headache. Circulars from a Ministry will dislocate the whole Region. These things have been obtaining in the past. The policy to pay Elementary Teachers in Training Centres has not just started. It was happening in the past and the boys were enjoying it. It is entirely wrong for these things to happen. I am saying, Sir, that when I visited my constituency during the week-end, I had a delegation of these students who were upset by a circular on the Notice Board in the Centre being sent to them and it was signed by the Minister of Education that these people should not receive their salaries again. What I am saying is that we should not try to have or harbour very many enemies for ourselves.

**An hon. Member:** What enemies?

**Mr J. E. Eyo:** Enemies are too many. (*Laughter*). From within and from without, both from left and right. We have nowhere to put our head for shelter. The students in the Colleges are our enemies; the people at home, women, schoolchildren and all are our enemies. (*Laughter*). There should be something done. I am appealing that the Minister should revoke that circular instruction at once. At least, there should be time and notice before any major changes take place. Things should not happen like that without notice; we are all human beings, we should just feel and think, place ourselves in the position of those who are going to be affected by such changes. It is not good at all that such a circular should be out, and in the best interest of this Region, something should be done now to revert that order.

There was some provision in the Estimates to convert certain Government Primary Schools into Secondary Schools. But looking through the whole Estimates (I do not know whether my eyes deceive me) I have seen nothing like

that being inserted. (*Interruption: Look properly*). I am very serious about these things. What are we going to tell the people? In various places, advertisements were made to employ principals. Recommendations have been sent to the Ministry of Education or Local Government as the case may be. (*Interruptions*).

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

**Mr J. E. Eyo:** The Minister of Education and the Assistant Secretary inspected these sites just for the conversion. It was not only one that he inspected. They were about five. Now, Sir, the building has not been started and the estimate has been silenced over it. There was nothing said about it. We want a statement just now so that when we go back home we know what to tell our people. It is very good to embark upon high things but we should start from small to big ones. If the small ones fail, we can embark upon big ones and there is still fine hope. So there should be something done either by some warrants to convert those Primary Schools into Secondary Schools with particular reference to Ikot Ibritan Government School.

**An hon. Member:** When?

**Mr J. E. Eyo:** As soon as possible as they used to say.

Mr Speaker, about two years now, I have been hammering that we should have piassava trade in this Region regularised. I was saying that it should be made one of the consistent articles of trade, have it included under the Inspection Ordinance because some of the people who are trading on this piassava used to be disappointed at times when they have some contracts and having completed the consignments are unable to sell their surpluses. If it were arranged that we have it as a flowing trade it will help the finances of the Region.

We note from the speech of the Minister of Finance what was said about oil. I am very grateful, I am very happy that this oil is what is helping us. The Minister very well quoted that palm oil has sustained us for generations. It will continue to sustain us and we have this mineral oil as well. The point I want to make is that from this palm tree we have the oil, the kernels and there are also the shell of the

kernels. Now when these kernels are being burnt they still can be sold. I remember about one or two years ago many people were selling burnt shells of kernels and they were fetching about £5 a ton. This was done in Calabar Province or in Abak Division for that matter. Somebody was telling me that from these burnt shells we have a very good sugar refinery out of it. I am suggesting to the Government that something should be done to improve these burnt shells of kernels as one of the products of the Region.

When we were looking at the Trade Journal, the Trade Officer was saying that he spent about £50,000 in investigating the possibilities of dry copra, preservation of palm wine and so on, whereas in Abak this Trade Officer (I do not want to mention name) got the particulars of what he put down to get his own position from that young boy who is able to preserve palm wine in Abak Division. Yet the Federal Government has spent about £50,000 to investigate the possibility of copra, the preservation of palm wine and so on. We are having copra trade also in Calabar Province and we are having a lot of coco-nuts all over the Region. This trade should extend to all parts of the Region.

**Mr Speaker:** The hon. Member should wind up.

**Mr J. E. Eyo:** Yes, Sir.

As I was saying, I am speaking in support of the Appropriation Bill and it is unfortunate that we have a fall in the revenue but if we have the co-operation of the Opposition, setting aside politics and tell the people that what we want is money and that Government does not mould money because the understanding in the villages is that we have currency notes, we have coins and these coins and currency notes are being printed by Government, so Government has got machines to make money and why are we called upon to pay tax, we shall go a long way. If we can go about and tell people that the Government of this Region does not mould money, nor does it make currency notes and that the best way we can get our money is to pay our tax and pay it promptly, we shall be able to get what we want in the future.

Mr Speaker, I beg to support.

**Mr O. Arikpo (Obubra Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, in speaking to this debate, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the Minister of Finance for showing some courage in the presentation of this year's Budget. I hope, Sir, that the realism of the Minister's Budget address will be reflected in the performance of the Ministries in the current year and—in spite of what his colleagues may feel—that the Minister should consider it his duty to maintain the same realistic approach which he has so ably expressed in his address.

I should also be happy, Sir, if the Minister would persuade his colleagues to persuade their supporters to understand and appreciate the full impact of the Government's policy in the previous year and the need to face the financial problems of this Region with greater realism. The Minister has made a few very important points which to my mind ought to be the keynote of the speeches from this House throughout this Budget debate. One of these points which he echoed was what His Excellency the Governor said in his Speech From The Throne on the fact that our reserves have run down to a dangerously low state and the second point is the fact that there had been some curtailment in the services of the Region. At the risk of reopening these old wounds, Mr Speaker, I will refer to what my colleague, the Leader of the Opposition has already spoken about only to use it as an illustration of what the Minister has got to keep in view throughout the coming year; and that is the point on the two figures which the Minister has given. As I said, I am referring to this not with any intention of reopening old wounds or starting a fresh controversy, but only to emphasise to the Minister the necessity for him to remain firm throughout the ensuing year even if that is going to make him unpopular with his colleagues and with his political supporters. It is a fact that our over-expenditure as analysed on page 2 of the Memorandum which accompanied the Estimates, that is to say over-expenditure on items other than education, is in fact, a far more serious problem than over-expenditure on education. The relative figures of £417,914 show that in spite of the noise that has been made, and in spite of the fact that the Government has tried to use education as a scapegoat, there are other sources of over-expenditure which are far more serious and which ought to be examined very closely in the ensuing year.

Sir, I am referring to this for no other reason than that the Minister has pointed out that there has been some curtailment in expenditure in various services throughout the Region. I venture to say, Sir, that in my opinion there has been not sufficient curtailment and there is still a very real danger that people will get away with this feeling of complacency: that after all, it is not too bad and that it could be worse; because of the fact that the Minister has been a good deal too lenient in his curtailment of expenses in the various items. I take just as an example of the sort of thing which I am referring to on page 2: the Minister's view is that a cut in the vote for travelling will make the Agricultural services suffer. If we cut the vote on Road maintenance, our revenue will drop because produce cannot be moved.

Now, that is quite true that in order to maintain our produce trade we must keep our roads at a reasonably good level of maintenance; but the first one, to my mind, is not quite true and it is that sort of argument, I fear, that often permits people to spend money which need not be spent. Too often than not money is spent on non-essentials in the name of maintaining our services. And part of our problem of over-spending in this Region is that far too much money is spent which need not be spent, and there is a general attitude amongst civil servants that Government has an unlimited source of money. There is an attitude of not paying sufficient care in the spending of public funds, and I hope that the Minister and his officials would take particular care in cutting down a lot of this unnecessary expenditure. It is all very well to say that a piece of foolscap paper, a blotting paper or nib cost next to nothing. But over a period of twelve months expenditure on these items amount to a good deal of money. I hope that the Minister will instruct his officials to take a special care to see that this type of wastage is seriously curtailed during the coming months.

In connection with this question of economy, Sir, I want to say that in respect of reduction in Ministerial salaries, I seem to believe that a good deal more economy could be effected on the Ministerial and Legislative votes. For instance, if you turn to the Attorney-General's office or the Legal Department you will see that there are two new posts termed new political posts—that is, the Attorney-General and the Solicitor-General. These are two new items



on our Estimates for which there is a new item for travelling of £500 each. Personally, I do not think that Ministerial tours yield their value in gold. If they are going to cost us so much with Ministers spending £500 or £800 a year on touring I do not want to be understood to say that our Ministers are not entitled to travel; they are entitled, but I hope that Ministers should set an example in curtailing non-essential expenditure at this time. It is very easy for people to get the feeling that a good deal of Ministerial touring is unnecessary. I expect that Ministers being very responsible people will exercise a great deal of restraint in the way they spend this part of the vote attached to their Ministries.

These are all small economies in themselves, but when added together they should amount to a great deal at the end of the year.

Again, I should like to repeat what I said about our duty to set a moral example to the community in the Region by exercising the greatest restraint in our use of public funds; and I hope Government will take that very much to mind. The Budget itself is proved to be a non-political Budget. It makes no extravagant claims and makes a very serious admission which is that at the moment the Government has not got a firm control of its finances and that we are depending on circumstances whether we sink or float. The Premier is very fond of telling us that our finances are buoyant. Buoyancy is a relative term; it may very well be that our finances are buoyant because there is nothing in the bag and so when placed in water it would not sink but will float. So we should be very careful in taking this expression "buoyant revenue, buoyant finances" too seriously because that buoyancy may be an indication of a very serious financial situation.

As I said, Sir, what worries me about the Minister's speech is that it is an admission that we have not got full control of the trend of our public finances and that for any Government is not a very happy thing, nor is it a hopeful thing for any Region. So that I do hope that the breathing space which the Minister has sought, and will get, will be used not only to repair the damage which has been done to our reserves and to our finances, but will be used both to rebuild these reserves and to seek out and work out a firm financial policy which will bring back under control the

finances of this Region. Merely to hope that by negative devices we should tide over this very serious trend in our finances, is to my mind, not sufficient. Ministers of Finance all over the world are usually very unpopular with their colleagues and our Minister of Finance should not be unduly worried if he finds himself unpopular with his colleagues. He has got a very great duty imposed upon him by this Region and I hope that he will not allow his courage to fail him in the ensuing year. He will be rendering a very great service to this Region if he succeeds in bringing our finances back to sanity and bringing them back under the control of the Government.

I will now like to go back to matters which I have referred to several times in this House and which have often been opposed by the Government because they sound contradictory. As has been pointed out time and again in this House, half our problem is that we are not collecting all the direct taxes which we budget for year in, year out.

The problem is that we are not collecting all the taxes which we expect. The same thing applies to indirect taxes which we expect and that has been happening year in, year out. The Minister has told us that sometime during this year, he hopes to deal with a supplementary budget. May I say that that will be an occasion when he may try out some of the policies which have been suggested from the Opposition Bench. One of them is that he should re-examine the whole of the Schedule to the Finance Law. It is much better for the Minister to budget for and collect £100,000 from direct taxes than to estimate for £1,000,000 only to collect £100,000 or £90,000. It is true to say that, having regard to the standard of living in this Region, our present rate of income tax is a little unrealistic. And those of us who have the duty of sometimes prosecuting and sometimes defending tax evaders so called, realise that it is not every case of tax evasion that is a genuine case of evasion. In several instances, there are cases where people who at one time were very prosperous businessmen have been impoverished as a result of general trade recession and so have fallen considerably below their previous financial level. But because they do not keep accounts, they have been taxed on their previous performance and the tax assessment has been unfair. If the Minister would have a look at this Schedule

[MR ARIKPO]

with a view to granting some tax relief to all classes of people, to my mind, I think he would be doing not only himself a great deal of service but to the finances of this Region some considerable good. I would like the Minister to take this suggestion seriously. As I have said again and again, there is a point in public taxation beyond which instead of having a regular increase in the volume of money collected there is a decrease and if you get to an optimum point and once that point is passed, your financial graph begins to fall. I quite seriously say that we have passed that optimum point in our financial graph and we ought to have a second look at our Finance Law Schedule and see whether we might not produce the opposite effect by some judicious and equitable reductions in the rate of income tax.

The Leader of the Opposition has very properly said that the question of tax collection and the question of revenue ought to be lifted above party politics. I hope it is clearly understood that that does not mean that the Opposition will accept any measure put forward by the Government however unreasonable it may appear. What it means is that when once the Government and the Opposition have dispassionately examined the Government financial measures, that they, from both sides of the House, should consider themselves in duty bound to see that such measures are not stifled by political partisanship or unconstitutional agitation. Financial Policy is a subject of fundamental party difference. Revenue collection should not be. Sir, I will like to refer to this question of assessment and collection of taxes. I believe it is quite proper for any Government, in order to ensure that its policies are carried out, to appoint only those people who believe in those policies to carry them out. When it comes to matters like appointments to public Boards and Corporations, I firmly believe that the Government is right in appointing only supporters of the Government to such bodies because only supporters of the Government can be expected to carry out conscientiously the policies of the Government. But when it comes to matters like the tax assessment committees, I have very great doubt that the Government is wise in putting only its supporters on such committees.

My own view, Mr Speaker, is that where it is practicable, it is far better to appoint non-party

persons; where it is practicable to get people who are independent of political affiliation it will be better to appoint such persons. I have heard some murmurs behind the Government Bench. I am fully aware that every citizen of normal intelligence has political leanings. Nevertheless, that is different from having political affiliations or being actively attached to a political party. What I am saying is that people who are not attached actively to political parties should be appointed, where they can be found. In areas where it is difficult to get such independent people, I think tax assessment committees should consist of people of various political leanings so that we have a compound of party affiliations; because where you have a tax assessment committee which consists wholly of persons attached to one political party, there is a tendency—quite a natural one—for them to be very lenient with their party supporters and I have seen an example recently where a person has been over-leniently assessed by an assessment committee merely because he is an active supporter of the majority party in his Local Council whose members form the assessment committee.

**An hon. Member:** What of the West?

**Mr Arikpo:** Never mind what happens in the West. I am speaking in the Eastern House of Assembly for the benefit of the Eastern Region.

**An hon. Member:** The first time I am hearing this.

**Mr Arikpo:** I have always confined myself in my speeches in this House to the Eastern Region. In any way, as I was saying, Sir, I have seen recently examples of people who are under-assessed. The important thing there is not only that they are under-assessed; my point is that they believe that they have a right to be under-assessed. I am saying this from the correspondence which went on between some individuals and their own colleagues. For instance, in a case which recently came up before the Courts, a person complained about his tax although his colleagues on the assessment committee taxed his trade profits at 3 per cent instead of the locally accepted 5 per cent, because he believed that as an active party man who contributed to party funds he ought not to be so taxed.

In spite of the fact that his tax went down to 3 per cent, he still complained. Now, the fault here lies not strictly with the men or the members of that particular Assessment Committee but I want to point out that they are placed in a very difficult position being that they are party supporters. Sir, the result is that we are losing a considerable amount of revenue as a result of this one-sided tax assessment system. I will therefore like to suggest to the Government that wherever it is possible to do so, members of the Tax Assessment Committee should be persons who are not known to have any party affiliation; but where that is not possible, it is in the interest of the members of the majority party in the local councils that they should be men and women of different political affiliations—it will at least give them protection: they can go to their fellows and say: "well we are not the only people in this committee. This wicked Action Group or wicked N.C.N.C. people have insisted on your being assessed like that". It will be in the interest of the masses of this Region that the money which should be collected is not lost merely because members of the Tax Assessment Committees are anxious to satisfy their party supporters. There is a good deal of that sort of thing going on in various places and often (I do not say all the time); but quite often persons who are able to pay are under-taxed and persons who are not in such a good financial position are in fact paying their taxes with the result that we have all this short fall. I suggest that the Minister of Finance should look into the question of the composition of the Tax Assessment Committees in the various parts of the Region.

Sir, having dealt with rather the negative side of financial problems and urging our cutting down as much as possible in our expenditure, I will like to make a few suggestions on what to my mind—and in the long run that is what really matters—how to improve our finances. It is the question of increasing the volume of money collected by way of taxes. The Minister pointed out and very rightly too, that the problem of the drop in the volume of palm produce exported from the Region is one for serious reflection. It is already suggested by the Leader of Opposition that that is partly because of the manner of restricting prices paid to producers of palm products.

I should like to add that another cause of the decline in yield is the age of our oil palm trees. Most of the trees from which oil is produced are so old that they ought to be replaced. I think there are two ways of tackling this problem of replacement of ageing palm trees. One is the method which is already being carried out: that is opening large plantations. This is the one method which will in the long run solve the problem of production; but there is a limit to the number of large-scale plantations that can be established. Most of the producers are small-scaled producers and will for a long time remain so. I wonder whether the Minister of Agriculture would consider the establishment of small scale palm groves. A scheme of making advances through the E.R.D.C. to everybody who is willing to start a palm grove however small—a grove of say a hundred trees—should not be beyond the financial capacity of the Government. If we can succeed by means of small cash advances to farmers to start small groves which should not require high labour cost or plenty of managerial organisation, I think in another ten to fifteen years we will have replaced most of our ageing palm trees; and the groves will be owned by individual household or small families, and at that time be able to produce small quantities as we are doing now, all oil palms of very high quality. I should like the Minister of Agriculture to give some consideration to this matter of replacing ageing oil palm trees.

Secondly, I want to suggest that the few Agricultural Co-operative Societies be encouraged by means of cash advances to undertake medium size oil palm plantations as a means of replacing these ageing palm trees; otherwise, in another five years there will be a very appreciable fall on the value of palm produce exported from this Region. We cannot afford to allow our natural industries to fail whatever our financial fortunes.

Thirdly, I want to suggest that in the case of capital development such as the construction of roads, that in spite of the present financial difficulties that something be done to maintain the present level of development. It has been stated that Government intends to transfer road development to the Local Government Councils. I hope with that transfer, there will be a corresponding transfer of funds for the purpose of maintaining the existing standard of the roads.

[MR ARIKPO]

There are some areas which are potentially very rich agricultural areas, but which are grossly underfed by roads, and in fact with the Local Government Councils, taking over road maintenance it will be necessary to control the maintenance of existing roads, and to provide some capital and some technical organisation for them to open up new roads which will facilitate the evacuation of export produce from the rural areas to the ports. I think if we do all these things, that is cutting down strictly on our recurrent expenditure as well as adopting the more positive methods of increasing our sources of revenue, we should be able to overcome our present financial difficulties within a very short time. It is not enough to cut down our expenditure without a corresponding effort to build up our recurrent revenue capacity and unless you make it possible for the tax-payers to increase their earning capacity, I am afraid our revenue will continue gradually to shrink so that while it is a good thing to cut down on public spending it is also important to take positive measures to increase the source of public revenue.

As I said, while admittedly this Budget has been purely mechanical, in the sense that it just gives us the facts and figures, I hope the House will study very carefully these facts and figures and show that they represent a very serious warning about the position of our finances and the need to give very serious thought to finding methods to increase them. I do not think we are wise to continue to depend purely on our statutory share from the Federal Government because as many would have already seen there is a recession in trade and federal revenues are very sensitive to trade changes; and if the present recession goes on there is going to be an abrupt shortage in our share of federal revenues. Therefore within our own limits we want to do something to maintain a balance. Our revenue so far has been very unstable.

**Government Supporters:** It is better than any other Region.

**Mr Arikpo:** I am concerned for the moment with the financial state of the Eastern Region. A bad thing may be better than a worse one, but the fact that it is better than the worse does not make it good. I am concerned

with our having a good thing for the Eastern Region, and my suggestion is that no matter what the Western Region, or the Northern Region, or the Southern Cameroons, or Ghana, or anything else is, it will help us to improve our revenue. This fluctuating revenue makes it very difficult for Government to look and plan ahead, and one of the constant accusations against the Government has been planlessness. Part of the reason is that our revenue is fluctuating and the Government ought to put a stop to this annual fluctuation in our revenue. Government ought to be able to say "We expect our revenue to increase by so much and should be right in doing so." That is all I can say. I believe that the only way of doing this is to combine this measure by restricting the amount of expenditure and cutting down unnecessary expenditure. There is a good deal of that in this Region at the moment which ought to be stopped.

Secondly, I will suggest that Government should take serious steps against these methods of decreasing and sterilising Government revenue in this Region.

**Dr W. N. Onubogu (Onitsha Division):** Mr Speaker, I rise to speak in support of the Appropriation Bill. In doing so, I want to say a word of congratulations to the Minister that in spite of all difficulties, he was able to present this nice speech. However, he did advise caution about the finances of the Region. It is about this caution that I want to start by cautioning the House and in doing so, I would like to bring to the notice of the Minister of Finance and the Premier for that matter, the position of tax assessment in Onitsha. I will say right now that the whole thing has gone off the rail in Onitsha. Maybe that they are very anxious to get considerable amount of money to the coffers of the Government and I still repeat that the assessment has gone off the rail. (Laughter).

**An hon. Member:** Where is the driver?

**Dr Onubogu:** The driver has gone. Thank you for that question. The driver is in the United Kingdom. Mr Speaker, I am told that we pay income tax and that people are to be assessed according to their income. Those who have kept their books properly will bring their books forward and they are assessed

according to their books; but for those who are unable to keep their books then the driver or the Assessment Officer will assess them. What happens now is that some people are assessed in Onitsha according to how many rooms they occupy in their houses. Mr Speaker, these rooms are actually occupied by the people themselves. They receive not even a penny as rent. If this is done in England, I am not aware that it has reached Nigeria. If it has reached Nigeria, is it done in Enugu? Does the same thing apply to Calabar, Port Harcourt and all over the Region? So that even if you are asked how many rooms your house contained and you said your house contained 10 rooms, then he would tell you that he knew that in that area, each room was about £2 or £1 10s. In that case, your house gives you £15 per month and that is about £180 a year. You have to pay rent on that. Mind you, you don't get any rent from those rooms. You occupy the whole of them. What I am saying is that what is good for the goose should also be good for the gander. If it is done in Onitsha, it should also be done in other places in the Region. So I am seriously calling the attention of the Minister of Finance to look into the matter because there is a lot of trouble going on. I do not know how long it will take to get this cleared. One of the speakers had already said that a lot of people should be brought into the fold to pay tax. I quite agree. Now many people are preparing to go to court to argue their tax appeals against this arbitrary assessment. I am describing what the position is in Onitsha Township. Mr Speaker, I have put it very mildly. I want to say, Sir, that I have looked into the Draft Estimates and found that we have £65,000 as royalty for oil. I want to say that the Government should be up and doing. We must press on so that next year when we come here, I would not like to see £65,000 as royalty. There is a lot of oil there. We should get more royalty. Now, some of us say that £65,000 is plenty of money. After all, we talk of amenities for our Divisions and villages. I feel that £65,000 is too small. It is a mere chicken feed. We are entitled to much more.

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

Hon. Members are aware of certain statements in respect of oil exploration. I think it has been clearly indicated that until oil is found in commercial quantity, we cannot

afford to think in terms of making millions of pounds out of it. There is true indication that it has been found and I think really we ought to avoid debating that topic in this House. We have got to think of the outside world and their reactions to what we say in this House.

**Dr Onubogu:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I hope oil will be found in commercial quantity. That is what I have in mind.

Mr Speaker, my speech is always short and in a short time, I will sit down. I am very surprised, Mr Speaker, to note that the Government has not found it fit to make provision for a short road in Onitsha Division—from Abagana to Aguleri which has once appeared in the Estimates of 1955-56 but has now disappeared completely.

I am saying, Sir, that it is very disappointing. This is the most backward area in Onitsha Division. They are very populous and they pay their taxes. What they have been asking of this Government is to put this road in good condition and tar it. Whenever we go out on election campaign we promise heaven and earth and year in, year out, this promise is forgotten. I am very sad about it and I do not know how the Government will ever count on the support of the people from now onwards.

I want to thank the Government on behalf of my people of Ogidi for the provision of a little amount of say £12,000 to help them in their long struggle to provide water for themselves. I want to assure this House that by this I believe that Government like God, helps those who help themselves. Ogidi people, Mr Speaker, have taxed themselves year in, year out, to provide water and Government seeing their trouble has now decided to help them.

Mr Speaker, I know that when we come to the particular Head, we shall be allowed to speak on this Head, but I want to seize this opportunity of calling the attention of the Minister of Health to the fact that the last Hospital Law has not been working well at all. It has made it impossible for Doctors who are qualified and who are of Eastern Nigeria origin to accept appointment here; a lot of them have gone to the University College and a lot of them are in the West and some are in the

[DR ONUBOGU]

Federal headquarters. Mr Speaker, this is a very sad situation. The Minister should go back to his Ministry and consider the situation in his Department so that an amendment will be made. I am saying that there is not sufficient inducement for our Doctors who belong to this Region and who would like to come and work in this Region. They just cannot come because the conditions are not the same. I hope I am speaking the minds of Members.

**Hon. Members:** No! You are fighting for your private interest.

**Dr Onubogu:** I will never go to the Government to work; so it is not a question of private interest. I am saying exactly what obtains in the Medical Department of this Region today.

Mr Speaker, Sir, if I might say something about private practice, it is also difficult for private Doctors to establish private hospitals in townships. After all, it is a question of help—whichever way you contribute your quota is alright. The Ordinance specified a certain dimension and certain distance where a mortuary will be built in the township—where have you got the land to build hospitals with these measurements in townships. I am saying, Sir, that this must be looked into. It makes impossible the establishment of private hospitals in the townships.

**Hon. Members:** But you were a Minister at the time.

**Dr Onubogu:** Mr Speaker, I refuse to speak when some Members are speaking. I am saying, Sir, that the time has come when the Minister of Health should review this Hospital Law. It is impossible for us to get new entrants unless it is reviewed. That is the point. I am also asking the Minister of Health to think over the question of giving every Doctor who wants to establish a certain amount of money; don't put any tag on it. Do not say unless you go to the 40th mile into what is called the under-developed area. I am telling you that a lot of people are running to the townships. Building grants should be given to anybody who wants to build, no matter where he wants to build.

**Hon. Members:** No, no.

**Dr Onubogu:** You just say "no". I hope Members will realise that this is a highly technical subject. (*Hear! Hear!*). They should keep their mouths shut. Only three people here are qualified to speak. Mr Speaker, as I said before, I have not too much to add excepting that brickbats will come when we get to the particular Head, but I only beg your indulgence to put in one or two things.

I support the Appropriation Bill with the hope that the Government will not only stand here and caution us, but that they will get inside and caution themselves.

**Dr A. N. Obonna (Owerri Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I rise to support the Appropriation Bill so ably proposed by the hon. the Minister of Finance. This Budget presents a period of marking time in order to restore our depleted reserve. It is a good financial policy, but it has its adverse effects. The first consequential result of such a policy is the question of unemployment, and I think that is about the most important thing one will have to consider in discussing this Budget.

This Budget as I have said is a marking time Budget. But on the other hand, the students we have in the colleges are not marking time; they continue to pass out with distinction only to come out to find no employment. This is something that we should think seriously about because when these students roam about without jobs, a lot of things will follow—more and more demonstrations. This is one of those aspects which give me a serious concern, much as I admire the policy of the Government. I therefore want to offer a solution to this question of unemployment and it is this. I want the Government to consider it seriously—it may not be a pleasant solution—that we have to reduce the pension age and increase the rate of pension. I repeat—reduce the pension age, increase the rate of pension. By so doing, those who have been in the Government Service for years time Budget. But on the other hand, the will leave the service with substantial pensionable rate and make room for young ones to enter the service as is done elsewhere in the world.

Another aspect of this Budget is that people will be dissatisfied everywhere. People will like to see their social services going from better to best; but when they see it not going on

while taxes are being paid, you and I can understand the reason but others cannot. Then it becomes more difficult to collect these taxes. Then there will be the problem of tax evasion and there will be more trouble, and perhaps the following year things may be worse.

But the point is this: that I have almost agreed with the Leader of the Opposition when he said that more than half of the people of this Region who ought to pay tax are not paying particularly people in the rural areas. In fact, people migrate to areas where they are not taxed and people in their own areas go to other places where they will not be taxed and when the tax season passes away, they come back again. The result is that we do not collect the tax at all. I do not know what we should do in this respect. I think it is time when people in the village or village council should be made actually responsible for this collection of tax and not individuals because I know there are many of these individuals who collect these taxes, who with ordinary tips, never put one's name on roll at all. People know this fact, and the only thing is that Government will continue to suffer while these people will enrich themselves at the expense of the Government. I think the responsibility should now be shifted to village councils and rebates or some commissions should be given to these people who collect these taxes. About this question of tax evasion, I think it is present all over the world. There is no part of the world where it does not happen and the only thing we can do about it is by reviewing the report of the Economic Mission written by the Premier and Mr Ojukwu. I think conscientiously that their line of thought is the best for the moment for this Region where a professional should be taxed as a professional. Government should decide what he will be taxed—whether £200, £300 or £400. If one has a general survey of what one should pay, and once one knows that is one's tax, one would work harder and harder to see that one is able to pay that because without any intention of defrauding the Government, these people do not keep account. One makes the money and at the end of the year one does not know what one makes, and no savings are made; and so, one does not know whether one is cheating one's self or the Government. In this connection, I must thank the Government for introducing Pay

As You Earn system for the private professionals who may like to take part in it. I think it will help to solve some of these problems. Then another point I would like to introduce is this: the Government has realised that the price of palm produce depreciates every year. I do realise that the wealth of our people, particularly those in the rural areas depends on the price of the produce. Therefore, if the price of produce depreciates every year, it means that the earning capacity of our people depreciates every year and we have called on these people to pay the same tax without corresponding decrease. Therefore, there will come a time when this tax, even though as small as it is, will become oppressive to the people. In fact, the people are grumbling already and as I said when I was speaking on the U.P.E. demonstration—I said here clearly that it was due to economic pressure. People couldn't pay the fees asked for and the only way they could show their grievances was to demonstrate and all that happened was just a cumulative effect of all they were harbouring in their minds.

The question is: what should we do to promote the price of palm oil? I think the responsibility depends on the Marketing Board. I think part of the price or commissions now paid to the Licensed Buying Agents should be made payable to the middlemen who in turn will make some of it available to the producers. Unless this is done, you will find that there will never be any satisfaction at all. The Licensed Buying Agents always monopolise all the commissions and they are greedy people. So, what we should do is that the Marketing Board should apportion part of that profit and make it payable to the middlemen. I think that will stimulate the sales of palm produce. Another way to promote this is by encouraging Co-operative Societies and making them to pull together and buy oil together and give them the very facilities we are giving the Licenced Buying Agents and if possible, as suggested here, they may be asked to buy some of the existing pioneer oil mills.

Another point I will like to raise is the amenities for Owerri Division. In this connection, I have to congratulate my hon. Friend, Mr G. C. Okeya for the able way he has presented this Division this morning and I have to add some of the points he missed. If you go to Owerri today what the people

[DR OBONNA]

talk about is that they are part and parcel of this Government; they have supported this Government for time immemorial and they feel that the Government does not take them as part of this Government. In fact, there is no visible thing; no road, except the Federal road that passes through Owerri, perhaps by accident. There is no road tarred in Owerri Division; there is no single mile or half a mile of road tarred in Owerri Division. Well, another point is this: It seems to us that everything in Owerri is bad with the Government. Take for instance the Owerri Secondary School. I think it is the only Government Secondary School in this Region without electric light and it has existed for a long time. The building is not comparable with any of the buildings in this Region and when it comes to performance in examinations the college is second to none.

**An hon. Member:** What about the hospital?

**Dr Obonna:** The hospital is even worse than other hospitals in the Region. The Police Quarters, the D.O.'s house and in fact everything in that Division is very bad.

The only hope we have is the presence of the Shell Company but last year I had a shocking news of their removal. I am appealing to Government that with the withdrawal of Shell BP, an industry should be established in Owerri.

When it comes to the question of self-help, I can assure you that only very few Divisions can compete with Owerri. Take for instance Mbaise; we have built our secondary school on self-effort, we have built our hospital on self effort.

On water supplies, we thought that need should have been the prime consideration but it is now the question of the 'highest bidder' because I don't see how on earth a place like Mbieri where people travel miles and miles to get water should not have been considered.

In fact, the only bridge which I have seen in Owerri Division is the Azara Egbelu Bridge and that bridge is useless without the Okatamkwo bridge. That bridge will not cost Government anything over £2,000; yet since three years we have been appealing to Government to do something and nothing is done about it. We have this road—Okpuala-

Mbaise road, then from Mbaise that road leads to the Okigwi road. That road, every Member here will agree with me (barring of course the Okigwi Road) is the worst road in the whole of the Region today. In the rainy season, no matter how strong your car, you can never go to that road with it and be able to return with it. Then we have the Okpuala-Etche Road. That road has been used by members of the E.R.D.C., but nobody bothers to see to the maintenance of that road. That is one of the worst roads, and hon. Members from Etche will bear us out.

The Umuahia-Owerri Road, has been promised to be tarred but nothing has been done to show any sign of doing so; in fact, right in Owerri, we are all branded as liars and that all of us in this House are useless. Thanks to the good offices of the Premier who many a time defends us when we often get insulting letters from various people.

I want to speak about our colleges. In view of our population, we would like most of our colleges to be double-streamed. There is no need multiplying the building and paying unnecessary money. I feel that Government should adopt that policy throughout the Division—that colleges should be double-streamed to avoid multiplicity of colleges. I know, perhaps, you may think that efficiency might suffer.

*And it being 2.15 p.m. Mr Speaker interrupted the business and the Debate stood adjourned. Debate to be resumed on Wednesday, 2nd April, 1958.*

(2) The Riot Damages Bill—Second Reading—Adjourned Debate on Question (28th March)—That the Bill be now read a Second time.  
*Deferred until Tomorrow.*

(3) The Eastern Region Local Government (Amendment) Bill—Second Reading. *Further deferred until Tomorrow.*

(4) The Acquisition of Land by Aliens Bill—Second Reading. *Further deferred until Tomorrow.*

#### ADJOURNMENT

Resolved: That this House do now adjourn.  
*(The Minister of Production, Dr M. I. Okpara).*

*Adjourned, accordingly, at sixteen minutes past 2 o'clock p.m.*



## WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Monday, 31st March, 1958

### Ishielu District Council— Distribution of Amenities

109. **Mr P. A. Onwe** asked the Minister of Local Government, what steps he is taking in response to the representations made by some Local Councils to see that the Ishielu District Council distributes amenities equitably; is he aware that it is proposed to establish a maternity centre at Ezzangbo, four miles from the present centre, at the expense of places as much as thirty miles distant; and if he is, what steps does he intend to take to stop this.

**The Minister of Local Government:** I am aware that the Ishielu District Council plans to build a maternity home at Ezzangbo. The Council made provision of £1,500 for this in its draft Estimates for 1957-58, and this was approved. When I visited the Council in May last year, I was told that the Council had not finally decided on where this maternity home should be built; and I informed the Council that they could choose another site if they wished, but it must be approved by the Medical Officer. Later the Council wrote that they had acquired land for the maternity home at Ezzangbo, and asked for approval of a contract for the work. I gave approval, as the site had been agreed on by the Council.

There is a limit to the extent to which it is proper for me to interfere with the working of councils; and in general I do not propose to dictate to councils where they will site their amenities. That is a matter which councils should be able to do best themselves. If I noticed that amenities were being concentrated in one particular place I would ask the council to reconsider its plans. In the present case, I was aware that the council had considered the matter at length and on more than one occasion, and I saw no reason to withhold my approval.

I would like to add that the Ishielu District Council has proposed, in its Draft Estimates for

1958-59, to build a further maternity home but does not appear to have decided on a site yet.

### Ezzangbo Market

110. **Mr P. A. Onwe** asked the Minister of Local Government, if he will investigate the reasons for constructing the Ezzangbo Market at the expense of other places; what is the importance of this market over others; what is the total cost of the market and how much money has already been spent on it.

**The Minister of Local Government:** Yes, Sir. £1,000 inserted by the Ishielu District Council for unspecified Market Improvement in its draft 1958-59 Estimates has been deleted. The Council is being asked to explain its plans, including the proposed total cost in detail. £48 was spent on clearing and surveying the site in 1956-57 and the Council has provision of £1,000 in its 1957-58 Estimates for the market. No information about the exact amount spent is at present available in my Ministry.

### Ishielu District Council H.Q.

112. **Mr P. A. Onwe** asked the Minister of Local Government, why were the Headquarters of the Ishielu District Council removed from Ntezi, which is more central than Ezzangbo.

**The Minister of Local Government:** I am not aware of the reasons which led the Ishielu District Council to select Ezzangbo as its headquarters. In April last year, the Council asked my approval for supplementary expenditure to erect these headquarters buildings at Ezzangbo. I visited the Council myself in May last year, before I had given my approval; councillors then stressed the urgency of this project, but none of them suggested that there was any disagreement at all over the choice of a site. I therefore gave my approval.

EASTERN HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 1st April, 1958

*The House met at Ten o'clock a.m.*

PRAYERS

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

APPOINTMENT OF ATTORNEY-  
GENERAL

**The Premier (Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe):** Today, being 1st April, the Nigeria (Constitution) (Amendment) Order in Council, 1958, which was made on 14th March and laid before Parliament on 20th March, comes into operation.

Section 60 of the said amending Order provides that there shall be an Attorney-General for the Eastern Region who shall be a person qualified for appointment as a Judge of the High Court of the Region and shall be appointed by the Governor acting on the recommendation of the Premier.

Under the same section, it is provided that the office of the Attorney-General shall become vacant, if the seat of the Premier in the Executive Council of the Region becomes vacant; if he resigns his office by writing under his hand addressed to the Governor; if he absents himself from Nigeria without written permission given by the Governor; if he ceases to be qualified for appointment as a Judge of the High Court of the Region; or if the Governor on the recommendation of the Premier so directs.

It is with pleasure that I announce to the House that, in accordance with the stipulations of the amending Order, His Excellency has appointed Michael Oguejiofor Ajegbo, Esquire, to become the substantive Attorney-General of the Eastern Region as from today.

Mr Ajegbo was called to the Bar on 27th January, 1947, as a member of the Honourable Society of Gray's Inn at the Inns of Court, London. Since his return to Nigeria in that year, he has engaged in practice as Solicitor and Advocate of the Supreme Court of Nigeria. He will be sworn in, this evening, as a Member

of the Executive Council and he has assumed duty as the Chief Law Officer of this Government.

I am sure that hon. Members will join with me in expressing our joy at this important milestone in our constitutional struggle for political self-determination and national freedom.

According to the (Amendment) Order in Council, a person appointed as Attorney-General of the Eastern Region is deemed to be a Member of the Eastern House of Assembly; such a person is also deemed to be an elected Member of this House.

It is, therefore, with pleasure that I introduce the hon. Attorney-General to you, Mr Speaker, and to the hon. Members of this House. (*Applause*).

MEMBER SWORN

The hon. the Attorney-General, Mr M. O. Ajegbo took and subscribed the Oath required by Law.

**Mr Speaker:** The hon. the learned Attorney-General, I can do no more than congratulate you on your appointment as the Chief Law Officer of the Eastern Region. We wish you long tenure of office.

**Mr S. G. Ikoku (Enyong Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like on behalf of my colleagues here to join the hon. the Premier in welcoming our new Attorney-General to this hon. House. We are very happy, Sir, that he is here and we are sure that the House and the Region as a whole will benefit from his appointment. This is a great step forward constitutionally but it is one of great responsibility.

Our new Attorney-General will not be just a politician. He is the first law personality of the realm. As you know, Sir, the rule of law is one of the crops which parliamentary democracy sows and today we are calling upon our new Attorney-General to see to it that the crop is strengthened. I think it will be his duty, Sir, to see that this Region is run according to law and that in the discharge of that duty nobody, even Members of this House or the Government of the Eastern

Region, is above the law. The Attorney-General, if we are to follow the practice in Westminster, should be able to put his foot down on matters of law, even as regards his own Government and that is where we do not see the Attorney-General as a mere Minister. He is the first law personality of the realm and if we succeed in strengthening the rule of the law, I think it will be to his credit.

Those who know him personally cannot doubt his ability and we are very anxious to be able to tell the whole world that our law has not deteriorated because of this advancement.

We must remove one bit of jarring note and that is in connection with the earlier announcement of his being the Attorney-General-designate. You will remember that we took offence at that time of his appointment. Now that he is the substantive Attorney-General we are all very happy. We will let bygones be bygones. (*Hear! Hear!*)

I would like now, Sir, to say that this is the first time that this experiment is being conducted and that makes it even more difficult for the new Attorney-General because he has to create and maintain a standard which should be a first guide to all who take over office from him. That makes his job more difficult and we hope that he will be able to live up to the great responsibilities which are now on him. From this side of the House we assure him the fullest co-operation in this discharge of his duty as Attorney-General.

**The Attorney-General (Mr M. O. Ajegbo):** Mr Speaker, may I first of all thank you, the hon. the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition for your very kind speeches welcoming me to this House. The Eastern House of Assembly enjoys great reputation for its democratic atmosphere. Hon. Members express themselves with warmth and feeling and sometimes with vehemence. But what strikes every visitor to the House is the amount of friendliness that prevails—the sense of humour that pervades your debates.

My appointment as Attorney-General of the Region marks another turning point in our history, another milestone on our road to independence. The number of messages of congratulations and goodwill I have received

when my appointment was announced, gives an indication that the appointment is not very unpopular. (*Laughter.*)

I am grateful to the hon. the Premier and the Government of the Eastern Region for the honour they have done me in giving me this great opportunity for service. I promise everyone of you hard work and fair mindedness and I can assure the Leader of the Opposition that I am first and foremost a lawyer and will endeavour to maintain the rule of law. (*Hear! Hear!*). I hope to be able to make some contributions to your debates and to help with some of the legal problems that will crop up in the House.

Nobody is more conscious than I am of the responsibility that falls on my shoulders. I have no doubt at all in my mind that with the support and co-operation of every one of you, I will hold the job down. I pray to God to direct me and to give me the strength and wisdom to serve the Region.

#### PAPERS

**Mr Speaker:** During the present sitting of the House the following printed Papers were distributed to Members. These Papers are deemed to be laid upon the Table.

They are:—

- (1) Annual Report on the Forest Administration of the Eastern Region of Nigeria for the year ended 31st March, 1957.
- (2) Second Annual Report of the Eastern Region Marketing Board, 1st January, 1956 to 31st December, 1956.
- (3) Annual Report of the Fisheries Department, Eastern Region, for the year 1956-57.
- (4) Annual Report, Eastern Nigeria Pharmaceutical Corporation, for the year 1956-57.
- (5) Annual Report, Eastern Nigeria Printing Corporation, for the year 1956-57.
- (6) Annual Report, Eastern Nigeria Cinema Corporation, for the year 1956-57.
- (7) Annual Report, Eastern Nigeria Tourist Corporation, for the year 1956-57.

Ordered: That the said Papers do lie upon the Table.

**ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**

**Civil Servants**

70. **Mr S. E. K. Iwueke** asked the Premier, whether he is aware of the fact that most civil servants in the Region do not exercise political neutrality in their dealing with the public; if so, what steps is he taking to call such civil servants to order.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier (Mr J. O. Umolu):** I am directed to answer as follows:—

All Civil Servants are expected to exercise political neutrality and there are regulations forbidding them to take active parts in politics. If the hon. Member knows of any Officer who indulged in active politics he should put forward his name and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against him.

**Foreign Companies**

94. **Mr H. U. Akpabio** asked the Minister of Commerce, how many new foreign companies have established themselves in business in the Eastern Region between March, 1954 and March, 1958.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Commerce (Mr E. W. Udonkim):** I am directed to answer as follows:—

Ten industrial companies and thirteen trading companies; but six of the industries and at least two of the trading business are expansions of other businesses established in Nigeria or are new ventures by persons or firms already resident in Nigeria.

**Adulteration of Commodities**

97. **Mr S. E. K. Iwueke** asked the Minister of Commerce, if he is aware of the adulteration of commodities in our markets; if so, what steps is he taking to prevent these traders from exploiting the public.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Commerce (Mr E. W. Udonkim):** I am directed to answer as follows:—

There is no action the Minister of Commerce can take. The offering for sale of adulterated commodities is an offence and specific complaints about the commission of such offences should be notified to the nearest Police Charge Office for the necessary action to be taken.

**Gunpowder and Match Industry**

100. **Mr S. E. K. Iwueke** asked the Minister of Commerce, whether he does not think it wise to establish a gunpowder plant and a match industry in view of the growing demand for both gunpowder and matches.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Commerce (Mr E. W. Udonkim):** I am directed to answer as follows:—

It is unlikely that a profit could be made by local industries manufacturing gunpowder or matches.

The raw materials used in making gunpowder are not available locally (with the possible exception of charcoal). Moreover the mixing of the ingredients is a highly dangerous trade requiring complicated safety precautions. There can be little doubt that it is both cheaper and safer to import manufactured gunpowder than to import the chemicals and try to make a profit on making gunpowder.

The possibility of establishing a match industry has previously been investigated and has been rejected. The main reason for rejection is that none of the Nigerian timbers is suitable for match-sticks. Another is that all the chemicals required would have to be imported. In these circumstances there could be no hope of competing successfully against the mass produced matches imported from overseas.

**Mr Abengowe:** Is the Minister aware that locally manufactured gunpowder shoots as well as foreign gunpowder?

**Mr Udonkim:** The Minister is not aware.

**BILLS PRESENTED**

**(1) Welfare of Illegitimate Children Affiliation Orders**

Bill to make provision for the welfare of illegitimate children by providing for the granting of affiliation Orders for the maintenance and education of such children presented by Mr G. C. Okeya; read the First time; to be read a Second time Today.

**(2) Welfare of Illegitimate Children Adoption**

Bill to make provision for the welfare of illegitimate children by providing for the

adoption of such children by the father of such children, presented by Mr G. C. Okeya; read the First time; to be read a Second time Today.

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Members are aware that under our Standing Orders, Bills cannot be read the First and Second time on the same day. The reason, of course, is that Members want sufficient time to read the Bills and study them in order to be able to debate them properly. There is no doubt that hon. Members have had that opportunity. You have all read these Bills and are very anxious to debate them today. Is it the wish of the House that the second proviso of Standing Order 43 be suspended so that these Bills could be read the Second time Today?

*Aye.*

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### (1) The Eastern Region (Welfare of Illegitimate Children) (Affiliation Orders) Bill

*Order for Second reading read.*

**Mr G. C. Okeya (Owerri Division):** Mr Speaker, I am really grateful to you for allowing me to take the Second reading of the two Bills I presented this morning.

After dabbling in political theories for some time as a student, it had been my ambition to be, not only a legislator, but a humble back bencher with petitions and private Bills to stir the Government and keep them thinking on social reforms.

I am quite aware of the set backs in the dark passage of Private Bills and their doomed fate. Very often, good Bills from Private Members no matter how good-intentioned they may be, are derided and vehemently opposed. Wilberforce and Granville, Whiteheads and Roebuck, came out with Humanitarian and Philanthropic Bills which were thrown out in the first instance, but later brought in as Abolition of Slavery Bill, Reform Bill, Education Bill and passed into the Statute Book of England.

Mr Speaker, Sir, on the Motion to beg leave to present this Bill, I attempted to give the objects of and reasons for the Bills, viz.,

The Maintenance Bill and the Adoption Bill —The two Bills are distinct.

All the speakers that day agreed that the Bills are high and noble in aim, humanitarian in concept, objective and conducive to the welfare of the class of children concerned.

The critics of the Bills without reading them to grasp the fundamental principle involved rushed out to condemn the Bills on the following grounds:

- (i) That there are no illegitimate children as such in the Region.
- (ii) That if the Bills become Law, prostitution and constant litigations will be encouraged.
- (iii) That such law is difficult to operate or enforce like the Bride Price Law or Osu Law.
- (iv) That such a law is contrary to Native Custom.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the objections of Members are frivolous taking into consideration the essence of this Bill. They do not affect intrinsically the objects of the Bill and the reasons of the Bill. At this stage I must briefly subject the objections to argumentative analysis.

*Objection No. 1.* The critics forgot one fundamental principle in scientific argument or logic, that is, arguing from accepted definition or from major and minor premises before conclusion. By definition, illegitimate child is one born out of unlawful wedlock. This definition identifies the class of children the Bill seeks to help. A child whose father and mother are not married according to Native Law and Custom or any Ordinance heretofore in force is an illegitimate child; such children are common in our community.

**Hon. Members:** Where; in your own village?

**Mr Okeya:** Mr Speaker, Sir, allow me also to say that those who argue that there are no illegitimate children in Ibo land should not forget the terms *Nwa Oyi*, *Nwa Okwa*. (*Laughter*). In Ibo *Nwa Oyi* is a child born out of prostitution unlawfully and *Nwa Okwa* is a child adopted into the family, the father is not known.

[MR OKEYA]

*Objection No. 2.* The Bill is not concerned with the immorality of prostitution or the morality of adoption, but with the maintenance and welfare of the illegitimate child. Prostitution is as old as human society. Psychologically, it is a biological communication not encourageable by Law. The Bill rather seeks to encourage moral responsibility and not moral laxity.

*Objection No. 3.* To maintain and assert that because the bride price is not enforced, therefore, the proposed Law cannot operate is begging the question—it is illogical. The objects of this Bill are quite different from those of the Bride Price Law. The maintenance Bill is ancillary to the Bride Price Law—that young people may marry as early as it is within their economic means—not above £30. The Bill provides maintenance of the child legally if one is not prepared to marry the girl. The Young Children's Welfare Act of the Eastern Region does not prescribe how much you will pay to maintain the child, but this Bill provides that.

**Hon. Members:** How much?

**Mr Okeya:** Twenty shillings per week. (*Laughter*).

This is a very important part and most important objection about custom and that the law is contrary to custom. Custom as we all know, is a relative term and it is varied within or without a given place. (*Hear! Hear!*). Custom is not the same everywhere. For example, I will give two customary illustrations. In Ibo land, the Aros seem to lead historically.

**An hon. Member:** They are not Ibos.

**Mr Okeya:** According to the Aro custom, where an unmarried girl is pregnant, the father of that girl owns the child. The natural father or putative father cannot claim the child because he is not married lawfully to the girl before the act took place. Such a child by Aro custom is legitimate and has full family rights with the other children in the family. If the putative father is an Osu, the child by custom is illegitimate. Both the mother and the child could be sold into slavery.

**An hon. Member:** Not now, no more Osu.

**Mr Okeya:** Now, if we go by this Aro custom or principle, in one case, the Aro custom admits that they are legitimate children. Now, if where the girl is being betrothed and she is pregnant, the intending husband has the child and not the natural father according to Aro custom but in this instance, the husband of the girl cannot regard such a child as legitimate. This is a very important issue. When a girl is being intended and that girl is preganated by another man, the intending husband can claim the child but he cannot regard the child as legitimate but as an illegitimate one and such a child can not enjoy all the rights which other children in that family are entitled to. Contrary to this Aro custom, you find that the Olu or Ogbalu custom is quite opposite to this. Towns along the banks of the River Niger and even some towns in Onitsha and Owerri Provinces for example Atani, Aboh, Oguta, Ihiala, and Onitsha, all agree on this principle. Where an unmarried girl is pregnant, the issue is adopted by the girl's mother or father; but in all these circles, such a child is still illegitimate and he is not entitled to all family rights. Of the two customs, Sir, the Aro custom contravenes the principles of natural justice, because it is repugnant in the sense that it does not recognise the intrinsic affinity or consanguinity.—The blood relationship between the child and his natural father. When people talk of custom they must realise that custom is flexible and varying; and so you cannot judge this Bill by instance of one custom prevailing in your own town.

**An hon. Member:** Can you tell me how your father was born? (*Laughter*).

**Mr Okeya:** Mr Speaker, Sir, these objections are not material to the object of the Bill. They are flimsy. For further implications of this Bill, I have to refresh the minds of hon. Members on important clauses in this Bill because most of them seem to be afraid of the Bill because these are customs.

*Clause 2.* "Single Woman". This has a more restricted meaning than that in England in similar legislation. Here it only means a spinster or a widow.

*Clause 3.* The age of thirty has been chosen to prevent women from making a business of the obtaining of affiliation orders.

The purpose of going to court before the baby is born is that where the applicant is honest and really does know that "X" is the father of the child it gives him notice. He cannot "do a bunk" and of course evidence is always easier to procure immediately after rather than twelve months or so after, the act in question.

Proceedings in Court cannot be contested until after the birth of the child. This is to prevent there being an order followed by a miscarriage or death at birth. No sum of money can be claimed in respect of funeral expenses as in England. But a sum may be recovered for the expenses incurred to the mother by reason of the birth of the child.

*Clause 4 (1).* This is the most important clause in the Bill. It states that the mother must prove that the father is the father of the child. A mere allegation to that effect is not enough.

She must produce some evidence in corroboration in some material particular. If the father says "no I am not the father and at the relevant time I was in Port Harcourt", and if this alibi breaks down, it being proved that he was in Enugu and not in Port Harcourt at the relevant time, that is enough corroboration.

It is always up to the father to say that the girl was a common whore and that she had so many men that she cannot prove who the father was.

The point is that this Bill is to help honest people: girls who are left in the lurch by their men friends.

It will not assist prostitutes—at least, it may not do so. For each case will depend upon its own facts. And the mere fact that the girl is immoral will not prevent her from obtaining an order provided that she can prove that the father was the father of the child.

*Clause 4 (2).* Twenty shillings is the maximum. A Magistrate will go into the means of the father before he makes an order. A big trader might have to pay up to twenty shillings but, for example a messenger, etc., might only have to contribute a very small

sum, say five shillings per week or even less. Please note that the money is for the benefit of the child and not for the benefit of the women.

*Clause 5.* This is most important. History has shown that persons against whom orders have been made on this nature will do every thing in their power to avoid payment: even when they have the money. And that is why it is necessary that the court can enforce it on the father to maintain the child.

Mr Speaker, this Bill is socially desirable, and it is important not only to the lawyers and doctors but also to sociologists and theologians; to legislators and statesmen and indeed to all who are concerned with political and moral problems and human welfare to support this Bill. Since customs affecting illegitimate children differ according to localities and since Members do also agree that the aim of this Bill is noble and humanitarian, I appeal, Sir, to Members to form a committee representative of all the people in the Region to discuss and recommend this Bill.

Sir, I beg to move.

**Mr K. Kiri (Degema Division):** Sir, I beg to second.

**Mr Speaker:** I will propose the question. But before I do so, I would like to call the attention of the hon. the Mover to take into account the sort of reception that the Bill has so far received. I do so, not in order to curb his particular enthusiasm, but to stress that we have been in session a long time now. We are all anxious to go back to our homes. We have quite a lot of Government business to be done and while not really trying to oppose your intention in this matter, it seems to me that you have to consider whether this is the proper time to present the Bill, having seen the support it has so far received. You may wish to consider deferring it for debate until such a time when the House will be in a more favourable mood.

If you wish to ask leave of the House at this stage to withdraw your Bill, it is not killed. You still have an opportunity next two or three years to see that the people of Eastern Nigeria have been educated in such matters and are willing to receive it. But if the Bill goes

[MR SPEAKER]

through and it is defeated, it will be very difficult for you—think about it. I will not advise you on what to do, but if you want leave to withdraw, I am prepared to put it to the House.

**Mr Okeya:** Mr Speaker, Sir, relying on the good intentions of my supporters, I crave your indulgence to defer the Bill for two or three years.

**Mr Speaker:** Order, Order. Under Standing Orders I cannot order the Bill to be deferred. I can only order it to be debated or if you seek leave to withdraw it, order that leave be granted that you withdraw—you can do what you like. I do not intend that the whole day should be spent on debating this Bill in view of the obvious reception it has so far received.

**Mr Okeya:** Mr Speaker, I want the Bill to be debated and be thrown out, if defeated.

*Question proposed.*

**The Premier (Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe):** Mr Speaker, I do not intend to make a long speech on this Motion, but I would like once more to clarify the stand of the Government. Government is of the opinion that this Bill should be an open one, so that there should be a free vote. (*Hear! Hear!*). It means, therefore, that even on this side of the House we may find ourselves either for or against the Bill. (*Laughter*).

As far as I am concerned personally, I would like to say that I very much appreciate the way and manner the hon. Mover presented his Motion. It is a sociological problem which we must face. Unfortunately, there are also ethnographic problems which are entwined with it. (*Hear! Hear!*). I do wish most of us will be able to see this sociological aspect of it and divorce it from the ethnographic one. However, I wish the Mover the best of luck. (*Laughter*). Suffice it for me to say that, at this stage of this country's development I really feel that we should have certain legal safeguards to give protection to those who may become sociological problems as had been pointed out by the hon. Mover.

I commend the Bill to the favourable consideration of the House.

**Mr M. E. Ogon (Ikom Division):** Mr Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Mover of the Motion for the able way he introduced the Second reading of the Bill. But at the same time, Sir, I think it is my humble duty to oppose this Bill. At this stage I would say, Sir, that we should not allow it simply because people are very interested in defending their system. I have my reason for opposing this Bill.

First of all it is against the tradition and custom of my people and I think, Sir, it is very right that I should oppose it at least for that one reason. This is a Bill to impose an undesirable system on the people and is like saying: you are making a Bill to name a certain section of the society "Osu". Rarely can you go to the pubs or theatre and you find somebody called illegitimate. You can't; he would sue you if you do. What will happen now is the moment a child has been taken to the court, for many years after that he cannot stand election. Granted that the mother lost the case in the Court people will say: your mother took somebody to court and you were then called an illegitimate child. It is very unfair to condemn a child because of a wrong name. (*Hear! Hear!*). Sir, I think that the whole idea of social reform is good but social reform should be based on justice which is meant to alleviate suffering not to impose injustice on the people. Look at section 4(1) of it. It reads as follows:—

"After the birth of such illegitimate child on the appearance of the person so summoned or on proof that the summons was duly served on such person or left at his last place of abode, the Court shall hear the evidence of such woman and such other evidence as she may produce, and shall also hear any evidence tendered by or on behalf of the person alleged to be the father and if the evidence of the mother be corroborated in some material particular by other evidence to the satisfaction of the said Court the Court may adjudge the man to be the putative father of such illegitimate child."

In other words, Sir, if a girl happens to be in love with my friend from Aba because of his appearance, if the girl sees that my hon. Friend is a



very handsome young man who is very wealthy, what stops that girl from suing him and then summon her former friend to come and give evidence? You are bound to punish innocent people. There is no sufficient safeguard by which a Judge shall have to prove that this is the real father of the child. For that reason alone I would ask that this Bill be thrown away.

They are not going to condemn their children or allow them to suffer. The mother of such child will only look round and lay hands on a well-to-do person like a barrister.

Another case is that of a political leader. If I want to embarrass any political leader, for instance if Chief Awolowo comes to Ikom, I can only arrange with someone to mention his name in connection with such a thing or perhaps the name of the Prime Minister of this country may be mentioned. The mere mentioning of the name is more damaging to this country than the inaccurate birth of one or two children. (*Laughter*). You are laughing at it, but, like a Commission of Inquiry, some unscrupulous persons can use it towards their own selfish ends.

I am therefore, urging hon. Members to look at either side of alleviating this problem. We can appeal to the Doctors to build homes for this type of children. Mr Speaker, Sir, I oppose this Bill because the danger it contains is more than the advantages to be gained. If the Law is passed it will encourage people to go to court against some innocent men.

Mr Speaker, I beg to oppose.

**The Minister of Welfare (Mr E. A. Chime):** Mr Speaker, I rise to support this Bill. In the first place, Mr Speaker, I would like to add my congratulations to the hon. Member for Owerri. Whatever may be our opinions on the Bill itself, I do not think that hon. Members will dispute that the hon. Okeya deserves our warmest praise for this most thorough and workmanlike piece of legislation. In my opinion, Mr Speaker, the hon. Member deserves more than praise. He deserves the full support of this House. In my opinion, this Bill fills a very real need.

As Minister of Welfare, I have listened with very considerable interest to the debate when

the Bill was first presented. I think, Mr Speaker, that we should all get clear in our minds precisely what this Bill proposes to do, and then perhaps some of us will not fear it so much.

If Members will read the Objects and Reasons at the foot of the Bill, they will see that the object is to enable a mother of an illegitimate child to apply to a Magistrate's Court for an order to maintain that child. That is all. Members will recall that another Member from Owerri, Dr Obonna, claimed that there was no such thing as an illegitimate child in Nigerian society. In general, I agree with that. Our indigenous custom is that any child who is born into society is welcome and has a right to be maintained and cared for until he can fend for himself. And that custom still holds in many parts of the Region. But Members know very well that times are changing and that the old customs which bound us together are being loosened, particularly in the towns and urban areas where individuals of different societies come together. Now, Mr Speaker, it is primarily such situations, where perhaps Native Law and Custom is not so strong, that this Bill seeks to cater for. The very reason why Magistrates' Courts were chosen instead of Customary Courts was because it was thought that greater use would be made of the provisions of this Bill in towns than in country districts. The Bill is therefore not against the spirit of our custom: it merely seeks to preserve the essentials of it in modern form.

I would like to turn to other criticisms made of this Bill. One Member described it as "a big joke". I do not think there is anything to laugh at in seeking to provide for the upbringing of children even if they have no father who will acknowledge them. Such children, Mr Speaker, deserve our sympathy and not our laughter.

Other Members have said that the Bill would create a bad precedent and would encourage our girls to misbehave. In my opinion, Mr Speaker, the reverse is true. In my opinion this Bill if passed into law will at least act as a deterrent on reckless behaviour by men—old as well as young. I do not see what hon. Members who oppose this Bill have to fear—except perhaps their own guilty consciences! I believe Mr Speaker that it is wrong for a man

[MR CHIME]

to bring a child into the world and then to seek to dodge all responsibility for its up-bringing. Let us not forget that the onus of proof is on the woman and she must corroborate her allegation in some material way to the satisfaction of the Court.

This Bill is in keeping with modern practice in civilised countries the world over. By passing it we shall set an example to Nigeria. It is very proper that we should take the lead in such matters because we all know—despite what the hon. the Leader of the Opposition sometimes claims—that all wise men come from the East! I have already shown that this Bill is not contrary to our custom—it is merely translating that custom into modern form. In my opinion, Mr Speaker, this is a good Bill and deserves the sympathy of this House.

Mr Speaker, I beg to support.

**Mr J. A. Agba (Ogoja Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, already I am placed in a very awkward position in my attempt to support this Bill.

**Mr Speaker:** You should be brief.

**Mr Agba:** From what Mr Speaker suggested to the House and to the Mover of the Motion, it seems to me that we have already lost about 50 per cent of our supporters. None-the-less, I proceed in a way to support the Bill and to say something to the House and I hope that hon. Members will reason with me and not be sentimental. I begin first of all with explaining the term used in the Bill and I take the word "maintenance". Maintenance as is used in the Bill really means looking after the child by feeding, washing, and doing all possible things that the body requires to make it grow very well. It also implies spiritual tenderness, spiritual care which means bringing up the child in a religious atmosphere and making it put into practice those qualities that make for love of God and love of man and make the child responsible for himself and for his neighbour.

Then I take the word "education". Education, if we examine that word carefully, comes from the Latin word *educare*. That is, drawing out of a man those qualities which make him less a man *qua* man and then in

effect, put into him those qualities which make him worthy of the name "man", a true image and likeness of God. Now, such business really requires a gigantic hand. A single hand cannot do it and also it entails bringing up a man physically, morally and intellectually and you will agree with me that to do this kind of business, one person alone is not enough. I cannot go to tell you that one man alone can do it nor will a woman left to herself be able to bring a child up in a way that it should be brought up. I am not going to analyse the word "education" in all its aspects, nor am I going to tell you all that culture in everything entails but I say that the production of a child is really the result of the consummation of marriage. On the other hand, I am not suggesting that every production of a child suggests legal marriage. I rather use the word generation.

**Mr Speaker:** May I suggest that the hon. Member should confine himself to the principles of this Bill.

**Mr Agba:** I am confining myself to the principles of the Bill and I am explaining things that will help me to defend the Bill in the way I would like to defend it.

If a child is born and left to a woman alone let me say in the way that animals do it, as you have the she-goat going with her young ones (*laughter*), so you find a cock, fowl and so on. Well, if that is the case, a man becomes really less than a man. The production of a child entails the readiness to bring up that child to a standard of living compatible with a human being and standard of education compatible with a human being—one of the essences of marriage. As I have said already, a woman left alone cannot do it; and the mere spreading of children here and there left to the care of a mother alone is not sufficient. It makes one really less than a man. I support this Bill from the point of view that the more a man and a woman get together to look after a child, the better will that child grow and the better will the child be educated and the better the child will be of service to the State.

I turn to refute some of the arguments advanced by some Members. Now some have said that there are no such children as illegitimate children in the country. I think that

is not right. It is a statement coming from those I might call, ignorant and inexperienced persons. We have them all over the country except they do not understand the word illegitimate which really means not legal in a sense that those children are not produced from a legally constituted marriage. But you may ask me: what of those children produced by polygamous parents? Those ones are very well guarded and they do not come into this class. There you have the mothers and the fathers; there may be only one father but at the same time he gives at least what I might call moral support in the upbringing of the children. Those polygamous children are really protected.

I will go so far as to tell you that even in their case, they are not quite safe. The Cannon Law lays it down that if these children, for instance, undertake or enter religious life, they cannot by their own reason alone become priests, much less to talk of their becoming Bishops. They have got to get special dispensation from Rome to be ordained priests. Rome will never give them the dispensation of becoming Bishops. Those are children of polygamous parents. I am not even talking now of illegitimate children.

Now, when I talk of illegitimate children the case becomes worse. Well, these ones have only the mothers to look after them. They haven't even the fathers—the fathers are unknown and if that is the case I say that the Bill here only seeks to get the co-operation of the father to agree with the mother to help in bringing up the children. The Bill also has another aspect. It is enforcing really the moral law, or transferring the enforcement of the moral law to the state, asking the state to take up the enforcement of the moral law, making people to look after children whom the mothers alone cannot very well care for.

Now, I say, the Bill is educative in its own way. To those of you who are very much personal, I would say that if you fear that by dealing with a girl you will really incur some sort of responsibility, what will happen is this: the Bill will assist you to think twice. In your dealing with a girl you will think of what sort of a girl you are dealing with and what is your relationship with her. Then you will take into consideration the fact that whatever you will not like to do in the public, you will not do in secret. That is one aspect of it.

Another aspect of it is that the Bill endeavours to be social in a decent way. You can befriend a person; you can act with a person very decently without going too far. This Bill acts as a sort of restriction to those people who will not think twice before they act. Religiously, I say it has a charitable aspect. I do not believe for one moment, that the Members of this House going outside in the street and finding some children lying about the place uncared for, unclothed and the rest of it, will really enjoy the sight. I do not think anybody with sense will like to enjoy such a sight.

Naturally, the Bill is only asking us to be more charitable to those who are not very well cared for—help the mothers in sending them to school and do all that is possible in our own power to release their sufferings.

Socially, I say the Bill has another aspect. It tells of indecency. We, really in dealing with each other will take into consideration the fact that just as we would not like to be embarrassed by others we would not also like to embarrass others and it does not really prevent us from being social in every aspect of the word. But at the same time it makes us more decent in our dealing with others. We have to respect the female sex as they also have to respect us.

Now, in my conclusion, Sir, I would like to say that having said so much I would like to make the House understand that the need is an absolute one. It is not merely a necessity of fitness that this Bill be introduced and be passed into law by this hon. House. It is an absolute necessity. I repeat that it is an absolute necessity that this Bill be passed into law in this Region even though I regret that quite a lot of laws that have been made and passed in this House are not being effectively enforced yet I repeat that there is a necessity to pass this Bill.

Sir, I commend this Bill to the House.

**Mr E. O. Eyo (Uyo Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I simply describe this Bill as being funny. I must say, Sir, that the joke on this Bill is on the side of its supporters. The Premier has said that Government would allow a free vote on the Second reading of the Bill but it is quite obvious that the free vote will be against the Bill.

[Mr E. O. Eyo]

Now, Sir, the first time I read the title of the Bill I developed a very peculiar attitude. I took time to look for the definition of "illegitimate" child. There is no such definition in the Bill so that we are just wasting time in legislating for an unknown person. Until we are told who or what this "illegitimate" child is, we cannot proceed with this Bill.

Sir, I happen to be a typical Ibibio man and I come from that part of Calabar Province which is very typical in its beliefs. There is no such thing as an illegitimate child in my area. If by that we mean that the child has no father, may I submit, Sir, that there is not a child in this world who has no father. The argument is as to whether the father came by this child legally. What happens is this: a man falls in love with a woman, the woman becomes pregnant and brings forth a child. The man either accepts responsibility and provides for the child, or denies responsibility and refuses to provide for the child. That does not label the child "illegitimate". I was really surprised to hear the Minister of Welfare speaking in support of this Bill and preaching morals to Members of the House. If in fact there are illegitimate children in the Region, then the Minister of Welfare has special responsibility for them. Let the Minister ask the House to vote money for the care and welfare of these poor children.

If you go to Santa Isabel you will find that all the General Hospitals have orphanages. In the old days, Sir, we used to hear a lot about mission boys and girls. The mere fact that there are no more mission boys or girls in the Region should suggest that this child, or object called illegitimate child does not exist (*laughter*).

The Mover of the Second reading of the Bill was saying something about rules of evidence as if we do not know what they mean in a court of Law. What should interest this House, Sir, should be the attitude of the Ministry of Welfare and the Government to married and unmarried women—their conditions of service in the Civil Service. That is the headache at the moment in the Eastern Region. All abnormal practices exist among the working class girls. The danger is that a girl in the Civil Service who gets pregnant should,

according to the provision of this Bill, name "X" to stand by and after the delivery of the child, to become the legitimate father of the child. At the moment, Sir, our girls in the Civil Service commit several abortions for fear of losing their jobs. One should have thought that the Government would review its policy to allow these pregnant girls and women to remain in the service whether they are married or not.

**The Premier:** It is being done.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Government should allow these girls to remain in the service. These are the girls who would have produced these so-called illegitimate children. I am suggesting that Government should make provision for the care and maintenance of these so-called illegitimate children if they really exist.

Now, Sir, what will interest this House is the provision that cases for compensation should go before the Magistrate Court; and it has been suggested that this will ensure justice. The truth is that the chances of such cases succeeding in the court are very remote. The Bill has carefully avoided the Native Courts because I am sure no such case will be of any interest to our Native Court Judges—a woman claiming £1 a week for fifteen years. The man will have to pay £780 in all merely because a girl happens to name him as father of her child.

Now, Sir, while I congratulate the Member for Owerri for having the welfare of these so-called illegitimate children at heart, I am asking the Members of this House to oppose the Second reading of the Bill for the reasons I have already given.

Sir, I oppose the Bill.

**The Minister of Production (Dr M. I. Okpara):** Mr Speaker, I beg to oppose this Bill. This is a very dangerous Bill and it is a great pity that a very capable man like Mr Okeya should waste his time bringing a Bill of this sort to this hon. House. You will see, Sir, the bone of contention really is this word "putative". In other words, biologically speaking, who is this father? What we have in this Bill is a very vague definition of a putative father. Once this Bill is passed it will lead to a lot of

trouble. As has already been referred to in Clause 4 of the Bill "if the evidence of the mother be corroborated in some material particular by other evidence to the satisfaction of the said Court the Court may adjudge the man to be the putative father of such illegitimate child." Well, Sir, that is not the way to find out a biological father. You can only find out who is a biological father by using biological methods—by biochemistry and serological methods. But even so, by using these methods of blood testing in the most developed countries of the world the results are still far from being accurate and it is most difficult indeed to pin a man down as the biological father of any child. In other words, even with most delicate methods of science known today it is still not possible really to pin a person down as a biological father. If this cannot be done even by biological methods, how much more difficult it is to allow laymen, because I regard the Magistrate as a layman in matters of this sort, to begin to decide who is the biological father of a child.

I would go further, Sir, to state: I come from Bende Division and there is no such thing as illegitimate child in Bende Division and, Sir, we would not like the problem to be introduced into Bende Division. I oppose this Bill, Sir, on four main grounds.

The passage of this Bill will certainly lead to scandal. Innocent men who are probably men in high walks of life are bound to be named by some unscrupulous young ladies.

Secondly, the Bill if passed into law will also lead to blackmail. You can get either an innocent wealthy man or a man in high walk of life who can be threatened by some unscrupulous people that if he did not give them such and such an amount he would be named as the father of an impending child.

Thirdly, Sir, this Bill is bound to lead to a spate of divorce. If, Sir, a man is married and has been unfortunately named as a biological father of a child and the Court has already given the verdict, then his wife has no option but to take further action against him for adultery.

The fourth point is the one I have already mentioned. It leads to a stigma. At the moment we have nothing like illegitimate child; but the moment this Bill is passed we

then have illegitimate children everywhere and this is a stigma of the worst kind especially when it has been approved by a Court of Law.

I therefore urge hon. Members to agree with me that this debate should be adjourned.

Finally, Sir, I would like to state that the salvation of these unfortunate people is some form of welfare work. The Minister of Welfare should be persuaded to busy himself with this sort of thing. After all, Sir, there are widows with more than one child and they are not blaming anybody; the care of these children is in their hands. The Government should be persuaded to look after such unfortunate people and until the Ministry has started interesting itself in these widows, (there are literally thousands of them) I fail to see the point in coming to second a very dangerous Bill like this. I would therefore humbly request this House Sir, to throw out this Bill. We appreciate the fact that Mr Okeya has done a lot of work; I only would have wished that he had employed himself in more useful work. I hope, Sir, that in future he will bring another Bill that will not necessitate so much controversy. I will never be happy if a Bill like this were passed. I have no illegitimate child; but, Sir, even though I have none, there is a danger that some of you here—some innocent people—will fall into the trap of this Bill if in a moment of lapse we were to allow the Bill to pass this House.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to oppose the Bill.

**Mr Ogon:** Mr Speaker, I beg 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.*

## (2) The Eastern Region (Welfare of Illegitimate Children (Adoption) Bill

*Order for Second reading read and discharged. Bill withdrawn.*

## (3) The Riot Damages Bill— Second Reading

*Order read for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question (28 March)—That the Bill be now read a Second time.*

*Question again proposed.*

*Eastern House of Assembly Debates*

683 [Riot Damages Bill: 2R; Com.] 1 APRIL 1958 [Local Govt. (Amdt.) Bill: 2R] 684

**Mr Speaker:** The Motion on this Bill has been moved and seconded, and it is now open for debate. If nobody wishes to speak on it, I will put the Question.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*

*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

*Clause 1 agreed to.*

*Clause 2.*

**The Minister of Justice (Mr R. O. Iwuagwu):** Mr Chairman, Sir, I beg to move that in line 9 of Clause 2 the words "Eastern Region" be inserted before "Local".

**The Chairman:** What are you defining there?

**Mr Iwuagwu:** The words are: "Eastern Region Local Government".

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 2 as amended agreed to.*

**The Chairman:** Any further amendments?

**Mr Iwuagwu:** No further amendment, Sir, until we come to Clause 16 (1).

*Clauses 3-15 agreed to.*

*Clause 16.*

**The Minister of Justice (Mr R. O. Iwuagwu):** Mr Chairman, I beg to move that in line 2, the figure "14" be left out and "15" be inserted.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 16 as amended agreed to.*

*Clauses 17 and 18 agreed to.*

*Clause 19.*

**The Minister of Justice (Mr R. O. Iwuagwu):** Mr Chairman, I beg to move that in the third line of this Clause the words "Eastern Region" be inserted before "Local".

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Minister of Justice (Mr R. O. Iwuagwu):** Mr Chairman, I beg to move that in line 4 of this Clause, the figure "1955" be inserted after "Law".

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 19 as amended agreed to.*

*Clauses 20-22 agreed to.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported with amendments, read the Third time and passed.*

*Sitting suspended at 12 noon.*

*Sitting resumed at 12.30 p.m.*

**(4) The Eastern Region Local Government (Amendment) Bill**

*Order for Second reading read.*

**The Minister of Local Government (Chief A. N. Onyiuke):** Mr Speaker, I rise to move the Second reading of a Bill entitled "The Eastern Region Local Government (Amendment) Law, 1958."

Before I come to the details of this Bill, I should like to make a brief explanation. A first draft of a Bill to amend the Eastern Region Local Government Law was printed in *Gazette Supplement* of the 9th January of this year. That Bill was given the First reading at the last meeting of this House and was set down for a Second reading on the 18th February. As the Second reading could not be taken on that day, the Bill automatically died and a fresh Bill had to be published. This opportunity was taken to make a few additions to that Bill and the Bill now before hon. Members is rather longer than the first draft of the Bill.

I will proceed formally in this case and discuss this Bill clause by clause:—

Clause 2 seeks to make a minor drafting change in section 20B of the Law which concerns the membership of two Councils. This will prevent a person being a member of two different Councils other than a Local Council and a District Council in the same area. As the Law is worded at present a person may not be elected to two Councils in different areas but may be co-opted or appointed to them.

Clause 3 concerns the filling of casual vacancies among appointed members of Councils. As the Law stands at present such a casual vacancy caused by death or disqualification has to be filled within sixty days and legal advice is that if it is not filled within sixty days, it cannot be filled at all. This leads to difficulties because there are normally delays in choosing a successor to a traditional title and these delays cannot be avoided if custom is to be followed. For example, in the case of the Onitsha Urban District Council the death occurred of one of the Ndichie Ume. The Obi of Onitsha was unable by custom to appoint a successor within sixty days and no one has therefore been appointed to fill the vacancy caused by this death. It is therefore, proposed to remove this restriction and to enable such a casual vacancy to be filled at any time.

Clause 4 is a minor point of drafting. Section 56 of the Law gives a period of one month for the presentation to the High Court of an election petition. It will be clearer if this period is defined as thirty days and this will follow normal legal practice.

Clause 5 is also a minor legal point. At present section 60 lays down the procedure for presenting election petitions and refers to rules of court which have since been repealed.

Clause 6 section 80 of the Local Government Law gives in detail the functions which Councils may be given and provides that the Minister of Local Government may sanction the performance of certain other functions not listed in it. Since the Law came into force, I have exercised this power twice and have sanctioned expenditure upon community development and the granting of sums of

money for the maintenance of twins. These sanctions have been published as legal notices but for convenience it is desirable that they should be added to this section of the Local Government Law.

Clause 7 seeks to change the present provision of the Law under which the Minister of Local Government has power to instruct a Council to remove an unsatisfactory court clerk from any particular court. This section of the Law, as it stands, would enable a Council to remove such an unsatisfactory court clerk to a different court and a further order would then have to follow removing the clerk from that court. The proposed amendment would give me power to instruct a Council to remove an unsatisfactory court clerk from all or any of the courts in its area.

Clause 8 is an important one and seeks to give the Minister of Local Government power to transfer any member of the staff of a Local Government Council to the service of a different Council. I consider it is most important that I should have this power. Many cases have arisen since I assumed office in which a Council has been dissatisfied with a member of its staff but has not got grounds for terminating his appointment. Often in such cases the employee would prove perfectly satisfactory if transferred to another area but the Council has no power to transfer him, nor have I. It may also be desirable to arrange transfers of staff on promotion. I have had numerous requests from Councils and staff alike that such powers should be exercised and this matter was raised in a question in the last meeting of the House.

Clause 9 is a minor change in wording which is thought necessary as a result of a recent judgment of the Chief Justice.

Clause 10 seeks to amend part of the Law which lays down that if a Council's estimate is not approved or disapproved by the Minister before the beginning of the financial year to which it relates, the estimate shall then be deemed to be an approved estimate. Experience has shown that this part of the Law is impracticable. A Council only has to delay the submission of its draft estimates to the Ministry sufficiently and the estimates automatically become approved estimates. Hon. Members may recall that an amendment to

[CHIEF ONYIYUKE]

this section of the Law had to be made in the case of the 1956-57 Estimates to delay the effect of automatic approval until the 31st of May, 1956. This is a problem which may arise year after year and it has certainly arisen this year when arrangements for dissolving County Councils have made it necessary to revise the draft estimates of many District Councils and will make it impossible to check all these estimates before the 31st March.

Clause 11 relates to parts of the Law concerning rating. In areas to which the Assessment Ordinance has been applied, property rates only can be levied. At present, for example, in Port Harcourt a property rate is levied; the Municipality has been considering levying a capitation rate as well, and might wish to do so in connection with Education, but with the Law as it stands it could not do so. The proposed change would enable a Council which levies property rates to levy a capitation rate as well for special purposes.

Clause 12 relates to exemptions from rating. Section 131 of the Law lays down what types of buildings are exempt from rating; at present these are churches, mosques, etc., schools and hospitals. It is proposed to add to the list public libraries. This will mainly concern the library being built in Enugu by the Library Board and it is desired to exempt this from rating so that the library's fund may be spent on the purchase of new books instead of on paying rates.

Clause 13 seeks to make it easier for Councils to collect their rates. At present the Law only makes it an offence for a person to refuse to pay rates. The Finance Law, on the other hand, makes it an offence either to refuse tax or to neglect to pay tax. It is often difficult to prove actual refusal to pay. The proposed amendment to the Law will bring the provisions regarding rating in line with those regarding the collection of tax under the Finance Law.

Clause 14 is a minor change in the rating provisions which will also bring these into line with the Finance Law.

Clause 15 concerns the appointment of rate collectors. At present they can only be appointed in respect of specified areas and this makes it doubtful whether a firm can legally

be appointed a rate collector in respect of its employees. The proposed amendment would enable this to be done and again would bring the Local Government Law into line with the Finance Law.

Clause 16 refers to the provisions in the Law about appeals against the decisions of Auditors. The first twenty-six words of the section as it stands, at the moment, have been copied directly from the United Kingdom Local Government Act of 1933 and refer to a Local Government elector's right in the United Kingdom to object to any item in the accounts of the Local Government Council of his area. This does not apply in this Region and the proposed amendment would cut out this unnecessary provision.

Clause 17 concerns the acquisition of land by Councils. Legal advice is that such acquisition involves the execution of a contract which must be subject to the approval of the Minister in accordance with section 74 of the Law. The proposed amendment to section 182 would make this perfectly plain.

The last clause is an important one in the present circumstances. It has been discovered that there is a gap in the law; section 227 provides that when a Council is dissolved under section 12, all its assets and liabilities vest in the Minister of Local Government and the Law as it stands does not say what the Minister does with the assets and liabilities. There is, however, provision in the Law for distribution and allocation of assets and liabilities in other circumstances and the proposed amendment would give me similar powers when Councils are dissolved under section 12. It would be essential that I should have these powers when County Councils are dissolved so that the Council staff may be allocated to other Councils and the County Councils' properties may be divided out among the component District Councils.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Commerce (Mr J. U. Nwodo):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*



*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

*Clauses 1-7 agreed to.*

*Clause 8.*

**Mr S. N. Alo (Abakaliki Division):** Mr Chairman, Sir, I beg to move that the words "after consultation with the Councils concerned" be inserted immediately after the word "Minister" in Clause 8 2(a). Why I feel that this should be inserted is that it is the policy that Local Government should be the Government of the people by the people for the people and as such I have a case in Abakaliki which I think has warranted my suggesting this amendment. In Izi District Council, Sir, the Council wanted to secede from the County Council because the staff of the County Council was not co-operating with Izi District Council. If the Minister transfers the staff from the County Council to Izi, it will not work well.

I have already been informed that the Secretary who is the cause of the non-co-operation of this Council with the former County Council may be transferred to the Izi Council. This, I am afraid, will bring serious trouble in the Council and my people have already indicated that any attempt by the Minister of Local Government to send this person to the Izi District Council will be highly resisted.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and negatived.*

*Clause 8 agreed to.*

*Clauses 9-18 agreed to.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported without amendment, read the Third time and passed.*

**(5) The Acquisition of Land by Aliens  
Bill**

*Order for Second reading read.*

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Town Planning (Chief S. E. Onukogu):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I rise to move that the Bill entitled "A Law to regulate the Acquisition of Land by Aliens" be read a Second time.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I do not think I need to add much to the reasons and objects which appeared in the printed copy of the Bill as published in the *Gazette* and which hon. Members have before them now. You will remember that this House passed an identical Bill at the meeting which was held in December, 1955, and as the hon. Minister charged with responsibility for land matters said then, the Bill was intended primarily to replace the out-of-date Native Lands Acquisition Ordinance, bringing that up to date and making it fall in line with the present constitutional developments of this country. After we had passed the Bill, certain matters were drawn to our attention that needed amending.

It is not possible for us, Mr Speaker, to amend a Bill by another Bill. The Acquisition of Land by Aliens Bill, 1955, has not yet passed into Law and the simple solution would be for that Bill to be dropped. The Amendments which we are proposing are simply that in two places in the Bill it states that proceedings in regard to any Court cases should be brought on the application of the Attorney-General and not by the Minister. These two amendments are shown in italics and appear in sections 7 and 8 of the Bill. These two simple amendments will bring our Acquisition of Land by Aliens Law into line with the present Constitutional Order in Council.

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture (Mr D. A. Nnaji):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*

*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

*Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.*

*Clause 3.*

**Mr Agba:** Mr Chairman, I wanted to speak on Clause 2 but you have passed it.

**The Chairman:** In your own interest, you may like to speak any way.

**Mr Agba:** If it is your wish, I will welcome it.

**The Chairman:** Yes. It is alright for future guidance of the Government.

**Mr Agba:** The definition of the word "alien".

**The Chairman:** What subsection?

**Mr Agba:** Clause 2 (a)—

"Any individual other than a Nigerian". I would like to say that the definition there leaves me in ignorance.

**The Chairman:** Alright, you have made your point.

*Clause 3 agreed to.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported without amendment, read the Third time and passed.*

**(6) The Public Lands Acquisition (Amendment) Bill—Second Reading**  
*Further deferred until 9th April, 1958.*

**ADJOURNMENT**

**The Minister of Production (Dr M. I. Okpara):** Mr Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until tomorrow, at 10 a.m.

**The Minister of Transport (Mr P. O. Ururuka):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

**ADJOURNMENT DEBATE**

**The Eastern Region Development Corporation**

**Mr E. U. Eronini (Owerri Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, on the floor of this House on the 8th of April, 1957 the hon. Sam. Ikoku, the Leader of Opposition raised some points during Adjournment and that was a charge

against the E.R.D.C. and the then Chairman of the E.R.D.C. He referred to a Motion by hon. M. E. Ogon the Chief Whip of the Government and a notice of Motion by me that Mr Ogon be removed as Chief Whip of the Government.

Hon. Ikoku levelled various charges on the E.R.D.C. The one I am personally concerned with is the one that there is an adjacent beach at Port Harcourt to that of the E.R.D.C. into which the E.R.D.C. oil to the tune of 1,400 tons found its way. He implied that the adjacent beach belonged to me, and that as the Chairman of the E.R.D.C., I used my office in a most dishonourable way.

On the 9th April, during the Adjournment, I made a reply to the allegations and said that the allegation about oil and the E.R.D.C. Beach were serious impeachment conspired, planned and ill-motivated to tint on my character. The hon. the Premier in whose portfolio the E.R.D.C. was then entrusted, in his speech gave an assurance that a Parliamentary Investigating body would be appointed.

The House did not go into detail as to the composition or the personnel of the Committee. However, the investigation was parliamentary and was to conform with parliamentary procedure and the standard rules. As the investigation was by a Committee of the House especially where the inquiries affected the character or conduct of a Member of the House, it was no doubt implied or understood that the report of the Committee would be laid on the Table of this House and debated in its fullest.

It is the right of man to be told where he has gone off the rail for future amends; otherwise, innocent souls will be punished without their knowing why they were so treated. I tried to do my best when I was Chairman of the E.R.D.C. It is at least of my personal interest to know where I have gone wrong so that I will in the future try to make amends and avoid such short-falls.

We are all learning and if at all our mistakes are not of criminal flavour, we must know where we have failed. As the then Chairman of the E.R.D.C. the full report should have been sent to me for comments. The system of extracting some half-truths and false portions

for me to explain is not democratic at all. I need the full report and the report according to procedure should be laid on the Table of this House for debate.

Nothing kills ambition and frustrates initiative than this act of hide and seek. Some of us will not like to be left unclear on such accusations of 1,400 tons of oil finding its way to the unknown. It is a serious allegation and the report of that allegation should, for goodness sake, be made public. The other allegation by hon. Ikoku about the staff is nothing to worry my life since about eight members of the staff had been imprisoned for fraud, etc. I am proud of my method of administration; in fact, the present Chairman Mr Ojukwu has said that he is prepared to give me a certificate and testimonial and that no one could have done better under the circumstances I was placed. I am more than glad that a person of Mr Ojukwu's calibre and business acumen, the lone star in the East, should be made to take over from me as the Chairman of the E.R.D.C.

I strongly wish to be cleared, to be sure that in my administration, there was nothing criminal and there was nothing of such unscrupulous nature to warrant my dismissal or to warrant such allegations against me.

It may be interesting to say that all I did or all we did as a Corporation were of co-operative bargaining and if two members of that Corporation are still Parliamentary Secretaries today it means that that Corporation has not done badly indeed. It is also interesting to say that a lot of people who gave report of mal-administration, especially the staff, not less than eight of them have been convicted, not of bad administration, but of pilfering the Corporation's money and property. I wish that the report be laid on the Table of this House and debated on its merits and I will be able to explain myself where I have gone wrong.

**Chief I. I. Morphy (Ogoja Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, on behalf of the Opposition, I have to reply. The last speaker said that he wanted the report of the Parliamentary Com-

mittee that investigated him to be published; but, does he remember that he was Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee that investigated Mr E. O. Eyo when he was Chairman? Was that report published or did he ask for the report to be published? What I am saying is that whatever we mete unto others, I think we should be squarely prepared when we are made to face the same circumstance without crying unnecessarily.

When he was Chairman, something was happening very badly in the Obudu Ranch; but at the time Mr E. O. Eyo was Chairman, it was working very well and we did have some good turnover. If the Premier is to publish the requested report, we will want him to publish that which investigated Mr E. O. Eyo with Mr Eronini as Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee.

We of the Opposition are happy that Mr Eronini is removed from the Chairmanship of the E.R.D.C.

**The Premier (Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe):** Mr Speaker, I have noted the request made by the hon. Member for Owerri Division that the report of his administration be published and laid on the Table of this House. I have also noted the observations made by the hon. Member for Ogoja.

As far as the Government is concerned I must admit that we have received both reports and if any hon. Member insists that either of these reports be published as Sessional Paper and laid on the Table of this House, I see no reason why the Government should object. Subject to consultation with my colleagues, I will be prepared to give an undertaking to have the reports of the E.R.D.C. printed as Sessional Papers and laid on the Table of this House. Any hon. Member who wishes then to debate the contents will be at liberty to do so in accordance with our Standing Orders.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Adjourned, accordingly at ten minutes past one o'clock p.m.*

## WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Tuesday, 1st April, 1958

### Abakaliki County Council Funds

103. **Mr P. A. Onwe** asked the Minister of Local Government, if he is aware of the dissatisfaction of the people of Abakaliki expressed through their District, Local and County Council representatives, at the misuse of the funds of the County Council, and other charges against the Chairman and Executive of the Council; if so, when will the Minister enquire into the allegations of the people in order to protect their interests.

**The Minister of Local Government:** Yes, Sir, I am aware that there is a certain amount of dissatisfaction in Abakaliki with the work of the Abakaliki County Council. The hon. Member will be aware that it is proposed to abolish this, with other County Councils, on the 31st March, 1958. There is, therefore, no object in holding an inquiry into the working of the County Council now. The action which Government could take on the result of such an inquiry would only be the

dissolution of the Council or the suspension of certain members and as the Council is going to be abolished anyway, an inquiry would be a waste of time.

### Western Ahoada Rural District Council

106. **Mr J. O. Okeh** asked the Minister of Local Government, whether he would consider the resistance of the people of Western Ahoada to pay rates an expression of absolute loss of confidence in the Council as a result of the many cases of stealing and misappropriation of funds in which the staff of the Council have been involved.

**The Minister of Local Government:** I am aware that there has been delay in collecting the rates in Western Ahoada and I agree that this may have some connection with a loss of confidence in the Council by the people. The Council is due for re-election in the next six months and the people of Western Ahoada will then have the opportunity to elect Councilors in whom they do have confidence.

EASTERN HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 2nd April, 1958

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

PRAYERS

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

School Syllabus

52. Mr S. E. K. Iwueke asked the Minister of Education, what action he is taking to revise the Primary School Syllabus with a view to improving the standard of education.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Education (Mr L. O. Uzoigwe): I am directed to answer as follows:—

A revised syllabus for junior primary schools has been prepared and has already gone to Press. It is now for the Education Committee to study the revised syllabus and make recommendations. The appointment of this Committee was announced in His Excellency's Speech From The Throne, paragraph 35. Its terms of reference specifically include investigations into school syllabuses and curricula.

Members' Commonwealth Visits

77. Mr S. E. K. Iwueke asked the Premier, if he will favourably consider making available to Members of the House facilities to enable them to visit the various Commonwealth Countries and Colonial Territories so that they may become more closely acquainted with the various people and political institutions and, with the knowledge of their economic and social problems, adjust their own on return to this Region.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier (Mr J. O. Umolu): I am directed to answer as follows:—

In view of the heavy expense that will be involved the Government does not propose at present to consider making facilities available to Members of the House to visit other Commonwealth countries.

Trade Negotiations

98. Mr S. E. K. Iwueke asked the Minister of Commerce, if he will make a statement on any trade negotiations he has made or intends to make.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Commerce (Mr E. W. Udonkim): I am directed to answer as follows:—

None, Sir. The negotiation of overseas trade agreement falls within the list of subjects reserved to the Federal Government.

This Government welcomes trade delegations from overseas and is prepared to do everything within its power to see that the Eastern Region shares to the full in any increase of trade that may be negotiated. I am glad to say we have no reason to complain of the level of trade, which continues buoyant.

Ora Bridge, Nkalagu

119. Mr P. A. Onwe asked the Minister of Transport, the reason for the two years' delay in completing the Ora Bridge, linking Abakaliki with Nsukka at Nkalagu; what was the amount of money granted to the Abakaliki County Council for this project and how much of it has been spent to date.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Transport (Mr D. O. Anu): I am directed to answer as follows:—

The Ora River Bridge is being constructed by the Abakaliki County Council with the assistance of a special grant of £2,700 made to the Council by the Ministry of Local Government in 1956-57. It is suggested that the hon. Member should ascertain the reasons for the delay from the Council, since my Ministry has had no direct dealing on this bridge with the Council.

Abagana-Aguleri Road

123. Mr E. Chidolue asked the Minister of Transport, what is delaying the tarring of Abagana-Aguleri road as provided for in the Policy for Transport—Appendix "A" Schedule of Trunk "B" roads, Route No. 232, Eastern Region revised to 1st April, 1956; has this been provided for in the current Estimates; if not, why.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Transport (Mr D. O. Anu):** I am directed to answer as follows:—

The Abagana-Aguleri road was included in the original Road Integration Programme but, when this was curtailed, the project with certain others had to be excluded.

The project has not been lost sight of—it appears in Appendix 5.

#### Water Supply in Owerri Division

127. **Mr G. C. Okeya** asked the Minister of Works, how many new wells were sunk in Owerri Division in 1957; what steps are being taken to see that new wells are provided in those districts whose people have deposited money for that purpose.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Works (Mr R. O. Anoke):** I am directed to answer as follows:—

No new wells were sunk in Owerri Division in 1957. The main reason for this is that no Rural Water Supply Staff was available for posting to Owerri after the Inspector of Works earmarked for the Division had been transferred to Bende to relieve a sick Inspector. Work had started at the latter place and it would have been uneconomical and wasteful to have stopped in the middle. In any case the list of water points proposed by Owerri County Council was received too late for the Public Works Department to complete action on it before the close of the year. Further, no local contribution had been notified as received from Owerri by the end of February.

I am however pleased to inform the hon. Member that arrangements have now been made to post an Inspector of Works to Owerri and he is expected to start work there shortly.

#### Electricity—Owerri Town

128. **Mr G. C. Okeya** asked the Minister of Works, what steps have been taken to meet the incessant requests from Owerri Town for electricity.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Works (Mr R. O. Anoke):** I am directed to answer as follows:—

The electricity undertaking proposed by a special Committee appointed by the Owerri

Division would cost about £80,000. The net annual loss for the first few years is estimated at £10,000.

The Electricity Corporation of Nigeria is quite prepared to install, distribute and maintain such a supply if the initial capital can be provided and if operational costs, together with recurrent losses, can be guaranteed. It has been ascertained that the consumer potentiality of Owerri is not a paying proposition for the Electricity Corporation of Nigeria.

Thus, for the present, finance is the problem. Consideration is however being given to the general question of supply of electricity to minor towns.

#### Sinking of Wells in Ikot Ekpene Division

130. **Mr J. M. Ito** asked the Minister of Works, why the sinking of wells in the Ikot Ekpene Division has been suspended; whether the Minister will consider replacing the officers connected with this work by competent contractors in the areas concerned.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Works (Mr R. O. Anoke):** I am directed to answer as follows:—

I am not aware that well-sinking under the Rural Water Supply Scheme had been started in Ikot Ekpene Division. There has been difficulty in collecting the requisite local contribution which until recently was required to be paid in advance of work being begun. It is this difficulty that delayed the starting of work in Ikot Ekpene Division.

Irrespective of how the work is done, whether by direct labour or by contract, the same supervision is required, for without proper supervision my Government will not be reimbursed by Her Majesty's Government. The question therefore of replacing the Public Works Department officers by contractors does not arise. However, the priority list of the first twenty wells to be sunk by contract has been sent to the Administrative Officer in charge.

#### Water Supply in Okigwi Division

131. **Mr S. O. Achara** asked the Minister of Works, if he will give high priority to providing a modern Rural Water Supply in Okigwi

Division, in view of the fact that most of the present sources of water supply are highly contaminated and the people have to trek between three and five miles daily for water.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Works (Mr R. O. Anoke):** I am directed to answer as follows:—

I am fully aware of the needs of Okigwi, and of other Divisions also, for water supplies in the rural areas. A pumped and piped supply has already been approved for Nsu.

I hope very shortly to be able to publish a White Paper setting out for the information of hon. Members, the whole position regarding the Rural Water Supply Scheme.

#### Bridges at Ikot Ekpene

132. **Mr J. M. Ito** asked the Minister of Transport, whether he is aware that various petitions have been forwarded asking for two bridges to be built at Nto Edino and one bridge at Ekpenyong Atai in Ikot Ekpene Division; if so, how soon will the bridges be built.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Transport (Mr D. O. Anu):** I am directed to answer as follows:—

I have received representations from the Ikot Ekpene County Council regarding the construction of bridges at Nto Edino and Ekpenyong Atai as I received from many other councils from other Divisions for similar work. I intend to consider the claims of these representations together and not in isolation.

#### Annang Joint Hospital

133. **Mr J. E. Eyo** asked the Minister of Transport, how soon will a bridge be built across the Qua Iboe River at Ikot Okoro, Abak, to make the Annang Joint Hospital easily accessible to patients.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Transport (Mr D. O. Anu):** I am directed to answer as follows:—

As soon as funds are available. The sum of £8,000 was provided in the current Estimates for the construction of the bridge but the

revised estimated total cost has been shown to be £21,000. The provision is, therefore, inadequate, and a decision is being sought for additional provision required, to enable work to start.

#### Okigwi-Mballa Mamu River Road

134. **Mr S. O. Achara** asked the Minister of Transport, what is the reason for the delay in starting the tarring of the Okigwi-Mballa Mamu River road, for which funds were provided under the Colonial Development and Welfare Scheme, and when is it proposed to put this work in hand.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Transport (Mr D. O. Anu):** I am directed to answer as follows:—

I regret that work on the Okigwi-Mballa Mamu River road must wait until such time as the necessary funds are available.

I appreciate that the project was included in the original Colonial Development and Welfare Scheme, but this scheme has had to be reviewed by Government. The project appears in an Appendix to the Estimates.

#### Abakaliki-Yahe Road

148. **Mr P. A. Onwe** asked the Minister of Transport, what effort has been made to get the Federal Government to tar the Abakaliki-Yahe Road, for which it is understood provision has already been made.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Transport (Mr D. O. Anu):** I am directed to answer as follows:—

The Federal Government engaged Consulting Engineers to survey, design and draw up specifications for the tarring of the Abakaliki-Yahe Road. The survey has been completed and the designs and specifications are in hand.

The Federal Chief Civil Engineer visited the road earlier this month, and work will probably be started in a few months time.

#### Abakaliki-Obubra Road

149. **Mr P. A. Onwe** asked the Minister of Transport, what is holding up the construction of the Abakaliki-Obubra Road, which it is understood has already been given out to contract.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Transport (Mr D. O. Anu):** I am directed to answer as follows:—

The Abakaliki-Obubra Road is in two sections. The first section, MS 0-15, is an old road and the responsibility of the Abakaliki County Council. The second section MS 15-30½, is an entirely new road and has been completed by contract under the Public Works Department and is now an all-weather gravel road maintained by the Public Works Department.

The ferry for the Cross River Crossing is now on order.

#### ORDER OF THE DAY

#### The 1958-59 Eastern Region Appropriation Bill—Second Reading

(Second Allotted Day)

*Order read for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question (28th March)—That the Bill be now read a Second time.*

*Question again proposed.*

**Mr J. A. Agba (Ogoja Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have to open my Budget speech with refuting some of the attacks levied on the Opposition by some members of the Government Bench and in that connection I should like to say that, personally, I think that the Opposition has no reason whatsoever to be hostile to the Government nor should the Government be hostile to the Opposition. Now, if the Government has to be efficient, helpful to the people and not degenerate into autocracy, the Opposition should not only be healthy numerically but should also when it finds it possible, devastating in its criticisms and also constructive. I say that those Members on the Government Bench who are not really helping the Government but are merely hangers-on and so to speak careerists in their support of the Government are more of a harm than good.

**Mr Speaker:** Will you withdraw those words?

**Mr Agba:** All right, I do withdraw. (*Shame, Shame*). I think they should not think that when the Opposition is helping the Government to avoid crisis by bringing out

certain pit-falls in the Government policies they are really doing some evil. I think they are really helping the Government and if the Government really understands the need of the Opposition in a democratic government, it will do everything possible to co-operate with the Opposition.

**Mr Speaker:** After all these generalisations would you make your comments on the point at issue.

**Mr Agba:** I am making it, Mr Speaker.

**Mr Speaker:** You have much time to prepare your grounds and I suggest you proceed with it.

**Mr Agba:** I think they should do well to help to gain more and more Members for the Opposition to this House.

Now, having said that much I would like to say that I have a few words of congratulation to the Minister of Finance for his Budget speech and on the attempt he has made to produce these Estimates. But certain remarks appear in his Budget speech which I think were not at all necessary. Page 1, paragraph 2 of his speech attributed the late coming of the Estimates to the decisions taken in this House last month with regards to the U.P.E. Scheme. I do not think this was the sole reason for the Budget being late in coming to the House, and at the same time I do not think it necessary that the Minister should have gone to the extent of expressing that. None the less, I still say that I congratulate him for the effort he has made and for the nice speech he has made also.

The second point I have is that I have much pleasure, and I do congratulate the Government in having acted on some of the criticisms and suggestions made in this House last month, such as cutting down the salaries of Ministers and certain others.

**An hon. Member:** It was done before that time.

**Mr Agba:** But at the same time I say that Government has not explored all possible avenues of bringing more revenue to the Region. You have here, for instance, on the Estimates under the Head of the Governor,



Secretary to the Governor, Group 7; and another one Private Secretary, Scale A. I am not going into talking on each Head because this will come in the Committee of Supply, but I wonder whether this establishment makes for the economy of the Region.

**Mr Speaker:** Before you do so will you read your Constitution properly?

**Mr Agba:** Thanks. I am just thinking whether such a multiplicity of offices incurring at the time quite a lot of expenses on the people takes into consideration the revenue of the Region. Now leaving that aside I like to talk of another source which will bring revenue to the Region—that is tax—and here I suggest that the Finance Law be more enforced. In rural areas those people who evade taxes are really the rich men who are not civil servants. Those who work under the Government may pay their taxes, but those who are traders, wine tappers and the like evade taxes and the reason is this:—When the Tax Assessment Committee goes out these people often go away from their houses and leave their servants in charge, and when the Assessment Committee come on they only assess the servants instead of assessing the masters. On the part of the wine tappers they are not permanent; they go from one place to another. When the Assessment Committee finish in one area they come back again to their place of residence and in this way they do a great deal of evasion as tax-payers. Formerly, the Government had in each place a chief and each chief was responsible for collecting taxes from his people. He knew his people. The Administrative Officer had only to contact each chief who paid the money which he had gathered from his people. Then a certain sum of money, ten per cent, was paid to the person. That really worked well and very effectively too, and the people paid their taxes very well. Very few, if any, evaded paying their taxes. But this time the work is left to the Councillors who, as far as I know—I am one of the councillors myself—are not very effective with the people in their actions. Some of them cannot address the villagers, much less to collect taxes from them, with the result that it is very difficult now for people to pay taxes.

Last year, you will remember, Members of the House were asked to go on tax campaign. I found in my own area that due to the weakness

of the councillors the council rate had to be collected along with the taxes. That meant in effect that the whole money collected—both the rate and the Government taxes—was considered as being very high, and there were quite a lot of people, including N.C.N.C. chaps, who went out to say that the taxes had not been reduced at all. They campaigned on that and that lessened the morale of the tax-payers.

They made the people believe that the tax was not lessened. The Council rate was 13s, Government tax was 30s; that brought the amount to about 43s. The ordinary man paying that sum of money at a blow will really believe that the tax has not been lessened. My suggestion here is that we fall back again on the old system of getting each Chief to collect the tax in his own area and bring up at a specified time. I think that will help quite a lot. That deals with the payment of tax and I have it under the heading of "Enforcement of the Finance Law".

Also in assessing people for this tax, there are some people who are not assessed at all. I know some women traders are asked to pay tax, but there are some women who are so to speak, what I might call, "in the senior civil service". Pardon me for that slang. They make more money each day with their body than those people who carry commodities to the market. I think they should pay tax. Here in Enugu each landlord has twenty to thirty of them and they pay 5s each day for their lodging. I cannot see why they should not pay tax and perhaps if the Government ask these women who make money from their body to pay tax it will serve in a way to clear them out of the town and keep the town healthy. Again, I have to say that the landlords too are not effectively assessed. The tenants pay quite a lot of money to these landlords. The landlords do not abide by what I call the "rents payment ordinance" in the town here. You find that some tenants complain quite a lot that they are being made to pay more than what the Government has stipulated. Now, if that is the case, each landlord should be made to pay more if he collects more from his tenants. Pay as you earn, I think that is quite correct. If this point is taken into consideration, I think it will be a way of bringing more revenue to the Region. I shall also suggest that the Councils

[MR AGBA]

should collect their rates away from the collection of the Government tax because when we make the people to pay the tax and the rates together they feel that the tax is very heavy and that really lowers their effort in coming forward to pay the tax. Each council should take the responsibility of collecting its own rate while the Government assists in the collection of the tax.

Now the next point, Mr Speaker, is the U.P.E. Schools. In some areas these schools have been closed. I tell you of one where there were 300 children before the modification of the U.P.E. scheme. When I was driving down a couple of days ago to the House there were only seventeen children in the school out of 300. I suggest that instead of keeping these schools which are the responsibility of the Government, perhaps it might be better to hand them over to voluntary agencies; they will make proper use of them. Again instead of building the University at Nsukka, the money voted for it might as well be used for giving more grants to these schools so that more children can go back to school. We cannot have a University without getting children passing through the lower schools.

Another suggestion I should like to make to the Government is the question of recovery of loans. Some time ago a very long list was read of people who have taken loans from the Government.

Now, Sir, if the Government keeps on giving out loans to people and no effort is made to get them to repay them at a fixed sum per month, I wonder how the Government will be able to help others who are equally in need. A lot of complaints have been made here in the House by Members and many have suggested to the Government to encourage the expansion of agriculture by way of loans. I wonder where the Government will find the money to implement the policy and schemes it has budgeted if these outstanding loans are not repaid. The effect is that, whereas certain people are completely neglected others are enjoying. I think, Sir, that something should be done and it is only then that this financial buoyancy that is being spoken of frequently would really come into effect and be a reality.

I want now, Sir, to turn to the Ministry of Transport. I want to say, Sir, that Transport, like Education, is one of the essential things that bring civilisation into any area or country. I wish to thank the Minister of Transport for the promise he has given me with regard to the roads in Ogoja and Obudu. Ogoja has only two main and important roads: the branch going to Ikom and the other branching to the Plateau in Obudu. These roads are in a very bad state and I am just mentioning them to make the hon. Minister understand that what I have spoken to him in private is really a sort of thorn in the flesh of the people of Ogoja. I would like him to put his promise into practice. May I also mention the Federal road from Abakaliki to Bansara. I think there is a Civil Engineer in charge of this road. It is awfully bad. You will not believe for any moment that that road is under the care of the Federal Government and that there is an Engineer working on it. The man working from Ikom to the same branch is very efficient. You will not need any tarring on this road but the Abakaliki one is very bad. I hope something will be done to make this man to realise that he owes some responsibility to the Region with regard to this road. That road is used by the whole Region from Calabar to Port Harcourt and so on. If you stand by this road on the eve of Obudu or Okaku markets, you will find a number of lorries going to Obudu, Ogoja and the Plateau and right to the Northern Region. If that road is not very well looked after it will not only hamper the financial progress of the Region but it will also affect those areas which depend on Ogoja, Tiv and Boko for their food supply. I hope the Minister will see to the proper building of this road by taking a very active step.

Now, Sir, at Okpoma, eighteen miles from Ogoja, there are salt pits. The people dig the salt, boil it and sell—a real money making concern. I am asking the Government to look into it and perhaps send an expert to teach the people the proper way of producing salt.

It would be a source of revenue to the Region and I think it would serve as a sort of employment too to the people living around it.

I say in conclusion, Mr Speaker, that I very much appreciate the Government taking into

consideration quite a lot of the suggestions made in the last month's sitting and I urge that healthy suggestions made at this time should also be considered. Thank you Mr Speaker.

**Mr E. O. Eyo (Uyo Division):** Mr Speaker, when I received a copy of the 1958-59 Estimates last week, my immediate reaction to the Budget was one of repulsion. But after going through the printed speech of the Minister of Finance I have had to re-adjust my attitude to the Budget. Sir, the Minister of Finance has described the Budget as a "mark time" Budget. But the people of the Region will not understand what a mark-time or double-mark-time Budget is. The Budget must be given a name which can be easily understood by every person in the Eastern Region who speaks and understands "Pidgin" English. That name is "How-for-do" Budget. Yes, "how-for-do" because the budget is the illegitimate child of circumstance delivered to the Eastern Region as the inevitable product of financial mal-administration which has been the characteristic feature of the financial policy of our Government over the past three years. We have been running on deficits over the past three years and the figure now stands at £1,686,561. Last February, the Minister of Finance was caught up in a financial dilemma and became so obsessed in mind that he did not know how to address his letter of resignation to the Governor, but had to seek advice and direction from the Premier. Sir, the Budget before the House presents a sorrowful picture. The Minister of Finance deserves our sympathy and I join others to commend him for his courage and boldness in presenting such a budget to the House. The financial policy of Government, as stated by the Minister of Finance, is to limit public spending in order to give the revenue a breathing space; and to restore the general revenue balance by curtailing expenditure until the revenues have replenished the depleted balance. In order to carry out this policy Government has over-estimated certain items of revenue and has frozen the personal emoluments in respect of several posts in the public service. On Revenue Head 401—Taxes Under Regional Laws—Government expects to realise £3,673,700. Sub-head 9—Produce Purchase Tax is to bring in £1,020,000 as against £1,000,000 which was the revised estimate for 1957-58. This means an over-estimate of £20,000.

There is no explanation in the Memorandum to justify this over-estimate. Rather than justify this over-estimate, paragraph 14 at page E 5 says:

"The rise in export tonnages forecast in the 1957-58 Estimates has not materialised. Consequently, revenue from the Produce Purchase Tax is estimated to fall as the export tonnages fall".

Sub-head 10—Purchase Tax: Petrol—is to bring in £210,000 as against £200,000 revised estimate for 1957-58. No explanation is given in the Memorandum to justify this over-estimate. Head 404—Water Supply Undertakings—will bring in £69,000. This amount is to be collected only in 1958-59 and is therefore non-recurrent. Head 405, Sub-head 32—Technical Institute and Trade Centre: Surplus Profit on Suspense Account, £1,500 as against £100 revised estimate, 1957-58. No explanation has been given in the Memorandum to justify the over-estimate of £1,400. Head 409—Sub-head 8 Enemy Property: Distribution of Assets—will bring in £178,000. This is a windfall and like manna will not fall a second time from heaven. Head 410, Sub-head 3—Import Duties on Motor Spirit £517,000 as against £470,000 revised estimate 1957-58—an over-estimate of £47,000. Sub-head 4—Import Duties, other: £4,045,500 as against £3,770,000 revised estimate 1957-58 an over-estimate of £375,500. Sub-heads 3 and 4 therefore give an over-estimate of £422,500. No explanation has been made either in the Memorandum or in the Minister's Speech to justify this over-estimate of £422,500. My total figure of over-estimate of revenue is therefore £453,400. Add £69,000 to be realised from water supply undertakings in 1958-59 only and the windfall of £178,000 from Distribution of Assets of Enemy Property we have a total of £700,500 which helped to swell our estimate of revenue for 1958-59 to £13.14 million.

I am happy to note that we shall have £65,000 as royalties from oil. The discovery of oil in the C.O.R. area is most significant to those of us who come from the C.O.R. area and we all hope that oil will soon be found in commercial quantities.

Now, on head 409—Sub-head 5—Regional share of capitation fees in respect of recruitment to Fernando Po is estimated at £16,800, that is £9,200 less than the revised estimate of

[MR E. O. EYO]

1957-58. This would suggest a reduction in recruitment figures. Sir, the question of regional share of capitation fees on this Sub-head is a matter which I would like Government to take up very seriously with the Federal Government. There are at present about 30,000 Nigerians working in Fernando Po—mostly Easterners from Calabar, Owerri and Ogoja Provinces. The minimum recruitment per month is 600 and the maximum is 800. The Spanish Government of Fernando Po pays a capitation fee of £5. £3 go to Eastern Regional Government and £2 to the Federal Government. The Federal Government comes into the deal because it has responsibility for external relations with Fernando Po, for which it incurs expenditure to maintain a Consulate in Santa Isabel. Besides this the Federal Government has no moral claim in the share of the Capitation fees payable in respect of workers recruited from the Eastern Region. The Government of the Eastern Region suffers a loss in revenue and man power, loss in revenue because the labourers recruited to Fernando Po do not pay their taxes to the Regional Government. The Local Government Councils in the Eastern Region lose in revenue because these labourers do not pay their rates to the Local Government Councils of their areas. This capitation fee of £5 should be shared between the Eastern Regional Government and the various Local Government Councils affected. While on this, may I seize this opportunity to thank Government for sending Members of this House on the Parliamentary Delegation to Fernando Po and Rio Muni last November. I had the honour of being a Member of the Parliamentary Delegation and I hope Government has studied the report of the Delegation and will take up the various recommendations and suggestions with the Federal Government.

I will now turn to the estimates of Expenditure. In order to be able to balance the Budget Government has frozen the personal emoluments in not less than 309 established posts in the public service as follows:—

Heads	Posts
422 Administration	3
425 Audit	8
427 Judicial	1
430 Agriculture	42

Heads	Posts
431 Fisheries	1
432 Forestry	5
433 Veterinary	3
434 Ministry of Commerce	4
435 Ministry of Education	1
436 Education	93
438 Accountant-General	12
439 Board of Internal Revenue	14
443 Medical Services	66
444 Ministry of Information	16
445 Ministry of Internal Affairs	1
448 Legal	1
452 Produce Inspection Service	3
454 Land	8
455 Survey	9
457 Road Construction	3
461 Social Welfare	1
463 Public Works	14
Total	309

In this connection I wish to draw Members' attention to paragraph 3 of the note on the first page of the Draft Estimates:

"A number of posts has been shown in the Estimates with financial provision for part of the year, or without financial provision for the whole year. Such posts must not be filled during the year either substantively or in acting capacity without prior reference to Executive Council, seeking first the concurrence of the Minister of Finance regarding financial provision as usual."

Sir, the object of this is clearly to enable the Government to present a balanced Budget because if Government had made financial provisions for these 309 posts in the Public Service, the total estimated expenditure would have exceeded the total estimated revenue—that would mean an unbalanced Budget with a deficit. Government is anxious to conceal this fact and so decides to freeze these personal emoluments for the time being only to release them after the Estimates had been passed by the Minister of Finance going to the Finance Committee or the Governor signing a special warrant as authority for the

expenditure. I can do no more than warn Government that the ability to deceive others may be cleverness but the ability to deceive oneself is a serious disease of the mind. Government proposes to reduce Expenditure Head 450—Grants to Local Government bodies—by £99,500 as an economy measure—see page E 18 of the Memorandum:

“As an economy measure, the level of Grants to Local Government bodies has been reduced by one twelfth.”

This cannot be an economy measure—the measure has been taken to enable Government to balance its Budget. The reduction of £99,500 from grants payable to Local Government Councils in the Region will seriously affect the finances of these Local Government Councils which are now called upon to contribute £2.4 million towards our Education bill. I will now turn to our main source of revenue—the palm produce industry.

Sir, the Minister of Finance has informed us that there has been a drop in the export tonnages of palm produce. The Minister says on page 7 of his Budget speech :

“I understand that price factors have not brought about these drops. They are said to be due to the exceptional weather of the last few years and to the ageing of our palms”.

Here, Sir, may I say that I appreciate the fact that the Minister of Finance is not a farmer and is not in any way connected with farmers.

**An hon. Member:** He is a farmer.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Well, he cannot be a farmer. If he were, he would not say “I understand that price factors have not brought about these drops. They are said to be due to . . .” Just listen to the language. This language is not the language of one who has a knowledge of the Industry. Now, Sir, may I say that the Minister of Finance, on this issue, has been ill advised. The exceptional weather of the last few years and the ageing of our palms may affect the yield of fruits. This is what I want the Minister of Finance to understand. I am prepared to concede that. Those two factors may affect the yield of the fruits, but certainly not the production of oil and kernels from the fruits already harvested. The truth is that if there is no financial incentives to the farmers and producers there is a

fall in production. The Marketing Board, Sir, must design the price structure to encourage production. May I repeat, the Marketing Board must design the price structure to encourage production. The producer in the Eastern Region, and this is a very serious point, receives far less for his produce than his counterpart in the other Regions of the Federation. Far less, in some cases to the tune of a margin of £10 per ton. Now, despite the fact that in 1956 our Marketing Board made a net profit of £1,913,039 after paying purchase tax to the Regional Government totalling £1,087,477 it does seem to me, that the incidence of our purchase tax is now being passed on to the producer. If that is so, may I respectfully submit, Sir, that it is a very serious breach of faith because it was a point on which the Government was very emphatic in 1956 when we passed the Produce Purchase Tax Bill. At the time the Opposition held the view that the incidence of this tax would be passed on to the producer. I spoke as the Government Chief Whip and assured the House that it would not be passed on to them but it does seem to me now, in view of the wide disparity between the producer prices paid by the Eastern Region Marketing Board and the producer prices paid by other Regional Marketing Boards in the Federation, that the incidence of the produce purchase tax has been passed on to the producers. I would like the Minister of Finance to make a statement on this and I warn that if that is what has actually happened then a very serious breach of faith has been committed.

The primary purpose of the Marketing Board Reserves is for stabilisation of producer prices. I venture to say that it is immoral, it is a betrayal of trust, to fail to use the reserves of the Marketing Board for this primary purpose while at the same time diverting these reserves for other purposes. The farmers of the Eastern Region, the producers of palm produce look up to Government as trustees of this fund. It was made quite clear over a number of years, by those who established the Central Marketing Board, the people who were responsible for building up these reserves over a number of years that these reserves were held in trust for the farmers and that the primary purpose of the reserves is for stabilisation of producer prices. The Eastern Regional Marketing Board inherited £15.1 million from the Central Marketing

[MR E. O. EYO]

Board in 1954. At 31st December, 1956, these reserves of the Board stood at £8,322,006. Of this, £5 million has been earmarked for the proposed University of Nigeria of which, £1.5 million is already committed. I ask: must we embark on this university project at the expense of £5 million of the farmers of this Region? You may say "Government has taken a decision. It is Government policy". But I wish to make this point that Government policy must flow from the popular demand of the people. This policy must be freely ventilated in this House before it finds expression in Government action. A Minister has just said "it was passed in this House". The mere fact that we decided some years ago to build a University when certain facts were not brought to light is not enough to continue to be stubborn at this stage and to be impervious to reason. It is no argument that because in 1956 we decided to build a university, if in 1958 we are faced with the realities that we cannot afford to wither away £5 million of the farmers' money on a crazy experiment, we should continue to be stubborn and impervious to reason. I can bet my life that that project will fail. It will never materialise. The example is in our U.P.E. Scheme. The University project will fail as the Government's U.P.E. Scheme. On the part of the Opposition, we are quite prepared to co-operate with the Government. But may I say this that it will be asking too much of an intelligent Opposition to co-operate with a Government which is stubborn, fool-hardy and impervious to reason.

I need not remind hon. Members of the fate of the £2 million from the reserves of the Marketing Board which was channelled through the Finance Corporation into the African Continental Bank in 1955. Of this sum £550,000 was used to finance the various Corporations in the Region. May I say, Sir, that besides the Tourist Corporation all the other Corporations have proved unproductive and Government is no doubt aware of the feelings of Members about these other Corporations—Cinema, Printing, Pharmaceutical and Information Service. At a later stage we will be able to say more on the Pharmaceutical and Information Service Corporations. The Marketing Board has ceased to make grants to the E.R.D.C. and this is serious enough.

The fate of the E.R.D.C. hangs on the Eastern Regional Marketing Board and if the Board fails to make grants to the E.R.D.C., the E.R.D.C. will collapse. The Marketing Board has ceased to make grants to the E.R.D.C. As a result the E.R.D.C. has been unable to pay out loans totalling £158,000 approved in 1955-56.

Going back to the palm produce industry, I have to stress once again the role of Producers' Co-operative Societies. The E.R.D.C. should negotiate with these societies and hand over half of their mills to them. After all the E.R.D.C. mills only produce about 10 per cent of the produce in the Region. Also the Marketing Board should pay a fixed commission to middlemen who are responsible for buying palm produce from the producers in the villages and then deliver to factors who in turn deliver to the Licensed Buying Agents. Up to last year, Licensed Buying Agents were paying a commission of £4 per ton on oil and £2 15s a ton on kernels to the factors and middlemen. This year the Licensed Buying Agents have reduced the commission to £1 10s a ton on oil and £1 4s 9d a ton on kernels. As a result, the factors and middlemen have refused to buy palm produce and this has affected evacuation to the bulk oil plants. The Southern Cameroons Marketing Board has recently introduced a middlemen's commission element of £3 per ton on cocoa. Our Marketing Board should introduce a middlemen's commission element of £3 per ton on palm oil and £2 per ton on palm kernels. It must be remembered that the factors and middlemen control the palm produce industry and not the Licensed Buying Agents.

In conclusion, Sir, I wish to emphasise the need for the appointment of a Financial Adviser to the Regional Government. The Minister of Finance is, after all, a politician and knows nothing about Public Finance. What we need badly is a financial adviser, somebody who can drill the Minister of Finance on public finance and advise him properly. We cannot leave the Minister of Finance in the present position in which he is. I understand his former Permanent Secretary is gone, the next is also gone, and the lump sum compensation is so attractive that the expatriates have conspired to leave us. What are we going to do? We are not going to

beg anybody to stay. It is not our fault; we have got to pay dearly for self-government. I want to say, Sir, that £9,000 is rather attractive. Very few people who have the opportunity to draw £9,000 as lump sum compensation would remain in the service. So, rather than induce them to stay it induces them to go. But, Sir, we may think of providing some attraction over the next few years for a Financial Adviser—a real expert to be employed in the Ministry of Finance. In making this suggestion, Sir, I just want to remind our young Ministers that the essence of good politics, the essence of good administration is sound financial practice.

**Dr A. N. Obonna (Owerri Division):**

Mr Speaker, Sir, in giving my support to the Appropriation Bill, I have to offer one or two points which will bring in new sources of revenue to the Government. One of these is the introduction of a lottery. It has been a long time we have been expecting that Government will take a bold step to introduce a lottery in this Region, but so far nothing has been done. If a lottery is introduced into this Region, it will make employment available for many of our jobless people. It will bring in substantial revenue and in this connection I refer the Government to Ireland—Dublin. There is no industry, no department or institution which offers more work to the people of Ireland than the Irish Sweepstake. There is no legislation preventing the people of this Region from participating in lotteries carried outside this Region. It means then that the revenue of this Region is being drifted away to other Regions. This is a very poor economic policy. Therefore I want to state categorically that we should introduce a lottery in this Region or prevent our people from taking part in outside lotteries. There is no point saying that it is bad and yet allow people to participate in foreign lotteries.

Then another point I would bring out in this Budget is this. Studying the Budget closely, you will find that it is too tight. What I mean by that is that there is not enough margin for any emergency. That being so Government will have to take precaution to check the cost of living because where cost of living rises the trade unions will have to agitate for more pay and as you know trade

union policy has been strongly influenced by changes in the cost of living. If the cost of living is allowed to rise so sharply and wages agitation arises, you will find in the matter of a second that this Budget will be completely ruined. Therefore, I suggest that the Government should establish what we call cost of living index and, in fact, I think this job could well be given to the Minister of Agriculture or the Minister of Welfare who would as time goes on from month to month or quarterly furnish the Region with details of rises in the cost of living. I know this will present some difficulty because it is no easy task to secure an accurate record of prices since they vary from district to district and even from shop to shop. Some articles may appear more expensive than others of the same category on account of variations in quality. These are the difficulties, but I am sure if Government can find those statistics of urban areas they will give very good indication to show the gap in the rise of cost of living index.

I have to go into the Estimates first of all. In doing so I will congratulate the Government for the integration of the Ministries and the Departments and I refer now to those Departments which are independent of the Ministries. It seems to me, Sir, that those people who happen to be working under those departments not manned by any Minister suffer a lot in spite of their high qualifications. In this connection, Sir, I will refer hon. Members to the Printing Department. Since I entered this House if there is any Department that is highly criticised it is the Printing Department, but I am surprised, Sir, to find that in spite of our economy the Government Printer's salary has been raised to £2,220 from £2,040. If what an officer has by criticism of this House is increment in salary I then wonder why it is necessary to criticise here. Whereas, Sir, you take for instance the House of Assembly.

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order! would you refer to other Departments if you wouldn't mind.

**Dr Obonna:** Coming to the cut in the salaries of Ministers, I have to say that my hon. Friend Mr Agba has been guilty of political fraud when he said that the Ministers' salaries were cut following the criticism of this

[DR OBOONNA]

House. I thought before this House met the announcement had already been made by the hon. the Premier.

I appreciate the gesture of the Ministers in cutting their pay but I fail to understand why the salaries of those holding political appointments, who are colleagues of the Ministers were not cut as well, because I believe that those men holding political appointments should share the fortunes of the Government and also the misfortunes of the Government along with the Government, so that in future when there should be any rise in pay, they should earn rise in pay; when there should be any drop in pay, they should have drop in pay.

Speaking again on the Budget, I come to some amenities for the people of Owerri Division. I have to say here that no one from that Division, now, holds an important Board office or in the Corporations—in fact no chairmanship of any Board goes to that Division so that there is still a lot of agitation that members from this Division have been neglected. I hope Government will consider that in making future appointments.

Then I want to speak again on the need for a bridge at Imo River at Udo. All the Ministers here (Ministers of Transport in this Government) have visited this Imo River and have all agreed that it is necessary to bridge across that river.

This bridge, if carried out will reduce the distance from Owerri to Umuahia by almost seven miles—the shortest road from Owerri to Umuahia. The Owerri Divisional people, Mbaise people have all requested the Government to help them to build this bridge but up till today no effort has been made. I know we will be told that self-help must be encouraged; there is no doubt that we have done a lot of self-help. All our colleges, two or three, have been built by self-help; our hospitals have been built by self-help. What will the Government do for us? We are still requesting that this river should be bridged, considering the advantages. We have an oil Mill very near that river and if the river is bridged it will influence the success of the Mill, and soon it will open trade between Ubakala, Umuahia

Ibeku and the Ngwa neighbouring people so that we request the Government to give it prior consideration.

Then I come to the question of Mbaise hospital. I do not understand why Government has failed to meet its obligation to this hospital. Over a year ago, the instruments to run the hospital arrived from England and up till today the Government has failed to make available its share to build the Doctor's house and the Nurses' quarters. The result is that those instruments are now, in fact, wasting and rusting away and God knows what will become of them. This has made the people more annoyed and in fact there was a time they decided not to pay any more rates or taxes unless the hospital was completed. I will like the Government to act immediately so that the position should not worsen.

As I have said before, the Budget is a very good one considering the circumstances we find ourselves. There could not be anything Government should have done to stabilise our revenue but to cut. I must say that in doing so, we should not forget things like Agricultural Departments. We have to provide more food for our people. Our population is increasing everyday and these people must be fed. I am glad that the Government has wisely voted more money for experimental purposes and I hope it will be rewarded in the future.

With these few words I beg to support the Appropriation Bill.

**Mr S. O. Achara (Okigwi Division):** Mr Speaker, I like to look at this Budget as reflecting an attitude of penitence and I would therefore congratulate the Minister for putting it up. I hope that in this connection, Mr Speaker, the Government will bear in mind its limited financial resources and in making schemes which will involve large sums of money, take into consideration that we do not want to run into the same difficulty as we experienced on the question of the Universal Primary Education.

I will like to say a little on the question of tax collection in this Region. Before the Board of Internal Revenue was established, the question of tax collection was left in the hands of



village heads and compound chiefs and this question of evasion was almost absent as it is easy for a compound head to know all the taxable adults within the area of his authority. But with the coming of the Board of Internal Revenue, an effort was made to centralise the collection of taxes. Each Division was supplied with a van and it was intended that the head of the Board of Internal Revenue in each Division with a small team of clerks would leave the Divisional headquarters and go to the villages to collect taxes. It is simply impossible; they don't know the people. I would like the Minister of Finance to make sure that he retains the previous system whereby taxes were collected in the villages and compounds by the people who know the tax-payers. We should make sure that we do not create any difficulties when tax payments are being made. I had a very unpleasant experience last year when my attention was drawn to the problems facing the tax-payers in some sections of my constituency. I had to accompany them to Okigwi to make sure that I paid the tax myself. Certain innovations were introduced which made it impossible for those who wanted to pay the tax they actually collected. Such irregularities should be curbed. I appreciate, Sir, that this 'get rich quick' among our people is a disease, but I think we should make sure that it does not affect tax collection. If an old man from a village brings, say £200 tax to pay and he has to undergo certain formalities unconnected with tax collection before he pays, then he fails to find from which source to find money to meet these demands. I had to put up with the difficulties last year and I succeeded in paying taxes for those who came to me but I will not be there always. As it happened in that section from which I come so it happened in other sections. I would like the Minister of Finance to call the serious attention of the Commissioner of the Board of Internal Revenue and his lieutenants to this problem.

The second thing is this. It takes such time to get the names of dead tax-payers removed from the tax list. There is a death fee which a tax collector has got to pay before he can get the name of a tax-payer who died to be removed from his list. This is bad too and it makes the problem of tax collection very difficult in the rural areas. These old men who collect these taxes are not lettered

and when they are subjected to this type of treatment the tendency is for them to seek to leave off the question of tax collection. It was so much last year in Isuochi, Umuchieze and Nneato areas that they said that they would prefer that this year the tax authorities at Okigwi should come to the villages and collect the taxes themselves.

We talk very much about tax evasion. I think, in fairness to the people who live in the rural areas we do not find much of this tax evasion in the rural areas. It is in the urban areas that you find tax evasion in the various forms which former speakers have mentioned and the Minister of Finance should make sure that the authorities who collect taxes in the urban areas take very serious measures to avoid tax evasion.

One of these methods by which people evade tax in an urban area like Enugu is that when the tax season comes they go away—they call it tour or business trip—and you cannot see them until after two or three months. By the time they come back taxes have been paid and even when they come back those of them who can afford to pay the tax assessed will so disguise themselves when they go to appeal before the tax authorities; they put on rags and appear as if for months they have never had any meal, only with the view to making sure that they do not pay the tax to which they are entitled. I do not know how it will work out if I should suggest that we make it the responsibility of house owners in townships to make and submit a list of taxable adults who live in their houses.

On the question of roads, Mr Speaker, we cannot separate our commercial prosperity from the question of good roads. Only last year when we had extraordinary rainfall we saw how poor our roads in this Region are. In 1954, we passed in this House a Motion calling upon the Government to undertake vigorous road policy. That vigorous road policy had remained "unvigorous" since then. We have had three Ministers since 1954. This Minister will come and pursue the vigorous policy half way and goes; another comes, pursues the vigorous policy half way and goes; and so it continues. Up till now, Mr Speaker, even where we have money to tar some of these roads we continue to receive

[MR ACHARA]

frivolous and fantastic excuses each time we come here, that either the supervising engineer is not available, or the quantity surveyor is absent, or the head overseer is on sick list. We cannot continue at this rate. If there is any measure of Government function which will receive priority in this Region, I think it should be our road system; and I would call upon Government to make every effort that money voted in this House for the development of roads is used. I would say in this connection that when some of us criticise on the floor of this House certain projects of Government, we are misunderstood; it is not because one just wants to criticise for the purpose of criticising. When our finances become buoyant—I feel that our finances are not yet buoyant—then we can afford to pursue these other schemes. Something like this road problem should be tackled by the Government. If there is any money to be got from anywhere (whether from Marketing Board or from reserves, or from any other source) I think we should pursue the problem of these bad roads very vigorously.

In this connection, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the Minister of Transport to the work being done by the Federal Government on the Okigwi-Umuahia road. We should desist from building roads only to last for as long as we remain in office. I invite the Minister of Transport, and his colleagues to go to Okigwi and see the fine work which the Federal Government is doing on that road. They are building that road not for the present session of the House of Representatives, they are building it for this and the next generation. Before passing on to another matter I would like the Government to take this matter seriously. Even if they tar only one mile of road let it be properly tarred, let provision be properly made for it. But for us to continue to make these provisions yearly and to come here to hear these excuses would not do. I would like the Government to survey the possibilities of getting a loan to meet the road problem in this Region.

Mr Speaker in 1955 one road was provided for in my constituency for tarring under the C.D. and W. Scheme. The first Minister went and assured the people that their surveyors were surveying the road and that as soon

as they completed their survey work would begin. Before he had time to see this road through, another Minister came forward and told them that after the rainy season work would start and before he had time to see the work started he went to another Ministry and the third Minister came in. What has happened now, Sir, is that a reply has been made that the funds for this road are not available but there was a sum of £44,000 voted in 1955 for this road. I want Ministers to make sure that the promise made by one Minister would be fulfilled by whichever Minister is on seat.

Mr Speaker, the question of the replacement of our palm trees provides food for thought. These palm trees like human beings, get old and some are dying; they should be taken care of. My suggestion is that the Minister of Agriculture should make sure that palm seedlings are distributed free to those farmers who are prepared to cut down the old palm trees and plant new ones. He should also provide experts such as Agricultural Officers who should go round to advise farmers on how to plant the seedlings, the spacing and so forth. That is one way of giving them the incentive to plant palm trees. If we continue as we are doing and leave this question of old palm trees to them our produce will fall more and more. It should be noted that the palm trees are the back-bone of our financial resources in this Region and we should do everything to make sure that they do not die out.

Mr Speaker, I want to congratulate the hon. Premier for the gesture of reducing the salaries of Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries, the Leader of the Opposition, and the three Government Whips. I think it is a very good thing, but if I were the Premier what I would have done would have been to leave the Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries and the people concerned as before, and do what I think should be done under the circumstances, and that is to reduce the number of Ministries.

**Hon. Members:** You have said that before.

**Mr Achara:** I have said that before and I make no apologies for saying it again.

I do not agree that we should cut their salaries. I want to make it quite clear that the

cut only means a little difference of £7,350. I congratulate the hon. Premier for the gesture of thinking that it is worthwhile reducing the salaries but if I were in his shoes, I would have thought of reducing the Ministries to not more than ten and this would bring in a saving of from £60,000 to £100,000.

Now, Sir, I want to thank the hon. Minister of Finance for paying tribute to the staff of his Ministry. I was in that Ministry for two years and five months and I think I can bear witness to the sense of duty and responsibility of the Officials both Africans and the expatriates and I would resist any effort to discredit any of them. I congratulate the Minister for his courage in embodying in his Budget speech thanks for the staff of the Ministry. I would like this to be borne in mind by the Government of this Region: that when there is praise for any achievement in any Ministry, the praise goes to the Minister. When we used to pour praises to the former Minister of Health, he took the praises and not the Director of Medical Services, the specialist or the nurses. In the same way, the Minister should be prepared to accept responsibility for whatever he has done which we feel is not good. I would like us to look at this question as did the Federal Prime Minister, and I agree with what he said at the last session of the House of Representatives.

When in the past civil servants were running the Government we found it proper to criticise them and now that we have introduced the Parliamentary and Ministerial system of Government our Ministers should not escape blame—they should be prepared to take the blame. If it is a question of honour, we give a Minister honour; if it is a question of dishonour, we give him dishonour. It is in this connection, Sir, that I thank the Minister of Finance for his courage in preparing the Budget.

**Mr P. N. Okeke (Onitsha Division):** In supporting the Appropriation Bill I would like to begin on a subject touched by a Member for Onitsha Division. I would like to begin with the Board of Internal Revenue. This Board, Sir, is the core of the Eastern Region and it is a Department that will expect heavy criticisms from members of the public. Before I go on further, Sir, I would like to begin with tax assessment in Onitsha. At present you have in

the Board of Internal Revenue a system of filing for prominent personalities and that section has now become "a sword of Damocles" for people who are articulate. If you are articulate you are threatened that your file will go into the section called "prominent personality Ledger". I refer to recent assessment in Onitsha. If the Speaker will allow me, I like to mention names of twenty people who have been assessed to pay taxes in Onitsha this financial year. I can give about twenty examples of assessments as follows there are many others. One man has been assessed to pay £2,000 not income but tax payable; he is a Barrister. Another is to pay £1,555. (*Interruptions*).

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

**Mr P. N. Okeke:** A third has been assessed to pay £1,460, another £1,430, another £1,289, another £1,275, a woman £1,003, another woman £900, another £550, £700, £600, £660, £600, £1,450, a petty trader £1,120, £606, £500, £550 and £600.

Now, Sir, the total tax to be paid by twenty people in Onitsha is £19,468 (*Applause*). The average is £975 each and that is on assumed income of the average of £4,600 each. Mr Speaker, Sir, I would raise this point because at present the Eastern Region is facing two serious problems. One, Sir, is the problem of the expatriate Civil Servants and indigenous African Civil Servants. It is now very difficult for our people to know which to choose from the other. With all due respect to our expatriates I think they should be in sympathy with our political struggles. It is the right of any people to govern themselves no matter how badly. I notice there is a tendency on the part of certain expatriate civil servants to sabotage the Government. At Onitsha the Assessment Officer had the impunity to ask people, when they come to the Office, "Who are your bankers"? He is very much interested, Sir, to know where you bank, whether in the A.C.B. or whether your bankers are the expatriate Banks. After two months or so the assessment officer flew back to England and took his lump sum compensation. What I am saying is that tax assessment in Onitsha does not bear any relation to the income of the people assessed. The position is this. Some people think about our half a

[Mr P. N. OKEKE]

million pounds loan. In Onitsha Market, you can get at least 300 to 400 empty stalls now. There has never been a case like this all these years. The position is that many traders are deserting the township and most of these market stalls are now empty because it does not worth much to own them. A petty trader, whose capital is not up to £3,000, was assessed on an income of £6,191. Originally, he was assessed by a former Revenue Officer to pay £432. It was believed to be too high for that matter, and when this Expatriate Officer came, he sent this man an additional £1,025 on an income of £6,191. Mr Speaker, Sir, on the very morning, this Expatriate Officer left Onitsha. There were a few people who were able to meet him in his office and he reduced their tax from £1,400 to about £400. That was for a few people—about three or four. Without going through the process of appeal, he himself made the reduction for about three or four people. Some of those assessed, I understand have come to the Commissioner of Internal Revenue. I understand that they have been asked to go back and pay instalmentally. That is the answer they got from the Board of Internal Revenue.

Mr Speaker, Sir, what I am saying is that with our African Officials, it is not possible to get justice. There is discrimination. With the European Administrative Officers, the tendency is to cause trouble for the Government.

**Hon. Members:** No.

**Mr P. N. Okeke:** Some Members say 'No'. Well, I challenge you to tell me any part of the Eastern Region where anybody has paid up to £1,000.

**Hon. Members:** In Port Harcourt, and Aba... (Interruptions)...

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

*Sitting suspended at 12 noon.*

*Sitting resumed at 12.30 p.m.*

**Mr P. N. Okeke:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to continue from where I stopped.

I would like to make certain suggestions on the Board of Internal Revenue. In the first place, I understand that only two Revenue Inspectors are in the Region. These Revenue Inspectors appear to be on Scale B. I think, Sir, that it is this Department Government should give sufficient inducement in order to attract efficient and honest people. It is not in the interest of the Government to train people, some of them graduates, and then put them on Scale B whereas their counterparts in the Administration are on Scale A. This will encourage bribery and corruption and I think the Board of Internal Revenue is a Department where the best should be posted. It is a very important Department for the Government because it collects the bulk of Government revenue and Government should be very careful in selecting people to work in this Department.

As I said before, to my knowledge there are only two trained Revenue Inspectors and when these people are selected they should be given proper training before they come out to work. At present, Sir, the position, especially in big townships, is to employ either junior clerks transferred from Local Government Councils to work in the revenue office. As I said before, during the debate on the "Self Government White Paper" you cannot pour the new wine into old bottles. Some of these people working in the Revenue Department have stayed too long under our local councils and native authority councils that many of them do not fit into the Board of Internal Revenue and it is necessary to train people who will give proper assessments rather than arbitrary assessments.

Mr Speaker, Sir, may I go on to a recent tax which was imposed in the Region just a few days ago—tax on diesel oil. I understand, Sir, that the tax is nine pence a gallon. I want to say, as a businessman, that this tax will not succeed in the Region. It will be like the tax on beer. I sounded a note of warning here when the tax of 3d was put on a bottle of beer. I said that it would not work. If the Government had made that tax a penny a bottle, Government would have realised more income, more revenue from the tax on beer. Why it failed was that Government put a difference of twelve shillings on a case of beer. It was then still profitable for anybody to convey a case of beer

from anywhere in the Western Region—Asaba, Warri, Sapele, to Port Harcourt and Aba because it costs about only four shillings for a case from Sapele or Warri to Onitsha. Now if the tax had been only four shillings a case, then it would not have paid any trader to convey a case of beer from Warri to Onitsha and then to other parts of the Region. The same thing is going to happen with the tax on diesel oil. The tax is too much, Sir. If Government wants revenue from it the tax should be reduced. I cannot understand why the tax on diesel oil should be higher than tax on petrol. What I will suggest is to reduce the tax to say four pence a gallon, otherwise you will have the Western Region lorries plying from the Western Region to the Eastern Region. You cannot prevent lorries from carrying diesel oil drums from the Western Region and the nine pence a gallon gives a difference of thirty-three shillings per forty-four gallon drum. Now, a difference of 33s is more than sufficient to carry a drum of petrol from any where in the Western Region to anywhere in the Eastern Region. I certainly believe that it will not cost more than 13s to carry it from say Asaba to Aba or Port Harcourt and a trader who feels he can make a profit of £1 on a drum of diesel will certainly, no matter what vigilance Government may exercise, continue to smuggle diesel from the Western Region to different parts of the Eastern Region. So I want to sound another warning that this tax will fail unless it is reduced.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I left a point on tax assessment. Here in Enugu the position is this. A landlord who owns ten plots is assessed tax on each of the ten plots separately. Let us take a hypothetical figure of £100 on each. For ten plots he makes £1,000. Now if you assess him tax on each plot he pays by far less than he should have paid if the total income from the property are taken together. But in Onitsha the position is different. In Onitsha all income from property are assessed along with income from other sources and it makes a big difference. For example, a man who has five plots here—and they are generally assessed £151 per plot, makes over £750. Tax on £750 under Group 3 or 4 is about £40. But where they are assessed individually it is £3 5s a plot and £16 5s for the whole five plots. In Onitsha tax on property is taken together and added to aggregate income from other sources. This same problem,

Sir, is facing businessmen who happen to be Members of this House. Here is a Member of the House who pays as he earns on his £800 per annum. After he has already paid on his £800, and when you add another £400 the tax goes higher, and it looks like double taxation. In that case I would prefer not to pay as I earn. The £52 10s which I pay as I earn—certainly if I use it in business it will yield some interest or profit before the end of the financial year or towards the close of the financial year where I pay the whole tax at a time. So I feel that businessmen who happen to be Members of the House are cheated, and I notice that it does not apply to people who are semi-civil servants and also Members of the House. They pay as they earn in the two cases and they are not called upon to pay any more tax. I am saying this, Sir, because I feel that the system of tax assessment in Onitsha ought to be reviewed and I ask the Board of Internal Revenue or the Ministry of Finance to set up a commission of enquiry to investigate tax assessment in Onitsha. Last year petitions upon petitions came from Onitsha to the Minister of Finance asking that a commission of enquiry be set up and the Ministry did not take any step. Some of us had clear evidence to produce before that commission. I want to say that I know that some professionals will soon begin to leave Onitsha. There is a case of a lawyer who returned just last August—and those in the legal profession know that the field is now becoming rather very tight. This man was asked to pay a tax on an income of £400. I wonder whether he has had five cases ever since he came back. (*Interruptions*).

What I am saying, Sir, is that the Ministry of Finance should harken to the cry of the people in Onitsha. Set up a commission. We have evidence to prove to you that when you have an African Administrative Officer it is a question of nepotism, corruption and victimisation. With the European Revenue Officer it is sabotage against the Government. For one thing, with the European assessment officer there was no discrimination. It was high for everybody. For example when an African was in charge somebody was assessed to pay £39, but this year a European assessed him on £1,430. Here in the office of the Internal Revenue there is now a big file bearing the name "P. N. Okeke, Owner of Properties at Onitsha" and three prominent

[MR P. N. OKEKE]  
buildings were assigned to me there. I wrote back to ask Government to collect any income from the buildings and to forfeit them. At the material time, I was not receiving an income of one penny from any building anywhere in Nigeria. So, Mr Speaker, I am appealing to the Minister of Finance that the problem at Onitsha ought to be investigated because it is going to affect the half a million pounds loan. This loan must be repaid, and where traders leave the market—some of them cannot afford to pay this tax and are going over to the Western Region and to the Northern Region—we will find it very difficult to repay this loan if this system of tax assessment continues in Onitsha.

Mr Speaker, I will also like to suggest to the Minister of Finance to consider reviewing our Finance Law and the Schedule. The Federal system, Sir, is that people are given allowance for their wives and children and then the rest of the income is taxed. If you watch closely you will see the difference the groupings make on the income tax paid by different people. Let us take, for example, certain Ministers. An unmarried Minister pays about £890.

**An hon. Member:** There is no unmarried Minister.

**Mr P. N. Okeke:** It is possible to get an unmarried Minister.

Another Minister with three children pays £475 whereas if it were in the Federation the married Minister gets about £200 allowance for his wife, and I think here in the Eastern Region if somebody is allowed £200 tax free for his wife that is sufficient. It makes nonsense of the whole system if you don't collect as you should have collected. Here, for example, there are some Ministers who pay £630 because either by accident they have two children.

**Hon. Members:** Why accident?

**Mr P. N. Okeke:** A Minister may have three children in 1957 and in 1958 one dies; now he pays about £200 extra tax because of the loss. I think this is unfair. I suggest

that Government could make more money if they give certain allowance to married people and then tax the remaining income. People will pay more tax there.

Mr Speaker, I will like to go over to a different subject altogether. I like to say a few words.

**Mr Speaker:** If I may interrupt you; you have not more than five minutes. You have had a full period of half an hour.

**Mr P. N. Okeke:** I like to say a few words on our education. I think that the Minister of Education should bring before this House a principle or formula for grants-in-aid to all schools and I urge that all grants-in-aid be based on the number of children catered for by voluntary agencies. That will solve once and for all the problem of constant complaints from voluntary agencies.

I said some time ago, Sir, that licences in the Eastern Region should be at par with the rate in other Regions otherwise our people will continue to evade taking out their licences in the Eastern Region.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I should like to say a few words on the water supply undertaking in Onitsha. Every time we come into this House people shout Onitsha, Onitsha! Now, Sir, under E 113 Appendix C—Urban Water Accounts Special Expenditure, for a total of £61,400 the population is 76,921; Enugu has an allocation of £138,000 with a population of 52,764; Calabar has £58,909, population 46,705; Aba £106,200, population 57,787; Port Harcourt £269,000, population 71,634; Umuahia £70,000, population 12,259.

Mr Speaker, Sir, if you go to Head 404—Revenue from Water Supply Undertakings—you will notice that Onitsha is to pay annually back to the Government £22,000 as against £61,000 spent. There are other areas with 138,000, 58,000, 106,000, 269,000 and 70,000. Aba is to pay £11,500 as against £106,000 expenditure. Abakaliki is to repay only £2,100. Enugu is only to repay £14,000 and Umuahia £5,000. What I am saying, Sir, is that it is in Onitsha township alone where Government has spent only £61,000 that the tax-payers are called upon to pay water rate up to £22,000

in order to cover renewal fund and sinking fund. Why should this not apply to other townships? Why should Onitsha township be asked to pay £22,000 as against £61,000 Government is spending?

Before I wind up, Sir, I would like to touch on a subject on which my Friend from Onitsha mentioned this morning. I want to say, Sir, that Government should do something now about the Abagana-Aguleri Road and the Amam-Nzam Road. As far back as 1955, the Minister of Transport made a statement in this House that the Anam River Bridge was in the programme and that the Abagana-Aguleri Road would be tarred in the following financial year. I find, Sir, that this road has not been mentioned or rather included in the roads to be tarred this financial year. I have said before that Government has not been maintaining a mile of road in the Onitsha Division. It is only the Federal road which passes through Onitsha-Port Harcourt and via Onitsha to Enugu.

Mr Speaker, I now come to the Ministry of Health. I would like to say again that it would pay the people of the Eastern Region for Government to give more grants to Voluntary Agency Hospitals. If you go to Iyi-Enu hospital, you will find a number of patients sleeping on the floor; go to some of our Government hospitals and you will find them empty. People prefer to go to voluntary agency hospitals and if people do not patronise Government hospitals it is for the Government to find out why. I think it is the responsibility of the Government to equip and maintain these voluntary agency hospitals. I was in Iyi-Enu hospital last week and it was a pathetic scene to see many patients lying on the floor because there was not sufficient accommodation and not enough staff. These voluntary agency hospitals are doing very well and Government should encourage them; they are better than many of our Government hospitals.

One of the reasons why people do not go to Government hospitals is that in many cases there are no drugs and in fact I can't blame the hospitals because doctors have no drugs to treat the patients. Patients go there and the doctor prescribes the medicine and you would not get the medicine and naturally people go to voluntary agency hospitals.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I would like to request the Minister of Town Planning to go to Onitsha to see what he can do with Fegge 'Hollow'. Government allocated round about a hundred plots to people in a swampy area which is water-logged during the rainy season. The water there is as deep as five feet to ten feet. Government allocated these plots during the dry season. During the rainy season the buildings there are abandoned and they are unsafe for human habitation. We led a delegation to the Ministry of Town Planning and I think Government should consider and see whether they would pay compensation to the owners of these buildings and demolish them. Government should not leave the responsibility to the Onitsha Urban District Council, which did not collect the premium nor collect rents, to continue to receive delegations from the inhabitants of this area. If anybody goes there during the rainy season he would pity the inhabitants of the area. I think it is the responsibility of the Government that collected the premium to see that these people are given alternative sites or the area improved. Another thing, Sir, is that the Government collected about £79,000 premium from Fegge layout and gave the work of tarring the roads in Fegge to a European Firm; that was during the District Officer days. There was no council to supervise the agreement but go there now, it is an eye-sore to see the conditions of these roads. They were badly tarred; in fact at one time a kind of inquiry was held over one of these roads and the firm concerned had to forego the claim on one of them. We are saying that if the Government wants to develop an area for town planning and Government has not the time, the Local Government or Urban District Council in the area should be made to know how the money collected by the people has been spent. I am not putting the responsibility on the Government as such because this arrangement was made when the District Officer was responsible for making most of these arrangements. The firm that tarred the road did very bad work.

Mr Speaker, Sir, in winding up I like to thank the Government on the introduction of the House of Chiefs in the Eastern Region. I regard the introduction of the House of Chiefs as a kind of "Pandora's Box" and if Government is not careful they will soon create a Frankenstein which will destroy its

[MR P. N. OKEKE]

creator, if Government is not careful in selecting and grouping these chiefs. I wonder how Government can create First-class Chiefs and I wonder what village will accept its Chief as being Second-class Chief. I am not opposed to the creation of the House of Chiefs but I am warning the Government to be very careful otherwise they may yet create another problem in the Region which will be very difficult to settle. In the Jones Report, Sir, mention was made about representation of traditional members in local councils. I think Government will accept that policy and the ratio of 5 : 1 recommended by Jones because it is likely to cause less trouble. I should like Government to think and plan and present to the House an acceptable policy for the appointment of Chiefs both in the Local Government Councils and also as Members of the House of Chiefs.

Mr Speaker, I support the Appropriation Bill.

**Chief I. I. Morphy (Ogoja Division):**  
Mr Speaker, Sir, we are called upon again to debate the financial and economic state of Eastern Nigeria and the Financial Policy of Government which we are told this year in the Budget Speech is to limit public spending in order to give the revenues a breathing space and allow our reserves to recover from heavy drain. And we are told the rate of our development must slow down. The period is one of marking time in the determination to restore our reserves. It is also said that our wealth is in the industry and initiative of our people. It is accepted we are not yet a rich Region in terms of money. The Budget is finally said to be modest. We of this Side of the House have oftentimes told Government that we are only potentially rich and not in terms of money. How do we tap these potential riches? I will like to refresh hon. Members' minds on the past financial policy of Government and I quote His Excellency the Governor's Speech from the Throne, 1954:

"You are meeting in difficult and critical times. The volume of work you will be required to undertake is great, the decision you will be called upon to make will be momentous. It is of course right and proper that you should have a special care for the people in the area you represent and for

their interests, but I would ask you to remember that overriding these is your duty to the interests of the Region as a whole, and never to forget that the Eastern Region is part of Nigeria. To do this will not be easy. It will require steadfastness and courage and a willingness to face temporary unpopularity for the lasting good of the people of the Region. Think, therefore, I beseech you, like statesmen of the next generation and not like politicians of the next election."

How are we living up to this ?

"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".

The Premier also said in 1954:

"Stripped of its rhetoric, the Budget Speech of the hon. 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 shows the great possibilities awaiting the Region if only we would bend down to the task of economic reconstruction with courage and vision."

The Government of the Eastern Region is irrevocably committed to the policy of raising the standard of living of our people to expand our economy by encouraging industrial and commercial activities.

I also note that it is the policy of Government to increase social services dependent upon the economic and commercial stability of the Region, not to raise new taxes unless at the same time it provides people with the means to earn more. Help to produce goods for local consumption and for external trade. Increased employment will be created as a result, wages will be more stable, prices will be depressed at a reasonable level, artificial scarcity of consumer goods will be stultified, earning capacity will be increased, economy



will be stable and our skill shall be developed to enable us contribute a fair share towards national prosperity. These look sound and good but has Government put them into practice?

We of this side of the House were hoping that as self-government has been achieved, the people of the Eastern Region will find the spectre of poverty gathered to the ghost of the past and prosperity rooted in the concept of equality of economic opportunity in a society where every person is guaranteed social security and economic stability. Nothing short of a miracle should have happened, it could have brought about an astonishing redistribution of wealth and there could have been adequate slice for all. But what do we find in actual practice? Government is fast creating a class by giving loans only to the well-to-do. We have measured Government performances and found them against their promises. Let Government not be prepared to make a penny wise economics by satisfying a few. The masses will soon revolt if Government does not retreat.

Our potential resources could be tapped by putting the above enumerated policy into practice. Give loans to farmers. Teach them real mechanical cultivation. Go all out to aid soya beans, groundnuts, cocoa, coffee, cola nut and benniseed farmers of Ogoja.

Put into practice full scale general policy for trade as contained in Sessional Paper No. 5 of 1955, Part 1.

- (a) to ensure the widest possible distribution of consumer goods at the right place, at the right time and the right price.
- (b) Expand the export trade of primary products.
- (c) Facilitate a greater participation by Nigerians in commerce, not by discriminative measures against non-Nigerians but by training Nigerians in business and commercial methods.

We are happy to welcome £65,000 as royalties from oils and we will be very happy to hear that instead of tonnages of our palm produce falling there is an increase. Government knows that weather and the ageing of

our palms are the causes of the drop of our statutory share of the Federal Revenue and is going to be £97,000 less. What have the E.R.D.C. and the Agricultural Department been doing? What is Government doing to save the situation? Is the situation going to be saved by placing projects in cold storage? In Ogoja, we have the best clay and salts which Government could tap and this will bring money into the Government's funds but is Government encouraging small industries?

We are told that even though the road scheme is so dear this scheme must be put in cold storage. The importance of road in our economies cannot be over emphasised. Let Government think again and stop this seeming minor but harmful cut in our road development for this is the only means by which produce could be brought from the remote areas of the Region.

How can this policy of limiting public spending as to give the revenue a breathing space bring us the money we so need? Has Government even kept to this policy? No. How will the revenues have a breathing space when the wasteful corporations still exist? If we are to diminish public spending, let these corporations be wound up. Our Government has told us that 10 per cent has been reduced from the salaries of Ministers as to make us know exactly that they are keeping up to the policy for limiting public spending. I am saying that 10 per cent has in fact not been reduced. (*Interruptions*). I am going to explain. The Ministers do not pay house rent; they do not pay electricity bill; they do not pay water rate. If we calculate all these, the 10 per cent that has been cut from their salaries has been more than compensated.

**An hon. Member:** Awolowo does not pay.

**Chief Morphy:** The people who have made the real sacrifice are the Leader of the Opposition and the two Government Whips who do not live in Enugu. These people's salaries are being reduced when they are not living in Government quarters. I will also mention the Deputy Speaker whose salary has been reduced by 10 per cent. They do not get it back from allowance.

[CHIEF MORPHY]

When Government came out with the statement that salaries of Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries were going to be reduced they did not tell the nation that that of the Leader of the Opposition was going to be reduced. The Leader of the Opposition has more work to do and the £1,500 paid to him is not enough if this Government believes in Opposition. I strongly advise Government to pay the Leader of the Opposition more than £1,500.

Sir, we want the Government to know that the people of this Region are in a position to measure performances against promises. The N.C.N.C. Government is a Government of promise and very good at raising people's hopes. If we come all out to tell the people the truth that since you took office there is no money and that the people should work hard to bring this money, I think the people could have really stood up to the show. But Government came all out with well cut out phrase to tell the people that "our finances are buoyant, we are providing more money for you, we will provide amenities", but now we are facing the real facts; and the people are really seeing what Government is doing. Government has told us only half of the truth. They should come all out to tell us the full truth so that the Opposition and Government will meet up the issue and try to make the finances of this Region buoyant as the Premier has been describing it.

The wealth of this Region lies in the industry and initiative of our people. This is very true. But has Government encouraged enough small industries so that the Region might in three years time boast of money? Has the Government made it possible for our people to demonstrate their interest and prove their initiative? Instead, Government's act is fast encouraging people to leave this Region for other Regions or Fernando Po. We of this side of the House strongly and doubly want Government to make use of the Economic Planning Commission if it still exists and if it does not exist make use of their recommendations. You will find out that the whole report was based on the Economic Commission, but we do not hear much about this Commission. So we are asking Government that if the Commission does not exist Government

should set up another, but if it exists, Government should try and give it economic planning powers so that their recommendations to make the Region have more money might be taken seriously.

Now, in conclusion, I say: let us encourage more productivity on the farm and industry so that each citizen will play an indispensable role. Let Government know that the productivity of our heads, our hands and our hearts is the source of all the strength we can command for both the enrichment of our lives and maintenance of peace in this Region. This time what we are doing is that we are trying to make the people run away from the farms and go to the townships, and worse they go to the townships to roam about without doing some work. During the time of taxation they also run from the rural areas to the townships. By so doing Government is losing money from these people.

It is no use this time taking advice from the expatriates, whose intention is to lead us astray. Our Ministers should do their best to see that they go all out themselves to see the position of things. As hon. Eyo said here we want somebody who will be advising the Minister of Finance and if possible this fellow should be made the Secretary to the Economic Planning Commission.

**Mr Speaker:** I am anxious for the Opposition to debate this Second reading today. Tomorrow there will be very little opportunity for Members to speak on it. I think it is one of those debates in which we expect Ministers to reply and the Ministerial Bench will be taking most of tomorrow. I think in fairness, that unless the Opposition do not wish to speak to the debate, I propose to call on others. I do not promise they will have tomorrow.

**Mr M. U. Etuk (Uyo Division):** Mr Speaker, would you like me to speak today?

**Mr Speaker:** Yes, if you are ready.

**Mr Etuk:** Mr Speaker, it is understood that the Budget session is a session on which one can say all sorts of things about one's constituency and about the Government's financial policy. In that case, every Member is given an opportunity to voice out the needs of his constituency.

**Mr Speaker:** You should confine yourself to economic policy.

**Mr Etuk:** There are two points which I wish to speak on tomorrow, but in view of what the Speaker is saying that perhaps the Opposition Bench may not have a chance tomorrow, I will like to make those two points now. The first point is about the Ministry of Health, and, that is in connection with the voluntary agency hospitals. I have looked through the Estimates and have seen that very little is provided for in that Ministry which, in fact, may not allow adequate assistance to these voluntary agency hospitals. I have, like the hon. Member from Onitsha, witnessed the work, very good work, that these hospitals are doing in the Region; but they are greatly handicapped because of lack of funds. I have also had some experience in Government hospitals and I can, therefore, make comparison of the qualities of the services rendered by these two institutions. I am not going into the reasons why one is more efficient than the other, but I think it is generally known that most of the Government hospitals are, for one reason or the other, not taking proper care of their patients. It is possible that the voluntary agency hospitals are doing so well because of their christian spirit but I think that these institutions should be considered and given every help.

Now, Sir, a lot has been said already about the Ministry of Transport. Looking through the Estimates again I find that some of the rural areas have not been given any consideration either in the maintenance of the old or construction of new roads. I quite remember that about three or four years ago, the Government came out with the promise that the road connecting Uyo and Opobo through Etinan would be taken over and tarred. On the 12th of January, 1957 the then Minister of Transport personally promised that he would see what he could do to have this road included in his programme. Road construction is very important to the Region, and, I am wondering whether it is deliberate neglect or an oversight that these two roads which are so important to the life of the community have been left out. The Federal Government has come to assist the Regional Government and the Uyo County Council helped to build a bridge over the Qua Iboe River on this road. The Minister of Local Government will

bear me witness when I say Uyo-Etinan-Ekparaqua road is bad because when he called last year to inspect the Iman Rural District Council the approaches to the bridge on this road were impassable. His Permanent Secretary's car could not get through the mud, and I asked him then to bear me witness the time I would come to this House to make reference to this particular section of the road. If the Regional Government is not able to tar the whole road, perhaps because we have not got enough money, I would suggest to the Government seriously to consider tarring the approaches to this important bridge for which we have spent about £19,000 to build in order to keep it up from erosion in the same way as we did with Abak bridge in Abak Division. That will save the bridge and prevent this area of the road from getting from bad to worse.

**An hon. Member:** Use community efforts.

**Mr Etuk:** Somebody had just suggested community development; we cannot leave everything for community development otherwise nothing will be done.

Another point, Mr Speaker, is about the Local Councils, District Councils and County Councils. Under the new set up the Minister of Local Government will be making new grants to these District Councils now becoming County Councils. In almost all cases these grants will have to be increased from what they were last year, in this year's Estimates. But it is not known on what principle the increase is being based, whether on population or according to the needs of the particular council. I would suggest to the Government that in a case of others where you have had four District Councils under one County Council and you allocated so many thousands of pounds before but now that these councils are separated it would be wise to consider both their needs and population in reallocation of grants. Perhaps you may have former county institutions or new projects sited in a smaller unit of the Council and it will need a higher amount of money because of their needs for basic social services in that particular Division more than the others with more people in their area, but fewer needs or demands.

Most of the Members have congratulated the Minister of Finance. I do not like repeating what others have said, but in this case,

[MR ETUK]

while I have confined myself to the important points which I felt should be looked into, I would like to join others in congratulating the Minister of Finance for being able to produce an Estimate, call it what name you may, which can for some time arrest a downward trend of our financial policy and make it show as if we are going to achieve something because it is not everybody who can exhibit such wits. (*Hear! Hear!*).

Several suggestions have been made and I think one with which I would like to associate myself most, and, I lay more emphasis on it is this Board of Internal Revenue. The Board of Internal Revenue for one reason or the other is not doing exactly what it should do. A lot is dependent on that particular body for the collection of our taxes and if the machinery is faulty, naturally the results must either be nothing or faulty also. In Uyo Division, my own constituency, I said here before that in many cases it is not the question of refusing to pay tax but the incapability of paying it because the people have not got the means to earn their living and to be able to earn a living means to pay the taxes. Added to that is the annoyance of arbitrary assessment especially on some of the petty traders who cannot even make £10 profit in a year. It will make tax evasion considerable and tax collection impossible. And the blame will come back from the Government that we have not got money from taxation. As it was suggested last year that hon. Members should go all out (even though transport money was not provided for us) and help in the collection of taxes, I would say that if the Government really wanted us to interest our selves in this job, I think it should be our duty, Sir, to help Government to get the money to run the social services of this Region. The Government should then make it clear to these Officers in the Internal Revenue that we can assist them. We are not going to boss them but can assist them. There may be difficult places they do not know, but we who are living in the area may know and if they approach us, it will be our duty then to guide them to make correct assessments which will make tax easily payable. In that connection too, among other things that have been suggested, either mal-practices or whatever name you call it, can also be avoided and the collection

of taxes might be even smoother than one sees at the moment.

Mr Speaker, as I said, these are my contributions and I thank you very much.

**Rev. O. Efiog, C.B.E. (Calabar Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I rise to support the Appropriation Bill and I take this opportunity to congratulate the Minister of Finance for managing to produce before us these Estimates. My plan really is just to offer some constructive criticisms on the building up of our finances in this Region. (*Hear! Hear!*).

Sir, I desire to confirm that politics means money. Without money our social services, all political knowledge, political science and political philosophy are futile and must be paralysed. Mr Speaker, a young Government like ours should appreciate this. The acquisition of money in an honest way does not depend upon any academic qualification. I know a West Indian businessman who has no more qualification than of our school leaving certificate, yet in his employment are persons with all sorts of University degrees. After all, Solomon, the wise did not pass Standard VI, and most millionaires are not learned.

I want to say, Sir, in January 1950 at the Ibadan General Constitutional Conference, I had the opportunity of enunciating a very acceptable formula for politics. I said that politics means money multiplied by men and by social services. If you want to do real good politics get the best of men, honest men, then you can request them to supply you with all sorts of social services. They dare not refuse. All they will have to ask is, supply us with money and we will give you social services. They will give us services to the extent of funds available. Government can only collapse on two grounds: over-expenditure or want of suitable personnel. My contribution is along this line—suitable personnel.

Native Authority system was abolished as unworkable. Lagos Town Council, Port Harcourt Town Council, Aba and Onitsha Town Councils were also condemned and dissolved for mismanagement. Our present County Councils have been called waste-pipes and therefore we are scraping them. I want to

say that there is nothing whatsoever wrong in these institutions or in their constitutions as such. The blame should go to unsuitable personnel. Politicians who are by no means statesmen, cannot see visions, they cannot dream dreams. However, it is the human element in the constitutions that is giving a lot of trouble. Any government wishing to succeed must have the best of men and men of integrity, seeking self-renouncingly the good of the people and not for mercenary purpose. No Government can ever succeed without a suitable personnel; finance just comes in as a subsidiary. We must not attribute our problem to other sources; it is due to one of the two sources: over-expenditure or lack of suitable personnel.

After all, England has no written constitution to-date, but they have suitable personnel. For six hundred years, from the inception of British Parliament, parliamentarians did not receive allowances or personal emoluments, yet they vied among themselves one way or the other to contribute the best services to the State and thereby achieve the enviable tradition for free and voluntary services. We have no such credit and therefore greatly handicapped. The fault is not our own altogether. We come to meet a situation where politicians are paid so that politics has become a lucrative work and a paved road to affluence. Quite a number of people without any background, self-sacrifice, free and voluntary services, jumped into the arena and then we have trouble.

At this juncture, I wish to pay tribute to the Premier and his colleagues and all those who have sacrificed a lot at this time in order to ameliorate the situation. I have emphatically stated that our political and constitutional set-backs and difficulties can only be traceable to two sources.

Mr Speaker, I strongly advise the Government to rigorously and with accelerated *tempo* pursue the policy of developing revenue yielding projects. (*Hear! Hear!*) Agriculture should claim first priority. The form of our Government is completely foreign, our approaches also foreign. The trouble is our agriculture for generations has not been realistic or Nigerian in type. It has only exercised our minds, we write volumes on

it, do experimental agriculture, establish demonstration farms and engage in elaborate research on plant life and pests, etc., employ army of officials, build imposing and palatial offices in the name of agriculture while in the Region there is acute shortage of food. This is comical. We want now practical and commercial agriculture so that we might be self-sufficient in foodstuff to the extent of exporting surplus to fetch outside money into this Region. Any people who are self-sufficient in foodstuff automatically open the flood gate to prosperity and solve over fifty per cent of their economic problems. Agriculture is the parent of all projects and man's first industry ordained from above. As empty sacks cannot stand so hungry people cannot achieve much. If this Region wants success I counsel it to invest in this project of projects. By agriculture in this context I include fishery, animal husbandry, forestry and veterinary. I served in this Region on a policy making committee for agriculture, forestry and veterinary before, and I was convinced of their potential wealth. Let Government through its E.R.D.C. enter into partnership with farmers, individual farmers as well as corporate bodies with a definite object to prosper the people. My experience in the Spanish and French territories on this subject may serve us. I unreservedly lay it at the disposal of this department just for the asking. Let the Government invest also in other revenue yielding projects. A young man started building industry. His first building helps him to build a second; with the first and second he got a third building. He continued like that, buying buildings and building houses. At the moment he is the proud possessor of about twenty buildings with an earning or rents in the neighbourhood of £1,000 per month. I want to invite Government to emulate such examples. Start some revenue yielding projects and carry on. Do not let agriculture be only in theory.

Mr Speaker, to continue to tax the people, who are poor, beyond their capacity is incurring trouble and danger. Therefore, let Government invest in other avenues in order to get money. A Director of the Colonial Development Corporation visited this Region in 1949. They had £100 million to develop the Colonies. We met in the Secretariat at Enugu and he told us that he had come with such money in order to develop the Colonies.

[REV. EFIONG]

One of the then hon. Members disputed that statement and said it could not be true. No white man can honestly seek the prosperity of the African. The Director answered "if you do not prosper, then it will affect our own prosperity. We must make you prosper so that you can buy our manufactured goods such as cars, bicycles, etc". I want to invite this Government's attention to such a policy. If you tax the people too much they will not prosper and you will never prosper. I will submit a hypothetical case: Suppose this Government goes out now to prosper the people, I think at a no distant date you might have out of our eight million people about one million people who can each pay £100 per annum—that is £100 million. Suppose a million people again pay £50, that is £50 million. So we will rise by leaps and bounds, and we will be able to industrialise the Region and get more money for any other projects.

Now I had already said that I have accumulated experience in this matter from the Spanish and French Governments. I have no time to elaborate on that now.

Mr Speaker, I want to say a few words on finance. I must now join issue with Government on the question of finance. I support my predecessors who have spoken, giving figures. They have also indicated the weakness of the machinery for tax collection and the reasons why there is much tax evasion. But I want to call Government's attention to the fact that it is necessary to know that without economic independence, political independence is futile, and it is proper at this time when we have taken over the Government to remain quiet and think out the ways and means to get this Region prosper. But I think we want to continue at a great speed to industrialise the Region and to finance all projects—and anybody can err that way. The proper thing is not to put too many irons in the fire.

Throughout the speech of the hon. the Minister of Finance you have in every page the very sad confession of over-expenditure or shortfall in revenue. The problem is that we do not amass money sufficiently before we embark on so many projects. I caution Government to curtail these projects.

Our trouble in this Region is that we do not sit down quietly and plan. If we mean to carry out four projects, let us see that these four projects are done to the satisfaction of the people and then you will have their confidence. No Government on earth has the right to spend more than what the people could allot them. This over-expenditure means that the people gave us say a million pounds to do their business and we spent more than that; that is our fault. The policy of curtailment of services will surely lead to public hardship and unemployment. Marking-time policy is recommendable under these circumstances, but I want to caution Government that marking-time policy will necessitate quick march. The different areas are clamouring for amenities, and can't understand why provisions are made in the Estimates in their favour without any fulfilment. Some have begun to doubt whether the money is really there. The position is so telling that Government has to transfer £280,400, meagre as that is, from the C.D. and W. Scheme to supplement and buttress the depleted general revenue. Yet Government continues to describe this gloomy picture of its finances as rosy and buoyant. It continues to make a comparison of its revenue with those of other Governments and congratulates itself for spending on education a higher percentage of its Budget when compared with that of any other country in the world. Can Government prove to this House that it reached such a height by design or positive planning? It is clear that Government attained that height by sheer blunder and therefore it has no glory. The policy of marking time as I said is justified under the present circumstances but I caution Government to have foresight and let our politicians be also statesmen who can see visions and dream dreams.

Mr Speaker, I want to say something on this question of the appointment and recognition of Chiefs. I want to emphasise the fact that Government must not interfere unnecessarily with tradition in this issue. This is white man's Government; it is Westminster pattern here with us. It has no relation whatsoever to the tradition and life of the country but, I think we should marry the two sooner or later so that it might be a realistic thing to the people. The appointment of Chiefs, as I know it, should be done only by the people concerned—the king-makers according to

custom and usage. Then the appointee or appointees can be presented to Government through the appropriate channels for recognition. Government, of course, has no choice but to accept, honour and recognise. If Government can impeach any of these peoples' characters, then Government has a case. Otherwise, the procedure is the appointment and presentation by the people, and the recognition is by the Government. On this particular project, I implore Government for immediate implementation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I agree with one of the speakers who spoke about the decentralisation of function in the method of collecting tax. The Board of Internal Revenue is responsible for it at this time. But there was a system we adopted many years ago and which was fruitful. We had notices towards the close of last year to the effect that we, the Members of this House, should participate or assist in tax collection. I think it was due to the fact that the machinery was not doing its best. I feel, Sir, that we must really overhaul the machinery for collecting tax.

In closing, Sir, I want to draw the attention of the Minister of Transport to the need for a bridge over Atimbo. We have asked for this project over and over again.

**Hon. Members:** Federal! Federal!

**Rev. Efiang:** I know it is Federal but we want to go through the proper channel while we are here.

The building of this bridge was promised and it was said that nothing could be done until the volume of business in Calabar justified it. I want to say, Sir, that the volume of business now has more than justified it. I shall of course approach the hon. Minister of Transport personally to see that we contact the official source for implementation of this social service.

Mr Speaker, I beg to support.

**Mr M. E. Ogon (Ikom Division):** Even the Leader of the Opposition had to agree that the Budget is realistic in so far as it tries to equate expenditure on social services to the revenue resources of the Region. I think, Sir, this has two effects on the revenue of the

Region and I thought a reduction in our social services following the U.P.E. will stabilise expenditure in future. Secondly, Sir, I think that a cut now in our capital expenditure was meant to stabilise the level of taxation in the Region. I realise that the Budget has shown so much already. I would remind Members that good budgeting in the Eastern Region is bound to begin right now. We inherited a lot of bad things from the previous Governments. Why we are craving for so much capital expenditure, so many roads, is because the previous Governments and Commissioners of the Eastern Region did not provide sufficient capital expenditure as the other Regions had. This Region had to inherit the need to build a Supreme Court out of Regional funds whereas other Regions put their own Supreme Courts under Federal affair. Most of the buildings in the West and North were not put up there by the Regional Governments so that we were faced with the unfortunate heritage of lazy Governments. I would ask Members to support the Minister of Finance for it is a very difficult job to try to cut down expenditure in order to stabilise the resources of the Region. Sir, I agree also with the Leader of the Opposition that the economy of the Region will have to be stimulated, but I think he erred on one point. He erred where he assumed that the stimulation of the economy will come through Government expenditure. Granted there is a cut of £200,000 in our expenditure, I do not think that that will bring unemployment and poverty as has been mentioned here. Now before you can judge on whether there is unemployment or poverty you have got to work on statistics. We must have statistics to prove that there is more unemployment than there was five or ten years ago. I think £200,000 reduction in capital expenditure is more than offset by the increased expenditure on the Eastern Regional Marketing Board and the E.R.D.C. I happen to come from Ikom where the E.R.D.C. has a cocoa estate and I know that capital expenditure on the expansion of that farm alone amounts to thousands of pounds, and I know that the E.R.D.C. might be spending more than half a million pounds which is more than a cut in capital expenditure by the Minister of Finance. I attribute this to the wisdom of the Government because this will result on Government's directive. Sir, I will be very sorry if the Government will do anything at this stage to

[MR OGON]

affect the tax law or tax schedule. Let us face reality. This tax law is one of the best things we have ever done for this country; it is the most scientific, most up-to-date. The machinery of tax collection is very bad in that it is effective only in certain places.

There is a lot of clerical work. They only sit down in Enugu and issue long, long circular letters to the bush, and the circular letters are of course insulting, then the people will sit down and will not carry out the instructions of the circular. I say Sir, that the Minister must do something and do something at once to get the preservation of these Administrative Officers.

There is also a lot of unrealistic expenditure in the organisation of our civil service. I understand that our total revenue from taxes was only about 20 per cent. I might be wrong, but that is because of the deliberate policy of wastefulness. For instance, Sir, although we have an Accountant-General whose duty it is to co-ordinate, in the office we have a great number of untrained girls doing the accounts.

Again, Sir, there is a lack of co-operation between these Departments. The Board of Internal Revenue was unable to co-operate with the Printing Department and as a result we had to spend about £9,000 a year to print these tax collection forms in the C.M.S. Printing Press. This was because there was no co-operation between these Departments.

Again Sir, we have about 90 Tax Offices all over the Region, and in these offices we have clerical assistants. The reason for the apparent over-staffing of this Department is that people without qualifications are employed so that the work which could have been done by a very few number of qualified clerks is now being done by numerous untrained clerical assistants. I am asking the Minister to go through the staffing of this Department.

Sir, the real tax evaders are those in the lower income group and this is because the men at the top cannot go to the Administrative Officers and co-operate with them, with the result that the correct nominal roll of all taxable adults within the Divisions is not got. There is no sufficient co-operation. I am

told that we might have been getting from three to five million pounds of revenue from taxes in the Region.

Sir, I want to say a word about these Public Corporations. I would like to point out that these Corporations are not financed from Government revenue; they are financed with the Marketing Board vote and I will not like Government to make up its mind to wind up these Corporations at this stage. The complaints are due to continuous bad management.

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

*And it being 2.15 p.m., Mr Speaker interrupted the business and the Debate stood adjourned. Debate to be resumed Tomorrow.*

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Minister of Production (Dr M. I. Okpara):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Thursday, 3rd April at 10 a.m.

**The Minister of Transport (Mr P. O. Ururuka):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

#### ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

##### Visit to Nsukka

**The Premier (Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe):** Mr Speaker, I would like to announce to the House that out of respect to the opinions expressed by Gentlemen of the Government side and the Opposition of the desire to pay a visit to Nsukka, arrangement has been made by my Office so that three Ministry cars will be available for them to pay a visit there during the Easter holidays. The Parliamentary Secretary or the Chief Secretary to the Premier will be able to work out the details. I understand too from my hon. colleague, the Minister of Commerce, that he will be very pleased to co-operate with those concerned. I thought that I should take this opportunity to make this announcement.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Adjourned, accordingly, at sixteen minutes past two o'clock p.m.*



## EASTERN HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 3rd April, 1958

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

## PRAYERS

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

## PAPER

**Presented:** Report of the Investigating Committee into the closure of Schools belonging to the Education Missionary Society. (*The Minister of Information, temporarily holding the Portfolio of Education*).

Ordered: That the said Paper do lie upon the Table and to be printed.

## ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

## Grants-in-aid

35. **Mr G. C. Okeya** asked the Minister of Education, what were the grant formulae or systems of grant distribution during the period 1954-58, and what was the percentage of grant *per capita* in Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and Training Colleges.

**The Minister of Education:** The grant formulae and the grant *per capita* in respect of Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and Teacher Training Institutions were as follows:—

## Primary Schools

In 1954, 1955, 1956 primary grants were calculated as shown in the Education Ordinance 1952 (No. 17 of 1952) Grant-in-Aid Regulations 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20. The rates of Assumed Local Contribution applied are set out in Table IV of the same Regulations. These were revised in 1955 the result being an increase in Assumed Local Contribution. In 1957 there was U.P.E. that is all approved class teachers were paid full salary, plus another expenses allowance. In 1958 new and higher Assumed Local Contributions were introduced to Standards I to VI, as already published. The *per capita* grant per pupil in primary schools is as follows:—

1954 *per capita* ... £1 16s 0d.

1955 *per capita* ... £1 3s 0d.

1956 *per capita* ... £1 7s 0d.

1957 *per capita*. No figure available until after March 31st and final payments. It is not possible at present to give a *per capita* figure

for 1958 as it is not yet known precisely what the annual grant will be nor is it known how many children will be in school until later in the year.

## Secondary Schools

## Grant Formula—

From 1954 to end of 1957 grants were paid on two formulae (*See Education Law 1956—Grant-in-Aid Regulations 1957—Regulations 16 and 17*):

(i) *1st Formula.*—Regulation 16—Annual net expenditure (as in School Budget approved by Board of Governors and hon. Minister), less fee income deducted as A.L.C. (£9 x 25 per class).

(ii) *2nd Formula.*—Regulation 17—Salaries of staff + expenses for expatriate staff + allowances less fee income deducted as A.L.C. + sum for other expenses (£3 x 25 per class). Some schools were paid on 1st formula (mostly old established schools) and some on 2nd formula. It is not understood what is meant by “percentage of grant *per capita*”. I give below grant *per capita* in Secondary Schools:—

1954 ...	£15.4	
1955 ...	£21.7	(increase due Gorsuch salaries award)
1956 ...	£22.4	
1957 ...	£23.1	
1958 ...	not yet known.	

## Teacher Training Institutions

*Grant Formula.*—Grant to Grade II and Grade III Teacher Training Institutions has been calculated on the following basis:—

(a) Staff salaries and Allowances (Table X of the Grants-in-Aid Regulations 1952) +

(b) Capitation grant of £22 per student, plus

(c) Book grant of £2 per student.

The *per capita* cost has been as follows:—

1954-55 ...	£38.88
1955-56 ...	£43.19
1956-57 ...	£61.83
1957-58 ...	£51.79

## Metal Industry

99. **Mr S. E. K. Iwueke** asked the Minister of Commerce, who are the students sent overseas for study of the Metal Industry, and from what Divisions do they come.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Commerce (Mr E. W. Udonkim):** I am directed to answer as follows:—

The six trainees who have been sent to study the fabrication of metal windows and doors in the factory of Williams and Williams Ltd. are:

Mr E. Umoren from Ikot Ekpene,  
Mr T. Onuoha from Bende,  
Mr C. Eli from Degema,  
Mr P. Ebong from Uyo,  
Mr E. Chike from Port Harcourt,  
Mr C. Enubuja from Onitsha.

All are former students at the Government Trade Centre, Enugu.

#### Road Accidents

115. **Mr S. E. K. Iwueke** asked the Minister of Transport, whether he realises the fact that in most road corners of this Region where accidents have occurred, the causes were chiefly due to lack of visibility; if so, what arrangements is he making to remove this cause.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Transport (Mr D. O. Anu):** I am directed by the hon. Minister to answer as follows:—

I am indeed aware that many accidents occur at corners. I agree that some of these might not take place if the visibility was better, but I know that very few would take place at all if all drivers kept to the correct side of the road.

In the construction and reconstruction of all roads by my Ministry, alignment and visibility are catered for as matters of the utmost importance consistent with funds available.

#### Road Programme

118. **Mr S. E. K. Iwueke** asked the Minister of Transport, if he will make a statement on the expanded road programme and name the major new works which are to be undertaken under it, indicating which works are to be given priority.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Transport (Mr D. O. Anu):** I am directed to answer as follows:—

The Road Construction Programme is at present under review by Government and I

regret that I am unable at present to make the statement sought by the hon. Member.

It will be appreciated that a large part of this programme is being financed from Colonial Development and Welfare funds. Negotiations with the Secretary of State are proceeding at the present time.

#### The Acquisition of Awgu Government Station Land

179. **Mr G. I. Oko, M.B.E.** asked the Minister of Town Planning, when and for how much was the Awgu Government Station land acquired; to whom was the money paid; how much was paid for the economic trees destroyed thereon and those still standing; if no money was paid at all, what was the reason.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Town Planning (Chief S. E. Onukogu):** I am directed to answer as follows:—

Government obtained a formal title to the Government Station at Awgu in 1923. No compensation or rent is paid: it is stated in the relevant Agreement, dated 24th November, 1923, that the grantors recognised that it was to the interest and benefit of their people that the land should be used for the purpose of administering the Government: the land was therefore granted free of rent for so long as it shall continue to be used for such purpose.

No records are available to show how much compensation, if any, was paid for economic trees on the land.

#### Plots Allocation Committee

180. **Mr R. O. Ukuta, M.B.E.** asked the Minister of Town Planning, whether in the interest of all concerned, he will not consider the advisability of appointing a Plots Allocation Committee comprising reputable local citizens and representatives of Government other than Land Officers for every Township where there is Crown Land to undertake the allocation of plots on directives issued by the Minister.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Town Planning (Chief S. E. Onukogu):** I am directed to answer as follows:—

Sir, the hon. Member's suggestion is already being tried out in connexion with the forthcoming allocation of plots at Orlu. If this

experiment proves to be successful, I will certainly consider the advisability of extending it to other Townships in the Region.

### ORDER OF THE DAY

#### The 1958-59 Eastern Region Appropriation Bill—Second Reading

(Third and last Allotted day)

*Order read for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question (28th March)—That the Bill be now read a Second time.*

*Question again proposed.*

**Mr Speaker:** I gather from the Leader of the House that many Members prefer to speak to this debate. Although I had originally intended that Government Bench should have the whole of the day, it has been decided to let Members speak up to 12 o'clock noon. I gather in connection with that, that Members prefer that their speeches should be limited to 10 minutes, and I intend to stick to that.

**Mr M. E. Ogon (Ikom Division):** Mr Speaker, yesterday I started by thanking the Minister of Finance on his record Budget; and rather than call it a "How for do" Budget, I would say it is a "Good for all" Budget in the sense that if the Minister wants to continue to satisfy our requests for more roads he is bound to increase taxation. I think it is for the good of everybody that this Budget should mark time now rather than increase taxation in the Region. Yesterday also, I was misunderstood by many Members when I criticised the running of the Department of the Board of Internal Revenue. I seize this opportunity, Sir, to say that I have every respect for the knowledge and ability of the present holder and person manning that Department. I was misunderstood as attacking him personally. I want to say, Sir, that my hope is that with a bit of reorganisation on the machinery of tax collection and with more effective taxation, we will be able to collect more than £3.5 million against the present day figure and would be able also to reduce the 20 per cent rebate in collecting tax. I said also yesterday, Sir, that this Budget is realistic in the sense that if the Minister continues to supply all our requirements, we might be faced with presenting a deficit Budget. Also, I did say that there is nothing wrong in a deficit Budget because all

over the world, the United States for instance, for the past 15 years have never balanced their Budget because Government expenditure is different from that of a trading company. Information has it that Britain after the war never balanced their Budget. It took them a long time to balance their Budget. So, deficit is not a wrong theory in public finance at all. I would congratulate the Minister for concentrating all the funds for our social services on the U.P.E. in order to be able to present a balanced Budget and I would call that a piece of budgetary wizardry.

**An Opposition Member:** Is it not "how for do budget"?

**Mr Ogon:** It is not "how for do". It is "good for all". (*Laughter*). Sir, while the Minister thanks the staff for presenting the Budget, I would like him to take into consideration the fact that at present, we have very few Nigerians in this Region who can adequately man the Ministry of Finance and I would want the Minister of Finance to have a Departmental training scheme outside the Scholarship Board for people who will man our public finances. This is a very serious problem and training should be the task of the Minister for a very long time. We ought to be able to look round and take a few—about 12 young Easterners and attach them to the Colonial Office to study public finance so that as the years go by, we do not have to depend on the pleasure or displeasure of any foreign Government. I will say, Sir, that the time has come to train more people in public finance. Again Sir, looking at the way we spend our money over the last year on rural hospitals and on roads, I think we should have more value even on education than we have on the money we spend. Let the Government make sure that when thinking of a building, it is according to specification. Let us make sure that when a road is being tarred, it is according to specification. Take the Abakaliki-Enugu road. I think it is a trunk "A" Road. This road was tarred in 1953 and between that time and now, there is not one inch of the original tar that has not been replaced. I would like the Government to undertake a scheme of road building by a loan fund. If you travel overseas to the United States, you see roads which are constructed there—roads which will be there for generations to come. Do you not know that when the Romans left Britain, some of their

[MR OGON]

roads built years ago are still in Britain today. I am quite sure that two years after the British have left this country, no original tar on the roads will remain. We ought to have a new system of road building. If we take a loan of about £10 million, I will like it. Let us have a system of constructing bridges on the roads and let the drivers who pass there pay road toll to cover the expenses. Until the cost of the whole scheme has been recovered, it suggests that every driver will be willing to pay for plying on the road. If you can lay down in Ogoja Province, a road that will remain for 25 years, I am sure that children who are growing up now, in 25 years, will still be willing to pay towards the refund of the loan because a lasting road has been built for them and they can reap the benefit. Our roads are so badly tarred that by the time the contractor is doing the twelfth mile, the P.W.D. is amending the first mile.

I want to say that I support the principle of public Corporation. As a socialist, I think that public Corporation is a very necessary part of our belief. I do not quarrel with the fact that Government set up these Corporations. I think, Sir, it is because we have . . . (*Interruption*) . . . so that it is impossible to allow a Corporation to work for two years without criticism because I do not remember the Eastern Region having a Corporation here that has not got a counterpart in the Western Region. For our Tourist Corporation, they have the Management Board of the Catering Resthouses. We have the E.R.D.C. and they have the Western Regional Development Board.

My whole trouble, Sir, is management. There may be one or two Corporations, I think, which ought to be made Government Departments immediately, because the need for them has passed and I think Government should turn them into Government Departments. When the time comes to speak on that, I will mention them. But for the other ones, let there be good faith in them but I will ask the Government that if there is any inefficient management, even if they are our friends or brothers, they should be removed. I will also say that if we get good management and give them sufficient amount of money and appeal to our brothers, they will be willing to allow these people to work without a lot of

unnecessary review and detrimental interruption, until the annual accounts come when we shall be able to lay our criticisms.

I have to say that to every country public Corporation is a problem. I was listening to the B.B.C. the other day and the financial position of the U.K. was announced at the end of the financial year as £400,000,000,000 general revenue balance of Government Expenditure and on Nationalised Industries, the Government of Britain is running at a loss of £600,000,000,000.

I have to say that the means of production in our society should be left in the hands of Government but should be under good management.

In winding up, Sir, I have to say that in spite of the difficulties of the Minister of Finance, he has produced not only a buoyant budget but a "good for all" budget. It is a matter of pride, Sir, that our ship of state is steadily plying on an even keel; the distant horizon may be blurred and threatening, but our pilot holds firmly to the ladder. Under his experienced eye we are sure to arrive at the shores of everlasting happiness for this Region.

Sir, I beg to support.

**Rev. M. D. Opara (Owerri Division):** Mr Speaker, I rise to support the Appropriation Bill; and in doing so, I have to thank the Government for appointing the Attorney-General who is an indigenous Barrister.

I have something to say about thieves. Now that we have our own Attorney-General and the Minister of Justice and we are enjoying our quasi-independence, I would like to ask—"are we marching to this independence with thieves?" In the rural areas and sometimes in the urban areas, people's lives and property are not always safe. I am suggesting to the hon. the Minister of Justice if he would make it a law that these thieves when convicted are sent to Fernando Po. In Fernando Po they will have to work hard and will have no time to steal.

I have another point to make, Sir, and that is about the new set up with reference to provincial status. I want to say, Sir, that where the

people agree to join together, they should be allowed to do so. I am speaking with particular reference to the people of Egbema in Ahoada Division. They want to be joined to Oguta. One hon. Member from Ahoada said something about the people wanting to remain in the Ahoada Division. This is not correct. Before 1929 the people of Egbema were under Owerri Division; they attended the same court at Owerri. Egbema is just six miles away from Oguta and Ahoada is some forty miles away from it. These people have cultural relationship with the people of Oguta. I see no reason why they should not be allowed to join with their kith and kin. I am asking the Government to allow the people to choose which of the two places they wish to join.

Now, Sir, I want to correct one erroneous notion which Members must have had when Dr Obonna spoke. He mentioned something about the highest bidder and I think many hon. Members did not understand him. He was not talking about bribery and corruption in getting amenities. He was trying to say that in the distribution of amenities Owerri Division was not being well treated. The Members from Owerri always think that the most favourite son was always given something.

**An hon. Member:** Who is the favourite son?

**Rev. Opara:** You! He was trying to show that the Owerri people are not at all well treated.

One hon. Member from Onitsha spoke about the sum of money allocated for the Ogidi waterworks and said that God helps those who help themselves. In Owerri, we have the same water pump installation. The pump got out of order about two years ago. Two hon. Ministers who were on tour promised to help and although the local community collected money for the purpose, the Government did nothing to encourage them. During the recent women riots, this was one of the slogans sung around the villages—"We collected our own money and the Government would not help us. What kind of Government is this?"

**Hon. Members:** Sing it!

**Rev. Opara:** I will sing it afterwards. (*Laughter*). I do not see the reason why in such a big village like Mbieri where the people have started to do everything for themselves, Government should not show any interest. I am asking the Government to aid the Councilors and Legislators in that village because people have begun to hate them because the Government has not helped them.

I now want to say something about scholarships. My people of Owerri Division complain that they are always given scholarships for vocational studies—two year course—and those from other Divisions used to go for medicine, education and so on. So when scholarships are being distributed our people should not be given only vocational scholarships. It must be mixed. I am saying what is paining my people and they have asked me to say it here. (*Hear! Hear!*).

Another thing, Sir, is that I support what the Chief Whip said about road making. The Awka-Orlu-Owerri Road is now being tarred. I heard the Minister the other day making a statement when he was answering a question that about four miles have been tarred. I wonder if he had gone through that road to see for himself whether there is anything like tarring. Even the former good road is being narrowed and I wonder if this is the road to be tarred. I warn the Ministry, if our money is to be spent for roadmaking it must be properly spent.

I have to say something again, Sir, about the local government elections and representation. My own people of Owerri have asked me to say that in each local council or county council or district council the representation must be on population basis. It must not be on each local council having equal number because in doing that it seems the minority might sometime rule the majority. I know of a district council in Owerri Division which is to be a County Council. One village in that locality has about one-third of the population of that area and the County Council would have five local councils. If they were to have five councillors each, it comes to twenty-five. If two were to join they might one day subdue this large village. I would suggest, Sir, that the Government may consider to run local government on population basis.

[REV. OPARA]

Another thing, Sir, is about the Shell Company in Owerri. When the Shell Company came to Owerri it brought incentives into the minds of the people. Many young men came down and were employed. So many houses were built at Owerri and now that the Shell Company is leaving, we are wondering what we might do with these young men around the town. Our people are asking that Government might consider establishing a Trade Centre or a Technical School for our people in Owerri, considering that the Government school at Owerri cannot absorb the great number of students out of school. With the number of pupils that comes out from Owerri Division schools every year and even from the Owerri secondary schools, I think Owerri Division is worth a place for establishing a technical or trade centre.

**An hon. Member:** How much tax do you collect?

**Rev. Opara:** We collect double your tax.

**Mr K. Kiri (Degema Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I rise to speak in support of the Appropriation Bill, and I wish to make the following observations. The hon. the Minister of Finance has been fair enough and bold in giving us the true picture of what we hope to achieve. He points to contraction of projects, concentration of efforts and economy in all expenditures. I believe, Sir, he has given us this warning because to him the future does not seem to be too bright, and effort should be made to improve our revenue.

Fortunately, he has recommended boldly the taxing of diesel oil. I agree to it, but I would suggest further consideration as to the amount fixed, because as a Member from Onitsha rightly said, if the amount is high enough to encourage people to go to the Western Region or any other Region and get diesel oil from there and sell same in this Region at a profit, surely more people will be engaged in such a paying traffic. Mr Speaker, I call the attention of hon. Members that it is high time we legalised lottery or gambling in this Region. I know that most of us are religiously inclined but we cannot fight shy of our responsibility. It is not as yet possible to illegalise lottery here due to obvious reasons

and also because our people will find their way out. I believe that if gambling is legalised, we will realise a sizeable sum from it in this Region.

I also call the attention of the Minister charged with Production to investigate the methods whereby he can improve not only the quantity but the volume of our basic export product, the palm oil. Some Members have suggested that seedling should be distributed. If it will not be very costly I suggest that seedling be distributed to co-operative units and not to individuals since the intention of Government is to follow co-operative system of economy. Again, I suggest that it is high time we looked into other possible industries. We do not have to wait for expatriates to come over here to improve our economic resources. There are basic industries that local capital could be employed or Government could go into partnership with local entrepreneurs—industries such as the establishment of sugar cane estates, cocoa, copper, and other economic crops. It will not be advisable to expect expatriates to invest in such fields because we will require several acres of land and there would arise the problem of land. But with us it is easy to encourage local Governments to acquire several acres of land and introduce such plantation system of agriculture.

I also call your attention to the question of taxing soft drinks. It may be a penny or two per bottle. I realise that the tendency of people now is to go on consuming more of soft drinks. The idea of taxation is not only to tax those who can afford to pay but also to tax certain luxuries in which the community is so highly interested. That could probably bring more revenue than taxes imposed on commodities like petrol due to limited number of users at present. I do believe that there are over a million bottles of soft drinks that are being consumed in this Region annually. If you impose 1d or 2d per bottle of soft drink you will realise a sizeable sum of money than the £42,000 estimated from tax on diesel oil. I would like the Minister to consider and find out figures from the various distributing agents of soft drinks.

I call your attention to the improvement of fishing industry of the creeks. Unfortunately the Minister charged with this responsibility

has followed the policy of Biblical story which says that "he that has, more will be added to him; he that has less, that which he has shall be taken away from him."

Instead of paying more attention and spending more to improve fisheries in the areas where nature has left fishes to be, the Minister has spent money and energy in transplanting fish from lakes and ponds to the mainland. From the Report on Fisheries 1957-58, all attempts have failed and we the people of the Rivers find it difficult to understand why, for goodness sake, the Ministry found it convenient to remove its headquarters from the creek to Aba. Is the Minister aware that the population engaged in fishing is more in the creeks—at least 80 per cent of the people in creeks take to fishing. May I call the attention of the Minister in charge that it is regrettable that since he took up office or for the past four years no Minister charged with that Portfolio has visited the creek areas. We are completely neglected and fishing is the main source of our revenue; yet we are called upon to pay tax like other people who receive their due share of amenities provided by the Government.

I will suggest also, Sir, that there are certain industries that we are blessed to have by nature. These industries are more suitable in the Rivers area than in any other area in the Region; for example sugar and salt industries; and no attempt has been made to establish these. We hear from the Northern Region that Sugar Industry is going to be established at Lokoja. I have taken pains to experiment on the quality of the sugar found in Lokoja with that in Degema, Brass and Ahoada Divisions and have discovered that in taste, etc, ours is in all respects better. I draw my conclusions from the knowledge and from what other people experienced in such industry say. We stand in no way at a disadvantage when compared to the Lokoja site. I cannot see why no effort has been made to improve this basic industry that suits the creek areas.

I call the attention of the Ministry charged with Forestry to note that at present attention is given to forests in the mainland only and not a single scheme for the mangrove forests which are of great use both for the present and future needs of this Region. Money and time have been spent in experimenting on mangrove dyes at Aba Research Centre before

the said Centre was shifted to Oshodi Research Centre for the Federal Ministry of Commerce and Industries. Up till today we have no result of the experiment carried on at Aba pertaining to the dyes. The Minister, I believe, is aware that year in, year out, tons of mangrove wood are being used by the Colliery and if preservation is not encouraged, some years to come we might have to import mangrove wood. So I would suggest that the Minister should take note of my timely warning.

Again, Sir, I want to talk about roads. I believe roads are very essential both for the evacuation of our produce and as a means of communication; so are rivers and creeks; but unfortunately this Region has not spent a penny for the improvement of creeks which are used by three-quarters of a million people as a means of communication and for the evacuation of produce. May I call the attention of the Minister to consider if he feels it is not necessary to spend much money on the creeks, he should advise the councils in such areas to improve the creeks and charge it on the Government for reimbursement as it is being done by Local Government bodies in the matter of construction of roads. After all, this is our only means of communication and we cannot be left alone to suffer when others are enjoying better roads and other facilities.

**Mr P. U. Amaefunah (Awka Division):** Mr Speaker, I rise to support the Appropriation Bill and I have certain remarks to make. The Budget is a modest one based on caution, thrift and sacrifice to the detriment of our Secondary School leavers most of whom would face unemployment. The Budget reflects the sacrifice we are called upon to make towards Regional Self-Government as huge sums of money had been spent on Lump Sum Compensation, on education, on capital projects, add on running other social services without outside aid.

During the U.P.E. trouble, I criticised the Board of Internal Revenue, which is the financial livewire of the Regional Government. It is very vital that Government should purge the Board of Internal Revenue of old retired pensioners and old crooks drifted from Local Government Bodies and man the Board with our first-class, second-class and third-class clerks from the Administration, because they

[MR AMAEFUNAH]

have accumulated some experience in Administration, are more responsible and are working towards an incentive. The more vacancies would be created for our Secondary School leavers. Unless the personnel co-operate with the District Officers and the Local Councillors who in turn must be allowed to receive rebates on Schedule II and Schedule I taxes, tax assessment and collection must at the initial stages create varied and various difficulties in the rural areas. Some measure of responsibility must be brought to bear on landlords and landladies in urban areas where tax evasion is rampant. They must be forced by Law to give the whereabouts of their tenants who pack bag and baggage or vamoose after assessment or else pay their tax. The cost of education has eaten deep into the Regional coffers and hence the wild allegation that the Regional Government faces financial crisis. Mr Speaker, I fail to understand this because no approved voucher has ever been dishonoured by any of the Government Treasuries in the Region. For all I know, it would spell doom for any Government that dips its hands into its reserve funds. The Government has always to provide for a rainy day. Government should try as much as possible to divest itself of direct responsibility for secondary education as a sum of £10 million was spent on primary education in two financial years. I humbly submit that the Assumed Local Contribution for Secondary Schools now raised from £9 to £16 per student should be worked on the basis of £16 x 30 x 10 for a full-fledged Secondary School provided that admission into a class should be raised to 35 instead of 30. Government gains; efficiency is not lowered and this provision caters for a maximum number. It is true that the Eastern Region has the largest number of Secondary Schools in the Federation of Nigeria—68 in number—but over 1,500 pupils always register for entrance examination in any Secondary School fighting for 60 vacancies. Many, therefore, fall by the way-side and the best brains are wasted in the desert air. Government Secondary Schools and Training Colleges suffer from squandermania and all their teachers are Education Officers in classroom; e.g., £100,000 was given as capital grants to Umuahia in 1956-57 and this is more than enough to grant-aid 60 Voluntary Agency Secondary Schools in one financial year.

I am yet to be convinced that they do better than D.M.G.S., C.K.C. or W.M.G.S. Government should hand over these schools to Local Government bodies or Voluntary Agencies as the Government policy was to limit public spending in order to give the revenues a breathing space and allow our reserves to recover from the heavy drain caused by trying out U.P.E.

Mr Speaker, the Government will always lose revenue by way of licences unless it keeps motor licences at par with licences in other Governments of the Federation. Lorries with open buildings should be licensed in the Eastern Region because V.I.O.s often refuse to license and pass such lorries for roadworthiness due to strict instructions from Enugu. Yet they ply our roads. Drivers depopulate the Eastern Region and send the tax-payers to heaven or to hell prematurely because the requisite educational qualification they have not, traffic courtesy to them is a thing of the past, not to dim headlights as a signal to an approaching vehicle and reckless driving to them is "might is right". Drivers trifle with the safety of an approaching vehicle which carries over 40 passengers by neglecting to give the necessary signal in order to avoid collision or crash. It is worse when the approaching vehicle is a private one driven by what they call "I-go-drive myself" driver. Some of these die-hard type of drivers go by the name "Ogbu-na dozen", "Olika Bus", "Igwe-Oku". In my view other penalty should be imposed in addition to heavy fines such as suspension of their licences for a long number of years. All drivers fear the "white college". Such maximum penalties provided by law should always be imposed without leniency—that is the language they can understand and learn from the hard school of experience.

The Government hospitals in the Region have earned a bad name. Drugs and stores are sold to unknown hands and patients are always recommended by Doctors to purchase drugs and penicillin injections from friendly chemists for treatment. Diseases are sometimes not well diagnosed before treatment. Loss of revenue caused by almoners is heavy e.g., £1,659 19s 5d stood last year as loss on medical fees, £1,166 13s 4d as theft of 5,000 vials Unicef penicillin, 1,190 bottles streptomycin, 1,000 bottles penicillin from Port



Harcourt. A stronger and stricter control should be evolved as the Medical Department returns always constituted the biggest problem.

Government should encourage Voluntary Agency hospitals by heavy grants as these appeal more to the public and the sick.

Mr Speaker, Sir, losses of revenue are common in Government Treasuries in the Region because of the get-rich-quick mania e.g., Ahoada theft sub-treasury £1,524 3s 2d, Owerri £1,000, Orlu theft £7,878 9s 4d. Government should evolve a stronger system of control over these treasuries.

Mr Speaker, coming to Awka Division, I feel that we are always relegated to the background as far as appointments to Boards and Corporations are concerned; but of course, it is common knowledge that the patient dog eats the fattest bones; and also, he who laughs last laughs the best; but Mr Speaker, most parts of Awka Division are arid and it worries my people why the Government has not deemed it fit to give them water supplies from the Water Supply Scheme.

There is a slogan sung against Government in Awka Division. Mr Speaker, I will sing it in Ibo if I am allowed.

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

**Mr Amaefunah:** Mr Speaker, I want to call the attention of Government to the fact that the proposal to turn Awka Primary School to a Secondary School has not been implemented by Government. I wonder how soon that will be done.

**Mr V. K. Onyeri (Port Harcourt Division):** Mr Speaker, I rise to speak on the Appropriation Bill, and I will make a few observations. Mr Speaker, at a time like this, hon. Members are called upon either to praise or rebuke the Government in the way they have actually piloted the financial ship of state for the past year. For me, I think that in a state like this, hon. Members will have to state whether the Government for the past year had certain difficulties that put them in a position that made them not to come up to their expectations. I have seen the Government of last year as people who have actually taken pains to do the necessary things which the people of the Region require of them. (*Hear! Hear!*). I have

to praise the Minister of Finance for the able way, in spite of odds and difficulties, he has been able to present the budget. £13 million, hon. Members is not 13 million pence.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have to advise the Government to see to it that we appoint an Economic Planning Adviser. I think it will help the Government a lot if we have this officer no matter what we pay him and we can get him from any corner of the world, be it from England, America, Japan, or Asia provided Mr Speaker, that this Economic Planning Adviser will be somebody who will have the best interest of Africans at heart. I know that it will yield much dividend to the Government if they appoint such an adviser.

We have two types of communities in the Region—agricultural community and what I will call industrial community. Let us state that our agricultural community has been provided by nature. What then about what we might call our industrial community. Here again, I will say that we in this Region have not taken care of our man-power. I will say too that the Minister of Welfare and the Government as such will have to approach the Federal Government to see that we abolish this Treaty entered into about the enslavement of our people in the Spanish Island of Fernando Po. Since it is the question of unemployment which drives them to Fernando Po, why can we not approach our Marketing Board, through the E.R.D.C. to establish some of those estates in which our people are employed over there and let us pay our people here and retain them and at the same time collect the taxes which they will pay. (*Hear! Hear!*).

Mr Speaker, Sir, I have come again to this question of industrialisation because, I know that in the World Money Market, the whole thing has tightened up. Suppose we look round for I know that we have so many friends in the Region to mobilise capital—let me take for example the U.A.C.—suppose we take some of these firms into consideration and call a round table conference with them, and then in such conference, we thank them for the good work they have done in the past, and then ask them to help in the industrialisation of this Region; certainly, I think, Sir, that after such a conference that these firms will like to dump their money in the industrialisation of this Region. I am begging

[MR ONYERI]

very seriously, Mr Speaker, that our people should not see these big combines as people who are out to sap us of our wealth. I, personally, have seen them as friends because they are giving scholarships to our people and they employ many of our people who could not have been employed by the Government because of lack of funds.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I now come to this question of credit facilities for traders. Here in this country we have big traders and petty traders. The big traders have more facilities; they go to the Banks to raise loans which they repay. But the small traders have not got this facility. I am suggesting that the Government should establish a Co-operative Society or a Loan Board, where money could be dumped and loaned out to these small traders. If a small trader can raise about £500 he could be given another £500 in order to clear his goods.

Let me draw the attention of the Minister of Town Planning to Crown Lands in the Region and say that we have not made full use of our Crown Lands. I want to call the attention of the Minister concerned that it is now time we appointed something like a Boundary Commission which will go into the present boundaries of some of our urban areas and see whether there can be any adjustments to increase the administrative boundaries of some of these urban areas. Port Harcourt is one of these Divisions which need extension at the moment. The Port Harcourt Town Council made this request to His Excellency the Governor-General of the Federation of Nigeria, the Governor of the Region, the Premier and the Government of the Region. I think it is now time that this Boundaries Commission was appointed, so that if there was any dispute between Port Harcourt and the Ahoada Divisions, it could settle it and give Port Harcourt some breathing space to expand.

Before I wind up, Sir, I would like to congratulate the Shell B.P. for the able way they have been trying to discover oil in the Region and I hope that we will give them all the necessary encouragement they require if we are called upon to do so as a Government.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I support the Appropriation Bill,

**Mr M. C. Awgu (Awka Division):** Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity given me to speak.

First of all, I have to thank the hon. the Minister of Finance for the able way he has prepared the Budget, and for the unqualified humility with which he presented it. I now want to refer to some of the points raised.

I must first refer to the Lenten Season (*laughter*). The hon. the Minister of Finance made reference to it because he did not play politics, but was guided by the intuition to sound a warning trumpet for a return to God now that we have our backs against the wall.

All is not well with the East, and never shall it be until certain Eastern politicians no longer mask falsehood in semblance of truth. They are mostly hypocrites whose stock in trade is to deceive the masses. We have no one else to run to for deliverance except to God. Sacrifice which was emphasised by the hon. Minister, was not only that of finance but also that of our carnal selves. Things have come to such a pitch as we trustees of the Region in this hon. House must think twice. Sacrifices really are important. We must always remember that in the final analysis, the success of the Government of the Eastern Region will not be measured in terms of individual gains but in terms of the happiness of our people generally. Again, when we think and talk of sacrifices let us remember that gold and riches and luxury there may be, but what are these, Mr Speaker, if there is an aching heart? We are called upon to shoulder the responsibility of millions of people of the Eastern Region—eighty-four of us. I think we are answerable to our conscience at least. The hon. the Premier has done so much in making some cuts in the Ministers' salaries, but I disagree with one of the speakers here, who said that the floor Members would suffer no cuts. I say so because it is more blessed to give than to receive. What I must stress is this, Sir: as we do not quarrel about electricity bills which Ministers no longer pay, because they are necessary evils, we shall also ask Government to consider the possibility of consolidating Members' sitting fees and then let our salaries, £800 per annum, be cut by five per cent so that when people of the Eastern Region hear of Ministers cutting their salaries

they would also hear about us cutting our own salaries. (*Hear! Hear!*).

Mr Speaker, I shall now come to education. Previous speakers on this vital subject said that it would be good for us to hand over our educational matters to foreign Voluntary Agencies. Yes; let me ask if we are serious about getting our independence? No nation will really be free when its schools are under the control of foreign agencies. The destiny of any nation is determined by its schools and its religion.

When we think of growing towards nationhood, our children must be taught in such a way as to have the spirit of nationalism. (*Hear! Hear!*). We must tell our pupils stories about the warriors of Abam and Ohafia. You remember during the last war that the war leaders of England were saying about England of Elizabeth, England of John Hawkins, England of Drake and so on. When and where are you going to speak of your own warriors? You will see that there is need for our children to be taught such things in our schools. I am afraid your army will be easily sold away to their enemies, if your sons join the army for mercenary purpose and not for patriotism.

Another thing, Sir, is that we have always lost sight of morals in our African way. We do not mean by education to teach the children shapes of letters and tricks of numbers, leaving them to turn their arithmetic into roguery and their literature into writing love letters. We want our children to behave, and that is what is lacking today in the Eastern Region. We have imbibed much of the British way of life, and I thank the British for that; but I want whatever we have got in the past to be developed and improved upon in relation to the African culture now that we are striving for our new democracy.

Mr Speaker, previous speakers said that it would be good if Government Schools be handed over to foreign Voluntary Agencies. This can never be done, Sir; the need which the Awka and the Ajalli Government Schools fulfil in our Division can never be over emphasised. They have very great future. These are the only State Schools we have in the Region, and I think it is most unwise for a nationalist to think of handing them over to foreign agencies. We are hoping for the time when

education will gradually fall into the hands of the people themselves. I am asking the Government to consider very seriously as to when the Awka Government School as promised should be converted to a pure Secondary Grammar School.

Another very important matter is about the Judicial Department which is under no Ministerial control. We are very happy, but I am sorry to observe that there are flies in the ointment of this very high and great institution. Some bailiffs in some of the Magistrate Courts are trying to make this difficulty for the Magistrates in the carrying on of their work promptly and in time. There are some summonses issued since last year—October or November—that have not been served up till now, and the summonses are there with the bailiffs for reasons best known to them. I wonder then whether by freedom we mean servitude in the Eastern Region. We are now selling our conscience for a mess of pottage; we are now building a new Nigeria and must pick and choose our bricks. I hope the hon. the Attorney-General will save the situation.

**Mr H. U. Akpabio (Uyo Division):** Mr Speaker, I rise to support the Appropriation Bill, and I am particularly happy that I am here to take part in the deliberations of the House.

I remember, Sir, in 1946, I was driving with a friend, an alien, and he asked me "What is the percentage of literacy in this country"? I said "about 2 per cent.", and he said "seven hundred years more to go". This is why I say that I am very happy because this is the first year of our independence or some kind of internal self-government.

At this point I have to congratulate our Premier for showing the light and the people of this country have found the way.

My Speaker, Sir, my hon. Friend the Member for Port Harcourt mentioned something about Fernando Po. I was surprised when I read the new Treaty signed by our Federal Government with the Spanish Government even after the opposition of the Members of this House last year. I read through the clauses and they looked very beautiful, very nice and well written; but I have my doubts, Sir, because I have never seen Spanish Government respecting Treaties. I believe also that

[MR H. U. AKPABIO]

though our people went over there for investigation, they had not all the facts. One thing we have to note is the health of the people who have returned from Fernando Po. Most of these people go there in good health, but they come back sick people. Some of them are disabled and could work no more. Therefore, Mr Speaker, I am suggesting that this treaty should be cancelled. After all, it does not affect the whole country. It affects Eastern Nigeria more. In fact, it affects the people of the Southern part of this Region more than the people in the extreme North. Here in the budget we have £176,000 in the Estimate, but we have 40,000 people there or more. We have not the complete records of our people there, and if they are all here in Nigeria, and if they pay £1 10s per head we shall collect about £60,000 from them in tax. If we add this amount to indirect taxes, we may have something more than £176,000. Our Government has got the power to acquire land and we have spare land all over the Region. The Government can acquire part of this land and settle these people there. We have the same climatic conditions with Fernando Po and we can grow cocoa here. Apart from paying taxes they can help in producing food for local consumption and for export. The Government should therefore consider seriously cancelling this agreement. This is blood contract bordering on slavery.

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Member for Uyo said that the money given to the Marketing Board is meant mainly to stabilise the price of palm produce. Mr Speaker, Sir, may I quote from the report of the Marketing Board.

The hon. Member was trying to misdirect and to misrepresent facts by saying that the funds of the Marketing Board were mainly and solely meant to stabilise the price of palm oil. I know that this is good; the price of oil should be brought on the same level with the prices obtaining in the other Regions of the Federation. At the same time, we have some other things to do with money.

“It is the duty of the Board to secure the most favourable arrangement for the purchase of palm oil and its evacuation to ports of shipment, and this can be done by the allocation of funds to any Corporation established in the Eastern Region under the Law, or

to any Local Government body in the Region, in order to promote the development of our existing industries to the benefit and prosperity of the producers and the areas of production”.

I think this has given the Marketing Board a wider power rather than having money only to stabilise the price of oil.

Of course, the hon. Member said: “It is cleverness to deceive others but it is a serious disease of the mind to deceive oneself.” Here, I say that if it is sin to deceive others, it is also a serious disease of the heart and mind to deceive oneself. He was trying to deceive himself by quoting a portion of the Marketing Board’s Report leaving the other relevant section in order to misrepresent facts.

Mr Speaker, Sir, at page E 11 of the Memorandum on the Estimates, Head 430, Agriculture, changes in Establishment, we have an existing post of one Senior Assistant Agricultural Officer. It is put down here that the post existed in 1956 because the holder was not assimilated into the Agricultural Superintendent grade after the Cater/Okoye Report. Why special grades should be created for certain Civil Servants beats one’s understanding. According to the Cater/Okoye Report, officers of this grade were to be upgraded to the rank of Superintendent of Agriculture, and I am suggesting that if we wish the members of the Civil Service to enjoy their work and give us maximum service, I do not see why special grades should be created for special Civil Servants especially after it has been recommended that they should be upgraded to the post of Superintendent of Agriculture. In addition to this, it is said that some of them have been promoted even to that grade and were asked to refund the money after having been recommended for upgrading. I think if we want our people to work and serve us, we must give them encouragement and be fair to all of them. The Civil Service is the mainstay of the Government and we want fair treatment of all the members of the Civil Service. Since it has been recommended that this particular grade should be deleted from the list, I do not see why it should be inserted in the Estimates this year.

Then, Mr Speaker, I come to the question of roads. Roads in my own Division have

not been taken care of. Take for example, Eket Division; in the whole of that Division there is not even one tarred road, and I know that there are many people who are engaged in the business of transporting passengers from one place to another, and they have been ruined because of bad roads. What is more, the ex-Minister of Transport visited Eket during the rainy season last year, and I believe he saw things for himself.

I believe he was really shocked at the condition of the road. It was in the Estimates last year but this year it is right at the back; well, at the back of 1958-59 Estimates, where they put down also "if funds are available". We know that it is very hard to get money now, but it is conveniently written down "if funds are available". Where will the funds come from?

I know this is something to console the people in this area, that is why it is put down at the back "if funds are available"; perhaps in 1960 when the funds will be available.

I am suggesting, Sir, that the Minister of Transport should reconsider and get money either from the Colonial Development Fund or from somewhere else and make that fund available as soon as possible so as to meet the need of the people in this particular Division.

**Mr R. O. Ukuta, M.B.E. (Nsukka Division):** Mr Speaker, I support the Appropriation Bill and I have the following observations to make:

The economic resources of the Eastern Region is to be looked into; for instance, the tapping of gas at Ugwuoba could help to supply electricity to the whole of the Eastern Region. There are coal seams in my Division and all these are the wealth of the earth that belong to the Eastern Region.

The rice swamp at Adani where the Agricultural Department has over 200 acres should be increased. I am suggesting that individual farmers should be encouraged to plant seasonal crops by granting to them little loans to be refunded immediately after harvesting. I think the loans in thousands of pounds should be reduced to a minimum of at least £500 because heavy amount loaned out will not be easy to refund. Apart from this, very few

make use of the loan for the purpose for which it is made. I am suggesting that it should serve a useful purpose if the Regional Government could find its way to allocate river launch at Ogrugru for Administrative Officers to tour the towns by the river area during high water flood and it will be a way out if Ugwuoba river flooded and blocked the main Onitsha/Enugu road. This launch can take people from Onitsha to Ogrugru and cars can take them from Ogrugru to Enugu.

The two bridges at Ogrugru road need the attention of the Government for construction, namely: Iyakoro and Isi bridges. U.A.C. evacuates their produce from Nsukka to Ogrugru, then through River Anambra to Onitsha.

The Board of Internal Revenue employ more staff than it appears to be necessary. They print many forms that cost more money. Their funds are like Colonial Development Funds, which when granted, thousand and one Inspectors of Works will gather and make use of the money.

While our palm produce prices are getting lower and lower, all imported goods are getting higher and higher in all the shops.

The land along River Du at Umulokpa area is suitable for sugar cane. I would want the Minister of Agriculture to investigate this area by sending an expert to examine same.

The Minister of Transport should realise that the people of my Division are not happy about the unfinished tarring of Eha Amufu road. This road is the only road that links them with the Railway line in this Division.

Mr Speaker, I beg to support the Appropriation Bill.

**Mr G. I. Oko, M.B.E. (Awgu Division):** Mr Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Minister of Finance on the able way he has presented what I should describe as a "fine Budget". Hon. Members will agree that caution and frugality should be our guiding principle as far as our finances are concerned, even though our hon. Friends of the Opposition have described the Budget as a "temporary panacea" I believe that the *modus operandi* adopted by

[MR OKO]

the Minister of Finance will divert any chance of financial crash which is the prayer of the Opposition in this House.

I observe, Sir, that the item—Community Development (Fund Assistance to projects) is already cut. This needs emphasis. The hon. the Minister of Welfare will note that the funds that Government spend on Community Development add more to the people's efforts in cash and kind. In the years gone by, Government paid attention to make that fund available. The Ministry of Welfare has cut down this vote greatly. This is a serious matter. In the past five years, sums of money to the tune of £50,000 had every year been voted for this item. This item has always been the live-wire of the rural community. As far as development is concerned, I say, Sir, that this item should not be cut down so drastically.

Furthermore, there is a drastic cut in the grants to Local Government Councils and there is increased responsibility on the shoulders of the Local Government Councils. I will like the House to consider the precarious position that the Local Government Councils will find themselves in trying to discharge their obligation with slim finances. I humbly implore the House to reconsider the allocation to the Local Government Councils and the Minister of Local Government to look into this matter seriously.

The Local Government Association in the East should find accommodation in the Government financial structure as their Western counterpart have found favour with the Western Government. Sir, I submit that the Local Government Association has no office where its businesses are transacted. They go on from one hall to another. This is not only the responsibility of Councils but also the Government. I appeal, therefore, to the Minister of Local Government to make provision to this effect.

It is the duty of the Government to cater for the senile and helpless as well as disabled persons. By this I am referring to the cripple and beggars on the roads. As you go along the highways you see a good many of them begging. It is sad to see the beggars, cured

lepers and others of this category hanging about especially around Oji River Settlement. The cured lepers have lost their relations with their people at home. They have no estate to depend on to meet their life commitments.

I hope the hon. Minister of Welfare will make a statement of policy on this issue.

Now, Sir, I notice that the Budget is described as a "marking time" Budget. I do not think this is complimentary. May I ask: what will become of our unemployed and the standard of living of our people? I am referring to our school leavers. Are they going to mark time? The case of our school leavers is a very serious one; thousands of these boys leave school and if our Budget is a "marking time" Budget, I don't see how we can help them. I hope the Government will find ways and means to get money in order to get them employed. Industries could be established at various places in order to provide employment for school leavers.

I now come to the question of tax evasion, and I want to say that marking time will not help. The Government should step up its efforts to collect taxes. I do not want to attack the Civil Servants, but I must say, Sir, that if there is any laxity in tax collection the Board of Internal Revenue is to blame. There are a lot of complaints against the Commissioner but I will leave this matter to the Premier who should look into it.

Another point affecting the Commissioner, Sir, is printing of stationery at a very high cost. It is understood that the Government Printing Press whose charges are low, is not contacted to cope with requisitions and that jobs have to be done by non-government presses. I hope something should be done about it soon.

Sir, the people of my Division are dissatisfied with the way Government is treating them in the matter of tarring Oji River—Awgu road. The same also applies to rural water supply. I must say, Sir, that my people are convinced that Government has no intention to provide them with water. It is worse now with the increase in the population owing to the influx of students into the newly opened Secondary School at Lengwe in Egbo Etiti. I am told, Sir, that these students have to trek for about five miles in order to get their water. My

people of Egbo Etiti would like Government to give them a good water supply for these are amenities for which they pay tax.

Sir, I beg to support.

**Mr U. Enyi (Afikpo Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I rise to support the Appropriation Bill. In doing so, I would like to join previous speakers to congratulate the hon. the Minister of Finance on the excellent way in which he presented the Budget.

Sir, I would like to congratulate the Government and the hon. Minister of Transport on behalf of my constituency for taking action in tarring the Abakaliki-Afikpo and Okigwi-Afikpo roads, which work is still in hand. My people of Afikpo are very grateful to the Government for undertaking to fulfil this long standing promise. We are also looking forward to a time when Government will also take action on the Enugu-Agbani-Afikpo road for which the sum of £7,000 was provided in the 1957-58 Estimates and revoted in the 1958-59 Estimates. This road is very important to our people because it is the shortest route from Afikpo to the Eastern Region Headquarters and it reduces the present distance from Afikpo to Enugu through Abakaliki by twenty-six miles.

Mr Speaker, one other problem which I should say is the greatest problem in Afikpo Division is the question of water-supply. The majority of the people of Afikpo live on grasslands where there are no good sources of water supply. They have cried to Government year after year and as a result of our cries to Government many wells were sunk in various points. But I am sorry to say, Sir, that these wells do not solve the problem of our water supply, because many of the wells are dried up and the few that contain water become dirty and finally are abandoned by the people. About two months ago, I took round one expatriate Inspector of Works (Rural Water Supply) and showed him some of these abandoned wells requesting that they be cleaned up. But he told me he could do nothing as he had no equipment for cleaning the wells. The Afikpo District Council has neither the staff nor the equipment for the maintenance of the wells. I do not therefore know whose responsibility it is to maintain these wells. I am therefore suggesting that

the Government should investigate the possibility of drilling some boreholes in Afikpo Division to help the suffering people instead of sinking wells that will serve no useful purpose.

Another point, Sir, I should like to stress is the question of health. In the former Ogoja Province there are only three Government Doctors. These Doctors, in addition to their onerous hospital duties, have to supervise Council Medical Services in all the Divisions. That is, each Doctor has to supervise medical services in two Divisions—supervision of Council dispensaries, maternity homes and domiciliary centres. I am feeling, Sir, that that is too much for one person to do. I am suggesting that the Minister of Health should consider posting three more Doctors in the former Ogoja Province so that one Doctor will have to supervise the Council Medical Services in one Division in addition to his normal hospital duties.

Another point, Sir, is the question of scholarships. It is common knowledge, Sir, that Ogoja Province is behind other Provinces educationally. For this reason one-third of the Region's scholarships awarded strictly on merits do not benefit the sons of Ogoja and even the two-thirds awarded on Divisional basis—some Divisions do not derive any benefit, owing to lack of qualification. I have nothing to say about Government's policy on scholarship awards, but what I am trying to suggest is that where, for lack of qualification, any Division is unable to take up her quota of the scholarships, such scholarships should not lapse or go to other Provinces but should be given to other Divisions in Ogoja Province where there are qualified candidates to take them up.

Mr Speaker, with these few observations, I support the Appropriation Bill.

**Mr P. A. Onwe (Abakaliki Division):** Mr Speaker, I rise to support the Appropriation Bill. I want also to thank the Minister of Finance for the able way he has presented the Budget to the House. In fact, Mr Speaker, anybody who has been able to experience, as I did, or been able to see through the efforts made by the Government in order to present a Budget of this quality will not hesitate to join others who have congratulated the Minister and the Government as a whole.

[MR ONWE]

Last time, when I spoke here, I wanted to make mention of the Ministry of Commerce. I wanted to say, Mr Speaker, that I am very happy and my people of Abakaliki are very happy for the Cement Industry at Nkalagu. That industry has been able to place us on a ground which is no more recognised as that of the hon. Gentleman from Nsukka in respect of the University of Nigeria. (*Laughter*). Nsukka people have got their quota of amenities by having the University built in their home. That is the why, Mr Speaker, we in Abakaliki did not complain about having the University built there since Cement Industry is equally as big an establishment as the University.

The observation I have to make about this Cement Industry is that we are not satisfied only with giving us that factory, or establishing the factory in our home. We too, want to benefit by that establishment. As I am saying this I have my eye on employment, training facilities, and even the surface rent. I want to tell you, Sir, that as far as the surface rent goes, the people of Nkalagu have not been receiving this rent, and it is surprising that nobody bothers about finding out what is the reason behind their not getting surface rent. After all, I do not think that Government takes people's land by force. When the people agree to sign away their land the bargain is struck, and any development that is intended for that piece of land should go on. What happened at Nkalagu is that the people were even preparing for a day when an agreement will be signed or when they would be called up to take the money allotted for surface rent. But this expectation proved foolhardy. The Government seized the opportunity to exploit the people's ignorance, by just plunging in to acquire or take possession of a large expanse of land without any formalities. The worse, Sir, is that the extent of the area so acquired was not made known to them despite several demands by the people.

I want to say that at the outset I was one of those who met the Minister of Land and it was agreed that surface rent should be at £1 per acre. When the money was to be paid, to the surprise of everybody, only 5s was paid per acre. What is more, Mr Speaker, the company or whoever is responsible has to-date refused to show the extent of the area taken. No

boundary is shown to the people and they keep hearing rumours that even the villages where they have been living for thirty to forty years have fallen into the hands of the Cement Company. That is the reason why some of these people refuse to go and claim their money.

With regards to the training facilities I mentioned, there is no Division in this Region today that can say that they have not got enough people who have gone through their Standard Six education. We have many boys roaming about in Abakaliki who have been trained in various schools both Government and Voluntary Agency schools and are very brilliant, only they have not the opportunity of widening the scope of their education. They go daily to this industry which is established right in their home to find employment but are refused employment because of discrimination.

I want to remind the Government of one important mistake or error being committed, as far as my Division is concerned and for the benefit of this Region and that is in connection with the lead-zinc mines at Abakaliki. This lead-zinc has been under prospection for about twelve years now and each time you go there you see heaps of lead dug out and yet they are under prospection. I wonder what the Government knows about this industry. What is terrifying is that we have got about three to four companies coming each year. When this company comes it gets sufficient quantity and goes home; next year another company comes, gets sufficient quantity and also goes home and so forth. It is not even this lead-zinc alone, there are about eleven types of minerals struck in this particular area. Mr Speaker, these variety of companies come and do their prospection. I don't know who gives them licence, but I think Government is aware of their movements. What exactly I am driving at is that it will not pay us to keep on prospecting on this particular mineral year after year without having a clear-cut policy about it. We don't know where we are going; we don't know whether it is a mineral that will pay. What I am suggesting, Sir, is that the Government should step in and make thorough investigation about this lead-zinc and see to the possibility of establishing an industry just as we have at Nkalagu. Already, we are going to have a metal industry at Port



Harcourt to produce metal windows and doors. I think that with the cement and metal windows and doors being produced here in this Region, if we also establish an industry at Abakaliki to produce zinc—our housing problem shall have been solved.

**The Premier (Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe):** Mr Speaker, in supporting the Second reading of the Appropriation Bill, I must register my disappointment at the irresponsibility of the Opposition Front Bench who, after unfairly criticising our financial policy, have decamped now that it is our turn to expose their knavish trick!

I feel that the hon. Mover has been straight-forward in the way he handled his Motion. He said that the Budget represented “a period of marking time in the determination to restore our reserves.” This was an honest statement from an honest man. The Mover then emphasised that this determination must be “our prime objective in financial policy”. This admission is a straight-forward attempt to enlighten the House. Then he added that “everything including the prospects of raising loans and attracting foreign investment in the furtherance of our development plans, depends upon maintaining healthy reserves”. To my way of thinking this is a down-to-earth statement of policy.

Why did the Minister of Finance insist on restoring our reserves? Why must this restoration be our prime objective in financial policy? Why must everything be subordinate to this policy? To make a satisfactory reply to the above questions is to clarify the basis of the present financial policy of this Government. I am glad that the hon. Mover has developed his theme in such a convincing manner that, any criticism of the Bill before the House is bound to flounder if it is not based on fair premises.

The Bill is commendable for four reasons: it reflects a Budget which is realistic but is not fiscally perverse; it provides for essential service comparable to what obtains elsewhere in the Federation; it stabilises our general reserves as a cushion against unforeseen circumstances; it punctures the myth of an impending financial doom which was disseminated by my hon. Friends opposite.

After a financial holocaust which was caused by the inflation of wages, sentimental worship of the deity of education, and the premium attached to the price of freedom, this Government decided to prune those items of expenditure which it could not generously afford at the present stage of the social and economic development of this Region. The Gorsuch arrears cost us over £1 million. It placed us in the horns of a dilemma. If we did not pay the arrears it would have damaged our reputation. We paid it and it did damage our finances. The Universal Primary Education cost us a greater portion of our savings. Again, we were between and betwixt. If we did not embark upon this project, it would have embarrassed this Government. We did embark upon it and it has dislocated our finances. We agreed to pay Lump Sum Compensation to expatriate Civil Servants for their loss of career in the Colonial Civil Service. If we did not agree to pay this, it would have placed us in a bad light. We have paid it and it has not saved us from perplexity.

When he presented his Budget to us last year, the Minister of Finance did sound a note of warning about the effect of the Gorsuch arrears and the U.P.E. expenditure on our revenue structure. In fact, he anticipated deficits as a result of these measures. When now, their effect on our finances began to be reflected on our Budget, it became necessary to trim those we can afford to prune. The result is a measure of realism which has characterised the Budget proposals of the current financial year. What we have done with our Budget, this is what Mrs Ursula Hicks may describe as a cyclical counterpoise, since a current Budget may operate at a surplus or deficit “according to economic circumstances.”

Surely, no sane person would blame Government for paying Gorsuch arrears to its staff, to Local Government workers, and to Voluntary Agency employees. Surely, no reasonable person would castigate Government for daring to embark upon the U.P.E. Surely, no fair-minded person would condemn Government for accepting Hobson's choice left to our delegates to the London Constitutional Conference as a price we have to pay for the ultimate freedom of our country. A realistic approach is thus the only way open to those who were charged with the responsibility to prepare the Budget of this Region.

[THE PREMIER]

My second point in supporting this Motion is that it provides for essential services which are comparable to what obtains elsewhere in the Federation. The Eastern Region will spend £13.92 million to provide for the services of 7.5 million people; the Northern Region will spend £13.47 million for 16.5 million people; and the Western Region will spend £15.31 million for 6.5 million people. We will spend £5,355,800 for Education, the North will spend £2,880,665, and the West will spend £5,905,300. In respect of Health, we will spend £1,431,180, the North will spend £1,940,920, and the West will spend £1,543,100. For personal emoluments we will spend £2,405,690, the North will spend £4,858,990 and the West will spend £3,804,310. If the above figures are worked out on a *per capita* basis, it will be found that the East has not fared badly, in spite of the fact that the Chick system of revenue allocation was badly weighted against us at the coming into operation of the current Constitution.

My third point is that the present Budget stabilises our general reserves as a cushion against unforeseen circumstances. It is true that our general revenue balance was £5.1 million, in 1954-55; £7.16 million in 1955-56, £5.15 million in 1956-57, £3.75 million in 1957-58, and £3.90 million have been estimated for the ensuing financial year. Nevertheless, the fact remains that these reserves are not the lowest in the whole Federation; and not only that, they have enabled us to discharge our obligations. Without them, could we have paid the Gorsuch arrears to expatriates and indigenous Civil Servants? Could we have paid Gorsuch arrears to teachers employed by the Voluntary Agencies? Could we have paid Gorsuch arrears to employees of Local Government bodies? Could we have borne the full impact of the U.P.E.? And could we have been able to fulfil our pledge to those expatriate Civil Servants who have decided to take their Lump Sum Compensation? And yet, some in this House have allowed false alarmists to scare us into losing our sense of proportions, wrongly believing that all is lost!

Lastly, I am supporting this Motion because our Budget deflates the alarm that is being spread of an impending financial crisis in this Region. The Leader of the Opposition started this false alarm. He also accused Government

of making use of £280,400 from our Local Contributions Account of the C.D. and W. Scheme. But he did not indicate that after the Resolution of the House had approved such measure, we still had a balance of £1.40 million left on that account on March 31st, 1958; and that after a further expenditure of £660,126 this financial year, the balance on 31st March, 1959 will be £743,689. He also failed to bring to the notice of the House that if this money was not transferred our revised estimated general revenue balance on 31st March, 1958 will still be £3,473,046, which would equally have been the highest in the Federation. I submit, Mr Speaker, that if even this amount is deducted from our estimated general revenue balance on 31st March, 1959, the Eastern Region will still have the highest reserves of all other Regional Governments in the Federation. If these are facts, why should my hon. Friend cause false alarms to be spread about an alleged impending crisis in the finances of this Government?

The Leader of the Opposition described this Budget as "grim" and "flat". He had been banking on the expectation that, since the Universal Primary Education had depleted our reserves, this Government would not only be unable to balance its Budget but would experience a financial crash. This flight of the imagination can be understood in view of his journalistic prophecies that an impending financial crisis was leading this Region to bankruptcy. When now, he received the Estimates and noticed that his expectations had been disappointed, one can better imagine his plight.

The dictionary meaning of the word "grim" implies a mental depression. Its synonyms include annoyance, disturbance, uneasiness and discomfort. I can appreciate my hon. Friend's annoyance because his prophecy in the newspapers has not materialised. I fully sympathise with him for the disturbance such a disappointment had caused him because it is bound to create a situation of uneasiness and personal discomfort, especially when he confronts his fellow calamity-mongers. One is, therefore, not surprised that the hon. Member for Enyong characterised this Budget as "grim".

My hon. Friend used another language to define his attitude towards the Budget. He said that it was "flat." This is another English word which means "low in spirit." After all the cryptic assurances given to him

that the reason why the Estimates had not seen the light of day was because Government could not provide for its services; after having been secretly made aware that Government will be obliged to present a prayer to the Federal Government to come to its aid; after having dreamed dreams and seen visions of a coalition Government which would enable his handfull of supporters to quench their political thirst by being enthroned on the Government Bench, why should not my hon. Friend be low in spirits, especially when he noticed that not only has the Budget been balanced, but it has an estimated surplus, and the general reserve balance is now the highest of all other Regional Governments?

Mr Speaker, it is against this background of political hallucination that hon. Members should receive the hot air spouted by the Opposition Chief Whip who was obliged to admit openly that the Budget presented "a sorrowful picture". As soon as I read this part of the speech of the hon. Member for Uyo, I took my dictionary and satisfied myself that he is in the same boat with his colleagues on the Mourners' Bench. Sorrow implies displeasure, unhappiness, lucklessness and a state of being broken-hearted. Naturally, the Opposition Chief Whip is displeased because he will continue to oppose for the mere sake of opposing, without even being paid for this thankless task. Why shouldn't he be unhappy? It is sheer lucklessness for the Opposition side to be so disappointed by a smart Minister of Finance who balanced his Budget, in spite of previous forebodings! Certainly, Mr Eyo and his comrades cannot escape from being broken-hearted.

The learned Member for Obubra (Mr Okoi Arikpo) emphasised the downward spiralling of our reserves and stated that they had reached a dangerously low state. I will agree with him that our reserves had been depleting steadily for some time now, but I will not accept the view that our estimated general revenue balance on 31st March, 1958 or 31st March, 1959 is dangerously low, if a comparative analysis is made of the reserves of other Regional Governments in the Federation.

Mr Speaker, I am not prepared to accept the specious argument of certain critics of our finances, to the effect that we should restrict our arguments on this debate strictly within the confines of the Eastern Region. After all, this is only one Regional Government in a

Federation of one country, whose economic pattern is identical. Therefore, any criticism we make on a particular Region, on fundamental issues, must affect the rest *pro tanto*, and I must not only join issues with those who wish to restrict our criticism on this Budget to our local conditions, as the learned Member for Obubra insists, but I must denounce such a practice as not being conducive to a healthy grasp of the issues at stake. Thus, I am compelled to submit that the comparative method must be employed to justify the soundness or otherwise of the financial policy of a Regional Government which depends partly on Federal revenues for balancing its Budget.

At page E 9 of our Estimates, the Financial Statement shows that as at 31st March, 1958, we had a revised estimated general revenue balance of £3.75 million as against £4.10 million for the Northern Region and £2.23 million for the Western Region. To complete the picture it is pertinent to mention that our estimated general revenue balance for 31st March, 1959 will be £3.90 million, against £2.33 million for the Northern Region and £1.60 million for the Western Region. I am emphasising these points because Mr Arikpo left the House under what I regard as a totally false impression that our reserves are dangerously low, whilst in reality, they are the highest among the Regional Governments of the Federation.

He committed another *faux pas* when, in supporting the Leader of the Opposition, he referred to paragraph 4 of the Memorandum on the Estimates to show that, if the shortfall was £1,332,036 between the approved and revised Estimates for 1957-58, whilst Education accounted for only £417,950, other expenditures accounted for £914,086; therefore, concluded Messrs Ikoku and Arikpo, the argument of the Government that Education was a main contributory factor to the increase in such over-expenditure was a deliberate attempt to mislead and misinform the House.

On this issue, Mr Speaker, I submit that the two hon. Gentlemen have been most unfair to the Minister of Finance. At paragraph 6 of the Memorandum, it was clearly enunciated that the main contributory factors to the increase in the other Expenditure were re-votes totalling £452,953 (of which £335,330 was in respect of grants to Local Government

[THE PREMIER]

bodies for salary arrears and £117,623 on account of capital works) and £350,000 for the Lump Sum Compensation Scheme. Now, it does not take a genius to add up the totals of this sum to obtain £802,953.

Even, in this Budget speech, the hon. Minister gave what I consider to be an honest explanation of this point when, at page 4, he said that "The heaviest items contributing to this increase were re-votes totalling nearly £½ million against under-expenditure in the previous year, partly for unfinished capital works but mainly for grants to Local Government Councils on account of salary arrears." Then my hon. Colleague mentioned the Lump Sum Compensation Scheme. In view of these facts, I am of the considered opinion that the Leader of the Opposition is guilty of deliberately misrepresenting the Minister of Finance to the House as one who has misled hon. Members to believe that the Universal Primary Education was responsible for this Region's financial difficulties. Unfortunately, Mr Arikpo also joined him in committing this egregious but unavoidable blunder.

The same learned Member for Obubra derided the claim that our Budget is "buoyant". In this respect, he is not alone: other hon. Members from both sides of the House had been lured to fall into this trap. What do we really mean when we say that a Budget is buoyant? It means that the Budget is hopeful, secure, promising, reassuring and not easily depressed. In the language of the purist, it implies that the Budget has prudently provided, as far as human limitations and sound principles of economy can go, the financial wherewithal to fulfil the objects and reasons of the Appropriation Bill. In the language of Professor A. C. Pigou, it means that all regular recurrent expenditure would in a well-ordered state be met from taxes and not from loans.

Applying this yardstick to the Budget under fire, this Government has estimated a revenue of £13.92 million for the next financial year, and an expenditure of £13.72 million, leaving an estimated surplus of £201,940. Of this estimated expenditure, the sum of £13.23 million represents the sum appropriated in the Bill which forms the subject of the Motion before the House. The difference between

the sum estimated and the sum appropriated represents what would constitute a charge on the Consolidated Revenue Fund of the Region, in accordance with the Amending Order in Council which was signed by Her Majesty the Queen on 14th March. The fact that, since this Government assumed office, it has been able to provide for the services of the Eastern Region, either from its current revenues or from its reserves, places it beyond any shadow of doubt that, so far, its Budget has been buoyant. Mr Speaker, is this not a sign of hopefulness, security, promise, and reassurance? What more could the people of this Region desire of their willing and faithful servants?

There is another aspect of the point made by the learned Member for Obubra which I should discuss at length at this stage. He left a false impression on the minds of hon. Members by implying that this Government depended mostly on Federal revenues for its sustenance. This is insecure, he argued, because they are susceptible to trade changes and other external factors. I will agree with my hon. Friend that Federal revenues are mainly dependent on external factors and trade changes. I will also agree with him that it is not safe for any Regional Government to depend mainly upon Federal revenues for its sustenance. But I will differ from him in implying that the Eastern Region depends mainly on Federal revenues.

A study of our public finances will show that comparatively speaking, of all the Regional Governments, the Eastern Region obtains a bulk of its revenue from internal, other than from Federal sources. If hon. Members would refer to page E 9 of our Estimates, they will notice that we shall derive £5.66 million from internal, as against £7 million from Federal sources. In respect of the Western Region, it will derive £3.66 million internally and £11.64 million from Federal sources. The Northern Region will derive £3.85 million internally and £8.13 million from Federal sources.

My point is that whilst the criticism of Mr Arikpo is justified in some respects this Government has already established a record for casting down its bucket where it is and standing firmly on its own feet. Indeed, we have taken positive steps to increase and stabilise

our internal revenue so that today our internal revenue is higher than the total revenues, both Federal and Regional, which are available to this Region during the two years of the Eyo Ita regime. And that was barely five to six years ago! (*Hear! Hear!*).

The hon. Member for Ogoja (Chief I. I. Morphy) asserted that the people of the Region were getting poorer and poorer because Government was spending less and less on their welfare. My answer is that this is contrary to what has been happening. A glance at Appendix M of the Estimates will show that when we assumed office in 1954, the expenditure of the Government was £4.7 million, in 1955 it was £5.5 million, in 1956 it was £6.6 million and in 1957 it was £12.6 million. In other words, after four years since we assumed office we are spending about thrice what the previous Government spent in order to provide for the welfare and services of this Region.

The same hon. Gentleman also alleged that there had been a drop in our share of the Federal revenue as a result of what he thought was bad financial administration on our part. May I respectfully submit that this allegation is totally false. If hon. Members would turn to Appendix M of the Estimates they will find that when we assumed office our Federal revenues totalled £1.1 million. In 1955 they reached £3.2 million, in 1956 they were £5.7 million, and in 1957 we had a total of £6.9 million. We anticipate £7 million in the coming financial year, *vide* Head 410 of the Budget under scrutiny. My hon. Friend is, therefore, unfair in his criticism.

The Opposition Chief Whip, as usual, has exaggerated about the frozen posts in the Estimates. He gave impression that the salaries of all posts frozen have not been provided for in the Estimates. In the first place, this is not true, because the salaries of most of the frozen posts are provided for. In the second place, the Minister of Finance did make it clear in his speech that after the forthcoming Constitutional Conference, a Supplementary Budget will be presented before the House. That would be the appropriate time to know whether this alarm is true or false.

The hon. Member for Okigwi (Mr S. O. Achara) has complimented me for taking

the initiative and reducing the salaries of the Premier, Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries etc., for which I am grateful to him. But he suggests that the number of the Ministries should be reduced. He gave no tangible reason, so I presume that his suggestion is purely economic. After examining the position in the other Regions, whose finances do not necessarily fare better than ours, I am not convinced that it is the prudent thing to do now. For example, the Northern Region expects less revenue than ourselves, and yet there is provision for seventeen Ministries in its Estimates. The Western Region had made provision for fifteen Ministries. However, I am left to wonder whether my hon. Friend would have made this suggestion, when he had the distinction to be a member of the Official Bench of the House? In any case, when we present our Supplementary Budget, I will give this matter my attention.

I thank the hon. Member for Owerri Division (Mr G. C. Okeya) for his observations on the role of teachers in this Region. He said that they are regarded as Civil Servants by some people. In view of the unprecedented policy which this Government has crystallised, thereby transforming teachers into quasi-civil servants, I will consider the possibility of bringing them within the jurisdiction of the General Orders. If this is done, it will prevent them from becoming actively engaged in politics to the detriment of their jobs. Before such a move is made, there will be adequate consultation with all who are directly and indirectly concerned with the teaching profession.

Mr Speaker, our Budget is realistic, because it is honest, straight-forward and down to earth. There is no reason why any hon. Member should be appologetic about it. Since 1954, the very people who are predicting financial crisis in this Region, have been playing this dangerous game. In 1954, they even impugned the integrity of the Financial Secretary, whose name was Cook, and he was alleged to have cooked his figures. Nevertheless, we completed that financial year with an actual surplus of £3.67 million and a general revenue balance of £5.10 million.

It is an old perennial habit of my hon. Friends opposite not only to cast aspersion on the conduct of our finances but also to disseminate false propaganda in order to

[THE PREMIER]

deceive the unwary. One of them moved a Motion in 1954 to enable the funds of the Marketing Board to be used for other than agricultural purposes. This same person also supported the Bill which established the University of Nigeria. Today, he professes to love the farmers of this Region more than the Government and he is now criticising the lawful allocation of Marketing Board funds for other than agricultural purposes. What he did three years ago he now characterises as a crazy idea. I concede that politicians have every right to change the colour of their political coats, otherwise political turncoats will not exist.

Mr Speaker, I support the Motion. (*Applause*).

**The Minister of Production (Dr M. I Okpara):** Mr Speaker, I beg to support the Appropriation Bill. It is a feat on the part of the Minister of Finance that in spite of the troubles we have had in the last few days and weeks he has been able to present this most hopeful Budget.

I shall confine myself to remarks made about my Ministry. In the cause of the "Speech From The Throne" by His Excellency the Governor, the policy of my Ministry was defined as primarily concerned with the task of fostering greater economic integration between Agriculture, Industry and the rapidly increasing population of this Region.

It is the responsibility of this Ministry also to co-ordinate the efforts of the Eastern Region Marketing Board, the Produce Inspection Services, and the Eastern Region Development Corporation with the Government financial policy so as to achieve maximum efficiency in production and incentive methods.

I notice however, that during the Second reading of this Bill references were made principally to the work of the Eastern Region Marketing Board and I intend to answer very briefly some of the charges which have been made with a view to clearing up any possible misunderstanding.

The Leader of the Opposition made two charges against the Marketing Board—

- (i) that the prices paid to producers by the Board is the cause for the general

fall in the quantity of palm oil and palm kernels produced in this Region;

- (ii) that the sure way of increasing the economic activities of this Region is to increase the prices paid to producers in respect of palm oil and palm kernels.

In reference to (i), I should like to assure the Leader of the Opposition (unfortunately he is not here now) that the Eastern Region Marketing Board, during its last sitting in February, went into full details as to the causes for the general fall in the quantity of palm oil and kernels produced in this Region. I should like to assure everyone in this House that this is a subject in which I have some considerable interest. At the sitting of the Board when this question of fall in the quantity of both palm oil and palm kernels was discussed by all the experts at our disposal, the following are regarded as attributable causes of the fall in the quantity of both palm oil and palm kernel:

(1) That the wild palm trees, which still contribute a major part of our total production of both oil and kernels, are ageing. In other words they have reached the position of maximum production and are on the decline.

(2) That there is a general deficiency in certain minerals, principally magnesium sulphate in the areas in which palm trees grow—the cause of yellow leaves in palm trees.

(3) That more palm oil than ever before is being exported to the Northern Region, from Nsukka as well as from Aba areas, to those of the local factories in the Northern Region, which manufacture soap.

(4) That the economic progress in recent years and, especially the rise in the standard of living and in the number of school children, has resulted in the reduction of helping-hands, especially in the production of palm kernels in which children take part.

(5) That due to the excessive heavy rains for the past few years the production of both palm oil and palm kernels has, to some extent, been affected.

The Committee observed also that the fall in the production of palm oil and palm kernels is a world phenomena which cannot be attributed to the country alone. The hon. the Leader

of the Opposition will appreciate this argument. In other words, we have returned to the pre-war economy and have turned our back to the booms following upon the post-war years in the primary produce areas throughout the world.

What I cannot understand is for the Leader of the Opposition to attribute this general trend, which is known to be happening everywhere in the world, and over which no single Government has any control, to this Government.

As I said before, when the Committee of experts went into the whole question no one considered that the decrease in the quantity of both palm oil and palm kernels had anything to do with the existing prices. As an economist, the Leader of the Opposition will appreciate that sudden changes in the prices of such produce as palm oil or kernels have no effect at all on production in the short-run.

Palm trees take over seven years to mature properly and where you suddenly decide to double the prices of palm oil or palm kernels, the young seedlings in the nursery will not start to produce palm oil and palm kernels at once! This question of misunderstanding the problems connected with our palm oil and palm kernels trade should from henceforth stop from being a political issue and become a matter of national interest. (*Hear! Hear!*)

As a matter of fact, I should like to assure this House that the Eastern Region Marketing Board, through a judicious policy, has come off better than any of the Regional Marketing Boards.

For instance, in the production of palm kernels, the Eastern Region produced 177,832 out of the total of 394,427 tons for the Federation in 1956, representing 45.1 per cent. According to the latest figures the Eastern Region has raised its percentage to 47.9 per cent and produced 163,245 tons out of 340,721 for the whole of the Federation. (*Hear! Hear!*)

The total tonnage decrease for the whole of the Federation was 13.6 per cent but in the Eastern Region it was 8.2 per cent.

When we come to the production of palm oil the same phenomenon showed itself.

For 1956, the Eastern Region produced 137,116 out of 157,025 and for 1957 134,408 tons out of 148,499 tons for the Federation. The decrease in the Eastern Region production is only 2.7 per cent as compared with 6.5 per cent for the Federation. These figures, I hope, will dispel the false argument that price levels or the rate of tax have much to do with the level of production. They show beyond doubt that the Eastern Region has more successfully tackled the problem of production.

But the second contention is the general belief that production problem can be better tackled by offering producers the entire reserve of the Eastern Region Marketing Board. As I have showed above the price mechanism in relation to long term crops is a subject which should be carefully studied. If palm trees were like singlets, produced within five minutes in a factory, this general assumption of price relationship will be perhaps true. If you suddenly double the price of a singlet, you can have manufacturers doubling their output to take advantage of the increase in the price within 24 hours. I must warn any would-be-economist in this House that the situation is not the same as in the case of palm oil and kernels production. You cannot hasten nature by such artificial price adjustments. As a matter of fact, production may even fall if the prices rise too sharply. What this Government considers to be long-term solution of the problem is to maintain the reserve of the Board and to invest part of the reserve in direct production such as the plantation system, and the erection of more Pioneer Oil Mills to be distributed to producers. If you suddenly increase the prices of palm oil, the producers will use the additional income, not necessarily in improving their farms but in consumption goods most of which are imported. It is undeniable fact that a sudden increase in the income of primary producer raised the level of "hot-money"—that is, the money goes out of the country quickly but does not remain here to stimulate economic activities in the long run. You increase the level of import and not export and you make other people outside Nigeria more rich and not the people in Nigeria.

The policy of this Government is to reduce "hot-money" by conserving our saving to production efforts. If we chose, any day we can use the Eastern Region Marketing Board

[DR OKPARA]

reserve to expand our plantations at the Kwa Falls, Calaro and other places. These plantations will be solid achievements which will remain with us forever. Any responsible man will see that no purpose will be served to waste the reserve unwisely.

This year alone, £500,000 grant was made by the Eastern Region Marketing Board to the Eastern Region Development Corporation for the purpose of development. In addition, a loan of £100,000 will be made available to the E.R.D.C. for the next five years for the purpose of expanding our plantations and of introducing new crops. The remark by the hon. Member from Uyo that the Eastern Region Marketing Board has ceased to make grants to the Eastern Region Development Corporation is therefore groundless.

I know that the Department of Agriculture is planting young oil palm seedlings which are distributed to farmers at the rate of 1,000,000 a year. In addition, we are trying to combat the deficiency of minerals in the soil by distributing fertilisers. We are cutting down ageing trees and at the same time stepping up plantations by the Eastern Region Development Corporation. In other words, we are doing everything possible to solve this problem. It is painful to me therefore that some people imagine that this is a political issue.

I do not intend to touch the remarks by the Opposition Chief Whip that the Eastern Regional Marketing Board pay producers in the Eastern Region less than is being offered elsewhere since this is a matter which will come up in the course of his own Motion on this subject.

The same hon. Member from Uyo made the remark yesterday that the Eastern Region Development Corporation or the Eastern Region Marketing Board is not assisting Co-operative Producers. I should like to assure this House that the Eastern Regional Marketing Board makes an annual grant of at least £10,000 to the Co-operative Producers in the Eastern Region.

Then again he referred to "commissions" to middlemen, as is done in Southern Cameroons. I do not know what the hon. Member means by "middlemen". Does he mean the

men who work as middlemen for the big firms or does he mean the Licensed Buying Agents? If he means those who work for the foreign firms I will remind him that they are already being adequately compensated by their employers who are not the Eastern Region Marketing Board. If he means the Licensed Buying Agents, then I can assure him that there are agreements between the Eastern Regional Marketing Board and all Licensed Buying Agents as to buying allowances. These agreements are renewed every year by a joint representation and for the coming produce season the agreements have already been determined after mutual consultation. The hon. Member from Uyo might like to know that this year we are paying about £150,000 more towards our buying allowances.

Perhaps the implication is that the indigenous Licensed Buying Agents are not being encouraged. I should like to say that for palm oil indigenous Licensed Buying Agents are purchasing up to 49 per cent of the total palm oil bought in the Eastern Region. In the pre-war years the U.A.C. alone bought about 75 per cent of the total purchases of palm oil. This figure is now down to 37 per cent and is decreasing from year to year. You can see, therefore, that any suggestion that nothing is being done for the African Licensed Buying Agents is false.

Before I tackle the general economic questions affecting this Region I should like to refer once more to the misinterpretations being placed on the question of the Eastern Region Marketing Board reserve. It is a pity that I have had to come to this House twice within the last five weeks to deny the false allegation that the Eastern Regional Marketing Board received £15.1 million as share from the old Commodity Board. Actually, as I said during the last sitting of the House we received £11 million out of which £2.1 million was given out to the Federal Government as a loan, leaving a balance of £8.9 million. It was out of this balance of £8.9 million that £2 million was made to the Finance Corporation, leaving a balance then of £6.9 million. Between 1955 and 1957, in spite of grants of £400,000 made to the Eastern Region Development Corporation in 1955, and over £10,000 to Co-operative Societies, the total reserve stood at £9.7 million by the end of December, 1957.



It is within this gross reserve of £9.7 million that a sum of £1.5 million is earmarked for the University of Nigeria. This sum has not been spent. I heard yesterday the hon. Member from Uyo again saying that we received £15.1 million from the old Commodity Marketing Board. This is not true—we had anticipated to receive that amount but when the time came we actually received £11 million. It is also not true that £5 million has already been set aside from the Eastern Region Marketing Board reserve towards the University of Nigeria. What is true, however, is that for the next ten years—beginning from three years back, £500,000 is being set aside each year towards the foundation of the University of Nigeria.

This project is, however, not being embarked upon at the expense of farmers. As a matter of fact, anyone in the Eastern Region stands to profit from its foundation and I have no doubt that in the next few years, the people of this Region will appreciate our foresight.

Finally, I should like to add a word or two on the general criticism levelled on the Government financial programme that capital work will result in the increase of unemployment or in economic stagnation. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition, in his advice to the Government to cut down its expenditure, recurrent and capital, to the limit compatible with our revenue resources. That granted, I fail to understand the criticism of the Leader of the Opposition that such a cut necessarily leads to recession.

In point of fact, Government expenditure forms less than 10 per cent of the total expenditure in this Region. Through Government planning, capital expenditure will rise in the coming year in the Marketing Board by £600,000. At the same time the Eastern Region Development Corporation is hoping to spend £500,000 on further expansion.

You can see therefore that a fall in the Government capital expenditure for 1958–59 has been followed by a sharp rise in the expenditure of the Public Corporations. The increase will raise the economic activities of this Region to a level never before known.

Enquiries are going on with a view to a joint enterprise between the Eastern Region Development Corporation and two private companies to cultivate new crops.

The Colonial Development Corporation is also in touch with the Eastern Region Development Corporation with a view to a possible joint effort to expand the existing plantations or to start new ones. These coming activities, I submit, more than compensate this Region with a tiny fraction in the fall of Government capital expenditure and I am sure the Leader of Opposition will agree with me that the anticipated capital expenditure in the Public Corporations will more than offset four or five folds the small fall in the capital expenditure in the Estimates.

Finally, I accept the tributes paid to the Department of Produce Inspection Services. This year we have introduced a new system which has so far reduced adulteration of produce to the minimum and which has also improved the quantity of our Special Grade Oil. You can see, therefore, that this Government is not unmindful of the interests of the people it represents. I will end by saying that we in this Region have never had it so good (*Hear! Hear!*).

**The Minister of Commerce (Mr J. U. Nwodo):** Mr Speaker, I speak in support of the Bill.

I will go straight to review the main economic events of the past year and to assess their effect on the financial year that lies ahead.

First and foremost, is the sterling crisis that rocked the United Kingdom last September and led to the steep rise in Bank rate and the consequent further restriction of credit facilities.

This is a singularly unfortunate time for such a disturbance to take place because all the Governments in the Federation (not the Eastern Region alone) had been planning schemes of development to be financed by the raising of loans on the London market. Even if we were able to raise loans in London, we in this Region could not afford to accept service charges of between 8 per cent and 9 per cent per annum on the recurrent budget for twenty years or more, unless the funds borrowed could be reinvested in schemes which were immediately remunerative.

But that problem does not arise yet: because of the great demand for fresh capital within the United Kingdom, the Colonial Office is,

[MR NWODO]

therefore reluctant to recommend overseas territories for loans from the London market at the present time. This applies in particular to territories which are holding substantial reserves; and Nigeria is considered by the Colonial Office as one of them.

The Government was represented at the first meeting of the Loans Advisory Board of the National Economic Council. All the member Governments in the Federation impressed upon the visiting representative of the Colonial Office that the view was strongly held here that Her Majesty's Government had a special duty towards the territories that are approaching independence. The point was made that it is necessary to ensure that they enter upon their independent state with reserves sufficient to guarantee the loans that will be required to finance development in the early years of statehood.

It is not the Eastern Region alone that finds itself hampered by restriction of credit. Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom is facing the same problem—more claims on the nation's purse than the funds available in the purse. In our case the insatiable appetite is that of Education Grants; in England it is not only the National Health Service and the Agricultural Subsidies but also education that have been the cause of strain.

The question of how to bridge the gap led to the resignation of the former Chancellor of the Exchequer. Here, our problem is on a smaller scale and we have been able to effect the requisite adjustments in the Budget without dissension (though not, let me assure you, without a strenuous effort by each Minister on behalf of his department).

I ask your indulgence, Sir, to quote from the leading article in *The Economist* of February 1st on the subject of the problem facing the United Kingdom at the time of the Chancellor's resignation.

I quote:

"But, in all our doings, we need to confine what we do to what is within, and will reinforce, our strength. To cling on, for reasons of prestige, pride or political auctioneering, to commitments that tax us too much will be our ruin."

That was addressed to readers in Great Britain.

I feel that there is a lesson in those words to be learned. By the position of our present Budget we have led evidence to prove to the Fiscal Commission that the present constitutional set-up places on the Regions far greater burden than their internal revenue could meet. In this Region where the Government has risen to the occasion by increasing its revenue far in excess than those of other Regional Governments in the Federation, pruned down some of its essential services and in consequence faced all sorts of political odds and unpopularity, one could rightly say that there are grounds to justify the revision of Chicks Report which at present allocates revenue on principles of derivation instead of need.

The decision taken by the Nigerian Governments, in consequence of the closing of the London market to us for the present, is to raise an internal loan as soon as the necessary arrangements can be concluded. One point I wish to make clear beyond the possibility of misunderstanding is that the raising of foreign loans is not the answer to all our problems. We need capital like most other countries, but we cannot borrow to finance recurrent expenditure.

The other major event has been the recession that has fallen upon trade in the United State. It does not yet amount to a slump and the President and his economic advisers are confident that the recession is a healthy corrective and can be controlled and not allowed to degenerate to a slump. Some of us in this House can remember very clearly the economic impact of the slump of 1930-31 and will pray that cool heads and wise counsels will prevail and that a slide into a disinflationary rout will be averted.

During the past year Nigeria's foreign trade has continued buoyant and customs duties have attained a higher peak yet again.

Government is also keeping a careful watch on the steps being taken by Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom to protect the economies of the sterling territories against the threat of discriminatory tariffs and preferential quotas that might arise out of the

association of the overseas territories of France and Belgium in the European Common Market and proposed Free Trade Area. Nigeria has two official representatives assisting the Colonial Office delegate on the appropriate Committee and Working Party.

In the field of industrial development a milestone has been passed with the opening of the Nigerian Cement Company's factory at Nkalagu. We are proud of this testimony to our economic growth. This factory produces 6,000 bags of cement a day—100,000 tons a year. This production has considerably lowered the price of a bag of cement from 14s 6d to 11s 6d; the price at the factory itself, allowing for discount, is 10s 6d per bag. But Rome was not built in a day, however, and I may remind the House that the negotiations for a cement factory were going on in 1950 and perhaps even earlier. I am not suggesting that we must wait seven years for all our plans to mature, but I want Members to realise that large and costly industrial undertakings do not come to life except after the most exhaustive investigation of all the factors involved. As for the question raised by my hon. Friend, Mr Onwe on the Abakaliki Lead-Zinc Mines, I must say that this Government is doing its utmost to hasten the exploration of this industry. Members will observe that £50,000 have been provided by this Government for this particular project and that this Government is in consultation with the Federal Minister of Mines and Power on this project. I hope that these consultations will eventually come to a success.

Other important industrial developments have been the opening of the cigarette factory at Port Harcourt and the brewery at Aba. Both these are expansions into this Region by Nigerian companies already operating elsewhere in Nigeria. They are concrete evidence, if any were needed, of the importance of the Eastern Region as a market for consumer goods.

In the field of secondary industries, hon. Members will be interested to know that the equipment of the Ekulu Pottery is nearing completion. This has been financed entirely by the Government and has been designed to employ the potters trained at the Okigwi Training Centre. It will produce a standard range of domestic pottery on a scale large enough to justify the expense of mechanisation. The methods used in this factory are on the very latest lines.

The Textile Centre at Aba is now in new buildings. Its production is now greatly enlarged by the practice of putting out weaving contracts to past trainees who have bought their own looms. The combined output enables my Ministry to accept assignments of more than a thousand yards at a time for such articles as school uniforms and so on. But one of the most popular ranges is still the shirting; and the shirts made to order from the material continue to sell in quantity.

Here, I must make mention of the Handicrafts Shop in Enugu where you can always see a good range of shirtings and other textiles. The shop is next to the Enugu Town Council offices almost opposite Kingsway Stores. I hope that no hon. Member will return to his constituency without at least paying a visit to the shop. There you will see not only textiles, but also Okigwi pottery, Ikot Ekpene raffia work, Awka carvings and some examples of modern furniture made in Onitsha. I think you will find it very difficult to go home empty-handed.

Hon. Members will have read of the "Made in Nigeria" exhibition which was held in Lagos from the 1st to the 8th March. My Department of Secondary Industries built and equipped a stand displaying some of our most attractive products and our exhibit was warmly praised by the Prime Minister and the Governor-General. The Lagos papers also described our display in laudatory terms.

Part of the credit for the improving standards of secondary industries is due to the policy of issuing grants for rural industries which was initiated by Special Warrant during the past year. Under this new policy, a promising young industry can be helped, not by loans of cash, but by providing a machine, or tools or stocks of materials. In this way a young firm is enabled to execute its orders and make a reasonable profit without burdening itself with debts for materials. To give a few examples:—

Awka carvers have been helped by the grant of a stock of timber; Ikot Ekpene raffia weavers have been assisted by the grant of a stock of raffia; a firm of furniture makers in Onitsha has been given a piece of woodworking machinery that increases its

[MR NWODO]

output; weavers in the area around Aba can obtain stocks of yarn dye to their requirements on credit.

The results of this policy have been most encouraging and I profoundly regret that, because of the pressing need for economy in the coming year, I cannot justify a repetition of these grants in the Estimates now before the House. I hope we may make up lost ground in 1959-60.

It is the continuing policy of Government to do everything possible to encourage the development of Co-operative Societies. There are at present over 1,150 registered societies in this Region and they have saved and built up a working capital of nearly £900,000. The motto of the co-operators is "Self-help through Mutual help" and they are to be congratulated for doing so much to help themselves. While it is the policy of my Ministry to help all classes of people to promote their business enterprises, this body of people, having done so much for themselves, deserve my special support.

Government has not found it possible to give any further grant this year to the Co-operatives, beyond the £10,000 donated in 1954 for the establishment of the Co-operative Bank. The Eastern Regional Development Corporation is at present guaranteeing an overdraft of up to £50,000 to enable the Co-operative Bank to finance the marketing of cocoa. Last year, Government guaranteed an overdraft of £30,000 to enable the Bank to finance palm produce marketing; but it has decided this year to leave the Co-operatives to make normal arrangements with the commercial banks for funds to promote palm produce marketing.

Government continues to make a grant of £2,800 to the Co-operative Union to assist them with the payment of auditors. The Co-operative Law requires that the books of every society should be audited annually.

I must say here that I consider more emphasis should be laid on the importance of co-operation in marketing, in agriculture, and in rural industries. There is still far too much demand for the provision of credit for petty trading. I would like these petty traders to consider the greater advantages in setting up their own

wholesale organisation. The initiative must however, come from them. It would be quite wrong for me to attempt to discriminate between the diverse classes of people competing for financial aid. But if the Co-operators, who as a group hold large capital resources, will earmark part of their capital for development along the lines I have suggested, they shall receive my unqualified support.

I am aware that the staff of the Co-operative Department is inadequate for any large-scale development. I am also aware that most of the members of the staff are located in the area of the former Calabar Province, where 90 per cent of the co-operative societies exist. As soon as a more liberal policy becomes practicable, I hope to see additional staff provided so that the other areas of the Eastern Region may be enabled to make full use of co-operative methods of organisation and to improve their economic positions.

My hon. Friends, Okeh and Okeke had criticised the Ministry of Commerce for not encouraging traders and farmers to combine and to invest in establishing joint enterprises. It is indeed true that the response to the exhortations of my predecessors in office and of myself has been disappointing; but we are not living in a police state. We cannot compel free men to join in partnerships against their will. The truth of the matter as the House knows very well is that there is a very low standard of business morality in this country. Most farmers and traders do not like the idea of partnership and prefer to stand or fall by their single-handed efforts.

The Department of Trade has helped by pursuing a policy of teaching traders how to keep simple accounts and have continued to urge them to improve their status and their turnover by combining in partnerships; but we have met with little success in this direction. Our second aim for the future is to train the personnel of the Trade division of the integrated Ministry in market research duties in support of industrial investigations. This means that we hope eventually to be able to say what scale of production can be justified for new industries that may be established here.

Turning now to the coming year, the biggest item on the programme is the development stage of establishing Williams and

Williams (Nigeria) Limited in the Eastern Region. This will be a branch factory of the Company established in England and will manufacture metal windows and doors and may expand into the sheet metal fabricating business. The industry has been declared a Pioneer Industry and an application has been made in the name of the firm for a pioneer certificate. Relying on the assurances given me by the Federal Minister of Commerce and Industries, I hope this certificate will be issued to enable it to enjoy tax concessions during the years of development.

The Government of the Eastern Region has agreed to take up £50,000 of the capital of the company and has further agreed to erect two houses and a block of six flats at Port Harcourt at a cost of £60,000. Expenditure of £110,000 on this single project takes more than half of the total vote for my Ministry in the coming year. We have sent six students for training in the factory in England and expect to send a few more.

We have a number of other investigations that look promising; but we cannot afford to bring negotiations for the development of any of them to a conclusive stage in the coming year. Nevertheless, we are hoping to be able to carry the preliminary investigations into the glass industry and the plastics moulding industry a stage further. We have had to make provision of £5,000 to enable us to take advantage of any opportunity that may arise to promote early development of one industry or possibly of both.

My Ministry has ambitious plans for mining the iron ore that is plentiful near Onitsha and for smelting it, either by a new process using lignite, which also is available in the Region, or more likely using coal. But there are many more tests and experiments to be made before we can look at this at all hopefully. In any case, I have had consultation over the exploration of this heavy industry with the Federal Minister of Mines and Power and his present decision is that the Federal Government will recruit and send a metallurgist to investigate this deposit and do the necessary testing.

Several hon. Members, particularly the Government Chief Whip and the Leader of the Opposition have urged that Government

should undertake not to dispose of its holding of shares in companies in which it has invested in order to get new industries started. We understand the common man's dislike of the concentration of large amounts of capital in the hands of a few private individuals; but we are a growing nation and, like all the developing countries of the world we must attract the investment of funds from overseas in order to finance our continued development.

I have already told you how difficult it is to negotiate external loans at present. It is almost as difficult to stimulate interest among overseas industrialists to come and establish enterprises in Nigeria. It is therefore very necessary that hon. Members should understand the real nature of the problem and the importance for the future of finding a solution now. That is the constructive line; the negative line is to find fault with the seeming paradox of Government fostering the accumulation of savings and the formation of capital in a state openly following socialist principles.

The history of successful industrial development is a history of private enterprise. Some emergent nations have succeeded in establishing industries without private investment, but they are the exceptions that prove the rule. One blunt truth is that directors and managers that have not got a financial stake in the enterprise are less highly competitive, and therefore less efficient, than those who are risking some of their own money. Another hard fact is that we should keep our industrial development clear of politics: we all seek the greater prosperity of our country, irrespective of our political affiliations. If we are sincere in that aim, we must follow a consistent policy of mobilising our domestic capital to play its full part in the development of the country. We cannot expect all the funds to come from overseas.

With the greatest respect, I beg hon. Members to bear with me that at this early stage of our industrial development, Government finances which are so limited cannot accommodate all the enterprises that the Region might attract. The aim, therefore, is to evolve a system of rotating the funds. This rotation will in effect result in the rapid expansion of different phases of industries irrespective of tags of political colouring that might characterise any Government of the day and scare overseas investors.

[MR NWODO]

I hope it is now understood that there is no good reason why Government should not offer part of its holdings of shares for sale at a favourable opportunity. After the Central Bank has been set up it is likely that a stock and share market will be started in a small way. It may be necessary to make blocks of shares available from Government holdings in order to create the market and to enable the public to subscribe part of the capital. The spirit of private enterprise is strongly at work in the Eastern Region and we believe it is right and proper that the common man should be enabled to contribute his quota to our economic emancipation and to share in the rewards when the profits are reaped.

Finally, Sir, I would like to say a word or two about the Corporations. Government has taken a firm stand to reorganise the Corporations. I, as the Minister charged with this responsibility will meet the wishes of the Premier, my Colleagues and this hon. House by bringing up to Executive Council for appropriate action Corporations which I consider for economic reasons should no longer exist or in the interest of public good have fallen short of expectation and are not likely to operate at a profit for a long time. As a matter of fact, I shall be bringing a Bill before this House adjourns seeking approval to repeal the law establishing the Pharmaceutical Corporation. This is not that the Chairman and members of this Corporation for whom I have the greatest respect have failed; but because in their exuberance to produce quick returns they have plunged the Corporation into far greater schemes involving very large capital than its present finances could bear. I am determined, Mr Speaker, to exercise the strictest control over the administration and management of the four Corporations under me and I will insist and see to it that members of the Corporations concentrate purely on policy decisions.

Mr Speaker, I beg to support.

**The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke):**

Mr Speaker, in winding up the debate on the Second reading of the Appropriation Bill you will allow me to express my gratitude to those many hon. Members from both sides of the House who have shown a great

sense of restraint in their speeches, having realised that the task that faced me and the staff of my Ministry in the past four to five months of preparing the Estimates has been, as I said before, a prodigious one. It is most encouraging to me, Sir, to notice how responsible the speeches of all the Opposition Members in particular, with the exception of one or two, have been. If debates in this House will always continue in this strain, if people will try always to be realistic and constructive in their criticism, then we shall certainly succeed in a short time in building up a tradition of a Parliamentary system of Government which will be a worthy heritage for posterity in this Region. Sir, I however observe that the gallery throughout this Session has not been as full and as representative as it used to be. I only hope that that did not account for the change of heart. (*Laughter*).

Before I proceed, Sir, may I just touch on a teasing reference made by hon. E. O. Eyo to my letter to the Premier immediately after the debate in February on the modification of the U.P.E. scheme. It will be noted that even though the Premier released his reply for publication, I did not consider it necessary then to release my letter to him. But since it has suited my hon. Friend to mention it here, I feel, Sir, to avoid misgivings, I should be permitted to read it. Before I proceed, Sir, I want to explain the background. I want Members to understand that the speech I made during that debate on the modification of U.P.E. was what I may call "a speech of the soul" and that none of my Colleagues, including the Premier, saw it before it was delivered. In spite of that, Sir, I felt no regret for making it, but I feel that I might have embarrassed my Colleagues and the Premier by making it. In addition to that, I thought then that if I offered myself as a sacrificial lamb by resigning, though the failure of the U.P.E. scheme could not be squarely blamed on me, law and order in the Region might be restored, and so I wrote as follows to the Premier:

"8 Park Lane,  
Enugu,  
18th February, 1958.

My dear Premier,

I should like to have your candid opinion on the situation which has arisen out of my speech in the House yesterday. I

wish to repeat, Sir, that I meant every word when I said I was prepared to resign if it was the wish of the House.

I admit that I was not directly responsible for the difficulty in which we have found ourselves but it will not be a sacrifice too great to make to resign my office if that will have the psychological effect I envisage of helping to appease the nation. It is true that the House has since passed the Motion to modify the U.P.E. Scheme but still I cannot overlook the prestige of the Government and mine by remaining complacent in office after accepting responsibility for the mistake, except that my mind is not quite clear on what the repercussions will be if I took the course I am contemplating.

I have therefore considered it wise to consult you first.

I therefore wait to hear your well-considered opinion on the issue before taking action, Sir.

Yours sincerely,  
(Sgd) S. E. Imoke,  
(Minister of Finance)".

The reply, of course, I have no doubt all hon. Members read in the Press or heard it broadcast. I leave the rest to Members to make whatever deductions they like but I was certainly not motivated by any fear of the financial situation as my hon. Friend is trying to imply.

Turning now to the debate on the Appropriation Bill, Sir, may I repeat that we have had a most interesting and constructive debate, and I welcome the useful suggestions that have been made from all sides of the House. As one of my hon. Friends opposite remarked, the finances of the Region concern us all, and I am glad to have been able to note the marked spirit of co-operation and solidarity with which our problems have been faced. I am only sorry that my hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition found it necessary to be so disparaging in his opening remarks on Monday.

I wonder how he would have faced these problems? I suspect from his later remarks that he would have borrowed some money and congratulated himself on having thereby balanced his Budget. His definition of a deficit, Sir, appears to be "that which cannot

be covered by borrowing". Does that not betray a lamentable misconception of public finance?

I realise that the Opposition enjoys a fortunate position, particularly at a Budget session like this. They can advocate, without the responsibility of office, a policy of having one's cake and eating it.

They congratulate us on cutting expenditure and in the same breath want us to cut more and spend more. They want us to increase revenues and at the same time ask us to reduce taxes. They say that parents are being asked to pay too much in school fees or in Assumed Local Contribution and want us to get more revenue out of them in other ways—but they don't say how. They want us to spend more money on education by reducing the Assumed Local Contribution, and then they accuse us of presenting a negative Budget. The truth, Sir, is that they don't know what they want. We do. And they have no plan. We have. It is to mark time on spending give the tax-payer a chance to pay his school fees. A very simple, but very necessary plan.

This is essentially an interim period. When we see how the Assumed Local Contribution is affecting the cost of education and what the Fiscal Commission has to say about our revenues, then we will be in a position to plan the next stage and, we hope, give the order "Quick March". That is why we propose to have a Supplementary Budget later in the year. In the meantime it would be folly to do other than safeguard our position by marking time quietly.

Talking about the Fiscal Commission, Sir, I wish to remind you, that this Region has for the past five years suffered grave financial restriction on account of the system of revenue allocation recommended by Sir Louis Chick and we look forward with hope that the present Commission will remedy this.

It is relevant, Sir, to examine our Budget and see how much we are still spending on social services and grants-in-aid.

The total provision for Education—Ministry, Department and grants-in-aid—comes to £5.17 million, excluding as usual C.D. and W.; for Health, £1.16 million, and for grants to

[DR IMOKE]

Local Government bodies £1.05 million. The total for social services and grants-in-aid is therefore £7.38 million. That leaves only £4.5 million available to be spent on all other services of Government—roads, agriculture, produce services, Administration, tax collection, Public Works, industrial development and all the many and varied fields of activity of a modern Government. Is there any wonder then that this is not a very positive Budget? My hon. Friends opposite criticised it for being negative, but did not have the courage to stand up and say the reason why. The reason is that we are still spending too much on social services, particularly education.

I notice, Sir, that the Opposition have carefully avoided making reference to what I pointed out about the probable cost of education in 1959-60, namely that on present estimates it looks as though we shall have to find an additional £1 million next financial year. As I have said, it is impossible to estimate accurately the cost of education grants-in-aid this financial year until the effect of the Assumed Local Contribution is known next school term. We hope that the provision we have made will prove to be an over-estimate and therefore that the indications of a million-pound increase in 1959-60 will also prove to be an over-estimate.

Sir, the truth is that until we can bring the cost of our social services within reasonable bounds we shall have no room for manoeuvre in financing anything else. This year we have had to strike a balance between the burden that can be placed on the parents of school children, who are also the tax-payers, and the sacrifices that can be made in general Government expenditure. That is why our Budget is so tight. The crux of the present problem is expenditure, not revenue. There is a limit to the extent to which revenue can be extracted from the people who make up this Region and, after very careful consideration of all the possibilities of increasing revenue, we have come to the conclusion that for this year, with the re-introduction of an Assumed Local Contribution the revenues should be given a breathing space. That is why the only revenue measure we have introduced is the purchase tax on auto-gas oil. I assure you, Sir, that we have examined, and will continue

to examine, other possibilities of increasing revenue, but for the moment I am sure the House will agree that the path of wisdom is not to strain the purses of the people too far.

While on the subject of education, Sir, I wish to correct at once the complete misunderstanding by my hon. Friend opposite of the part of education in producing the estimated deficit of £1.68 million for 1957-58 and therefore in reducing our General Revenue Balance. The features indicate that education will have cost £418,000 more than the original estimate and other expenditure £914,000 more. But that is not the whole story. My hon. Friends opposite have over-looked a number of things.

Firstly, as was made clear in His Excellency's speech we have spent nearly £10 million on education grants-in-aid in two financial years. Adding on the cost of the Ministry and Department of Education it comes to nearly £11 million. That is a tremendous sum of money to spend on one service in the normal sense. That is the first point.

The second is that the effect of this extremely heavy expenditure is two-fold. One, it has in itself contributed very considerably to the reduction in our reserves. Two, as I said in my opening speech, it has for the past two years left us with no margin at all for errors and unforeseen contingencies in other expenditure. There are always a number of things in the many and varied activities of a Government which cannot be foreseen at the time the Estimates are prepared and which have to be provided for by supplementary expenditure, otherwise efficiency and services to the public would suffer. Normally, it is possible to make such supplementary provision by quoting savings from other items which turn out to cost less than was originally estimated. But when there is no margin, there are very few savings to quote and consequently unforeseen contingencies become a direct increase in the total of expenditure. This situation is due entirely to putting so many of our eggs in the education basket. The result in 1957-58, we estimate, was a net over-expenditure of £914,000 for expenditure other than education. Much of this sum, as I mentioned in my Budget speech, can be attributed to nearly £½ million of re-votes from under-expenditure in 1956-57, mainly for Local Government



Grants, and £350,000 for Lump Sum Compensation, but there have been other unavoidable supplementaries, too numerous and too small to be mentioned in detail.

A further point which my hon. Friends opposite have overlooked is that education grants-in-aid would have exceeded the estimate by a lot more than £418,000 had we not modified the U.P.E. Scheme. The original figure required as a supplementary for grants-in-aid was over a million pounds. By introducing an Assumed Local Contribution starting in the last quarter of the financial year we were able to reduce the over-expenditure very considerably.

The last point is that the bill for grants-in-aid in 1957-58 has not yet all been paid. There are inevitably many adjustments to be made in grants at the close of a financial year. Since the effects of the Assumed Local Contribution are not yet known, those adjustments cannot be made this year at the normal time, namely at the end of March. Consequently, they will have to be paid during 1958-59, but the bill for them properly belongs to 1957-58. The figure of £418,000 over-expenditure on education in 1957-58 therefore does not reflect the full cost. Also, there was under-expenditure of nearly £50,000 in the Ministry and Department, which makes the over-expenditure on grants-in-aid appear less than it was.

While on the subject of the estimated deficit for 1957-58, I should perhaps explain to the House that this is only an estimate based on figures received some time ago. Experience has shown that it usually turns out that there is less expenditure than Ministries and Departments thought. Put yourself, Sir, in the position of a Head of Department called upon in November or December or January to say how much he thinks he is going to spend by the 31st March. If he has got £500 for travelling, he will think twice before saying that he expects to spend only £300; firstly, because he can never be sure that something unforeseen will not turn up; secondly, because he will fear that my Ministry will take away from him the other £200 straight away; and thirdly, because he knows that my Ministry will take away the other £200 in the next year's Estimates. Therefore, he will say that he expects to spend £400, and it is not until the financial year has actually closed that

we can know just how much is likely to have been spent.

The accounts for the financial year are not closed for several months after the end of it, but is possible, now that the 31st March has passed, for us to obtain a reasonably accurate figure for revenue and expenditure, and I have this week called for fresh revised estimates of both revenue and expenditure in order to know more nearly the true figure. I hope to be able to announce this to the House before this meeting closes. That is one advantage, Sir, in having the Budget Session spreading over into the beginning of the new financial year.

I think we can confidently expect the deficit for the year to be somewhat less than the figure of £1.68 million revealed by revised estimates obtained some time ago. The accounts for January, which Members will have seen in last week's *Gazette*, showed a deficit for the period of £1.6 million, which can be compared with the deficit of £2.48 million the month before—an appreciable drop.

While on the subject of accounts I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Accountant-General and his staff on the promptness with which they always publish our monthly accounts. They are always first in the field throughout the Federation and usually get our accounts out within two months. This is no mean feat and is a measure of the efficiency of the Department, for which its Head deserves every credit.

Sir, I now return to the subject of revenue. The hon. Member for Uyo, Mr E. O. Eyo, queried some of our revenue estimates and concluded that we had over-estimated by some £700,000. Let me assure him that I also queried some of the figures but was satisfied that they are reasonable estimates. My hon. Friend's biggest queries were those concerning the estimates under Head 410, Statutory Share of Federal revenues. His doubts can be very easily disposed of. Those figures are the Federal Government's own, and if he would care to look up the appropriate Head of the Federal Estimates, he will find that the amounts are those that the Federal Government calculates it will be paying to us as our statutory share of its revenues. We see no reason to quarrel with their figures.

[DR IMOKE]

As for my hon. Friend's other doubts, he has misunderstood the use of the term "decrease" in annual estimates as it is applied to produce purchase tax (Head 401, Sub-head 9). "Increase" and "decrease" mean by comparison with the Approved Estimates for the previous year and not by comparison with the Revised Estimates. The approved estimate for produce purchase tax in 1957-58 was £1,150,000 and it has been decreased to £1,020,000 on account of the fall in export tonnages of palm produce, as is explained both in the Memorandum on the Estimates and in my Budget Speech. As a matter of fact, the Director of Produce Inspection thinks this tax may come to slightly more than the sum we have allowed for.

Purchase tax on Petrol (Head 401, Sub-head 10) is if anything under-estimated. We allowed for £210,000, but we now have the figure for actual collection during 1957-58, and it came to £244,000.

Head 405, Sub-head 32, profit on the Suspense Account of the Technical Institute and Trade Centre, is only a token estimate. You will see, Sir, that the actual revenue in 1956-57 was £5,914, but this varies very considerably from year to year. We consider that £1,500 for 1958-59 is a more realistic token figure than £100.

As for the Regional share of the capitation fees on Fernando Po recruitment (Head 409, Sub-head 5), the reason for the decrease is that in 1957-58 we were paid two years' share. For your information, Sir, the capitation fee is £5 per labourer, of which the Federal Government retains £2 to cover its cost in operating the Labour Office in Fernando Po and other overheads in Lagos and Calabar. This Region receives the other £3 per labourer.

I am well aware that the sum of £178,000 to be received as our share of the assets of the Custodian of Enemy Property (Head 409 Sub-head 8) is a once-for-all payment. We have devoted over half of it to the Urban Water Supplies Account (Appendix C).

It has been suggested that the revenue from Motor Licensing has been over-estimated and that no allowance has been made for the evasion that we all know has occurred in the past. In the first place, the inducement to

evasion by licensing in other Regions has been reduced, since the other Regions have raised their fees to levels far nearer those of the East; and in the second place, our estimate is based on actual collections in 1956-57 when evasion was at its height, plus the effect of the new increases put into force in January on the licence fees for the heavier vehicles. I am quite satisfied that my hon. Friends' fears are unjustified and that the estimate we have made is realistic and at the same time conservative.

Incidentally, our revenues in 1958-59 are not £370,000 down by comparison with 1957-58, as one of my hon. Friends suggested. They are only £88,000 down, because C.D. and W. receipts, as I have frequently explained, are not revenue in the usual sense. They account for the remainder of the decrease, but this merely reflects the fact that we have made a closer estimate of C.D. and W. expenditure this year. To be only £88,000 down in revenue is remarkably good when the over-estimate of Regional income tax in 1957-58 is borne in mind.

So much for queries about revenue estimates. As for my hon. Friend's criticism that we have balanced the Budget by making insufficient financial provision for 309 posts spread through the Estimates, I would refer him, Sir, to the Western Region Estimates for 1958-59, in which the Government to which he owes allegiance has done a very similar thing. The difference is that the Western Government has made a deduction varying from 10 to nearly 15 per cent from the provision for Personal Emoluments under a very large number of Heads of expenditure on account of what they call "staff turnover". Their aim is the same as ours: not to tie up funds in unnecessary provision for vacancies. The difference in the methods of doing this is that whereas the West only assume that there will be savings, we have made sure that, where savings are expected because of the time taken to recruit new officers, those officers shall not be recruited before the date estimated without reference to Government. We can then consider the possibility of making additional financial provision by quoting savings from somewhere else. There is therefore no deceit in this technique. If anything, it is the Western Region Government who may be disappointed in their estimate of under-expenditure on staff salaries, whereas we have retained control

over the filling of vacancies and have thereby ensured that we cannot be disappointed.

As regards Local Government grants, I regret the necessity for reducing these and appreciate that it will mean a tightening of the belt for Councils. But since Government is obliged to tighten its own belt, it is only reasonable that Local Government should have to do the same.

Government welcomes the Opposition's undertaking not to make a political issue out of tax. However, I fail to understand the implication that the Government on its side has ever treated tax as a Party issue. The revenue of the Region, its size and its efficient collection is vital to everyone. It is only after you have money in Mr Arikpo's aquatic purse that you can decide how to spend it. (*Laughter*). Then, I agree, the policies of the Government and the Opposition might be at variance.

Various Members of both sides of the House have stressed the necessity for an efficient tax organisation; some have emphasised the desirability of removing tax responsibilities from over-burdened District Officers. The Government wholeheartedly concurs both in general and in detail that there is much to be done in improving the efficiency of the Board of Internal Revenue. The whole aim of Government is ultimately to set up a self-contained organisation which will operate our Finance Law. I agree that Assessment Notices should go out as early as possible. Our staffing arrangements are to that end. I agree that the Assessment Committees should operate without fear or favour. It is only to be regretted that they have not always done so, and that therefore on occasion the Assessment Authorities have had to suspend some of them. I can only repeat that I agree there is room for improvement, but I must point out that there is a wealth of difference between the system as it existed under the old Direct Taxation Ordinance and the system under the much more comprehensive and therefore complicated Finance Law. Rome was not built in a day, nor will an efficient Tax Collecting Organisation be. This requires time, tolerance and—dare I say it—money.

In building this up there are bound to be growing pains. As I said earlier, we propose a completely self-contained Tax Collecting Organisation. In an ideal world we might have continued with the Direct Taxation Ordinance until the whole framework for implementing the Finance Law through the agency of the Revenue Service had been built. But that would have meant two or three years paying and training staff without any immediate return for the expenditure. At the end of the training period we might have enacted Finance Law and on a given day switched over. As I said that was what would have happened in an ideal world. But we are not in an ideal world and we certainly cannot afford one penny on unjustified expenditure. So this House introduced the Finance Law and the Government immediately started to implement the wishes of the people as expressed in that law. The existing machine had to be adapted. There has had to be, and will continue to be, improvisation and rule of thumb organisation. This can only accentuate the growing pains that are inevitably associated with a new thing.

It has also been suggested that the Board of Internal Revenue has issued insulting circulars. I must say that I have heard complaints of strained relations between one or two District Officers and the Commissioner of Inland Revenue, but I am not aware of the issue of insulting circulars.

My hon. Friend, the Leader of the Opposition, thinks that less than one million people pay tax under the Finance Law. I am very happy to say that he is wrong. In 1956-57 there were 1.2 million using the old Local Government rolls. I have not got complete figures for 1957-58, but I do know that in some areas at least the Board has made considerable increases. In Okigwi Division alone there are 30,000 more names this year than last. My hon. Friend believes that there are about 2½ million potential tax-payers. Much as I should like to share his belief, all available statistics go to show that it is not even £2 million.

Various Members have requested a flat rate for income between £1 and £59. I can assure you, Sir, that this has received the most serious consideration by the Government. There are two difficulties, however. We cannot afford to let the revenue drop below

[DR IMOKE]  
its present level. There is then the mechanical difficulty of striking a mean flat rate that will produce the same aggregate. It is not just a question of adding the figures together, and dividing by four. It is necessary first to know accurately how many tax-payers there are in each category. This knowledge can only be acquired easily when the mechanical accounting system of the Board of Internal Revenue is fully established. Secondly, and more important at this juncture, any flat rate must mean that certain tax-payers would pay more than they have done hitherto. It is true, others will pay less, but Government is most unwilling to increase anyone's tax at the same time as it has had to reintroduce an Assumed Local Contribution to Education. It is clear, Sir, that any flat rate must increase the tax paid by the man with a family, i.e., the person who is already affected by the Assumed Local Contribution.

While on this subject it is oportune to refer to the fact that there has been a big increase in the number of people who pay tax of more than £1,000 per annum comparing 1956-57 with 1957-58. That is certainly true but the cause is simple. In 1957-58 this House altered the Schedule to the Finance Law. The incidence of tax was reduced over the income range £60-£880 but increased above that figure. In 1956-57 a single person had to earn £3,700 to pay tax of £1,053 but in 1957-58 he had only to earn £3,195 to pay £1,000 and a few shillings. To indicate in another way how steeply this House increased the level of assessment of higher incomes, an income of £3,000 of a single man in 1956-57 attracted a tax of £580 10s but a tax of £890 12s 6d in 1957-58.

There have been valuable contributions to the problem of tax assessment and collection but equally I have noticed that there are many misconceptions. First and foremost, there has been no alteration either in the assessment or in the collection system. Both are virtually the same under the Finance Law as they were before. The Government is trying to make them more efficient and to facilitate immediate intervention when errors crop up. But Assessment Committees as far as possible, are still employed. In the rural areas collecting agents are still employed although their use has been discontinued in

the urban areas for reasons of economy. It is cheaper to employ a full-time officer than to pay tax rebate. The wealthy tax-payer for whom the computation of assessable income is more difficult is assessed by the staff of the Board of Internal Revenue.

The Member for Onitsha, Dr the hon. Onubogu, was most concerned about the tax on owner-occupiers. If the hon. Member had been occupying a rented house, the income out of which he would have paid his rent, would have already been taxed. He would not have been able to claim the rent paid as a tax relief. He is in the happy position of owning his own house and therefore paying no rent. The Government rejoices with him, but still needs its tax, so the rent he would have paid is taxed. I am able to assure him, however, that the system obtains in the six major urban areas. If there are owner-occupiers in his area that have, fortunately for them, slipped through the net, they are lucky. With increasing efficiency their number will decrease.

Before turning to other topics I should like to comment on the cost incurred by the Board. My hon. Friend, the Government Chief Whip, believes that the cost is between 15 and 20 per cent. This is not true. In 1956-57 the Board collected £2,126,762 in income tax. It spent £210,044 inclusive of the expenditure incurred in connection with entertainment, petrol and liquor taxes and capital works. In other words, 10 per cent.

The setting up of a large Accounts Section has also been criticised as redundant. It is, however, the aim that the Board should be a self-accounting unit not only because the amount of money involved justifies such independence, but also because in the interest of efficiency the Board has to maintain specialised data. The circumstances under which £9,000 was spent on outside printing has also been commented upon. The facts will be investigated.

**Mr Speaker:** May I interrupt: how many more pages have you?

**Dr Imoke:** Six pages.

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order! Our time is almost up and I think you have to wind up

or continue on another day. But I presume, that with the consent of the House you may proceed, but certainly not later than 2.30 p.m. Is it the wish of the House that the hon. Minister be allowed to continue until that time?

*Aye.*

**Dr Imoke:** There has been much criticism of certain assessments in Onitsha. First of all, I would point out that the rich as well as the poor have a right of appeal. But I am also very happy to say that certain of the gentlemen have taken the wise step of placing their affairs in the hands of chartered accountants. If the accounts prepared by these professional men show a different assessment, then the present assessments will be revised. This revision may, of course, be either upwards or downwards.

I want to turn now to the suggestions of the Leader of the Opposition that we should contemplate issuing investment bonds; that the income derived from such bonds should be exempt from income tax; and the surprising notion that the investment itself should be admissible as a relief from income tax. My hon. Friend, the Minister of Commerce, told the House that it is likely that the Federal Government will make arrangements to float an internal loan during the next twelve months. It is probable that a large proportion of such a loan would be taken up by the managers of pension funds and similar institutional investors. I cannot imagine where my hon. Friend opposite got the idea that money lent to Government at a commercial rate of interest should qualify the lender for tax relief. Nor can I recollect any precedent anywhere in the world for such a postposterous notion.

My hon. Friend spoke of the investment bonds proposed by him as if the lending were a contribution to Government funds. It would be no such thing—they would be straight-forward loans carrying guaranteed terms governing the regular payment of interest and the repayment of the loan when the term is fulfilled. I cannot believe that my hon. Friend is serious in suggesting not only that the interest should be free of tax but also that the principal invested should earn rebate of tax.

The proposal that the interest received on investment in Government stocks should be

free of income tax raises a completely different kind of problem. In principle, we can see no virtue in exempting investment income from tax, and we cannot entertain for one moment the idea that the rich man should be enabled to assure to himself and to bequeath to his heirs a substantial income which could not be taxed. But I think a good case might be made out for the "little man", the small investor, who should be encouraged to regard Nigerian Government Stock as the finest repository for his savings. I think it may be possible, when the time comes to float the first loan, to discuss with the Federal Government the possibility of exempting from tax the interest on genuine small holdings of stock—say up to £200 of stock. It would clearly be premature to discuss now the possible terms on which a loan may be floated; and Government cannot fairly be asked to define its policy on a hypothetical basis at this stage.

Before I leave this subject I must remind the House that the raising of external loans is reserved under the Constitution to the Federal Government. We accept this as a necessary condition because we recognise that overseas investors will only be attracted to lend to Nigeria, already a respected borrower on the London market, and not to smaller units within the Federation. For the same basic reason, we think it is desirable that internal loans too should be raised only by the Federal Government on behalf of the Regions. We are supporting the setting-up in Lagos of consultative bodies on this and kindred subjects, on which this Region will be adequately represented. The objects to be aimed at are uniformity of terms and conditions for borrowing which shall apply throughout Nigeria for any given time. By this I mean that when a loan is to be floated, all the Governments in the Federation will have the opportunity of stating their requirements, so that every Region that participates will borrow on identical terms. The other aim is the avoidance of auctioneering amongst the Governments and competition for priority by offering uneconomic terms or premiums. We are satisfied that this move is in the safe direction of establishing the highest standards of public finance in this country and is to be warmly supported.

In passing, Sir, may I be allowed to correct one or two misconceptions that the

[DR IMOKE]

Leader of the Opposition allowed to creep into his speech. The first I have already referred to: the idea that the raising of loans would enable Government to get away from budgetary deficits is, of course, quite false; he appears not to distinguish capital from revenue. The actual case is the reverse of my hon. Friend's argument: the interest and sinking fund payments due on borrowed money have to be paid out of recurrent revenue and hence are an extra burden on the Budget until the additional revenue from the projects financed by that capital begins to accrue.

The second is similar: he has confused capital and revenue in another way as well. He accuses us of having buttressed our revenues by falling back on capital, because we have transferred £280,000 from the Regional C.D. and W. Contributions Accounts to the General Revenue Balance. Again the reverse is in fact the case. Our General Revenue Balance is our accumulated capital, whereas the C.D. and W. Contributions account is not a reserve—it is there to be spent. The transfer conserves our accumulated capital, by moving money from where it had been put with the intention of being spent back into General Revenue Balance, with the intention that it should not be spent.

Finally, Sir, I want especially to thank all those who have counselled wise and cautious

spending. I have no doubt I will receive the co-operation of my Colleagues in carrying out this counsel. (*Applause*).

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time and under Standing Order 66 (4) stood committed to the Committee of Supply.*

**Mr Speaker:** Committee, what day?

**The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke):** Wednesday, 9th April, 1958.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Minister of Production (Dr M. I. Okpara):** Mr Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Wednesday, the 9th of April, at 10 a.m.

I wish to remind those hon. Members who have planned to go to Nsukka that the visit has now been postponed until next Saturday.

**The Minister of Transport (Mr P. O. Ururuka):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Adjourned accordingly at twenty-five minutes past 2 o'clock p.m.*

## WRITTEN ANSWER TO QUESTION

Thursday, 3rd April, 1958

### Allowances to Higher Elementary Teachers-in-Training

61. Mr J. A. Agba asked the Minister of Education, if the modification in the U.P.E. Scheme equally affects the allowances paid previously to the Higher Elementary Teachers-in-training as it does to grants-in-aid to Managers and Proprietors of primary schools; if so, to what extent.

**The Minister of Education:** It is confirmed that certain changes have been made in

the rates of allowances payable to Higher Elementary Teachers-in-training. Ex-standard VI students undergoing a four year course, who previously received no allowance of any kind will in future be paid £30 a year in their third and fourth years. Ex-Secondary VI students in training will have their rate of allowance increased from 36 to £40 a year. Elementary Certificated teachers who now receive an allowance of full salary less £24 will in future receive an allowance of £40 plus a separate allowance of £40 if married. These new rates will take effect as from the 1st April, 1958.

EASTERN HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 9th April, 1958

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

PRAYERS

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

PAPERS

Presented:

Reports of the Director of Audit on the Accounts of the Eastern Region Scholarship Fund for the years ended the 31st March, 1955 and 31st March, 1956. (*The Minister of Information, temporarily holding the Portfolio of Education*).

Ordered: That the said Papers do lie upon the Table and to be printed.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Grants-in-Aid

50. Mr N. O. Onwudiwe asked the Minister of Education, by what means is it ascertained that vouchers submitted to the Provincial Officers for grants-in-aid are correct both in salary figures and the number of teachers in the schools concerned.

**The Minister of Information temporarily holding the Portfolio of Education:** Vouchers are not submitted to the Education Department. They are prepared by the Department and are based on returns submitted by Managers. These returns are carefully checked against records of teachers qualifications and salaries which are kept by the Department. In January, 1958 a new system of Last Pay Certificates for Voluntary Agency Teachers was introduced, which is designed to improve the Department's records on the movements and salaries of teachers. It will work well if Voluntary Agencies co-operate fully.

In addition, the Education Law requires certain records and books to be kept in every

grant aided school and these are periodically checked by inspecting officer against Departmental records.

Students and Politics

54. Mr J. A. Agba asked the Minister of Education, whether in view of the fact that the World Student Association in its sitting at Ibadan last year decided that students should not take part in politics, he considered that students in Teacher Training Colleges and other institutions should be members of Councils.

**The Minister of Information temporarily holding the Portfolio of Education:** I have no evidence that students are taking part in politics. If the hon. Member has specific cases in mind perhaps he would enlighten me. The position of students in Teacher Training Colleges is that they may sit as members of Councils, with the permission of the Principal of the institution, provided that this activity does not interfere with their work. For the rest it is up to the Councils concerned, and the electors who vote the membership of Councils, and subject to the above consideration I do not feel disposed to interfere.

Training Centres and Secondary Schools

60. Mr G. C. Okeya asked the Minister of Education, how many new Training Centres and Secondary Schools were opened in 1957, and how much did each receive by way of grant.

**The Minister of Information temporarily holding the Portfolio of Education:** Three Teachers' Training Colleges, Grade II were opened in 1957. Twenty-nine Training Centres Grade III were opened in 1957 for men; four such centres were opened for women. Nine Secondary Grammar Schools and one Commercial School were also opened in 1957.

With the hon. Member's permission I will circulate details of the grants received by each of these institutions in the Official Report.



1. Teachers' Training Colleges opened in 1957 and details of Grants

(a) GRADE II COLLEGES

Name of T.T.C.	Amount of Grant paid £
1. St. Paul's C.M.S. Training College, Awka (Previously an E.T.C. added Grade II, 1957)	6,986
2. Bishop Lasbrey's C.M.S. Irete, Owerri (Previously an E.T.C. added Grade II, 1957)	5,794
3. St. Monica's Ogbunike, Onitsha (added Grade II, 1957)	8,859

(b) GRADE III TRAINING CENTRES

(i) (Men)

Name of T.T.C.	Amount of Grant paid £
1. Annang County Council, Utu Etim Ekpo	3,301
2. Calabar County Council, Creek Town	2,202
3. Eket County Council, Ndon Eyo	3,072
4. St. Paul's E.T.C., Ututu, Arochuku	1,406
5. African Church, Oku-Iboku, Itu	2,005
6. R.C.M. Ikot Nseyen, Ikot Ekpene	1,523
7. Ikot Ekpene County, E.T.C.	2,292
8. R.C.M. Immaculate Conception, Ikot Eba	1,745
9. Uyo County, T.T.C.	1,737
10. Methodist E.T.C., Ibiaku Ishiet	1,882
11. R.C.M. (E.T.C.) St. Mary's Afikpo	2,081
12. Obudu District Council T.T.C. via Ogoja	2,292
13. R.C.M. E.T.C., Nimo, Awka	1,482
14. R.C.M. E.T.C., Umuoji, via Onitsha	1,720
15. C.M.S. E.T.C., Obosi, Onitsha	1,385
16. C.M.S. E.T.C., Ngwo, Enugu	1,344
17. Methodist E.T.C., Agbani	1,533
18. R.C.M. E.T.C., Eke, via Enugu	1,878
19. Anglican E.T.C., Osusu, via Aba	Nil
20. C.S.M. E.T.C., Ohafia, via Bende	1,903
21. Q.I.M. E.T.C., Oloko, via Nbawsi	1,273
22. R.C.M. E.T.C., Ubulu, via Orlu	Nil
23. Loyola E.T.C. (R.C.M.), Uli, via Orlu	2,385
24. Presentation E.T.C. (R.C.M.), Ogbaku, via Owerri	1,944
25. R.C.M. E.T.C., Afo-Ogbe, Ahiara, Owerri	2,113
26. C.M.S. E.T.C., Akabo-Ikeduru, Owerri	1,272
27. C.M.S. E.T.C., Chokoneze, Ife-Ezinihitte, via Aba	1,410
28. C.M.S. E.T.C., Umuobiakani, c/o Obia Court, via Port Harcourt (Formerly St. Paul's Diobu—E.T.C. now here and H.E.T.C. remains at St. Paul's Diobu)	2,576
29. Anglican E.T.C., Okordia Zarama, via Ahoada	1,227

(b) GRADE III E.T.C.'s

(ii) (Women)

Name of T.T.C.	Amount of Grant paid £
1. Holy Child Jesus, Esin Ufot, Oron	1,164
2. C.S.M. E.T.C., Arochuku	1,688
3. Holy Rosary E.T.C., Aboh, Enugu	2,174
4. Anglican E.T.C., Isiokpo, Ahoada	Nil

**2. Secondary Grammar and or High Schools opened in 1957**

Name of School							Grant Paid
ONITSHA PROVINCE							
1. C.M.S. Girls' Secondary, Ogidi ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	Nil
2. Zixton Secondary, Ozubulu ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	Nil
3. Modebe Memorial, Onitsha ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	Nil
OWERRI PROVINCE							
4. Okigwi National, Umuna, Okigwi ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	Nil
5. Sacred Heart Secondary, Ezeukwu, Aba... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	Nil
RIVERS PROVINCE							
6. Birabi Memorial, Bori Ogoni ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	Nil
7. Holy Rosary Secondary, Diobu, Port Harcourt ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	Nil
8. Western Ahoada High School ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	Nil
9. Eastern Ahoada, Ikwerre, Etche ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	Nil

**3. Commercial Schools**

1. King's Institute of Commerce, Buguma ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	Nil
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**School of Music**

62. **Mr E. Chidolue** asked the Minister of Education, if it is true that about eight thousand pounds was spent in training a Nigerian as a musician in the United Kingdom; if so, would Government consider establishing a school of music in the Eastern Region so that this talented musician can train other Nigerians who will serve other parts of the Region, which one man cannot cover.

**The Minister of Information temporarily holding the Portfolio of Education:** No Regional funds have been spent in training any Nigerian as a musician in the United Kingdom, but the hon. Member may have in mind Mr Echezona who was granted a scholarship by the Federal Government to study music in the United Kingdom.

I would be happy to see a School of Music established in the Eastern Region to train talented Nigerian musicians. For financial reasons, however, it will not be possible to establish such a school at present.

**Western Ahoada Rural District Council**

104. **Mr J. O. Okeh** asked the Minister of Local Government, whether he is aware that the Auditor, in his report dated 21st August, 1957, on the accounts of the Western Ahoada Rural District Council remarked that the Council had failed in all its duties to the rate-payers; if so, what were the explanations offered by the Council which prevented the Minister from revoking the Instrument establishing the Council.

**The Minister of Local Government:**

Yes, Sir, I am aware of the contents of the Audit Report on the Western Ahoada District Council of 27th August and not 21st August where the Auditor remarked, I quote: with your permission Mr Speaker:

“In the light of this report it appears that the Council, to an indeterminable extent, has failed in its duties to the rate-payers on both counts.”

The Auditor did not remark that the Council has failed in all its duties to the rate-payers. The Council's comments on the Audit Report were that no surcharge had been raised by the Auditor as a result of his report; that the Audit Report revealed financial losses caused by council staff and that the staff involved were being prosecuted by the Police.

In the light of the above and the indeterminable remark of the Auditor I see no reason for dissolution of the Council but ordered a detailed investigation into the accounts of the Council with a view to fixing responsibility squarely on the councillor by surcharge that is found guilty of mismanagement of the funds of the Council and if any criminal intent is discovered to be prosecuted as that of the staff. The detailed investigation is in progress.

**Change of the name of Ogoni Division**

162. **Mr O. B. Nalelo** asked the Minister of Local Government, is he aware that Ogoni comprises five clans of which Khana is one;

if so, what were the reasons for changing the name of Ogoni into Khana; is the Minister further aware that four out of the five clans comprising Ogoni are agreed on the retention of the name Ogoni; if so, when will the name be restored.

**The Minister of Local Government:** No, Sir. My information is that the five clans of Ogoni are Northern Khana, Southern Khana, Gokhana, Tai and Eleme.

The name Khana District Council was originally approved because it seemed from available information that it was the most suitable name.

I would refer the hon. Member to the reply given by the hon. Premier as Minister of Internal Affairs to Question No. 291, in the 1956 Session, on the same subject. Referring to differences of opinion as to the name to be used, he said:

“I intend to resolve the matter in the following way: when the Local Council organisation has been finally determined on the basis of single-member wards and the local councils have been elected accordingly by universal adult franchise, then I propose to ask each local council to debate this problem and resolve on which name it wishes the District Council to be known by. I shall then abide by the decision of the majority.”

Local Councils have just been established in Ogoni Division; the Instrument establishing them laid down that the elections to them should be completed by the 25th March, 1958. I am now taking steps to consult them as promised by the hon. Premier in 1956.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### (1) The 1958-59 Eastern Region Appropriation Bill

(First Allotted Day)

*Considered in Committee of Supply.*

(In the Committee)

*Clauses 1-4 postponed.*

#### SCHEDULE

##### HEAD 420—THE GOVERNOR

**The Chairman:** Under constitutional arrangement Head 420—Governor's Office—does not come for debate in this House.

**Mr E. O. Eyo (Uyo Division):** I think they refer only to Sub-head 1 items 1 to 11—Personal Emoluments.

**The Chairman:** Do you like to amend the Constitutional Instrument?

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Yes, Sir.

**The Chairman:** I am guided by the fact that on the Bill there is no Head 420, but there might be some constitutional issues. I don't know.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** No, Sir, it is very clear from the Memorandum submitted by Government that it is only in respect of personal emoluments, that is Sub-head 1 Items 1 to 11.

**The Chairman:** It appears to me, and without going into the matter very deeply, that it might be construed as salaries and emoluments appertaining to the Office of the Governor. I am not saying that authoritatively. If it is, it is covered by the Constitution. But meanwhile I am only guided by the fact that right before me and in the Schedule itself there is no Head 420. I think it is a matter the Opposition can take up with the Government.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** I just want to get it straight, Sir. Are you saying that because certain items of personal emoluments are charged against the consolidated revenue Fund, other items of expenditure not so charged appearing under the Expenditure Head are not subject to debate?

**The Chairman:** It is conceivable that that is an answer. But my contention is that right before me in the Schedule, there is no Head 420, and if there is no Head 420 we cannot discuss it. It is a constitutional issue which I think you ought to take up with the Government on whether because the Constitution makes provision for the Governor's salary not to be debated in this House that is sufficient reason why other sub-heads should not be in this Estimate.

**The Premier (Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe):** I would refer the hon. Member for Uyo Division to section 224 of the amended Order in Council which reads as follows:

“The Governor of the Eastern Region may, with the concurrence of the Premier of the Region, prescribe, by Order published in

[THE PREMIER]

the *Official Gazette* of the Region, the offices that are to constitute the personal staff of the Governor, the emoluments to be paid to the members of the personal staff of the Governor and the other sums to be paid in respect of the expenditure attaching to the Office of the Governor."

so that it would not be quite in order at this stage to go into the items referred to by the hon. Member. That is why I propose, when we come to Head 421, to insist that the item which was erroneously inserted under the Governor's Office should be inserted under the Premier's Office.

**The Chairman:** If I understand hon. Eyo correctly, even though there is provision in the Constitution which enables the Governor's emoluments and other expenses appertaining to the office not to be debated here, there are items which do not properly fall within them and therefore provision should have been made here for those items to be debated. That is your point?

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** That is my point, Sir.

**The Premier:** We shall clear that up.

**The Chairman:** We will now proceed with Head 421—Premier's Office.

#### HEAD 421—PREMIER'S OFFICE

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £97,170 for Head 421—Premier's Office—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Premier:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move the insertion in Head 421—Premier's Office—a new sub-head, Carriage of Diplomatic Mail and include provision of £800.

This Sub-head was originally inserted in error under Head 420. Under the former constitutional arrangements the Overseas Communications Office which dealt with all despatches and communications with the Secretary of State and with the Governments of the Federation and other Regions was situated in the Governor's Office. As a result of the recent constitutional changes it was moved to the Premier's Office and now the bulk of the diplomatic mail, except his Excellency's personal despatches, is received by and despatched

by the Overseas Communications Branch of the Premier's Office. For this reason it is more appropriate that the vote for the Carriage of Diplomatic Mail be controlled by the Chief Secretary to the Premier.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Mr Chairman, I rise to move to reduce Sub-head 11 by £180. The whole question of hospitality allowance, official hospitality, and Government hospitality should be fully debated. The Opposition are not opposed to any provision in the Estimates for Government hospitality by Ministers but we are opposed to any hospitality allowance to any Parliamentary Secretary, the Chief Secretary to the Premier or any civil servant. Sir, the principle is this: that the proper body entitled to entertain any guest should be the Government. But under Sub-head 11 the sum of £680 is provided as follows: £500 for the Premier, £120 for the Chief Secretary to the Premier and £60 to the Parliamentary Secretary. Hospitality allowance should not be regarded as a "dash".

I had thought, in view of the criticisms in the past, that Government will have one block vote under the office of the Premier for Government hospitality and then it would be left to the Executive Council to decide on the entertainment of guests of Government. But Sir, if you look right through the Estimates there is provision in respect of hospitality allowance for every single Minister, and every single Parliamentary Secretary. Let us take the case of a Parliamentary Secretary. Whom does he entertain?

He is not in a position to entertain. We should make provision for only Ministers. How can we make provision for Government hospitality and another provision for each and every Parliamentary Secretary? If a Minister is away on leave or tour another Minister acts for him and if there is any guest of Government to be entertained by that particular Ministry then the acting Minister would entertain the guest from the other Minister's vote. We should not make provision for every Minister of State and every Parliamentary Secretary. Which Parliamentary Secretary has ever entertained any guest? Why should he

entertain from public funds? Why should a Parliamentary Secretary get a vote to entertain the public? I am saying that the Parliamentary Secretaries are not in a position to entertain on behalf of the Government or the Minister for that matter. Our objection applies equally to the Chief Secretary to the Premier or any Civil Servant for that matter. If somebody arrives in Enugu as guest of the Government it is of course the duty of Government to entertain that guest. Why should we make provision for the Chief Secretary to the Premier? Our objection is based on the principle that the proper body entitled to entertain is the Government through a Minister of State. We are prepared to vote any block sum to the Premier's Office for this purpose. Ministers are already competing among themselves to throw parties to Members of this House whenever the House is in session. This is not necessary at all.

I think, the other day three Ministers called cocktail parties, one after the other. It was quite unnecessary. Members of the House should be satisfied with cocktail parties by His Excellency the Governor and the Premier. All the Ministers want to entertain Members of the House. This is not necessary and we are simply wasting public money as our Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries regard the entertainment allowance as a "dash". The allowance should not be regarded as additional pay. We are saying that there should be a vote under one Head—Premier's Office. If our Ministers insist on £300 being allocated to each of them and £60 to every Parliamentary Secretary, the impression is being created that they regard this provision as extra pay. It is all very well to say that our Ministers have decided on a ten per cent cut on their salaries. This works out at £300 each and if each Minister draws £300 as entertainment allowance, then I submit he has not made any real sacrifice. (*Interruptions*).

**The Chairman:** Order! Order!

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** We demand a block vote under the Premier's Office for Government hospitality and it will be the duty of the Executive Council to decide whom the Government should entertain as guests. We say that the Eastern Region is poor and has not enough money to carry out all essential social

services and yet we are prepared to vote £120 to the Chief Secretary to the Premier and £60 to every Parliamentary Secretary.

I am left with the impression that Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries do not want to entertain their personal friends out of their pockets. If the Ministers insist on this £300 a year for their Entertainment Allowance, to be paid to each and every Minister then it is difficult to erase the impression that they regard it as additional pay. I can understand the position of a Minister who is called upon to entertain a Government guest but what about a Parliamentary Secretary? He wants £60 a year for entertainment. Whom does he entertain? (*Interruption*). Is it being suggested that if we have an august visitor in Enugu and the Premier throws a party for him the Minister will also throw a party and then to crown it all the Parliamentary Secretary? (*Laughter*). I have made our position quite clear. We are opposed to entertainment allowances for Parliamentary Secretaries and Civil Servants.

*Question proposed.*

**The Chairman:** Chief Onukogu, you were interrupting so much, I thought you wanted to speak.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Town Planning (Chief S. E. Onukogu):** Mr Chairman, I disagree with my hon. Friend, the last speaker, on the grounds that when he was in the E.R.D.C., he was drawing money for entertainment whilst he was Chairman.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** I call the Premier as witness. I was not drawing any allowance for any entertainment.

**Chief Onukogu:** Even when he left his successor was also drawing £300 a year for entertainment. (*Laughter*).

**The Chairman:** I am concerned with whom the Parliamentary Secretaries entertain.

**Chief Onukogu:** Mr Chairman, Sir, hon. Members in this House will agree that Parliamentary Secretaries do entertain. (*Laughter and cries of "No, No"*). About ten days ago

[CHIEF ONUKOGU]

hon. Okafor threw a cocktail party and the last speaker was invited. (*Laughter*). You will see, Mr Chairman, that even the money is not paid in cash.

**The Chairman:** Order! Order!

**The Minister of Production (Dr M. I. Okpara):** Mr Chairman, I beg to oppose what the Chief Whip of the Opposition has said. It is well-known, Sir, that by virtue of being a Minister, by virtue of being a Parliamentary Secretary, there is a lot of extra entertainments we have to do, if you are somebody who regards the post as one that should be maintained at a certain level of dignity. It is true that one can be a Minister and deliberately refuse to entertain anybody, but there are those who will not do that. It is very strange that the Chief Whip of the Opposition who is an Action Grouper should come here to make a most irresponsible suggestion. The Federal Government has provision exactly as was suggested in our Estimates. The Northern Government has a similar provision. I have here the Estimates of the Western Government. As a matter of fact, apart from the individual entertainment allowances for the various Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries, there is a vote for official entertainment in the Western Region. Let me take one Ministry at random—Ministry of Education. Entertainment allowance for Minister and Parliamentary Secretary is £420.

**An hon. Member:** U.P.E.

**The Chairman:** Order! Order!

**Dr Okpara:** Mr Chairman, U.P.E. is a childish argument at this stage. It has nothing to do with what I am saying. In the East, we have £300 as against their £420. The Member opposite has his own Party in the West in power. They are using £420 and he has not got the guts of tabling this Motion in a party caucus so that these suggestions may be implemented there in the West. (*Interruption*).

**The Chairman:** Do you say he has not got the gut?

**Dr Okpara:** He has not got the courage.

**The Chairman:** You said he has not got the gut.

**Dr Okpara:** I am sorry. That may not be parliamentary. I withdraw. Sir, in addition to all these individual votes for the Ministries, you have a general entertainment, Government hospitality, vote of £3,500 (*Interruptions*). Wait. You never read these Estimates of the Western Region. You never read anything since you left this side of the House.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Exactly.

**Dr Okpara:** Let me leave the subject of the Premier's Office. The Ministers here have made a lot of sacrifice, everybody knows. I think, Sir, it would be ridiculous and lowering the status of this institution of Ministry if we are going to suggest that a paltry sum of £240 for official entertainment (not for individual entertainment) should be excised. There are some of you who drink beer here; supposing you drink two bottles of beer yourselves daily you know what that comes to in a month. This money will not even be enough for the individual Minister, so that many of us are forced, in spite of these votes, to dip our hands into our personal pockets for official entertainments. I will urge this hon. House to reject this frivolous Motion.

**The Premier:** Mr Chairman, we have discussed various aspects of this problem, but I would like us to confine our attention to the words used by my hon. Friend opposite in making his argument. His argument is that it is not necessary for Parliamentary Secretaries and Ministers to entertain, but his Motion is to reduce. He is asking this House to reduce; he is not asking this House to leave out. My point is that any argument which is put to this House should be on the case whether to reduce or not to reduce. That being the case, I beg to oppose the Motion, because this case as I see it is to reduce, and if we say we have to reduce then the question is, what is the amount?—£680: Premier £500, Parliamentary Secretary £60, Chief Secretary £120, and my hon. Friend wants to reduce. I am opposing the Motion to reduce because that is the lowest this Government can afford so far as is consistent with the dignity and prestige of the offices concerned. I support

my argument by pointing out (this has been pointed out by my hon. Colleague) that the phenomenon itself is common to all Governments of the Federation, and what has been voted here is the lowest. We have voted £680; the West under the same Head and Item has voted £870 for the Premier and Parliamentary Secretaries, etc., and the North has voted £700—in other words the East has voted £680, the North £700, the West £870. I therefore submit that since the hon. Member wanted a reduction, we have already reduced that amount to the irreducible minimum. (*Applause*).

**The Chairman:** Order! Order!

I must warn visitors in the galleries that they are not allowed to take part in the debates by clapping their hands. If they do so, I shall order that the galleries should be cleared.

**Mr S. G. Ikoku (Enyong Division):** I like the way the Premier has spoken because it suggests that some of the points raised by the Mover of this Motion had not occurred to him earlier, and I am quite sure that they will make full use of this Motion to rectify the situation. I would like to make the point clear that we are not interested in the comparisons with other Regions—that really does not bother us. We are not interested in the actual money voted for Government hospitality. Why my Chief Whip moved a reduction is merely to give an opportunity to speak on the Head, and the Premier himself knows that.

**The Minister of Commerce (Mr J. U. Nwodo):** You asked a question and you have got the answer.

**Mr Ikoku:** Mr Chairman, Sir, it is rather surprising that the Minister of Commerce has become the Chief Secretary in the Government, and won't allow us to do our duty.

I like to point out that the main point in our case is that the Government should be able to entertain and entertain liberally. That is one. Secondly, we want to make sure that only those who are entitled to entertain the public do, in fact, entertain the public. If we are called upon to vote £1,000 for a Ministry for entertainment, we are ready to do it, but that fund will have to be operated

by the Minister. If he is not on seat his Acting Minister will operate it. If the Premier deems fit to appoint a Parliamentary Secretary to act for his Minister, then the Parliamentary Secretary will operate that fund; but to make a distinct allowance for the Parliamentary Secretary separate from that of the Minister is unthinkable. If for example a trade mission visits this Region it is either the Minister of Commerce or the Minister of Production who is involved.

**The Chairman:** I could see that there are notices reducing several sums from so many Heads. I am going to allow sufficient latitude of debate on this in the belief that when this has been decided we will deal with other items.

**Mr Ikoku:** My point, Sir, is this. If a trade mission visits this Region, the mission is not only the guest of the Government but also the guest of probably the Minister of Commerce or the Minister of Production. Either of these two Ministers can throw a party in honour of this mission. If the Minister of Production is not on seat and his Parliamentary Secretary is acting for him then he draws on the same vote to discharge this obligation. We do not see any reason why the Minister should be given £300 for his entertainment and his Parliamentary Secretary another £60 for his own entertainment. The principle, Sir, is that a Parliamentary Secretary can never represent either a Ministry or the Government except he is acting in the capacity of a Minister and when he is acting in that capacity he is authorised to operate the fund. So there is no need for special allocation for a Parliamentary Secretary.

Again, Sir, there is entertainment by the Government as distinct from entertainment by a Minister. I think here too we do not quarrel. An ample vote should be provided in the Premier's Office for this type of business. We have an example now. A group of visitors from Ghana are now here. We regard them as guests of the Government and they could be entertained from that special vote under the Premier's Office—that is hospitality vote for Government as distinct from hospitality vote for Ministers. In fact if we change the technology a bit and stop talking of Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries we will get out of the trouble. If you want each Ministry

[MR IKOKU]

to have a hospitality vote of £600, £800 etc., we agree and we know that it is being operated by the Head of that Ministry which is the Minister. We do not want to have this itemising of Parliamentary Secretaries' entertainment because he is merely an agent of the Minister. The Minister tells him what to do. The Minister says: you go and entertain; then he goes to entertain, and carries the voucher to the Treasury and collects the money, if that is necessary. So there is no need for a special allocation to them. What is actually happening Sir, is that these gentlemen entertain nobody other than their girl friends.

**Hon. Members:** What is wrong with that?

**Mr Ikoku:** Mr Chairman, I have been asked what is wrong with entertaining girl friends. I do not think there is anything wrong because I too entertain my girl friends, but I do not come to this House and ask for a vote to do so.

**Mr Nwodo:** With the greatest respect to the Leader of the Opposition, I think the language used is unparliamentary. The other time the Chief Whip of the Opposition stated here that there were "small and bigger slaves" who both struggled to be free from foreign domination. The same Whip in advancing his argument against the buoyancy of the Budget described the Budget as "how-for-do-budget".

**The Chairman:** Order! Order! What do you object to now?

**Mr Nwodo:** My objection, Sir, is in Standing Order 25 (5).

**The Chairman:** Hon. Members in rising to make protests should confine themselves to what they are protesting against. I want to know what you are protesting against.

**Mr Nwodo:** I am protesting against the language used by the Leader of the Opposition. It is unparliamentary and should be withdrawn.

**The Chairman:** I do not insist that he should withdraw the language; I think the point is quite clear.

**The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke):** I just want to make one small point to show

why it is necessary to show this allocation differently. It has been pointed out by one speaker that a Parliamentary Secretary threw a cocktail party a few days ago. I think Members will bear in mind too that there could be an occasion when a Foreign State may have to send a Parliamentary Secretary on a mission to this Region—in such a case it would require a Minister of the same status to throw a party for him, and I think that is a good enough reason.

The other point, Sir, is that this money is never paid in cash to anybody. If it is not used at the end of the year it lapses, and so I do not see any reason why Members should quarrel. If they do not quarrel about the amount as it stands in the Estimates, I do not see any reason why they should quarrel about where the allocation is made because the money is there; if it is not used it comes back to revenue.

*Question put and negatived.*

*Sub-head 17.*

**The Chairman:** I think it is quite a small matter and we are just beginning this long debate. We have got a long way to go.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Sir, I do not move.

*Question proposed, That an increased sum of £97,970 for Head 421—Premier's Office—be inserted in the Schedule.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### HEAD 422—ADMINISTRATION

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £273,750 for Head 422—Administration—stand part of the Schedule.*

**Mr V. A. Nwankwo (Abakaliki Division):** I am speaking that this Head be reduced by £100.

**The Chairman:** Reduce the whole Head! Now, will you show me that you are entitled to reduce that Head at all by any sum in view of the constitution?

**Mr Nwankwo:** I want to speak on that, Sir, and will quote my authority from the Standing Orders of this House.



**The Chairman:** Will the hon. Member please take his seat ?

**Mr Ikoku:** Mr Chairman, we thank you for allowing us to speak on the Premier's Office and on this occasion I would like to draw attention to three points in connection with the Premier's Office.

First, I would like to make it absolutely clear, Sir, that this side of the House is not against any measures designed to give the Premier's Office the status it deserves and the control it should achieve over the affairs of this Region. But Sir, there are certain arrangements in the Premier's Office which suggest a little bit too much concentration. We have, Sir, the Establishment Section which has taken the staff from the Ministry of Finance and brought into the Premier's Office. We also have the Administration Section which has been brought in partly from the Ministry of Local Government and partly from the Governor's Office; and thirdly, Sir, we have the Director of Recruitment position as well as Regional Security Office and Overseas Communication Office. I must admit, Sir, some of these additions to the Premier's Office are consequential on the constitutional changes that have taken place. I refer, for example, to Overseas Communication Office and parts of the Administration. But the picture now, Sir, is that Establishment provision which has the responsibility for detailed matters connected with posting and so on, problems in the Civil Service and also Recruitment Section which is concerned with training and Recruitment generally, suggestions of measures before setting up recruitment to the Public Service, are all concentrated in the Premier's Office. As a result, Sir, the Premier's Office has an undue weight in matters affecting the Public Service. I must say, here, Sir, that we were very much apprehensive at the London Conference of undue interference of politicians in the Public Service. As it is now, Sir, the Public Service Commission has been reduced to impotence. You have just a *Commissoin* ! All special duties about looking up Establishments in the Civil Service, making recommendations, plans for recruitment and training, are all taken away from it, and also taken away from the Ministry of Finance.

As a result these three gentlemen in the Public Service Commission will be faced

with the suggestion and recommendation which they will not be very much in a position to tender. The man responsible for recruitment is operating from the Premier's Office; the man responsible for all establishment in the Civil Service is operating from the Premier's Office, and these two sections must tender advice provided by the Public Service Commission.

As a result, Sir, it will be unwise—shall I say not quite human—to believe that the Public Service Commission will reject, except in very glaring cases, recommendations made from the Premier's Office. There are three sides to this problem. You have the Public Service Commission; the Establishment Division which is to say what posts are vacant and of the number to be filled and in what period, and lastly you have the Recruitment Division. These three forces pull together to influence appointments into the Public Service. Now two of these forces have been removed into the Premier's Office and it gives an undue weight to the Premier's Office. That is our first criticism.

**The Chairman:** May I interrupt please. Where do you want them to be ?

**Mr Ikoku:** I am coming to that, Sir.

We sincerely hope that at this stage of our constitutional advance we should refrain from making unnecessary experiments. Let us be guided by what has been and in, say, another five years we will then know where exactly the shoe pinches. We can then make some changes in the light of our own experience. I am therefore, suggesting that the Establishment Division should be reverted to the Ministry of Finance.

The next point, Sir, I would like to make is in connection with the Executive Council. There is an entry here—Secretary to the Executive Council. We agree with it. But, Sir, I think that in keeping with the practice in Whitehall we should begin now to make an attempt in setting up an Executive Council Secretariat. It has here been put under the Premier's Office but it is a body functioning by itself and if we sent this Secretary to the Executive Council over to head this Secretariat, we would then have a nucleus and probably in the near future, it would fall into something quite

[MR IKOKU]

respectable. The Secretariat must be able to make its own independent investigations in the interest of its own Government.

Again, Sir, we support the idea of the Premier's Office being divided into Divisions. You notice, Sir, that in connection with the Administrative Division, the person at the head is an Assistant Secretary, Scale A and also under the Regional Secretariat Office and Overseas Communications, the person at the head is an Assistant Secretary on scale A. I am suggesting, Sir, that somebody or rather a Civil Servant who is to advise the Premier on matters connected with the Administration—such a heavy task—could not possibly be an Assistant Secretary. It means that this man is just a messenger between the Premier and the Administrative Officers—he cannot stand up to any of them. The Administrative Officers are superior to him; the Premier is also superior to him. What sort of link is this? As I have said, Sir, this man is merely a messenger who does what he is told. He cannot express any opinion. Some of the Administrative Officers are in Groups 3, 4 and 5. May I ask, Sir, how could you bring somebody in his second year on Scale A to be the head of a Department which is specifically concerned with the affairs of the Administration? He is not going to pull his weight. After all, the Head of this Department should be in a position to tender expert advice to the Premier; and how can such a man tender such an advice? The same thing for the man in charge of the Regional Security Office and Overseas Communications Office. We have the Office in London and probably may open up one in New York and the Government must be kept in very full touch and the touch will be of a confidential nature with this office. We have a Commissioner, Sir, who is on £3,000—Ministerial Status and yet the link between him and his Government is an Assistant Secretary on £800.

**An hon. Member:** You got it wrong.

**Mr Ikoku:** If we take the reply now of the Premier that the person really responsible is the Chief Secretary to the Premier, it may now be taken that we have a structure like this: a Chief Secretary at the top, various divisions at the head of which you have Principal Secretaries. Now that method has been

followed as regards Political and General Divisions. It has been followed as regards the Establishment Division. These people are all to advise the Chief Secretary to the Premier who is to make final advice to the Premier and why should these two divisions be demoted and give a head who may not even be fit to be a full D.O., and you call in a D.O. to be in charge of a Division who is responsible for the affairs of Administrative Officers Class I or Class II and so on. I would like that anomaly to be corrected. It may be quite probable that the Premier is keeping his eye on the £ s d aspect of the problem, but I do not think the Premier's Office is where risky economy should be carried out. That is the position as such.

Lastly, Sir, on that Head, I am rather surprised to find the entry Sub-head 1 (5) Legal Adviser. I thought there was a time, Sir, when the people who were in a position to advise Government legally were not very "go ahead" as regards the Government and that Government were not very "go ahead" as regards them. So that this idea of bringing Legal Adviser to the Premier can be justified on the grounds of that experience but now Sir, we are in a position to appoint a person of our own choice as Attorney-General, a person who has to tender legal advice to the Government of the Region.

Then again Sir, further down, there is a provision for a Solicitor-General who will also be in a position to strengthen our legal pannel. I do not see why we should still drag in the idea of a Legal Adviser to the Premier except (*Interruptions*) . . .

**The Chairman:** What is the practice? Has the Prime Minister of England any adviser other than the Attorney-General?

**Mr Ikoku:** Not to my knowledge. The argument is that every Ministry has a Legal Adviser in the sense that Ministries will have to do a good deal of their original draft as regards law before the thing comes finally to the Cabinet.

The position is that there was an incidence in 1947 when the Minister of Health in connection with the National Health Scheme was in trouble and he had to invite an outside lawyer to advise them and they had to set up a pannel

of lawyers to advise them and they took the advice that was given them. That was in 1947 and I was then in the United Kingdom.

All I am interested in, Sir, is that the Legal Adviser could quite conveniently be in the Attorney-General's Department and help to strengthen the Department. We now have an Attorney-General, and we have a Solicitor-General.

**An hon. Member:** No, that has not been created. We are going to create it.

**The Chairman:** Actually, as I understand, I don't want to interfere. According to the Constitutional Amendment, we create whatever we like. Your argument is that it is not that there should not be a Legal Adviser, but that it shouldn't be under the Premier. Is it your argument? Or, is it that all such posts should be abolished? What is your argument? You have a very short time to debate this Motion, and I don't want to interrupt you; I just want you to make the point quite clear.

**Mr Ikoku:** My argument, Sir, is that whatever Legal advice is to come to the Government it is to come via the Attorney-General's Office, and in whatever way you want to strengthen the Attorney-General's Office, you are at liberty to do so. That is my argument. In order words, I am saying that there is no need for a Legal Adviser in the Premier's Office. That, Sir, summarises our views on the Premier's Office.

I would like to conclude on the notes I open before me, that anything which will be done to strengthen or to raise the status of the Premier's Office or to strengthen its control over Government activities generally, will be supported by us. But we are not going to support too much concentration in the Premier's Office and we are not happy with any indication of such.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Mr Chairman, I have to comment on the recruitment and posting of Administrative Officers. Those of us who happen to live in the Divisions receive complaints on the posting of Administrative Officers to our Divisions. Now, an Administrative Officer is posted to a Division this year; he embarks on certain schemes for the Division

—schemes connected with Community Development for instance. When the Administrative Officer really gets going on his schemes, all of a sudden he is asked to go on transfer to another Division. What happens? The schemes are suspended because the new officer posted to the Division is not interested. The people in the Divisions complain about unnecessary and frequent transfers of the Administrative Officers. I would suggest that where the people themselves do not kick against their Administrative Officers, they should be allowed to remain in the Divisions and do several tours. Most of these Administrative Officers are so popular in certain Divisions that the people of the Divisions often petition against their transfer to other Divisions. They are popular because of their good work in the Divisions. Some of them are experts on roads, culverts, bridges and other community development projects and they, on their own initiative, get the people to undertake certain community development schemes. The people would like to have such officers remaining long in their Divisions. They protest against frequent transfers of these officers.

I had a case of a man the other day at my home, who was assessed to pay his tax. He went to see the Assistant District Officer, who dismissed his appeal. This man told me that he did not accept the A.D.O.'s decision, and said he would like to see the District Officer. I enquired why, and the man told me that the Assistant District Officer was from Iman. Now, Iman is one of the clans in Uyo Division and the officer referred to happened to be an Ibo (not from Uyo Division or Calabar Province). The man had a feeling that he would receive a more favourable hearing from the District Officer (an expatriate officer) hence his determination to appeal to the District Officer. I do not for one moment share the views or opinion of this man in this particular matter. But he reflected the views and opinions of an average illiterate person in the village. It is against this background that I appeal to the Administration to be more careful about the posting of Administrative Officers to certain parts of the Region. In certain Divisions the people would not like to have two Nigerians of the same tribe in the station.

**Hon. Members.** Why?

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Because they prefer one expatriate with one Nigerian. I am here as their representative and I know what I am talking about. They would prefer to have an expatriate District Officer in charge of the Division with a Nigerian Assistant District Officer serving under him because in most cases the people do not stop with the Assistant District Officer if something goes wrong, they always go further and see the District Officer. Two Nigerians of the same tribe should not be posted to an area outside that tribe in view of the bitter tribal feelings in the Region at the moment. This tribal feeling is very very strong and Government would be well advised to take my views very seriously.

May I register, Sir, my concern over the selection of Nigerians to fill the posts of Administrative Officers in the Region. Onitsha Province in particular is more favoured. The recruitment from Calabar, Ogoja and and the Rivers Provinces is very poor. Not that these Provinces have not got the men with the necessary qualification to fill these posts...

**The Chairman:** Are you attacking the integrity of the Public Service Commission?

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** I will address you on that later on.

**The Chairman:** If you wish to, I am afraid I will not allow you to do so.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** I am not attacking the integrity of the Public Service Commission.

**The Chairman:** If you are suggesting that there are lots of material in Ogoja and Rivers Provinces to be promoted to the rank of Administrative Officers and that they are not so promoted, and probably the number is not what you expect, obviously you are imputing some motive.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Mr Chairman, I wish to address you at a later stage and will cite instances to show that there are people who are qualified to enter into our civil service but have been refused appointment by the Public Service Commission and these people have been employed in Lagos by the Federal Public Service Commission.

**The Chairman:** Then Mr Eyo, I believe there is a Head—Public Service Commission. I will allow you to say what you like when we get there; my present concern is Administration. What you are saying does not seem to be quite relevant.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Very well, Sir. I want to appeal to whoever is responsible for the posting of Administrative Officers to be more careful in seeing that an Expatriate officer and a Nigerian officer are posted to one station, but not two Nigerians from the same tribe in an area outside that tribe.

**Hon. Members:** Shame! Shame!

**The Chairman:** Mr Nwankwo, do not refer me to any Standing Orders.

**Mr V. A. Nwankwo:** I will not, Sir. I will like the Nigerianisation of the senior posts under this Head to be quickened than at present so that more vacancies should be created for qualified youths in this Region. By this we can make a lot of savings if the number of expatriates are reduced a bit. I will also stress on this point that care should be taken that the old interpreters who have come to the age of retiring should not be dumped into these posts. I should like an effort to be made for the gradual abolition of posts of interpreters because we have now Nigerian cadets who can speak directly with the people. Therefore the post of interpreters which number up to fifty-three is unwise and redundant. I remember in some two Divisions I went to, most of the interpreters are doing nothing. I think they should be absorbed as clerks or given other jobs. The Administrative Officers and their Assistants are now in charge of tax affairs and the supervision of Local Government Councils so that in the near future, that is on the introduction of Customary Courts in this Region, our Administrative Officers will have no need for interpreters as they will be required to review cases from the Customary Courts.

Administrative Officers who will be styled Inspectors or Commissioners attending Local Government Council meetings would either speak directly with the council or, the Secretary of the Council will do the interpretation where necessary on tours for tax collection or tax arrangement. The Administrative Officers

used to have direct communication with the tax clerks or court clerks and only in rare cases. The tax-payers or tax agents were interviewed and where there was need the tax clerk or the Court Clerk could interpret if the Officer was an expatriate. It is only in rare cases, such as in Ogoja Division or other areas with varieties of languages than one, that an interpreter who could interpret many languages could be employed.

*Question, That the sum of £273,750 for Head 422—Administration—stand part of the Schedule, put, and agreed to.*

#### HEAD 423—CLERICAL TRAINING SCHOOL

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £6,090 for Head 423—Clerical Training School—stand part of the Schedule.*

**Mr S. O. Achara (Okigwi Division):** Mr Chairman, I wish to draw the attention of the Government to the discrepancy between the staff of the Clerical Training School in the East on the one hand and the staff of the Federal, Western and Northern Governments on the other. There is a sense of frustration among the staff in the Eastern Training School who are not treated as their counterparts in the West, in the North and in the Federal Governments in spite of the fact that they have identical qualifications with the staff of the Federal and Western Governments, and in the case of the North they have qualifications which are inferior to the qualifications of the men here. In these other Regions they run a scale C (E) 2, 3, 4; that is £540 to £972 per annum, but here, Mr Chairman, the staff are on a very much lower salary.

We have much more qualified instructors and one of them has Inter B.A. and the others have passed the R.S.A. Examinations and some of them write as many as 120 words a minute. They feel that they are not fairly treated. The problem is that the Clerical Training School would appear not to have had an officer who is in charge of the school so that they have no person to whom they could direct their appeal for consideration of their service conditions.

**The Chairman:** Order! Order! Did they appeal to you?

**Mr Achara:** Well as their representative it is my duty to bring their grievances before the Government.

**The Chairman:** There has always been a lot of argument about civil service matters being taken by Members of this House. I have been here for four years now and you all know my attitude in the matter. There are channels through which civil servants who are not satisfied with their conditions of service could bring up their complaints to the Government. I do really deplore the use of this House by Members of the civil service to air their grievances. I think the duty of all Members is to direct them to their General Orders or to other conditions of service and ask them to go through the proper channel. I don't think this House is the proper channel.

**Mr Achara:** I submit to your ruling Mr Chairman.

**Mr Ikoku:** Mr Chairman, Sir, I would like to mention one or two points on general interest as regards this Head. In saying so I must say, Sir, that it is true that personal matters of all the individual civil servants should not be taken up in this House, they should make use of their service machinery and the only thing we could do here, is to discuss broad principles. I would like to say, Sir, that the first point I would like to raise is that this school I think is a unique one, not being run as a Government Department in the sense that detail administration matters are run. I would suggest that the Government should handle this school much in the same way they handle other institutions in the Region; that is to give the school a little bit more of attention. It is quite probable that particularly the Premier is not aware that this school does not enjoy autonomy comparable to other institutions in the Region, but we hope when you will look into the matter you will discover that the people do not enjoy that autonomy, and it has always been accepted that Government Departments are very poor school managers because their methods of administering the schools are very poor. If that is accepted then you will notice that the first item there will require some sort of modification as regards the person in charge. You will agree, Sir, that if the principle of giving other institutions autonomy is accepted, there must be something positive done,

[MR IKOKU]

The next point, Sir, is that the school has been removed to the Ogui Road and most of the boys are still in the Government Trade Centre, and I think there is the problem of transport as far as they are concerned. You will agree that the Government Trade Centre is not where one could get hold of a taxi. So I think Government can quite conveniently do something, probably buy them a bus to carry them to and from school.

On the question of salary scales, I think here we could make an attempt to raise the scales to the level comparable to what obtains in the Western and Northern Regions and in the Federation. I would like to draw attention to this fact that in the Federal Public Service Instructors Grade II with the same qualification start on £564 and end up at £972. In the Western Region, Sir, they start at £744 and end up at £972; in the Northern Region, they start off at £540 and end up at £972. (*Interruptions*). The point is appropriate; we are making comparisons as regards the public service. Please Sir, salary scales are not subject to the violence of political parties, so we leave them alone but we must try to achieve some sort of uniformity.

I said, Sir, in the Western Region they enter from £744 to £972 and in the Northern Region from £540 to £972. There is even a second scale in the Northern Region for people with only standard six qualifications. They start at £390 and end up at £714, but in the Eastern Region, Sir, where qualifications are the same for entry with that in the West and in the Federation, the scales are rather disappointing. Here, D 4 starts at £390 and ends up at £492; D 5A starts at £516 and ends up at £660; so that the points of entry are much lower and the maxima are much lower too. We hope that the Government will look into this matter and see that these anomalies are rectified, particularly, Sir, as I believe and we do believe, it is in the interest of this Region and this hon. House in particular that all sorts of enjoyment should be given to people in this category as Stenographers, Verbatim Reporters and so on in order to encourage them to be a little more efficient and pay a little bit more attention to their work.

*Question, That the sum of £6,090 for Head 423—Clerical Training School—stand part of the Schedule, put, and agreed to.*

#### HEAD 424—THE COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £27,780 for Head 424—The Commissioner's Office in the United Kingdom—stand part of the Schedule.*

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Sir, we on this side of the House wish to pay our tribute to our Commissioner in London. (*Hear! Hear!*). I am happy to have had the opportunity of looking into our office in London. I am sure that other Members who have visited our office in London will join in paying tribute to the work done by our Commissioner in London. I have this to say about our office in London, that it does not compare favourably with the office of the Western Region. Take for example the question of hospitality, only £900 is provided for hospitality for our Commissioner in London. Now, Sir, if you compare this with the provision for the Commissioner of the Western Region you will find a wide margin. Sir, hospitality allowance for the Commissioner has been reduced from £1,000 to £900 and no explanation is given for this reduction. Provision for Motor Vehicles, maintenance and running costs has been reduced from £1,800 to £1,250; and only £120 is provided for equipment, furniture and furnishings. I am only spotting these things to urge upon Government to vote more money to enable our Commissioner to maintain his prestige in London.

I wish to comment on overseas Allowance for Senior Staff. How much of the sum of £880 is paid to the Secretary to the Commissioner? I would like to know whether the salary for our Commissioner in London is subject to tax; and whether the tax is borne by the Government.

The vote for Transport and Travelling expenses has been reduced from £800 to £700. No explanation has been given. I venture to say that our Commissioner in London enjoys less amenities than the Commissioner for Western Region. I am sure the reason for this is not that we have no money but rather that Government seems to be indifferent to the welfare and comfort of our Commissioner. May I say, Sir, that any more money voted by Government for this Office will receive my support. I want to say, Sir,

that when our Commissioner last visited the Region he was not looking very happy. (Laughter).

**Mr Ikoku:** On a matter of policy, Sir, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the Publicity Branch of our Office in the United Kingdom. I am referring to the Publication known as *Eastern Region Today*. I think they are doing quite a good job but there is a point I would like to be given more attention in that journal. That is the question of advertising our economic potentialities to the outside world. I do not think enough light has been focussed on the economic possibilities of the Eastern Region.

Again, Sir, turning to the question of our students, I think our students overseas constitute a real problem and the Government must do something about this matter. Time after time, we have met them and they have suggested that hostels be put up for them and that Nigerian diet be supplied and so on. I think the Government should consider ways and means of helping in this matter. There are, however, two things which the Government ought to take up right away. The first is that the Government should change its policy of making our students who return from the United Kingdom travel in Third-class coaches on their journey from Lagos to the Eastern Region. These people travel from Britain by ship in first-class cabins and when they arrive here they are made to travel third-class.

It is not fair. After all, Sir, most junior clerks here going on leave travel second-class and I think these students should be given at least second-class passage from Lagos back home.

Lastly, Sir, I think the Government should carry out a survey of all our students overseas both private and State-sponsored. As it is now, Sir, I do not think we know exactly our human resources being trained overseas. There are certain people doing courses completely unknown to us and I think if Government undertakes such a survey, it will be in a position to know exactly where an Easterner is training in Britain and what course he is undertaking. We will thus be in a position to recruit them for our public services because there are certain private students in Britain who encounter a

great deal of financial embarrassment in the last phases of their academic career and if the Government could come in at that stage and tide them over such difficulties, it will be a very good idea for our public services. I know Government does such a thing for State-sponsored students but I think the private students should also be brought within the ambit of Government protection.

*Question, That the sum of £27,780 for Head 424—The Commissioner's Office in the United Kingdom—stand part of the Schedule, put, and agreed to.*

#### HEAD 425—AUDIT

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £53,280 for Head 425—Audit—stand part of the Schedule.*

**Mr J. E. Eyo (Abak Division):** There was a time in the past when we had Local Government established in 1954 and many of the clerks carried their salaries from Native Authority to Local Government but there was no audit at all of the accounts of Local Government for years. It took about two or three years before any audit was conducted and the Audit Department when they arrived just made a report and asked that the staff be down-graded. Those who were on £95 or so were asked to come down to £90 per annum, etc. It was embarrassing but now that we are having County Districts, Government should hurry up to see that accounts of every District Council in the Region are brought up-to-date so that the new Councils should be able to work amicably otherwise, the staff will have to carry their burdens to the new Councils and the new Councils will continue to pour complaints and draft letters to the Ministry of Local Government. If there is no step taken now to rectify the salary conditions of the staff of the Local Government Councils, who are now being handed over to the new County District Councils, the staff will carry their troubles and burdens over to the new County Councils. These will in effect mean that the Councils will continue to invade the office of the Minister of Local Government with complaints regarding the rectifications of salaries. The best thing now is for the Government to speed up to audit the accounts of all Local Government Councils in the Region.

*Question, That the sum of £53,280 for Head 425—Audit—stand part of the Schedule, put, and agreed to.*

*Head 426 postponed.*

**The Chairman:** Order! Order! I believe it is the wish of most hon. Members on both sides that we should try and brush through this Committee of Supply on Friday. The Opposition in particular are anxious that the debate should close on Friday and subject to the wish of Government I think it should really close on Friday. If some Members of the Government are not very anxious I suggest we have a form of motion to that effect so that on rising on Friday we should have concluded. So Mr Minister, do you like it to be deferred until Friday?

**The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke):** I have no objection—I like it to be deferred until Friday.

*Head 427—Judicial—postponed.*

#### HEAD 428—PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £24,570 for Head 428—Public Service Commission—stand part of the Schedule.*

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** I do not want to create the impression that I am attacking the members of the Public Service Commission. I have nothing personal against the individual members of the Public Service Commission. However, there are cases of Easterners who have been abroad to England and have had the necessary qualifications and have come back to the Eastern Region but have been refused employment into the civil service. Sir, one happened just recently and I discussed the matter with the Minister of Health. The gentleman had a Federal Government scholarship to study Radiography. The Eastern Region Government took over the scholarship and the gentleman qualified as a Radiographer. He returned, Sir, and he was refused employment. He applied to the Federal Government which was anxious to employ him in Lagos, but the gentleman would not be released from a "bond" he signed with the Eastern Regional Government. Having mentioned the matter

to the Minister of Health, I do not know what the position is at the moment. But here is a case of somebody who was trained by Government for a specialist course but returned to be told that there was no job for him and he has been waiting for months and months and may now leave the Eastern Region in search of employment in Lagos. Again, Sir, there is the case of a girl from Eket Division who returned from the United Kingdom as a fully qualified Nursing Sister, but she was refused employment by the Regional Government. This girl had to go back to Lagos and she has been employed as a Nursing Sister. Are there no vacancies for Nigerian Nursing Sisters in the Eastern Region? Another gentleman from Calabar qualified as a Dentist, returned to the Eastern Region and was told that there was no appointment for him. Now, Sir, it may well be that there are no vacancies but the impression being created is that there is a conspiracy to prevent certain persons from getting into the Civil Service. I find it very difficult to explain to my people why some people who are well qualified have not been able to get employment in our Civil Service.

I also attack the composition of the Public Service Commission. At the moment there are two Nigerian members. I do not know whether or not their seats have been declared vacant as provided for under the revised constitution, but I am not satisfied with that number. I do not want to go into more details about partiality, but I must say that I am not impressed with the argument that from a particular area we have not got qualified men to get direct entry into the Civil Service. There are two sides to the matter—direct entry into the Senior Service Grade and promotion within the service.

The position with regard to Ogoja and Rivers Provinces is just deplorable, and I have a feeling that the composition of the Public Service Commission at the moment is reflected in the appointment into the Civil Service. I am suggesting that, in order to meet that serious criticism, Government should reconsider the question of the composition of the Public Service Commission. One may argue that X is not representing a particular area, but Sir, all of us here happen to be politicians. We refuse to accept that argument. Anybody serving on the Public Service Commission comes from a particular area; he comes



from a particular Province; he comes from a particular Division and he has tribal feelings. If somebody who comes from the Rivers Province appears before the Public Service Commission with what he believes to be sufficient qualification is turned down, the feeling is that if he had somebody from the Rivers Province on the Public Service Commission, he might have had a chance into the Civil Service. This is reasonable and understandable in view of provincialism. I am not insisting on all members being full-time members but I am suggesting that a third member either from the Rivers Province or Ogoja Province, should be appointed either full-time or part-time. If this is done then the minorities in Ogoja and Rivers Provinces will have a feeling that their interests are protected on the Public Service Commission. I would seriously urge Government to consider the whole matter.

The Leader of the Opposition earlier on had dealt with certain functions performed by the Public Service Commission that have been removed. A Member made the suggestion that a Nigerian should be made the Chairman of the Public Service Commission. Sir, I do not support that at this stage. I want Members to realise the importance of the Public Service Commission. If there is any feeling of fairness at the moment it is just because we happen to have an expatriate as Chairman. If you remove that expatriate and put a Nigerian, no matter how good the Nigerian may be, he will come from a particular province, Onitsha, Owerri, Calabar, Ogoja or Rivers. The feeling will be that he is teaming up with some other member from that area to influence appointments one way or the other.

In order to get the public to continue to have confidence in the Chairman of the Public Service Commission the Government should not make the mistake of appointing a Nigerian to be the Chairman of the Public Service Commission at this stage.

**Mr Ikoku:** Mr Chairman, Sir, I just want to be brief. The Chief Whip has dealt with the policy matters in general but just one point I would like to raise. I don't know what is the policy of the Public Service Commission as regards appointment of people holding the same qualification to posts in the Civil Service. I would have thought that if a group of young men and women were trained and made

to go through the same course the intention was to give them, if not the same post, at least posts that are somewhat identical. There is a case which has been lingering for long in the Public Service. Certain people have been trained in the Local Government Service and some of them have been appointed on to very responsible posts while others have been reverted to the Ministries and given posts like First-class Clerks and Assistant Chief Clerks. I am bringing up the point, Sir, because, I think that type of arrangement only succeeds in demoralising those who have gone through this course of training, and, in fact, earlier I think it was last year, the Premier did answer a question in this hon. House to the effect that an executive grade in the Civil Service was under consideration by the Government and the intention was that such people could be appointed on to such grades. My point, Sir, is that if ten or twelve people go through the same course of training it is most unfair to appoint some as Principal Assistant Secretaries, Deputy Principal Assistant Secretaries somewhere, District Officers somewhere and then revert about 60 per cent of the number to First-class Clerks and Assistant Chief Clerks. Some of these people are on £370 while their counterparts are on £960. I think that the disparity is a little bit too great and I would suggest, Sir, that Government should suggest to the Public Service Commission that these gentlemen should be encouraged by being given posts where they can make full use of their training. This point has been lingering for two to three years now and I do not think much will be gained by further delaying tactics. Now that the Premier is directly responsible for recruitment and establishment—they are all in his Office—I hope we won't come back next year and still find these people wandering like sheep without shepherds. Something should be done for them right away.

*Question, That the sum of £24,570, Head 428—Public Service Commission—stand part of the Schedule, put and agreed to.*

*Heads 429 and 430 postponed.*

#### HEAD 431—FISHERIES

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £34,030 for Head 431—Fisheries—stand part of the Schedule.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**HEAD 432—FORESTRY**

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £74,020 for Head 432—Forestry—stand part of the Schedule.*

**Mr Ikoku:** Mr Chairman, Sir, this is not a matter of general policy, it is something that concerns my Division.

**Hon. Members:** Which is your Division ?

**Mr Ikoku:** Enyong Division. We have a lot of difficulties there in our Division as regards forest reserves and I would like the Minister to go very closely into this matter. There is a definite land shortage in certain areas of the Division where large tracks of land have been reserved. What we would want, Sir, is that a careful study of the situation should be made in order either to still reserve some areas or to allow some economic exploitation of the reserve areas—economic exploitation as regards planting. That is our demand, but we are not blind to the fact that there are other considerations on the side of the Ministry as regards general forestry policy in this Region. All we are asking is that some sort of compromise should be arrived at; our claims should be gone into and carefully weighed in the light of Government policy. I believe that some sort of accommodation of the demand of the people in this area for farm land should be made by the Minister concerned.

**Mr Nwankwo:** Mr Chairman, I want to say something about the Forest Reserve at Effium in Abakaliki. I would urge Government to take proper care of this forest reserve because some timber contractors have penetrated into this forest reserve and are cutting down timber trees indiscriminately. I would also like a Board of Survey to be held on some of the smaller forests especially in the former Ogoja Province so that more forests should be reserved. From my experience, I feel that trees are being cut down with some sort of recklessness and if this continues we shall have no forest in the future and no timber or wood for our buildings. I am also suggesting that after the survey Government should insist and return to the old policy where cutting down trees would only be done after obtaining licence. This will restrict the cutting down of young trees and thus protect the forests.

*Question, That the sum of £74,020 for Head 432—Forestry—stand part of the Schedule, put, and agreed to.*

**HEAD 433—VETERINARY**

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £94,740 for Head 433—Veterinary—stand part of the Schedule.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Head 434—Ministry of Commerce—postponed.*

**HEAD 435—MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £189,120 for Head 435—Ministry of Education—stand part of the Schedule.*

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Mr Chairman, I would like to draw the attention of the Minister of Education to the dissatisfaction of the people of Oku Clan in Uyo Division, who are the landowners to the Teachers Training College. I have seen some of the correspondence between the people concerned and the Minister of Education and I was just wondering when the matter would come to an end. Without going into details, the Ministry must be aware that for some time now the landowners have refused to grant Government additional land for the extension of the Teacher Training College and certain allegations have been made against the management in a petition to the Minister. The people have been deprived of their only water pump which was granted them by a clause in an agreement which was approved by the Governor. The Minister should know that the matter is very serious. I am suggesting that the Minister should get in touch with the landowners and explain matters to them. If they insist, then the Department might consider transferring the Principal. The petitioners would like to have a new Principal in the school. We would all like to see the Teacher Training College expanded and it could only expand if the landowners agree to give additional land.

**The Minister of Information temporarily holding the Portfolio of Education (Mr B. C. Okwu):** I think it would have been of great profit to discuss it with me in the Ministry. I don't think it is so important that it should be raised on the floor of the House. It is also true that in a matter like this, I need to get an expert advice as to what the position is and be able to inform the hon. Member.

**Mr G. I. Oko, M.B.E. (Awgu Division):** Mr Chairman, I want to raise at this stage some points with regard to grants payable to Teachers in Training Colleges. The allowances or grants given to this class of students were said to have been withdrawn and I have been receiving a lot of correspondences from teachers concerned that this matter should be raised for the Minister of Education to look into. These students in the Training Colleges should be encouraged. They have their hopes on these grants and if these grants are withdrawn their future studies in these colleges will have to be very difficult; at least, they should be given time to contact their people on the question of financial support.

**Mr J. O. Ihekwoaba (Orlu Division):** Mr Chairman, there is information that in some schools, teachers are promoting children without taking examination in order to fill up the gap. Even some of these children who are recently promoted from one class to the other in the month of February were asked to cross over to the other class in order to fill up the gap. So I want the Minister of Education to make a statement about this because I feel it will ruin the future of these boys if this continues.

**Mr P. U. Amaefunah (Awka Division):** Mr Chairman, I am standing up to raise a point about teachers in secondary schools in the Region. Now there is every amount of laxity among teachers in secondary schools and this laxity is due to the fact that there is no incentive in the teaching profession. It is the noblest of professions but the worst of trades. There is no amenity and no promotions and teaching suffers frustration and drudgery. For example, in secondary schools and especially in the Voluntary Agency Schools in the Region, graduate teachers are not satisfied with the result that teaching really suffers. If the Minister of Education takes for instance the statistics of subjects taught by intermediate teachers and senior certificated teachers together, and then the subjects taught by graduates, he will find out that boys pass more in those subjects taught by intermediate and certificated teachers. Many a time in the secondary schools, these graduate teachers demand car advances but the Proprietors cannot meet up such advances and the Regional Government does not support giving them car advances. After all, they are

not given car basic allowances, or mileage allowances and I think it was time the Education Department began to give them car advances in which case, the Government does not lose because the money is given as loan with interest. Moreover it is stipulated in the Code that for every ninety boys, there must be a graduate but the Government steps in to drain all secondary schools of those graduate teachers in the way of giving them Civil Service appointment because that is more attractive than staying in the teaching field and I think that graduate teachers are not sufficient for secondary schools in the Region. They don't take teaching as a profession but simply regard it as a stepping stone to Civil Service employment—some stay for three months and jump off. Their subjects therefore suffer with the re-employment of other teachers to fill vacancies so created. Science and English masters should be given lesser periods to make for efficiency. Therefore with a full fledged secondary school for 300 boys, I think two or three graduates could do where the other teachers are senior certificated teachers and intermediate teachers. Moreover, Mr Chairman, I think that in secondary schools and elementary schools there is not much efficient control of teachers, because the Education Code does not give certain powers to Managers of Primary Schools and Principals of Secondary Schools for the control of teachers, with the result that every teacher believes that at the end of every year he must get his increment—that is, increment is automatic. Therefore, they are not working towards an incentive. I suggest the Minister of Education should think seriously about this automatic increment to teachers. Again, there is also a falling standard in education. For instance, in the secondary schools in the Region, boys in Class V find it difficult to tell which is a Finite Verb or a Non-Finite Verb, which is a Gerund or a Participle. I think this is due to the fact that Grammar teaching has been stopped in elementary schools and secondary schools. English language is not our mother-tongue, but I am yet to be convinced that one could do Latin without doing Latin Grammar, ditto with English. If Grammar teaching would raise the standard of education in the Region, I see no reason why we should not revert to type even though it is obsolete according to some educationists.

**Mr J. A. Agba (Ogoja Division):** Mr Chairman, Sir, I would like to say something about teachers in training.

**The Chairman:** A lot has been said about teachers in training. Are you going to add to it or is it something new? Order! Order! I am not trying to interfere with Members to speak, but you cannot repeat one theme indefinitely.

**Mr Agba:** What I want to say is that very often when Members stand up to talk, they seem to generalise things. They believe that what holds in one place also holds in another place.

**The Chairman:** Indeed we are talking about policy.

**Mr Agba:** I would like to say, Mr Chairman, that these teachers in training before the modification of the U.P.E. Scheme were paid salaries, particularly teachers who had done their Elementary Courses and then went back again to do the Higher Elementary. They had their salaries together with increment, but now I think that with the removal of these salaries teachers in the rural areas—like Ogoja—are badly handicapped. This is one of the complaints put forward by the Principals of these Teacher Training Colleges. If these teachers are not given any pocket allowance, it will be absolutely impossible for them to remain in the colleges. Their own people are not prepared to support them in the colleges at all. So I am appealing to the Minister of Education to see to it that the allowance is not completely removed. They may not be given the full salary as hitherto, but I think something should be done to encourage them.

Another point, Sir, which I would like to make is that when proprietors apply to open Training Colleges, Secondary or Grammar Schools the response is often very slow. I cite one instance: the proprietor of Ogoja Training College applied to open a college at Obubra: he made this application since 1956. I was sent personally to come here and find out whether permission would be given for the opening of that college or not, since last year. I appeal to the Minister concerned that if he sees that a college will not be opened and no permission will be given to this or that college to be opened, the best thing to do is to make the proprietor know that he will not be given the permission to open the college in question.

Again, if he knows that his effort will not carry him anywhere, he will stop applying and will stop worrying those Members who are in the area of the proprietor's jurisdiction. There will be no need coming to the Ministry to ask time and again whether this thing will happen or not.

The other point I will like to make is what one hon. Member said about secondary schools. I regret to say that that kind of thing does not hold for all schools. He talked about teachers in secondary schools not working towards an incentive. Without using any damaging language I will rather say that I do not think he fully realises the gravity of what he says. That might hold in his own secondary school, but it does not hold in other secondary schools. In other places teachers have been energetic enough and have really been making their best efforts to do their work efficiently and give the children the real education that the school stipulates. If the Minister is going to look into that kind of thing at all I think it is not so much that teachers are not working towards any incentive but rather because equipment in certain schools are much better than in others. I think that may probably be what he was trying to say. In our own secondary school, for instance, the Science Hall has been fully equipped by the Mission and it is not an easy thing to equip a Science Hall particularly according to the present stipulation from the Ministry of Education. Now, if all schools had been equipped alike and grants in aid given to schools in the same way, I think they would do quite a lot. The schools will do very well, particularly the secondary schools. Instead of contacting the Ministry of Education to find out what is really wrong in his own school he comes to make a general statement. I did say here before that people come here to make general statements to cover areas they know little of. I think it a discredit to those Members. I do not claim to know really what exists in the whole of Ogoja Province much less to talk of the whole Region. I can talk only of my own little area and in the same way I can only talk of the schools I know of in my area. Unless I have travelled round the whole Region I think it will be too daring of me to come here and make general statements covering the secondary schools in the Region.

**Mr K. Kiri (Degema Division):** I wish to draw the attention of the Minister of

Education as to what he intends to do with the failures of Standard Six Examination. I feel that an arrangement could be made whereby failures could be given a second chance. They could be permitted to take the examination as private candidates on fee paying basis.

Secondly, Sir, I should say that the general demand for science teachers in most secondary schools in the Eastern Region requires immediate attention. Perhaps lack of science teachers is partly responsible for our secondary schools not attempting as they should the Higher School Certificate. As I have said several times, the Minister of Education should think seriously on this problem if we want to use the Ibadan University to our advantage and that could be effectively done by encouraging more schools to take the Higher School Certificate. Passing the Higher School Certificate will help them to gain admittance into the University straight, and would help us probably in curtailing the number of scholarship students going to U.K. In a way it will be an economy measure as well.

Thirdly Sir, I have to call the attention of the Government to the fact that there is not one Government education institution in the Rivers Province. The only two schools we have are all elementary schools—Bonny Government School and Ahoada Government School. Nothing has been done to improve their status. The good proposal we were once informed of that these two schools would be converted into secondary schools has been postponed, and I am appealing to Government that in the field of education they should remember that we the Rivers people are very interested and will welcome any improvement that could be done in the area. After all, it is said that those who have neither land nor economic resources resort to mental and skill development which are equally as useful as fertile lands.

**Mr P. A. Onwe (Abakaliki Division):** Mr Chairman, I just want to remind the Ministry of Education of the promise made to us in 1954. During 1954 when the Government was outlining its policy in this House a promise was made to my Division, Abakaliki, that we were going to have a Domestic Science Centre. It has taken a long time now, and it appears that no more thought is being given to this promise. I want the Government

to take into consideration that Abakaliki is the most backward area in this Region as far as education is concerned. It is important that at this time that we are moving towards our independence, the Government should make it a point that no Division, or no section of this Region, is left behind because it would mean dragging a very heavy tail. I think that the sooner this promise is given attention the better it shall be for us all.

The next thing I want to point out is that the primary schools we have in the rural areas are very backward in a way that in no one of these voluntary agency schools will you find adequate equipment with the result that the boys and girls go there only to recite as parrots. They are told that there is something like bus or clock, but they have never been shown even a paper clock as a sign of demonstration. So that when they come out to the townships these children are found very backward. I think that Government makes adequate grants to the Voluntary Agencies, and these grants, when they are made, should be made to cover cost of equipment.

Lastly, I want to say that the present U.P.E. modification, has so created a disorder in certain areas that some of the teachers have been stood-off for about two or three months now. I wonder what is going to happen because when I dropped into the Education Office the other time at Abakaliki, I was told that vouchers were being prepared to meet up the Government share of grants.

The District Council in my home has already paid £4,500 towards this end and has levied some amount of money as rates. I find that some of these teachers are fed up and I wonder what will happen because it appears at the end that the whole money is going to be paid up, that is, the grant meant for each school is going to be given to the managers. Are we going to investigate those who have been paid and those who have not been paid among those teachers that are still off? This is my little observation.

**Mr J. W. E. Anaba (Obubra Division):** Mr Chairman, I rise to associate myself with the views expressed by an Opposition Member, Mr Agba. The proposal to build a Roman Catholic College at Ugep in my own Division, was at one time in conflict with the decision of

[MR ANABA]

the Obubra District Council and it was decided in Obubra District Council that the Division was too small for two colleges to be erected at the same time, and communications from the Council and the Roman Catholic authorities were referred to the Ministry of Education. Up to the present moment, no particular information has been received as to the approval of the Roman Catholic College whether it should be erected or not. Mr Chairman, it is high time now that the Ministry should communicate with the people as to whether it is in favour of the Roman Catholic College to be erected or not.

**Mr K. J. N. Okpokam (Ikom Division):** I wish to draw the attention of the Government to the fact that the number of trained and certificated teachers in the former Ogoja Province is very very small indeed and that makes primary education suffer. This is reflected in the very small number of passes we have in the First School Leaving Certificate Examination. It is for this reason that I feel we have not been well treated when the Catholic Mission came out with the necessary capital to put up a teacher training college in Obubra Division and what they needed from the Government was the approval to go on but up till now approval has not been forthcoming.

If the number of teachers is few and there is the need to build a school where teachers could be trained, I do not think it is fair for Government to stand on their way. They would be working against the interest of the people of Ogoja Province and this condition, I hope, will not continue for long.

Another thing I wish to observe is that the number of secondary schools which give Higher School Certificate course to the students leaving secondary schools is very very small and the number of boys who wish to do the Higher School Certificate course is increasing year by year. Anything that Government can do to help those secondary schools which are really doing well to enable them to expand and add on two years post secondary course institutions would be welcomed by the people of this Region.

**Mr S. E. K. Iwueke (Okigwi Division):** Mr Chairman, I am strongly suggesting to

the Minister of Education that since the women's demonstration against the U.P.E. in the Region prevented many schools from starting in time, the time for the standard six examination should be changed and extended up to the earlier part of December, when at least most schools must have covered their schemes for the year.

I want also to speak on grants as it affects one particular institution I know. Mr Chairman, it is most unfortunate that the institution should be left without any assistance from the Government as such. I asked the Minister of Education a very good question with particular reference to the Women Training College in Uboma in Okigwi Division. I said that it is the only Higher Elementary Teacher Training College in the Division for that matter. The college was built in 1955 along with other colleges. It was the fortune of the college that even the then Governor of the Eastern Region visited it at the early stage and hoped very much that the Government would come to the aid of the people. It cost the people a little over £9,000 to build the college. Before the people were called upon to embark on such a major project they were told that as "God helps those who help themselves", if they put up every effort to build the institution, the Government would come to their aid. Up to this moment, nothing has been done in the way of giving building grant to the college. Comparatively speaking, the institutions that were built at the same time have received princely grants up to the tune of £3,000. I am very serious about this, Mr Chairman, and I wish the Minister of Education good luck and ask him to consider this matter seriously because it is the feeling of my people that after all the Government would come to their aid at least.

Another point I want to raise, Mr Chairman, is the question of moral laxity in our schools today. I think there is a general tendency for children to please themselves; I am attributing some of these causes to the parents. Most of the children are not prepared from their home. I am calling for a complete reformation of parents. Children should be well handled from home and disciplined. Discipline is being looked upon now as an encroachment on individual liberty. While the principle of "sparing the rod and spoiling the child" is true, I think in this case it must

hold fast. Parents should try to get their children well disciplined before hoping for any fruitful result from the school. The home is the first school of the children and should be their last school also.

When the Committee that will consider the system of education in the Eastern Region will come to stay, I am suggesting to the Government that they should take a serious view over this because we cannot afford at this stage of our national development to embark on any luxury, such as moral decadence. The Education Department also should take a serious view over this matter.

In Okigwi Division also we have no Higher Elementary College for boys. I am particularly happy that our people are those that help themselves and try to provide themselves with amenities unmindful of whether Government could help them or not. I am appealing to the Government to consider all these points.

*Question, That the sum of £189,120 for Head 435—Ministry of Education—stand part of the Schedule, put, and agreed to.*

*Heads 436, 437 and 438 postponed.*

#### HEAD 439—BOARD OF INTERNAL REVENUE

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £346,990 for Head 439—Board of Internal Revenue—stand part of the Schedule.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### HEAD 440—PENSIONS AND GRATUITIES

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £1,500 for Head 440—Pensions and Gratuities—stand part of the Schedule.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Heads 441, 442 and 443 postponed.*

#### HEAD 444—MINISTRY OF INFORMATION

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £48,830 for Head 444—Ministry of Information—stand part of the Schedule.*

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Mr Chairman, I move, that Sub-head 9 be left out. The object of

this amendment is to give Members an opportunity to spotlight the activities of the Information Service Corporation for which this money is voted. Sir, the Information Service Corporation has not achieved any useful purpose and it is the view of several Members that it should be reverted to a Government Department.

It is proposed to grant £24,300 to the Information Service Corporation for government publicity. Since this Corporation was established, there have been criticisms and also serious allegations which have been brought to the notice of the Government. First of all, there is the allegation of waste of public money and there are allegations of stealing. Sir, I understand that between January, 1957 and January, 1958, the Information Officer attached to the Corporation drew a mileage allowance of £230 5s 4d, sleeping allowance of £39 9s and children's allowance of £142 10s making a total of £412 4s 4d and on the 1st of August 1957, the Information Officer I understand was paid in bulk, a sum of £117 8s 5d. I understand, that there is no justification at all for this payment. In other words, the Corporation is being run without any sense of responsibility for public funds.

The next point is in regard to the Chairman. I am told that between June, 1956 and January, 1958, the Chairman drew in salary £3,157 5s 2d, mileage £925 9s, subsistence £229 2s and car basic £287 14s 9d that is a total of £4,599 9s 11d within twenty months.

Now, Sir, an analysis of these allowances shows an average mileage claim per year of £552, an average mileage claim per month of £46 5s. The total allowances including subsistence—£1,442 4s 9d. I need not go into the question of Board members themselves. But Sir, if the Government would care to conduct an enquiry (I am not asking for a public enquiry) but if the Government would be prepared to conduct its own enquiry, I think there are some of us here who would be willing to go before the Committee and prove these allegations. I don't want to waste the time of the House by making more allegations.

When it was a Government Department, the total staff employed was only twenty-three but now that it is being run as a Corporation,

[Mr E. O. Eyo]

the staff has risen to ninety-three. My view is that the sum of £24,300 to be voted for this Corporation is going to be wasted. The Information Service should be a Government Department under the Ministry of Information. Why should we continue to have the Information Service as a Public Corporation? I urge upon the Government to give consideration to the demand to revert the Corporation to a Government Department to enable Government auditors to examine its finances and the Permanent Secretary to control its votes.

**Mr Achara:** Mr Chairman, one of the points which I should like to bring up in connection with this matter is that dealing with the sale of vehicles belonging to the Information Service Corporation. Government policy in selling old equipment is that such equipment should be advertised and sold publicly. When the equipment of a Government Department or a Corporation is sold without advertisement, then it raises a lot of suspicion. Why the Information Service Corporation, which has various means of advertising the sale of its equipment should sell such equipment without advertisement beats my imagination. I should also like this to be taken note of if finally Government should decide to appoint a Committee to investigate these allegations.

The other matter, Mr Chairman, is this: I should have imagined that if I were arranging a private party and I went forward to the Information Service Corporation and made application for a photographer to serve me during the party, that any photographs taken at the party would be paid for by me, the photographer would come, since he is an employee of the Corporation, his films are the Corporation's films, his time the Corporation's time, and if he took say twenty photographs at that party he would develop these photographs and sell them to me at the Corporation's rate. What happens is that there is an allegation (and it is a very serious one) that on a number of occasions the photographers of the Information Service Corporation were simply sent out by either the Information Officer or the Chairman of the Corporation to these private parties and after taking photographs, delivered them free to the people who have called these parties. I think it is a very serious matter, and I would like this matter to be investigated too.

The next point, Mr Chairman, is that it was just of recent that the Premier took over this Corporation; he is not in a position to know what happens and nobody expects him to know. About the 9th of January this year, rumours spread within this township that the Minister of Information was going to be removed. The source of this rumour was from two high officials of the Corporation that he was going to be removed, that he was not amenable to discipline, that he was investigating too much and was bringing much Ministerial pressure to bear upon the Corporation which they have been running all these years, and since he had shown that he was a very hard person they were going to show him that the Corporation was theirs. We treated this as a mere rumour, but finally the Minister of Information was removed. What happened was that these two officers went about rejoicing that they had taught the Minister that they controlled the Information Service. In fact, what remained was for them to arrange open cocktail parties and rejoice that they had succeeded in removing a Minister of State. It is a very serious matter and I appeal very seriously to the Government to look into this matter and whatever the result is, we are asking the Government that the Information Service should be reverted to a Government Department. If these two gentlemen come before the Public Service Commission and are found fit to work in the Information Service when it shall have become one of the Government Departments, let them continue as officers. I do not want to go into the other minute details dealing with allegations of stealing and of high officials going on week-end, and coming back here to claim mileage allowances.

**The Chairman:** As a Member of a House of Assembly you are entitled on hearing certain information, the kind of which you mentioned, to take this matter up with the Minister concerned or if necessary with the Premier of the Region. I do not think it is right that allegations of such a nature as stealing should be made by any person in this House. It is not right for any person to make any allegation in this House that he cannot make outside and I will endeavour to stop such allegations being made especially if they are based on mere rumours. It is not right for people's characters to be stained in this House and I regard such a thing as



an abuse of Parliamentary privilege. I think you are just on the point of doing it.

**Mr Ikoku:** Mr Chairman, I support your ruling on the point and I will only like to say that the true test of how far we are serious of the charges we bring up in this House is that an investigation should be conducted and we should be challenged to come before that body and say what we are saying now, fully realising that what we say will be used in prosecuting us. We will be ready to do that. Any Member who is not prepared to do that should not open his mouth in this House. What we are saying, Sir, is that we would like to add a few points. This matter is a very serious one. I will like the Minister of Information to investigate this point. Is it a fact that the cook of the Chairman of the Information Service is being paid as a clerical assistant in that department? Further points are as follows: Is it a fact that the Gardener of the Chairman is also being paid as a clerical assistant in the Information Service? We would like to know. Is it true that the Information Service has made an attempt to raise the salary of the Chairman to £2,400 and that of the Information Officer to £1,500? I will like to draw your attention to this fact that the person who is now trying to get £1,500 could not get more than £600 from the Public Service Commission. So he has got pension for life by going through the Information Service. What sort of system are we building when people at the head sit down and draw their own budget and ask the Minister to approve? When he refuses, calculated intrigues are set in motion to remove the Minister. I will ask yet another question: Is it a fact that somebody who has no experience of publicity work has been sent overseas to the Commonwealth Information Officers Course and other journalists in the Information Service with more years of experience have been superseded? If it is true, why has such a diversion taken place? The Information Service is very important in a democratic government to explain the point of view of the Government to the people and to try to bring the point of view of the people back to the Government. It is absolutely essential that such a service should be efficient and not based on intrigues, because if it is based on intrigues, then whoever the Minister is will be misinformed and he will proceed to issue

statements to the public not knowing where the shoe is pinching.

I think the position is so delicate that the Minister should be given a firm control over information and the only way to do it is to remove this thing from the Corporation and bring it back as a Government Department, because this Corporation believes that they are something over and above the head of the Minister. They just tolerate the Minister—if they are to have a meeting at 9 o'clock they start it at one minute to nine and if the meeting is to last twenty minutes they are very anxious to see him go away. "Let him go and we will conclude our business". We cannot stand for that. If the excesses of a Corporation have been carried to that extent I think we must bring some of these things back so that it is clear to them, from the smallest messenger to the most senior officer, that they are under the thumb of the Minister. Information is so vital to us that we want this thing back.

My last contribution, Sir, is to assure the Premier that what we are saying are not baseless and the best thing for him to do is to get into the Information Service and find out the facts for himself. If he desires, we are prepared to come and say before him what we are saying here to the hearing of the officers concerned. That will no longer be on the floor of the House and the officers can take the remedy they like in the court.

**Mr R. O. Ukuta, M.B.E. (Nsukka Division):** Mr Chairman, this is a concocted plot to kill the Corporation. Most of the Members have been prejudiced to kill this Corporation, and wild accusations are going on too much in the Eastern Region. Everything is bad in the Eastern Region. I do not think the Members who spoke could prove 50 per cent facts of what they were alleging.

**The Chairman:** Order! Order! Do you oppose the Motion?

**Mr Ukuta:** I oppose it.

**Mr J. E. Eyo:** Mr Chairman, I am concerned about the news publication in this Department. We have three main languages in broadcasting the news of the Eastern Region. They are: English, Ibo and Efik. I happen to understand Efik, and I am sorry to say we do

[MR J. E. EYO]

not enjoy the news interpretation from English to Efik due to poor interpretation which drops off some main essence of the news.

**The Chairman:** May I interrupt you, please. The actual Motion proposed by hon. Eyo is to leave out Sub-head 9. Am I correct? It is a question whether you want that item left out or to remain.

**The Premier:** Mr Chairman, I am grateful to all who have contributed to the debate on this Motion, and I am also grateful to them for being broadminded enough to concede to me innocence on the various allegations made on the floor of this House. However, the Motion seeks to remove from the Estimates what would make it possible for this Government to discharge its obligations during the forthcoming financial year and it is on this ground alone I must oppose this Motion. I would say this that I have taken note of these allegations; some of them have been with me for the last week or two and I am going to accept the challenge by appointing a committee to investigate into the operation of the Eastern Nigeria Information Service just to give these gentlemen an opportunity to make their allegations and also to give those concerned the opportunity to defend their reputation. (*Hear! Hear!*).

I would not therefore agree that £24,300 will be money wasted and my main reason in saying so is that other Regions spend much more for publicity. The West for example is going to spend £154,000, the North may spend £80,000 and for the East, to say that £24,000 is a waste, I think, would not be fair. However, if there is an allegation of mal-administration that would be investigated but that should not necessarily prevent the Government from discharging its obligations, so it is on this ground alone that I oppose this Motion.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Mr Chairman, I beg leave to withdraw the Amendment.

*Amendment by leave withdrawn.*

*Question, That the sum of £48,830 for Head 444—Ministry of Information—stand part of the Schedule, put, and agreed to.*

#### HEAD 445—MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £12,780 for Head 445—Ministry of Internal Affairs—stand part of the Schedule.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### HEAD 446—PRINTING AND STATIONERY

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £112,840 for Head 446—Printing and Stationery—stand part of the Schedule.*

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Mr Chairman, I would suggest to Government to use the various bookshops in the Region for the sale of matter printed by this Department. At the moment I think only the C.M.S. Bookshops are used and very few people can go to these bookshops. I have in mind such bookshops like the Hope Waddell Bookshops, Qua Iboe Mission Bookshops, Lutheran Mission Bookshops, Methodist and Roman Catholic Mission Bookshops in the Eastern Region. The fact is that if the Government will use all these agencies to sell their *Gazettes* and other publications more sales would be effected as a result of wider circulation to the public.

**Mr Ukuta:** Mr Chairman, I am suggesting that it would be more useful if some pamphlets printed by the Government Printer be sent to the Divisional headquarters for sale because most of the people cannot come to the Government Printer at Enugu for them; and I am registering my appreciation for the hard work done by this Department in printing a lot of Government papers and pamphlets. I highly appreciate it.

*Question, That the sum of £112,840 for Head 446—Printing and Stationery—stand part of the Schedule, put, and agreed to.*

#### HEAD 447—MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £11,700 for Head 447—Ministry of Justice—stand part of the Schedule.*

**Mr Ihekwoaba:** Mr Chairman, I only want to call the attention of the Minister of Justice to this point. From Orlu Division so many petitions have come to his Office about building court halls in Orlu and again about the posting of a Magistrate to Orlu, and not sharing him with

Awka as most of the cases that the Magistrate handles are in Orlu. The Magistrate who is living at Awka, at present is handling three-quarters of his cases at Orlu. Therefore the Minister should post one Magistrate permanently to Orlu. If at all we should share one Magistrate with Awka, the Magistrate should live at Orlu, he must be resident at Orlu as Orlu surpasses Awka both in population and in number of cases.

**The Chairman:** Order! Order! I suppose the point you want to make is that the Minister should consider posting a Magistrate to Orlu?

**Mr Ihekwoaba:** Yes, and building a Court Hall at Orlu as there is none.

**Mr Oko:** Mr Chairman, I also want to draw the attention of the hon. Minister of Justice to the question which I asked in the House last year for providing a Court Hall at Awgu. At the moment the Court Hall in use is the Native Court Hall which had been used by the people of Mbanano, and when the Magistrate comes into Awgu, he uses the same Native Court Hall. I am strongly appealing to the Minister of Justice to do justice to Awgu.

**Mr K. J. N. Okpokam (Ikom Division):** Mr Chairman, I have had a strong desire to speak out my mind with regard to membership of the proposed Customary Courts. When the Minister of Justice was replying to the speeches of Members the other day, he mentioned that the appointment of members of the Customary Courts would be made from those who are in our Native Courts today. It is true that some Native Court Judges have very long experience in trying cases, but they are experienced not only in trying cases but also in bribery and corruption. I was listening to a District Officer when he was reviewing a case two weeks ago and a member of the court deliberately misinterpreted a native law and custom to suit the judgment of the court. I know the custom myself and were it not that the District Officer was a clever man, justice could have suffered.

Another suggestion from the Member for Orlu Division was that court members must be selected from among the chiefs. It must be remembered that people became chiefs merely because they were appointed

court members in those days and given a warrant. They were never known before. It was because they came to have a strong influence in the Divisions by virtue of their office as judges that the real natural rulers were relegated to the background and the native Court Judges became known as chiefs.

I am asking the hon. Minister of Justice to keep these facts in mind when making appointments of members to our Customary Courts. He should look for men with God-given integrity; it should not matter how long a man had served the courts—he must be honest and intelligent, chief or no chief, before he could be selected to serve. Young men should also have equal opportunity to serve if only they are suitable and honest.

**Mr Ikoku:** Mr Chairman, Sir, I just want to raise one or two points. Firstly, my people are experiencing a state of isolation. Transport communication is most difficult and this is affecting the administration of justice. I took the trouble of checking, Sir, and I discovered that Arochuku was once a Magisterial Division and because the Judge and the Magistrate find it very difficult to get through, all cases have to be taken to Itu, eighty miles away. This, Sir, is most inconvenient. Persons remanded in custody have to be taken all the way to Itu. In fact it is only that we have very law abiding people in this area, otherwise I am quite sure the constables would never arrive with these fellows at Itu—they will all escape. No doubt the Minister will say that they have not enough Magistrates in the Region but I would like to emphasise that provision should be made to open that Magisterial area.

My second point, Sir, is the need for a Ministry of Justice. Is there need for a Minister of Justice? We now have an Attorney-General, an Attorney-General of Ministerial rank. We all know it is a political appointment. We accepted that appointment because we regarded it as the practice in Westminster but I do not know of a Minister of Justice in Westminster. This, Sir, is a sheer duplication of effort. The Ministry should be quietly wound up. Of course that does not mean that the Minister of Justice should have to wind up. He could always be transferred to another Ministry. There is no need for a

[MR IKOKU]

Minister of Justice when we have an Attorney-General who is a political appointee. There is no reason for this. Probably the point might be raised that there are customary courts to look after. If the Attorney-General cannot take these into his strides, I would suggest that customary courts be either shifted unto the Ministry of Local Government or the Ministry of Internal Affairs; but the fact remains, Sir, that customary courts are not a sufficient subject to warrant the appointment of a Minister because right now, the Ministry of Justice is really the Ministry of Customary Courts. Just look at it! It is nothing else because the Attorney-General is here with us. The Chief Justice is there to go into High Court matters and what is left for the Ministry of Justice. Ministry of Justice, I heard somebody say, is in the West. I am not aware of it. I think the Minister of Justice in the Western Region has just been appointed Attorney-General, so that if you had not the extra difficulty on the personnel aspect in this Region, all you could have done was to have appointed the Minister of Justice as Attorney-General. I am not so sure you will be in a position to do that. I will strongly suggest that the Premier gives this matter a serious thought and even though he cannot do it right away, gradually, he will find a solution to it. (Laughter).

*Question, That the sum of £11,700 for Head 447—Ministry of Justice—stand part of the Schedule, put, and agreed to.*

*Heads 448 and 449 postponed.*

#### HEAD 450—GRANTS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT BODIES

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £1,050,500 for Head 450—Grants to Local Government Bodies—stand part of the Schedule.*

**Mr S. N. Alo (Abakaliki Division):** Mr Chairman, I just want to bring to the attention of the Minister concerned my feelings on the block grants to Local Government bodies. From the system of making these grants, it appears that a small Council like the Urban District Council shall have little revenue to run its essential social services. All smaller Councils like the Urban District Councils in Abakaliki, Umuahia-Ibeku, Ikot Ekpene, suffer because they receive 4s 6d per

head instead of 6s as in the cases of big townships like Enugu, Port Harcourt, and Aba. So I suggest that the Government should change the basis of calculating block grants to Local Government bodies in order that all may receive equitable treatment. In a letter to the Abakaliki Urban District Council, the Minister of Local Government called on the Council to refund a sum of £1,232 9s 11d. Should the Council refund that sum, its little revenue of about £22,000 will be greatly drained, and of course the balance will not meet the cost of essential services needed by the people of Abakaliki town.

**The Chairman:** Is that in the Estimates, under Head 450? What is the policy you disapprove of?

**Mr Alo:** I am speaking about the grants to Local Government bodies.

**The Chairman:** What grant do you object to there?

**Mr Alo:** I disagree with the Ministry's method of calculating grants to Local Government bodies.

**The Chairman:** What is the method of calculation?

**Mr Alo:** That in big townships like Enugu, and others, the basis of calculation is 6s per head, whereas in smaller Urban District Councils like those of Abakaliki, Umuahia-Ibeku, it is 4s 6d per head. So I am strongly suggesting that the Government should change the method of distribution of block grants to councils. The same basis of calculation, 6s per head, should be applied to all.

**The Chairman:** You want it made equal? Then let's hear what the Minister of Local Government has got to say.

**The Minister of Local Government (Chief A. N. Onyiuke):** Mr Chairman, grants to Local Government bodies are not equally distributed. There are more services in bigger Urban District Councils.

**Some hon. Members:** No, no.

**Chief Onyiuke:** It has been adequately considered by the Government that this is

the basis of calculation on which grants should be made to Urban District Councils.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Mr Chairman, Sir, I want to say that I have everything to quarrel over this distribution in this Head.

**The Chairman:** Will you go on until quarter past two, and you can start again tomorrow.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Members will note that Government proposes to reduce grants to Local Government bodies by £99,500. Now, what is the reason? The reason is at page E 18 of the Memorandum on the Estimates to which I refer Members. It says: "As an economy measure the level of grants to Local Government bodies has been reduced by one-twelfth". What does Government mean by "economy measure"? As I said the other day, the decision to reduce this figure by £99,500 is in order to help to balance the Budget. Government has not told us why the Local Government bodies. . . (interruptions). Government must be made to understand the position of these Local Government bodies. In the first instance, Government is calling upon them to contribute £2.4 million towards financing education, and we know what that means to these Local Government bodies. Now, Government wants to reduce the grants payable to these Councils by £99,500 and all the Government says is that it is an "economy measure."

*And it being 2.15 p.m., the Chairman interrupted the business and left the Chair to report Progress and to ask leave to sit again.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Committee report Progress: To sit again Tomorrow.*

(2) The Public Lands Acquisition (Amendment) Bill, 1958—Second reading. *Further deferred until Tomorrow.*

## ADJOURNMENT

**The Minister of Production (Dr M. I. Okpara):** Sir, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Thursday at 10 o'clock a.m.

**The Minister of Commerce (Mr J. U. Nwodo):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

## ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

### Report in the "Daily Times" of the Role of the Opposition

**Chief Morphy:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I like to draw the attention of the House to the publication in the *Daily Times* of April 5th. With your permission, I beg to read:—

"Earlier, the Premier registered his disappointment at the irresponsibility of the Opposition Front Benchers who after unfairly criticising our financial policy have decamped now that it is our turn to expose their knavish tricks."

I want to say, Sir, that we did not decamp. I was here at the time the Premier was making his speech and I want to say also that in the whole of the Federation I think we have the best and most able Opposition in this Region, so that the Premier in referring to us as irresponsible, is not doing justice to us all. Members might have observed that the Premier has been absent from this House several times and the Government Chief Whip has also been absent several times but we have not at any time described them as irresponsible. We are not at all satisfied that the Opposition should be described as irresponsible because some Front-Benchers were absent from the House. We hope Government will always give the Opposition Front Benchers their due respect and weigh them accordingly.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Adjourned, accordingly, at eighteen minutes past two o'clock p.m.*

EASTERN HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 10th April, 1958

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

PRAYERS

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

PAPER

Presented:

Report of the Director of Audit on the Accounts of the Government of the Eastern Region of Nigeria for the year ended the 31st March, 1957 (*The Minister of Finance*). Ordered: That the said Paper do lie upon the Table.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Tourist Corporation

76. Mr S. E. K. Iwueke asked the Minister of Commerce, has he any plans for improved facilities and transport amenities to attract a greater number of tourists to the Eastern Region than in previous years.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Commerce (Mr E. W. Udonkim):** I am directed to answer as follows:—

The Chairman of the Tourist Corporation informs me that the Corporation has plans to establish Catering Rest Houses in many towns. The Corporation also plans, when funds are available, to build health resorts on Obudu Plateau and in Nsukka; and seaside resorts at Ibeno in Eket Division and Bonny with swimming pools and entertainments.

The Corporation has at present a micro bus and a small car available for the use of travellers and tourists at Enugu and the same at Aba. The Corporation plans to make transport available at other Catering Rest Houses in due course.

Oji River-Awgu-Okigwi Road

155. Mr G. I. Oko, M.B.E. asked the Minister of Transport, when will the tarring of the Oji River-Awgu-Okigwi Road begin; what has been the reason for delay; will it be carried out by direct labour or given on contract.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Transport (Mr D. O. Anu):** I am directed to answer as follows:—

I am informed that the Federal Government invited tenders for the tarring of the Oji River-Awgu-Okigwi Road and that the awarding of a contract is now under consideration.

Grading of Posts in Local Government Councils

163. Mr G. I. Oko, M.B.E. asked the Minister of Local Government, whether his Ministry is proposing to grade the senior posts of Local Government Councils in the Region, and if so, how soon.

**The Minister of Local Government:** As regards the senior posts of Secretary, of Treasurer and of Secretary-Treasurer, principles have already been laid down to govern the grading of posts. This was done in my Ministry's circular No. LGT. 80/10 of the 13th September, 1954, which related maximum salary gradings for these posts to the Council's annual turnover. That system has proved satisfactory in practice, and I see no reason to review it.

Mr R. O. Ukuta, M.B.E.: Why is there annual turnover on salary grading?

**The Minister of Local Government:** Annual turnover must come into salary grading because if the Council is given a Secretary or a Treasurer, and if its turnover cannot pay that individual staff, it is embarrassing to the Council; so that, no Council will be given a staff that it cannot pay.

Motor Basic Allowances

176. Mr S. O. Achara asked the Premier, whether he is aware that some senior staff officers and holders of equivalent grades in certain Departments who have been given advances to purchase motor vehicles have been refused motor basic allowances which are granted to their counterparts in other Departments for the maintenance and running of their cars; if so, what steps has he taken or does he propose to take to remedy this anomaly which is causing much discontentment and dissatisfaction among the civil servants.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier (Mr J. O. Umolu):** The hon. Premier is aware of the anomalies to which the hon. Member refers. They have been considered by Government and the matter has been referred to the National Council on Establishments with a view to reaching a uniform decision with the other Nigerian Governments. The Nigerian Civil Service Union has been informed of this.

Future policy regarding motor transport allowances has been considered by the Committee appointed to make recommendations on the revision of General Orders. The recommendations of the Committee on this subject are almost ready for submission to Government.

## BILL PRESENTED

### Finance

Bill to amend the Finance Law; presented by the Minister of Finance, Dr S. E. Imoke; read the First time; to be read a Second time Tomorrow.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### (1) The 1958-59 Eastern Region Appropriation Bill

(Second Allotted Day)

*Considered in Committee of Supply (Progress 9th April).*

### HEAD 450—GRANTS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT BODIES

*Question again proposed, That a sum not exceeding £1,050,500 for Head 450—Grants to Local Government Bodies—stand part of the Schedule.*

**Mr E. O. Eyo (Uyo Division):** Mr Chairman, before the House rose yesterday, I was criticising the proposal to reduce grants payable to the Local Government bodies in the Region by £99,500. The only reason Government has given for this reduction is that of economy and I refuse to accept this reason.

The reduction of £99,500 represents 8.3 per cent. It is true that the former County Councils in the Region have been dissolved but the existing District Councils will now assume the responsibilities of the former County Councils. One would have expected the sharing of grants originally made to the former County Councils to the various District Councils which will now take over the responsibilities of the County Councils. It may be argued, that on the new basis of computation the grants payable to most of our District Councils in the Region this year are higher than the grants they received last year but the fact still remains that the total grants payable this year will be £99,500 less than last year's grants.

Sir, if you observe the figures for the various District Councils in the Divisions, you will notice that every Division loses, that is at the Divisional level, as a result of this proposal to reduce the total grants by £99,500. So, that affects every Division but the new basis of computation has affected adversely two Municipalities in the Region and as many as eighteen District Councils.

While the remaining District Councils have increases in their grants the two Municipalities, Enugu and Port Harcourt, and eighteen District Councils in the Region receive less grants this year than they received last year. I am referring to Enugu Municipality which will receive £17,259 this year as against £18,828 last year; Port Harcourt Municipality will receive £16,181 as against £17,652 last year; Afikpo District Council £29,062 as against £31,704 last year; Awgu District Council £20,743 this year as against £22,629 last year; Umuahia Urban District Council £2,530 this year as against £2,766 last year; Calabar Urban District Council £12,897 this year as against £14,070 last year; Ejaku District Council £2,216 this year as against £2,418; Ikom District Council £6,231 this year as against £6,837 last year; Ikot Ekpene Urban £3,722 this year as against £4,060 last year; Obubra £16,107 this year as against £16,480 last year; Obudu £7,920 this year as against £8,640 last year; Ogoja £20,569 this year as against £22,398 last year; Khana £21,409 this year as against £23,508 last year; Opobo Town Urban £1,526 this year as against £1,665 last year; Orlu £48,948 this year as against £53,430 last year; Mbaize £24,171

[Mr E. O. Eyo]

this year as against £26,368 last year; Owerri Urban £1,925 this year as against £2,100 last year; Abaja Ngwo £14,678 this year as against £16,012 last year; Ezeagu £10,188 this year as against £11,114 last year; and finally Nkanu £22,454 this year as against £24,496 last year. These eighteen District Councils and Enugu and Port Harcourt Municipalities will receive less grants this year than they received last year as a result of the new basis of computation proposed by Government; but all other District Councils in the Region will have increases in their grants this year over what they received last year. These eighteen District Councils and the two Municipalities which will this year receive less grants than they received last year will also be called upon to contribute their share of £2.4 million towards financing education and yet Government is proposing to reduce their grants this year while other District Councils will receive increased grants.

I would like to quote from page 7 of the printed speech made by the Minister of Finance:

“It is not proposed to put any additional burden on the income tax-payer, who has to find his share of the Assumed Local Contribution to the cost of education.”

I submit, Sir, that the proposal to reduce grants payable to these eighteen District Councils and the two Municipalities in the Region will put an additional burden on the tax and rate payers served by these eighteen District Councils and the two Municipalities because they will now pay more towards their share of the Assumed Local Contribution than they would have if the grants to their District Councils had not been reduced. We on this side of the House regard the issue as a very serious one because whatever happens Government should never have dreamt of reducing the grants payable to the Local Government bodies in the Region.

At page E 18 of the Memorandum, Government makes the following statement:

“As an economy measure, the contribution of £100,000 due to the Local Government Loans Fund in 1958-59 has been postponed, but there is a sufficient balance

in the fund to provide for up to £113,000 of the loans in 1958-59 (*vide* Appendix B)”. Here again, the contribution of £100,000 towards the Local Government Loans Fund for this year has been postponed on the ground of economy, but there is still a balance of £113,000 in respect of the loans fund. Judging from the past only very few Councils have benefited from this loans fund. Why not transfer £95,500 from this fund to Expenditure Head 450 in order to ensure that no District Council in the Eastern Region will receive grants less than it received last year? There is nothing strange or extraordinary about this suggestion because Government, in order to increase its general revenue balance, had to fall back on C.D. and W. Local Contributions Account and the Minister of Finance in his explanation at page 4 of his speech said:

“As I said, we estimate a deficit of £1.68 million. To offset this, the House will be asked later today to transfer £280,400 from the Colonial Development and Welfare Local Contributions Account back to the General Revenue Balance.”

I am therefore, not asking for anything extraordinary. All I am saying is that since the Local Government Loans Fund belongs to Local Government bodies in the Region, and since this fund now has a balance of £113,000, the sum of £99,500 should be transferred from this balance of £113,000 to Expenditure Head 450 to restore the original rate which Government has reduced by £99,500. If this is done Government will escape the indignation and anger of the Local Government bodies affected. What would be the attitude of our Government if the Federal Government suddenly decided to reduce their share of grants by 8 per cent as an economic measure? Only the other day, both the Premier and the Minister of Finance told us the finances of the Region are sound and that the Region has plenty of money.

**The Chairman:** Are you prepared to quote the figure?

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Yes, Sir, I can quote the figure. I think the figure is about £4½ million. If the Minister's figure is correct, why does Government propose to reduce the grants payable to these District Councils? It is obvious that unless Government restores this £99,500 under Head 450, eighteen District Councils and two Municipalities in the Region



will suffer. This will be rather hard on these Councils and there would be no feeling of fairness. Where lies the fairness if other District Councils in the Region will receive more grants this year than they received last year and eighteen District Councils and two Municipalities will receive less grants this year than last year? Where does Government expect the Local Government bodies affected to find money for their share of the Assumed Local Contributions? It will interest the House to know that during 1957-58 most of these District Councils levied a rate of 15s. For example, Abaja Ngwo Council levied 15s rate last year, Ezeagu 11s, Calabar Urban District Council and Port Harcourt Municipality had to levy a rate of 2s 6d in the pound; Enugu Municipality had a levy of 2s in the pound. Take the case of Port Harcourt Municipality and Calabar Urban District Council which were forced to levy a rate of 2s 6d on every pound of income on the rate payer. Now their share of grant from the Regional Government is reduced and in addition the rate payers will contribute towards the Assumed Local Contributions. If Government has any conscience at all I wish to appeal to that conscience, and beg Government to reconsider the matter. It is sheer wickedness even to think of reducing grants payable to these Local Government Councils by £99,500 under existing circumstances. I have offered the suggestion to transfer £99,500 from £113,000 which is a balance in the Local Government Loans Fund. Only very few

*Committee divided.*

Ayes 59. Noes 9.

#### Division No. 5

Mr C. A. Abangwu  
Mr O. U. Afiah  
Chief G. N. Agbasiere  
Mr D. S. A. Agim  
Mr D. E. Akilo  
Mr H. U. Akpabio  
Mr I. U. Akpabio  
Mr D. O. Aligwekwe  
Mr S. N. Alo  
Mr P. U. Amaefunah  
Mr J. W. E. Anaba  
Mr R. O. Anoke  
Mr D. O. Anu  
Dr N. Azikiwe  
Mr E. Chidolue

*Ayes*

(457)

Local Government bodies have so far benefited from this fund. I hope Government will give due consideration to this suggestion.

**The Chairman:** Order! Order! The Question is in terms of the Question proposed.

*Mr E. O. Eyo rose to speak.*

**The Chairman:** Are you amending? The Question proposed yesterday was that a sum not exceeding £1,050,500 for Head 450—Grants to Local Government Bodies—stand part of the Schedule. It is obvious that Government does not wish to reply to the points you have raised.

I would like to ask the hon. Member, the Chief Whip of the Opposition, what his intention is in regard to this matter. Is it your attitude that you intend to cut off the whole of that figure from the Estimates? What is going to be the result, assuming that you win on this Division?

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** The position, Sir, is that the question you have proposed and put to the House is in respect of Expenditure Head 450 which contains the proposal to reduce the grants by £99,500. We intend to vote against the Head as a whole to place on record our disapproval of Government proposal to reduce grants payable to Local Government bodies by £99,500. We are not amending, but wish to vote against the whole Head.

10.35 a.m.

Mr V. A. Nwankwo  
Mr N. Nweze  
Mr J. U. Nwodo  
Mr P. O. Nwoga  
Mr J. H. E. Nwuke  
Mr M. U. Obayi  
Dr A. N. Obonna  
Mr M. E. Ogon  
Mr C. A. Okafor  
Mr J. O. Okeh  
Mr O. Oketa  
Mr G. C. Okeya  
Mr E. P. Okoya  
Dr M. I. Okpara  
Mr K. J. N. Okpokam

Mr A. O. Chikwendu  
 Mr E. A. Chime  
 Mr E. Emole  
 Mr U. Enyi  
 Mr E. U. Eronini  
 Mr J. E. Eyo  
 Mr J. O. Ihekwoaba  
 Dr S. E. Imoke  
 Mr J. M. Ito  
 Mr R. O. Iwuagwu  
 Mr S. E. K. Iwueke  
 Mr O. C. Manu  
 Mr S. O. Masi  
 Mr D. A. Nnaji

Mr B. C. Okwu  
 Chief S. E. Onukogu  
 Mr P. A. Onwe  
 Mr N. O. Onwudiwe  
 Mr M. N. Onwuma  
 Mr V. K. Onyeri  
 Chief A. N. Onyiuke  
 Rev. M. D. Opara  
 Mr E. W. Udonkim  
 Mr R. O. Ukuta, M.B.E.  
 Mr J. O. Umolu  
 Mr P. O. Ururuka  
 Mr L. O. Uzoigwe

*Tellers for the Ayes:—*

Mr K. Kiri  
 Mr W. Abengowe.

*Noes*

Mr J. A. Agba  
 Mr S. J. Amachree  
 Mr M. U. Etuk  
 Mr E. O. Eyo

Mr S. G. Ikoku  
 Mr O. B. Nalelo  
 Mr M. N. Yowika

*Tellers for the Noes:—*

Chief I. I. Morphy  
 Mr A. J. Ekpe.

#### HEAD 451—MINISTRY OF PRODUCTION

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £12,560 for Head 451—Ministry of Production—stand part of the Schedule.*

**Mr S. G. Ikoku (Enyong Division):** Mr Chairman, Sir, we see the Ministry of Production as something which is bound to grow from important dimensions as regards farming in this Region and that is why we would like to take a little bit of time to raise one or two points on policy matters. The first point, Sir, is the produce price policy for palm oil and palm kernel. We would like the Minister in charge to make a very close study of these problems with a view to revising in an upward direction the price of palm produce payable to primary producers.

I will like to point out that we are paying our primary producers lower than other areas in this country. The special grade palm oil is selling at £50 per ton in the Eastern Region as against £54 per ton elsewhere. The technical grade I oil is £40 in the Eastern Region as against £45 elsewhere; grade II is £28 in the Eastern Region as against £38 elsewhere;

Grade III is £20 in the Eastern Region as against £30 elsewhere; so that the difference in the special palm oil grade is £4 per ton, for Grade I £5 per ton and in other grades £10 per ton. If these figures are calculated into prices per tin, you will find that on a decision to pay prices obtained elsewhere in the Eastern Region there will be increases of between 2s and as much as 8s per tin of oil in the Eastern Region and I think that is bound to have a stimulating effect on the production of palm oil and palm kernel.

In the case of kernel, Sir, the figure is £29 in the Eastern Region and £30 elsewhere. I wouldn't like to belabour this point because it is the question of policy decision by the Government, but I am only appealing to them to make a further study of the problem with a view to immediately revising these figures. This has been the state of the palm producing industry as from 1956. From 1956, 1957 and now 1958, prices have been stationary on this level, and I am submitting, Sir, that while I do not altogether rule out the expert opinion of the Advisers in the Ministry of Agriculture as regards the ageing of our palm trees, I regard the prices offered for our palm produce as the

most significant factor in the output of palm oil and palm kernel in the Eastern Region and I can go so far to assure the Minister that with an increase in the prices payable for this commodity, there is bound to be a further increase in output—ageing or no ageing of palm trees.

My second point, Sir, on this palm produce debate is the position of our Licensed Buying Agents. The picture now, Sir, is that you have two sets of agents in this business—the Expatriate Firms and our own Licensed Buying Agents who are very much handicapped in the business: very much indeed; and as a result the Expatriate Firms which have greater financial power have more advantage in the trade. The main thing worrying our people today, Sir, is the non-availability of trading capital. Many of our traders have barely £10,000 in cash to do business: the Banks are not very co-operative and as you know, Sir, £10,000 merely means advances for about two or three middlemen to purchase palm oil and palm kernel.

I am suggesting, Sir, that the Minister of Production should look into the matter and see whether there isn't a way of coming to the help of our Licensed Buying Agents. I do not see much sense in tying up the reserves of the Marketing Board either in this country or overseas when we could easily hand over certain fraction of them to these Licensed Buying Agents by way of advances to use as trading capital. If that is done, Sir, the effect will be to stimulate competition on the part of the Expatriate Firms and they will be compelled to adopt a more liberal policy towards the general benefit of the middlemen in the Region. Sir, I mentioned this point last week, I think in the debate, but I would like to make it clear to the Minister of Production that we are anxious and I think he is anxious too, to see an upsurge in the palm produce of the Region; and I think mentioning it here again I am giving him opportunity to tell us the ways and means he intends to employ to bring about this upsurge in the palm produce.

**Mr E. U. Eronini (Owerri Division):** I have to congratulate the Minister of Production for starting in this year the old request whereby the check-testing of oil is done at the B.O.P. instead of at the Beach. You will see that

this year we will have more oil of good quality than has ever been produced in this country before.

I would also say that he should give some consideration to make Owerri station and Okigwi station as gazetted Produce Buying Stations. In 1952-53 oil from Owerri and Okigwi were graded in Port Harcourt and Umukroshe totalling 10,784 tons and at Afikpo Road 47,300 tons. In 1953-54, 15,334 tons were graded at Port Harcourt and Umukroshe and 5,199 tons at Afikpo Road; and going down to 1956-57, 17,563 tons of oil from Owerri and Okigwi were graded at Port Harcourt and Umukroshe and 4,288 tons at Afikpo Road. April to August in 1957, 10,642 tons graded at Port Harcourt and 4,244 tons at Afikpo Road. Grand total is 97,959 tons within five years and five months almost all of which came from Owerri and Okigwi districts. Time has come when grading stations should be provided in these two areas.

This year the standard of F.F.A. allowed at B.O.P. is 4 per cent but at Abonnema and at some other B.O.P.s it is allowed to go up to 4.5 per cent. The reason for that, one cannot say. But you are telling the people around Abonnema to produce low grade oil because you have allowed this concession and that will increase also the total tonnage of low quality oil.

It has been said by the last speaker to encourage African Licensed Buying Agents. If you look at the areas of production there are more than thirty African Licensed Buying Agents. Time has come to restrict the buying of oil and delivering to B.O.P. to Africans. Almost in every sphere of it is done by Africans. It is too small at the moment to handle this by expatriate firms and we cannot live unless there is such restriction.

The point I want to raise is the effect of evasion of produce tax or purchase tax in areas within the borders of the West and the North. In Brass area in the Rivers Province you have the following data in 1953 and 1956-57 one could see, with your permission, Mr Chairman, that in 1952-53...

**The Chairman:** What is that you are reading?

**Mr Eronini:** Self-Government Part II; one can see the gross produce of 5,798 tons palm kernel and 1,625 tons palm oil. In 1956-57 Brass produced 5,700 tons palm kernel and 1,321 tons of oil.

There is a drop in oil production compared with that of kernels produced. Therefore, it was not a question of non-productivity or ageing of our palm trees but because of the oil being sold perhaps into the West. In Nsukka area in 1952-53, 14,875 tons of kernel were produced or sold for export and 5,133 tons of oil. But in 1956-57 due to the enactment of the Purchase Tax, in Nsukka we had 15,344 tons of palm kernel and only 72 tons of oil. In comparison there would have been about 9,000 tons of oil compared with the production of kernel. The reason for that is that in palm kernel the difference is only £1 and it is not very easy considering trade differentials to carry kernel to the North. But with palm oil a lot went away to the North. So that we cannot say that 15,000 tons of kernel were produced without oil. You can see, Sir, that the effect of the Purchase Tax has acted so wonderfully in Nsukka area. Nsukka produces more of grade one and grade two. The difference there is a question of about £5 per ton and £10. So that it is easy for anyone in Nsukka to take his oil across the border if it is grade two to get £10 more than he would get on the other side of the Eastern border and if it is grade one, £5 more than he would get if he sells it on the other side of the border. That is the reason why they could only sell in 1956-57, 72 tons of oil whilst in 1952-53 they produced up to 2,000 tons and in 1956-57 they had quite sufficient quantity of palm kernel. You cannot produce palm kernel without producing oil.

I am asking the Minister of Production to see what he can do to avoid this evasion of Purchase Tax which is rampant along the borders nearer the Northern and the Western Regions.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Mr Chairman, while on this Head, I wish to draw the attention of the Minister of Production to the policy laid down by the Marketing Board in its first Annual Report, 1954-55, paragraph 18:

“Oil Palm Produce is by far the most important crop controlled by the Board, and

the Eastern Region produces the bulk of palm oil in Nigeria. The Board was, therefore conscious of the fact that its policy in this matter would be followed with keen interest by the other Regional Marketing Boards”.

Now, Sir, that policy has not been followed up. The Board itself is conscious of the fact that whatever producer price policy the Board adopts that it would be followed with keen interest by the other Regional Marketing Boards. I interpret that to mean that the Eastern Regional Marketing Board would set standard prices for oil palm produce in this Region for other Regions to adopt since our Marketing Board realises the importance of this produce to the economy of the Eastern Region. The reverse has been the case. For those who argue that the price structure has no bearing on production, I quote the following observations from the same paragraph of the Report :—

“The Nigeria Oil Palm Produce Marketing Board had achieved considerable success in improving quality by adopting a price policy specially designed to induce production of high grade oil. The Board therefore attached the greatest importance to this particular aspect in determining its producer prices”.

I regret to say that contrary to this policy our Marketing Board has been offering less prices for our palm oil and palm kernels than the Marketing Boards in the other Regions of the Federation. This brings me to the question of produce purchase tax in the Region. It seems to me that the incidence of this tax has been passed on to the producer. I will quote an example to illustrate my point. The price for Special Palm Oil in the Eastern Region is £50 a ton as against £54 a ton in the other Regions. The purchase tax in the Eastern Region is £4 a ton as against a Sales tax of £1 a ton in the other Regions. Our Marketing Board deducts the purchase tax of £4 a ton and pays £50 to the producer while the other Regions after deducting the Sales Tax of £1 a ton the producer receives £53 a ton for his oil. The N.C.N.C. from the very start was opposed to the imposition of produce sales tax on the ground that it would be the producer who will have to pay this tax by having it deducted by the Marketing

Board. The N.C.N.C. preferred purchase tax to be borne by the Marketing Board. During the Second reading of the Purchase Tax Bill, the Opposition in 1955 opposed the Bill on the ground that the incidence of the tax would be passed on to the producer and there would be no difference between sales and purchase tax on our palm produce. At the time, I was the N.C.N.C. Government Chief Whip and I gave an assurance to the Opposition that the incidence of the purchase tax would not be passed on to the producers. That is not true today and Government has committed a breach of faith. The trading prospects of the Marketing Board have been very good, judging from paragraph 42 of the second Annual Report, 1955-56. The Board, after paying Administration Expenses totalling £86,011 and Purchase Tax of £1,087,477 had a net surplus of £1,913,039. That is, a gross profit of £3,086,527 was made by the Marketing Board during 1955-56.

If that was the true position, then there was no justification in failing to offer more incentive to the producers by raising the producer prices for palm oil and palm kernels. If the Marketing Board were running at a loss, the Board would certainly have reduced the prices. It is most unfair to pay our producers less prices for palm oil and palm kernels than prices in the other Regions.

I observe in the Report that the Marketing Board made a loss on its trading operations on cocoa. The Board should not be discouraged by this but should do everything to encourage more and more cocoa production in the Region. I know that people in Umuahia, in Bende Division and Ikom in Ogoja Province are very interested in cocoa farming. They should be encouraged.

I want to know from the Minister of Production who is responsible for the supply of palm oil from the Eastern Region to Fernando Po. The last Parliamentary Delegation to Fernando Po was disappointed to see the worst quality of palm oil exported to that Island from the Eastern Region. This oil is supplied to the Nigerian labourers working in the Island and the Parliamentary Delegation decided to take up this matter with the Minister of Production. Is the Marketing Board aware that it is the worst grade of oil, not edible in Nigeria, that is being exported to Fernando Po?

Then, lastly on this question of Licensed Buying Agents. I want the Minister to know that there is keen competition even though the Licensed Buying Agents have formed themselves into a Union. I want to explain to the Minister why over the last year there has been a drop in the export of oil. It is not that oil is not produced. It has been produced but not evacuated to the Bulk Oil Plants. Why is it not evacuated? The middlemen and the factors have not been fairly treated. Up to last year they were getting as much as £4 commission per ton of oil and £2 15s commission per ton on palm kernel. This year, all the Licensed Buying Agents have come together and have reduced the £4 commission on oil to £1 10s and the £2 15s commission on palm kernel to £1 4s 9d. As a result, the middlemen and the factors have refused to buy for the firms. I want to suggest to the Minister to adopt the policy adopted by the Southern Cameroons Marketing Board. I refer him to the second Annual Report, 1955-56 of that Board paragraph 23 at page 8. The Board there decided to introduce a commission element for middlemen in the Southern Cameroons and that is included in the commission payable to the Licensed Buying Agents in the Southern Cameroons, so that every middleman, every factor, knows exactly how much he has by way of commission for bringing cocoa to the Licensed Buying Agents.

Paragraph 23 reads:

"In the case of cocoa, the total allowances were further increased by the introduction of a middlemen's commission element of £3 per ton."

My suggestion is that Marketing Board should decide what should be the commission payable to every middleman and factor in the Region. It should not be left to the Licensed Buying Agents to decide because they would like to keep part of the commission to themselves. The Marketing Board should from now protect the interest of the middlemen and factors. I would suggest a commission of £3 per ton on oil and £2 per ton on palm kernel. If that is done, then the middlemen and the factors will go down to the village level and buy produce for the firms as before for evacuation.

I want to know why loans approved by the E.R.D.C. during 1955-56 totalling £158,000

[Mr E. O. Eyo]

have not been paid up till today. I have received complaints from people whose loans were approved but have not received their loans. We on this Side of the House are very much interested in the affairs of the Marketing Board and the E.R.D.C. We will continue to offer fair and constructive criticisms and also make suggestions to the Minister of Production. He will have two sets of advisers—first and foremost—the experts in his Ministry and second the Members on this Side of the House who happen to be closely connected with the palm oil industry in the Region.

*Mr J. O. Ihekwoaba rose to speak.*

**The Chairman:** Has the hon. Member any fresh suggestions to make bearing in mind what hon. Eronini has said?

**Mr J. O. Ihekwoaba (Orlu Division):** Yes, I have.

**The Chairman:** Will the hon. Member concentrate on those and not repeat anybody else.

**Mr Ihekwoaba:** Mr Chairman, I only want to clear certain points which the Opposition Members have been using all the time to incite the producers against the Government.

**The Chairman:** I don't understand you.

**Mr Ihekwoaba:** I was saying that I wanted to clear certain points which the Opposition have been using all the time to incite the producers against the Government (*Laughter*). What I mean is this: I remember last time when hon. E. O. Eyo got up in this House to speak, he pointed out that last year the Licensed Buying Agents were paying £4 to middlemen, forgetting that the Licensed Buying Agents pay from their own pockets and not from the funds given out by the Marketing Board. The Marketing Board pays out commission to the Licensed Buying Agents on the understanding that the Licensed Buying Agents should pay to the middlemen £1 10s 0d for a ton of palm oil and £1 4s 9d for a ton of palm kernels as the middlemen's commission. The Licensed Buying Agents should concede by giving high commissions to these middlemen and, therefore, they lose more in their own profit. This year they decided not to lose by

enriching the middlemen who go out to buy from the producers, get profit from them and again get from the Licensed Buying Agents. That is what hon. E. O. Eyo is referring to every time in this House. (*Laughter*).

**The Chairman:** Order! Order!

**Mr Ihekwoaba:** Another point is this, Sir. The Leader of the Opposition pointed out that the prices of palm oil in the West and the North are different from the prices paid in this Region. This is false. The prices are the same, but with slight differences. What happens is that the purchase tax in the West is imposed on the Licensed Buying Agents, whereby if Licensed Buying Agents sell their produce, the tax will be deducted before paying them, and in the East the tax is being deducted from the producers. That is exactly what happens. After all, the prices are the same, but the difference is that you take from this man and I take from the other man. (*Hear! Hear!*). Every time hon. E. O. Eyo tells the public that the Eastern Government is paying less for produce and the Western and Northern Regions are paying more. This is false. He should stop all this. (*Hear! Hear!*).

**The Chairman:** In other words you agree with Government policy in this matter?

**Mr Ihekwoaba:** Yes, I do. I have other points to make.

**The Chairman:** Order! Order!

**The Minister of Production (Dr M. I. Okpara):** Mr Chairman, it is indeed a great pity that the Leader of the Opposition and the Chief Whip were not in the House when I spoke at length during the Second reading of the Appropriation Bill, on nearly all these points they have mentioned here.

The fundamental difference between the so-called producer prices in the East and in the West is merely theoretical because the East is the one Region that produces S.P.O., (Special oil) and the other Regions produce technical oil. It is quite theoretical for any other Region to put any price it likes for special palm oil because it does not produce it. It is the East that produces this oil and similarly it does not matter what price we put for technical oil because we are producing very

little in the East and we think that probably in a year or so, we may produce no more of technical oil grades 2 and 3. In other words, it is not right to compare the prices for special palm oil in the East with the gazetted prices for the North and West because there is no S.P.O. there. Gazetted price is only a paper price. They haven't got this oil to buy and therefore what they are gazetted is theoretical. I shall refer the two hon. Members to that my rather lengthy speech on the Second reading where they will have some of these ideas more fully covered as we are pressed for time.

Then again, the hon. the Leader of Opposition, I think, suggested that some form of financial aid should be given to Licensed Buying Agents. I think this is a matter that is already being studied by my Ministry and we should be in a position to inform the House in a very short time when we have reached a decision. Mr Eronini's suggestions to make Owerri and Okigwi annual grading stations will be referred to my expert advisers, as you know I am not an oil expert (*laughter*).

The problem of regarding 4.5 per cent free fatty acid oil as S.P.O. in certain bulk oil plant, I understand, is a very complicated one and again we are already studying it so that there will be some form of uniformity all over the Region. His suggestion about tax evasion along the borders is of course not merely pertinent to my Ministry; I think it is a matter that should be handled by the Board of Internal Revenue. But it is anti-social of course for people to evade tax and expect social amenities.

The Purchase Tax in the Eastern Region on palm oil and kernel is being paid here by the Marketing Board and not by the producers so that the hon. the Chief Whip of the Opposition should have no fear about whether we have reverted to Sales Tax of the other Regions; we have not. He asked for who is responsible for oil to Fernando Po. I don't know, I shall find out.

Finally, he suggested that there is some difficulty between Licensed Buying Agents and their middlemen; a difficulty that has been accepted by the one buying agent in this Region. I wish to assure the House that the Marketing Board usually draws an agreement with Licensed Buying Agents as regards the

quantity of produce to be bought every year and if any Licensed Buying Agent, through indiscretion or quarrelling with his middlemen does not reach the minimum quota required, naturally he would not get a licence for the next year, and I have no doubt that the present arrangement is the easiest for the Marketing Board and the best for the producers. There will be no point in monkeying about with the internal organisation of Licensed Buying Agents.

And finally, the question of loans by the E.R.D.C. I have already spoken at this particular meeting of the House on this matter. Hon. Members will realise that the affairs of the E.R.D.C. have been a little bit tangled for the past few months and we are doing our best to cut the Gordian Knot and when all this is done, as I have already promised the House, loans will continue to be given to farmers and the E.R.D.C. will live up to its promises.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Head 452 postponed.*

#### HEAD 453—MINISTRY OF TOWN PLANNING

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £30,890 for Head 453—Ministry of Town Planning—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Minister of Town Planning (Mr E. Emole):** Mr Chairman, since this appears to be the only opportunity I have to speak before this hon. House adjourns finally, may I comment briefly on Heads 453, 454 and 455 and also reply to some of the points raised by hon. Members on matters within my Portfolio.

This Ministry was constituted under its present title six months ago. The responsibility for Land and Survey, formerly within the Portfolio of the Minister of Internal Affairs, has now been transferred to this Ministry.

With the assistance of my technical advisers, I have drawn up proposals for the establishment of a new Division of the Ministry, to be staffed by experts with professional qualifications as town planners, to carry out town planning schemes for the Region, with the

[MR EMOLE]

co-operation of, and in consultation with, existing planning authorities and Local Government bodies, which were to be endowed with town planning powers. Provision is also included in the scheme for assisting private landowners wishing to develop their lands in accordance with town planning principles.

Mr Chairman, for obvious reasons I have come to the conclusion that the introduction of these services, however desirable they may be, must wait for a more propitious moment. I have reached this conclusion with the greatest reluctance, since I consider that there is a very positive need for the introduction of progressive and systematic measures of town planning, guided by fully qualified staff, if this Region is to ensure that its people will be provided with living and working conditions most conducive to their health and prosperity.

I can only hope that when I raise the matter again, as I surely will, hon. Members will give me their full co-operation and support.

I am, however, happy to note that, in this Schedule recognition is at last given to the needs of what my hon. predecessor in office so aptly styled the Cinderella of all the Departments—namely, Survey. Sir, we had reached a point where there are only two fully qualified officers to attend to the many calls on the services of this Department and to supervise the work of over one hundred clerical and technical employees, to say nothing of a comparatively large established labour force.

I am therefore, very happy to say that there is provision in Head 455—Survey, for a substantial increase in the senior staff of this Department. The full effect will not be felt immediately since the majority of the new posts are to be reserved for Nigerian members of the Department—twelve in all—who are undergoing courses of training overseas and at Ibadan University and the College of Technology. For this reason, no financial provision is included for a proportion of the new posts. Nevertheless, the increase in establishment will provide a strong and very necessary foundation on which the type of efficient service demanded of this Department can be based.

In addition to staff increases, there is provision for the purchase of certain badly needed

items of equipment which will facilitate, among other things, the more rapid and accurate preparations of maps from air photographs, and enable the Department to change over from old-fashioned methods of mapping to modern techniques.

At this stage I would like to comment on hon. Chidolue's suggestion that the largest towns in the Region should be surveyed from the air. This, Sir, has already to a large extent been done, and up to the present, maps have been compiled from air photographs for 19 of the largest towns in the Region, and can be obtained from the Survey Department.

Turning now to the Land Department, steady progress has been maintained in pursuance of the dual objectives of developing Crown Lands towards beneficial use and of assisting to increase the revenue.

During the past twelve months over one thousand leases of plots in new layouts have been granted, in Port Harcourt, Umuahia, Aba and Enugu. The coming year's programme will provide approximately the same number of new plots in places as far apart as Ikot Ekpene, Enugu, Orlu, Degema, Onitsha, Agbani, Port Harcourt and Abakaliki.

On the revenue side, receipts from Crown Rents and Temporary Occupation Licences are conservatively estimated at £123,000 which is almost double the actual figures of £65,000 received only three years ago. It is not reasonable to expect that the impetus can be maintained at the present rate without moderate increases in staff from year to year, and the Bill provides for additional clerical and inspectorate staff to deal with the extra work involved in connexion with the development of new layouts in places where no Land Department staff has been stationed up to now. In view, also, of the rapid expansion of the revenue earning capacity of the Department, provision is made for the appointment of an Accountant.

Hon. H. U. Akpabio urged that towns should be planned in such a way that separate paths could be provided for pedestrians. This suggestion will be carefully borne in mind in connexion with the planning of new layouts.



Hon. P. N. Okeke suggested that the size of new plots should be not less than one hundred feet square, to allow the occupants plenty of room for gardens, and to have the benefit of wider frontages. This is indeed the policy of my Ministry in regard to purely residential areas, as new tenants will discover when they begin to move into their plots. But in the areas where plots are leased for trading and business in addition to residence, however, frontages must necessarily be smaller on account of the heavier demand and their greater commercial value. In such areas front gardens would be an expensive luxury, and few plots holders would be willing to devote valuable building land to this purpose. Even so, in these areas also, plot holders will find that frontages have generally been increased by between ten and twenty feet more than the former standard fifty feet, and plot depths have been increased by much more than this, so that there will be plenty of room for back gardens for those wishing to have them. Hon. P. N. Okeke also stated that foreign firms should not be permitted to own plots in the Region, while hon. Okeh urged that aliens should not be allowed to own land at the expense of the people's welfare.

On these two points I would like to emphasise that it is the policy of this Government to encourage and assist everyone, including aliens, who can make vital contributions to the development and welfare of the Region, to obtain the land needed for their operations. As far as the acquisition of private lands by aliens is concerned, I can assure the hon. Members that my duties are to ensure that agreements are entered into voluntarily by the landowners, and that the areas are not excessive. I take these duties very seriously and I can and do withhold consent to any transaction in which I consider that the landowners have been imposed upon in any way. In addition, aliens are not permitted to own land, and are restricted to leasehold tenures (*Hear! Hear!*).

**Mr Eronini:** Mr Chairman, the point I would like to make is about the power conferred by the Minister of Town Planning on the Local Planning Authorities. I would like to say that the Region should have a Town Planning Board that can go to an area and be able to know which areas would be suitable for commercial purposes and which areas will be

suitable for commercial or residential and which areas will be suitable for commercial *cum* residential purposes. They will not be interested in the allocation of plots. The experience they have got in Enugu will help them to know in Port Harcourt which areas will be commercial and which areas will be suitable for residential purpose. So the Minister should consider the advisability of having a Regional Board that can advise as to the planning of areas for commercial and residential purposes.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** I was listening to the Minister of Town Planning when he mentioned places he has decided to develop and plan. He must have forgotten to mention Uyo, and I am sure he has got it in his note.

The matter of town planning is a very important one. Besides Enugu, Aba, Onitsha and Port Harcourt, other places in the whole of the Eastern Region have not been planned. I would like to see a White Paper setting out details of a town planning programme to be followed each year. I agree with the Minister that he should have a team of experts. I would not like to hear criticisms after a town has been planned and laid out. If we want to embark on town planning it must be done properly.

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### HEAD 454—LAND

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £51,080 for Head 454—Land—stand part of the Schedule.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### HEAD 455—SURVEY

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £57,900 for Head 455—Survey—stand part of the Schedule.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### HEAD 456—MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £151,150 for Head 456—Ministry of Transport—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Minister of Transport (Mr P. O. Ururuka):** Mr Chairman, the projects of this Ministry have been so much under fire in this House during the Speech from the Throne, Appropriation Bill and during Question time, that I feel that I should first comment briefly on the general policy of the Ministry, secondly, show what is being done and the achievements and finally to rebut or clarify certain criticisms from some critics, who might be well-meaning, but have allowed their allegations to emanate from ignorance of the situation.

In the first place, I would wish hon. Members to understand that the scheme which Government is pursuing is the five-year road programme for 1955-1960. In this programme the Government selected a number of roads and bridges which it intended to construct and complete by the end of 1960. This implies that not all those roads will be started at the same time because of our limitations in financial and labour resources. However, the final objective is to complete the whole work to which Government is committed by its policy by 1960.

The problem before my Ministry and the Government now is whether we could, owing to some pressure from many Members of the House, within this five-year programme take in more commitments without completing the original ones. My present action on this is to take note of all the demands of the different Divisions and to make lists of these demands with a view to presenting them to Government in future for general review of our road policy. This fact explains why not all the roads are in the present estimate.

I have to emphasise what was said in the Speech From The Throne that our present five-year road programme was got up in a hurry. If any Division feels that it was not well accommodated in the scheme, we can only say that its claims will be well considered during the next review of the policy.

My Ministry is fully alive to the need for improved communications, for the economic development of our country depends on them. Without roads people live as though on an island, and trade cannot flow from one part of the Region to another.

In the rural areas the people themselves, by means of community development, are making great efforts to connect every village to the road system. But the existing road system, as we all know, is inadequate. The roads are unable to stand up to the heavy motor traffic, and that is why we are placing such emphasis on the tarring of existing roads. But a tarred road is useless if an old-fashioned timber bridge along it collapses. So we are placing equal emphasis on the construction of new permanent bridges. Two important new bridges have recently been completed at Okpoha and Ibagwa. At Okpoha the Aboyne River rises by 40 feet when in flood, and it was no easy matter to design and construct a bridge to meet that difficulty. The Ibagwa Bridge over the Qua Iboe River is on the main road from Abak to Opobo. Another bridge a few further miles downstream was completed over the same river at Etinan during the previous year.

During the past twelve months we have tarred ten per cent of the Trunk Roads for which the Regional Government is responsible. The tarring of the Aba-Opobo road at a cost of £162,500 was a great achievement. When the contracts now in hand have been completed, fifty per cent will have been tarred. This, Mr Speaker, is striking evidence of the progress that has been made.

It would be fair to say that steady progress has been made on most of these roads. Some, however, have not proceeded as quickly as they should owing to slow and incompetent work by some contractors. I have warned the contractors concerned that, if progress is not expedited, they will be expelled from their contracts. We are not prepared to tolerate any further delay in completing these projects and I feel the House will support me in this. However, I would emphasise that not all our contractors are behind schedule. Some are doing excellent and quick work, and such contractors deserve our congratulation.

Mr Speaker, with your permission, I would like to tell the House something about the different projects that we have in hand.

*Bende-Umuahia-Alayi Road*

Contracts for the Umuahia-Ahaba section were given out in November, 1956. The

contractor has been behind schedule but recently, I am glad to say, the work has been speeded up. A contract for the Umuahia to Igwu Bridge section was given out in July last year.

#### *Oko-Ufuma-Umunze Road*

A contract for a large bridge and a battery of box culverts was given out last July and is being supervised by a P.W.D. Resident Engineer. It is due for completion during the coming year. The road itself appears under section B of the Estimates and a contract for tarring 19 miles of road was given out last August.

#### *Obudu-Ikom Road*

The first 14 miles from Ikom to Bendige Ayuk has been completed by direct labour. A detailed survey has been completed for the next section from Bendige Ayuk to Bashua and we hope to start that very shortly.

#### *Port Harcourt-Ogoni-Kono Road*

The contract for reconstructing and tarring this road was given out in June, 1956 and the work should be completed by next August.

#### *Nto-Ndang-Arochuku Road*

This appears under both Section A and Section B of the Estimates. Under Section A we are building the vitally important Nkana Bridge. This has an overall span of 220 feet and, when completed, will be the first bridge ever over the Enyong Creek. It will provide a direct road link between Arochuku and Ikot Ekpene. The contract was awarded last November and is due for completion in six months time.

#### *Rehabilitation of Port Harcourt-Elele-Owerri Road*

This road was tarred originally without first being reconstructed. As it carried heavy traffic it soon began to break up. However, good progress has been made on its rehabilitation, but more money is going to be needed to complete it satisfactorily.

#### *Ahoada-Yenagoa Road*

The original estimate, based merely on preliminary survey, was £300,000. A comprehensive and detailed survey has shown, however, that the cost will be more than twice

that amount. However, with the sum available, we hope to be able to build the road as far as Mbiama on the Orashie River. This section, which is 16½ miles long, passes through very difficult country and more than 1,000 feet of bridging is needed.

#### *Abakaliki-Obubra Road*

This has now been completed except for quarters for the ferry crew. The ferry itself has been ordered from England.

#### *Akorkwa-Okigwi Road*

The amount provided is insufficient for both tarring and bridges. Tenders have therefore been invited for building 5 permanent bridges. I hope a contract for these will be given out shortly.

#### *Ikot Okoro Bridge*

Two new bridges have recently been built over the Qua Iboe River at Etinan and Ibagwa. The Ikot Okoro Bridge would be a third. A design has been completed but the amount provided in the Development Scheme, namely £8,000, is wholly inadequate. We are considering how best to find the extra money.

#### *Degema-Port Harcourt Road*

Only £40,000 was provided for this in the Development Scheme. Consultants have made a survey and estimate the cost at over £300,000.

#### *Ozubulu-Atani Road*

A detailed survey is about to be put in hand but a preliminary reconnaissance has been done.

#### *Ikot Ekpene-Itu-Uyo Road*

A survey has been completed and contract documents prepared. There is unlikely to be sufficient money for both the Ikot Ekpene to Itu and the Itu to Uyo Sections. But I hope to call for tenders for tarring the Ikot Ekpene to Itu Road (which carried heavier traffic than the other) in the near future.

#### *Awgu-Ndeaboh Road*

A survey is now in hand.

#### *Nsukka-Opi Road*

Work is in hand by direct labour and should be completed very shortly.

[MR URURUKA]

*Awka-Orlu-Owerri*

*Nyaba Bridge*

A survey has been completed but the cost of construction is likely to be very much more than the amount available.

I regret that the contractors are making very slow progress. The contract was awarded in October, 1956 but so far only 5 miles of road have been completed. I have recently warned the contractors that, if the work is not expedited, they will be expelled from the contract.

*Four Miles of Enugu-Agbani-Afikpo Road*

The sum available is inadequate and so this project must be deferred for the time being.

*Itigidi-Ediba Crossing*

The ferry has been ordered. I regret that it has been found necessary to defer construction of certain projects from Section B for the time being. As soon as loan funds are available, we shall put them in hand again.

Turning now to some of the points raised in the debate, the hon. G. C. Okeya, Member for Owerri, asked why Owerri Division had no road in the road development programme, and Dr the hon. A. N. Obonna said there was no tarred road in the whole of Owerri Division except for one Federal Trunk Road which passes through it. I think Dr Obonna overlooked the Owerri-Elele-Port Harcourt road which is both tarred and maintained by the Regional Government. Dr Obonna should not forget that some Divisions have no tarred roads at all, while Owerri already has two.

Turning now to the Road Integration Programme which can be found as Appendix J to the new Estimates, I will give a brief account of the progress being made there.

*Okigwi-Afikpo*

A contract was given out last October and nearly half the work has been completed.

I think too that the hon. Okeya overlooked the Awka-Orlu-Owerri road which is being tarred under Appendix J. The hon. Okeya wanted Government to take over from the Owerri Council the maintenance of further roads. Government already maintains the following roads in Owerri Division :—

*Abakaliki-Afikpo*

Good progress has been made and about 33 of the 38 miles have been completed.

Owerri-Port Harcourt,  
Obaku-Oguta,  
Owerri-Umuna.

*Enugu-Ozalla-Awgu*

A contract was given out last October. Work will probably start next September and is due for completion by May next year.

Government also pays 100 per cent reimbursement for the maintenance of the following other roads :—

*Umuhia-Ikot Ekpene-Abak*

A contract was given out in December, 1956, but I regret that the contractors have made very slow progress. So far only 8 miles have been completed.

Owerri-Akalovo,  
Oguta-Obiakpo,  
Oguta-Mbidi (as far as the Orlu Boundary),  
Owerri-Ododo,  
Ahoada Boundary to Okpuala (via Eziama).

*Obubra-Ediba Road*

The contractors are far behind schedule and the contract is going to be wound up. This project must then be deferred until loan funds are available.

Does the hon. Member realise that some Divisions receive reimbursements on no roads whatsoever? Does he seriously maintain that Owerri Division is not receiving its fair share?

*Orlu-Ihiala*

This has now been completed.

*Calabar-Arochuku Road*

Work is in hand by direct labour on rehabilitating miles 13 to 35 from Calabar.

The hon. J. E. Eyo, Member for Abak asked about the Ikot Okporo Bridge. I have already explained the position there. He should not forget that in the past two years Government has built two fine new bridges over this same river, the first at Etinan and the

second at Ibagwa. He asked too about the Oron-Eket road. This appears this year in Appendix Y, and will not be forgotten as soon as loan funds are available.

The hon. Arikpo suggested that areas with agricultural potentialities should be provided with capital for road construction. I fully agree with him that it is vitally important to open up such areas. The Ikom-Obudu road is one such road. It passes through land that is suitable for cocoa cultivation and the first 14 miles as far as Bendige Ayuk have just been completed.

The hon. J. A. Agba, Member for Ogoja, pressed for the tarring of the Abakaliki-Yahe road. Perhaps he heard the reply I gave to a Question the other day. Tenders have been received and the Federal Government hopes to award the contract shortly.

The hon. S. O. Achara, Member for Okigwi, took my Ministry to task, particularly over the failure to tar the Okigwi-Mballa Road. I fully share his disappointment and can only repeat what I said in my reply to his Question—that it will be done when we have obtained loan funds.

The hon. P. N. Okeke said Government does not maintain a single mile of road in Onitsha Division, apart from the Federal Trunk Roads. This is not strictly correct. The Regional Government maintains 5 miles of the Nkwelle Farm and Sack Factory Roads. In addition, we reimburse the Niger County Council for another 20 miles of road, namely for the Aguleri Road and also from Ihiala to Orlu Boundary.

I seize this opportunity of thanking all those who showered some praises on my Ministry. I also thank some of my staff who have helped me to achieve so much.

**The Chairman:** The hon. the Minister of Transport has no doubt anticipated all your questions.

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Chairman:** I do not intend that opportunity should be taken of this Committee stage to reopen our Budget speeches which is,

I feel, what Members want to do. I, therefore, intend that with the exception of those who have given me notice to amend anything only one or two speakers from the Government and Opposition Benches will be allowed to speak before I put the Question. I realise that Members are here to represent their constituencies but they are not here to waste the time of other Members.

#### HEAD 457—ROAD CONSTRUCTION

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £785,920 for Head 457—Road Construction—stand part of the Schedule.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### HEAD 458—ROAD MAINTENANCE

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £103,900 for Head 458—Road Maintenance—stand part of the Schedule.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### HEAD 459—MINISTRY OF WELFARE

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £15,090 for Head 459—Ministry of Welfare—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Minister of Welfare (Mr E. A. Chime):** Mr Chairman, when Chancellors of the Exchequer begin wielding axes and looking round to see what they can cut out, not unnaturally their first thought is invariably the Social Services! (*Laughter*). I am therefore, very pleased to be able to reassure the House that, although certain curtailments have been made, the financial provision made for my Ministry and Departments remains substantially unaffected. Indeed, in certain significant sectors, far from a decrease in expenditure being imposed, increased provision has been made and this is most significant in the assistance provided for Community Development Projects and I would like my hon. Friend from Awgu to take note of this. This brings me to the second point I wish to emphasise in the Minister of Finance's speech and that is his remarks about the importance of road-building, a matter to which also other hon. Members have referred. The improvement of communications in my opinion is

[MR CHIME]

one of the surest ways of increasing our wealth and in this field the Community Development Department is doing an excellent job of work. Indeed, this Department is acting in effect as consulting engineers to the majority of Local Government Councils in the Region. There is on deposit with the Community Development Secretary nearly £30,000 which Local Government bodies have paid over for the ordering of bridges on their behalf. This is not Government money but Local Government funds entrusted to the Department and as such is striking evidence of the close co-operation that has been achieved during the year between the Department and Local Government Councils.

The programme of bridge building is making very good progress. Six Bailey Bridges were completed during last financial year. These are :—

Asu-Uburu bridge in Afikpo Division,  
Aiya bridge in Ogoja Division,  
Uboma-Ezinugwaku in Okigwi Division,  
Doctors Creek bridge in Uyo Division,  
Eme bridge in Bende Division.

Four more have been received and the preliminary work of erection is proceeding on seven projects all told. The bridges in question are :—

Lubara bridge in Ogoni Division,  
Aboyne-Achara bridge in Abakaliki Division,  
Itu-Mbauzo bridge in Ikot Ekpene Division,  
Nkissa bridge in Ahoada Division,  
Orasi bridge in Orlu Division.

When the present programme is completed no less than 16 Bailey Bridges totalling 1,880 feet will have been assembled in the Eastern Region. The Community Development Department does not only order and assemble Bailey Bridges. Other types of bridges are used for the smaller spans and in the remote areas of the creeks imported foot-bridges are ordered and assembled for the people. Particulars for the year are as follows :—

**Foot bridges (imported)**

Degema Division	1 Brook foot-bridge
	1 Ensby bridge
Abak Division ...	1 Ensby bridge
Calabar Division...	3 Ensby bridges.

**Road Bridges (imported)**

Uyo Division ...	3 Ensby Road bridges
Udi Division ...	1 Ensby Road bridge
Awgu Division ...	2 Ensby Road bridges
Obubra Division...	1 Ensby Road bridge.

As regards assistance to projects generally, Government is fully aware of the determined efforts being made by the peoples of the Region, particularly those in the rural areas, to improve their communications and better their conditions. During the year the following allocations of Community Development funds for assistance to projects were made to individual Divisions. The aim is to give as far as possible the same amount to every Division, except that those Divisions where the people are helping themselves receive supplementary allocations.

<i>Division</i>	<i>Amount</i> £	<i>Projects Assisted</i>
Aba ... ..	657	£300 for Mvosi community centre. Balance for general projects.
Abak ... ..	187	£100 for Urua Inyang Centre. Balance for general projects.
Abakaliki ... ..	1,366	Mainly for Aboyne-Achara Bridge, but partly for bridges on Ngbo-Agala road.
Afikpo ... ..	1,600	Numerous small projects, mainly roads and maternity homes.
Ahoada ... ..	1,400	Mainly for Egwi Bridge.
Arochuku ... ..	565	£250 for Agwagwune maternity home. Remainder for roads.
Awgu ... ..	754	Mainly for roads.
Awka ... ..	968	Mainly for roads.

*Eastern House of Assembly Debates*

925

[Appropriation Bill—

10 APRIL 1958

Committee]

926

<i>Division</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Projects Assisted</i>
	£	
Bende ... ..	409	General projects.
Brass ... ..	1,192	Mainly for bridges.
Calabar ... ..	650	£490 for two "Ensby" footbridges. Balance for general projects.
Degema ... ..	728	£300 for footbridge. Balance for general projects.
Eket ... ..	1,900	Mainly for bridges.
Ikom ... ..	1,434	Mainly for bridges.
Ikot Ekpene ... ..	847	General projects.
Itu ... ..	558	Mainly for bridges.
Nsukka ... ..	900	Mainly for bridges.
Obubra ... ..	570	Mainly for bridges.
Obudu ... ..	1,264	Mainly for bridges but one town layout.
Ogoja ... ..	494	Bridges and culverts.
Ogoni ... ..	145	General projects.
Okigwi ... ..	1,248	Mainly for bridges.
Onitsha ... ..	1,603	Mainly for bridges.
Opobo ... ..	527	Mainly for bridges.
Orlu ... ..	122	General projects.
Owerri ... ..	767	General projects.
Udi ... ..	785	General projects.
Uyo ... ..	1,196	£611 for three Ensby road bridges. Balance for locally made bridges.

Only £10,000 of new Regional money was provided in 1957-58. The greater part of the above allocations was made from Federal money allocated previously and still unspent in the Community Development Deposit account.

It is our intention to continue to encourage self-help and to grant financial assistance in the form of materials in cases where the determination of the people is manifest. Practical evidence of Government's intention in this matter is in the recent appointment of an

Inspector of Works specifically for Community Development projects for which hon. Members will note provision has now been made.

Mr Chairman, I would now speak on the work of the Sports Commission. This Commission has a programme of development which includes grants of £250 to each Division for the construction of a Divisional sports field; and grants for sports stadia. Grants made by the Commission to Divisions for the establishment of Sports Stadia and Sports fields are as follows :—

<i>Division</i>	<i>Allocated</i>	<i>Paid</i>	<i>Purpose</i>
	£	£	
Brass ... ..	250	—	Sports Field.
Degema ... ..	250	—	Sports Field.
Ahoada ... ..	250	250	Sports Field.
Ogoni ... ..	250	250	Sports Field.
Port Harcourt ... ..	15,000	—	Sports Stadium.
Calabar ... ..	5,700	5,700	Sports Stadium.
Eket ... ..	250	250	Sports Field.
Enyong ... ..	250	—	Sports Field.
Uyo ... ..	250	250	Sports Field.
Ikot Ekpene ... ..	250	250	Sports Field.
Arochuku ... ..	250	250	Sports Field.
Opobo ... ..	250	250	Sports Field.

*Eastern House of Assembly Debates*

927

[Appropriation Bill—

10 APRIL 1958

Committee]

928

<i>Division</i>	<i>Allocated</i>	<i>Paid</i>	<i>Purpose</i>
	£	£	
Abak ... ..	250	250	Sports Field.
Aba ... ..	3,000	—	Sports Stadium.
Owerri ... ..	1,000	1,200	Sports Stadium.
Umuahia ... ..	800	—	Sports Stadium.
Okigwi ... ..	250	—	Sports Field.
Orlu ... ..	250	—	Sports Field.
Onitsha ... ..	5,000	—	Sports Stadium.
Awka ... ..	250	250	Sports Field.
Awgu ... ..	550	550	Sports Field.
Nsukka ... ..	250	250	Sports Field.
Udi ... ..	250	250	Sports Field.
Enugu ... ..	23,000	986	Regional Sports Stadium.
Abakaliki ... ..	2,300	2,300	Sports Stadium.
Afikpo ... ..	250	250	Sports Field.
Obubra ... ..	250	250	Sports Field.
Ikom ... ..	250	—	Sports Field.
Ogoja ... ..	250	250	Sports Field.
Obudu ... ..	250	250	Sports Field.

Brass, Degema, Orlu, Okigwi, Enyong and Ikom Divisions have so far received no grants. This is because the local people have not yet made arrangements for the construction or management of sports fields, despite encouragement from the Commission. When these arrangements are made grants will be paid. Arrangements for the development of stadia at Onitsha, Aba and Umuahia, are about complete and grants will soon be paid.

I would now turn, Mr Chairman, to the work of the Social Welfare Department. This unspectacular vitally important work is at present confined to Calabar but as I said in my speech on the Children and Young Persons Bill earlier in this Session it is hoped to extend it—without, I may say, any increase in cost—further afield. In that speech I made mention of the excellent work of the Department in investigating child-dealing and slavery and there is no need to repeat now what I said then. Hon. Members are probably aware of approaches made by my Ministry to all Local Government Councils and District Officers in the Region in connection with the problem of the traffic in children. The reports now being frequently made in the papers and also to my Ministry, about children rescued from slavery, show how effective the campaign against this social evil, has been.

The only Juvenile Court in this Region is at Calabar and without the Social Welfare Department this would have to be closed down. Recent statistics indicate that the work done

by the Department in connection with children in need of care and protection is having a direct bearing on juvenile delinquency. Significantly, the number of juveniles charged with criminal offences has fallen from 156 in 1947 to 53 last year. The Department is also performing an invaluable service in vetting the wives and children of labourers who go to Fernando Po. This is an important and considerable part of the work of the Department and it should be borne in mind that some £29,000 in revenue from capitation fees on Fernando Po labourers accrues to this Region. In this connection, I would like to refer to the remarks of certain hon. Members concerning this capitation rate. It is correct that a capitation fee of £5 is paid on each labourer so recruited and that, of this, £3 accrues to the Regional and £2 to the Federal Government. This matter has in fact already been considered by Executive Council but it would not be proper for me to make any further comment at this stage.

I would like, Mr Chairman, to take this opportunity of paying personal tribute to the splendid work of the Chief Social Welfare Officer, Miss Belcher, who is unfortunately retiring very soon after many years of devoted work at Calabar.

Of the other things which my Ministry is doing, hon. Members will be pleased to know that a new Staff Housing Scheme for Government servants was introduced. The new



scheme permits loans to be given to any Civil Servant holding a pensionable office and is confirmed in his appointment. No loan may exceed 36 times the monthly salary of the borrower, or £1,500, whichever is the greater. The rate of interest is to be 3 per cent. The new Government staff housing regulations are now being printed. Steps are also being taken to establish a Building Society. Negotiations have been made with the Nigerian Building Society, Lagos with regard to the extension of the Society's activities to the Eastern Region. The Colonial Development Corporation has also been approached on the establishment, with the assistance of Government of a separate building society in the Region. The intention is that the Society should give loans to suitable persons in the lower income group to enable them purchase their own houses and repay the loan by instalments.

In conclusion, Mr Chairman, the welfare of Nigerian Ex-servicemen has continued to receive the attention of my Ministry and the attention of Government Departments and Corporation has recently again been drawn to the importance of ensuring that ex-servicemen have every reasonable opportunity of employment. The hon. the first Member for Port Harcourt has raised the question of the eligibility of Nigerian Ex-servicemen for war service credits of 2s per day. The position here is that the circular in question was issued by the United Kingdom Government. If Nigerian Ex-servicemen are eligible it will be on a Nigeria wide basis and as such this is a Federal rather than a Regional responsibility. I have in fact already had approaches made to the Federal Government on this matter, and in view of the hon. Member's interest I undertake to keep him informed of any developments there may be.

On the question of finding jobs for these men in Nigeria, I would like to invite the attention of hon. Members and in particular the first Member for Port Harcourt, to industrial establishments springing up in this Region. It is hoped that those men will be gradually absorbed in these growing industries.

Mr Chairman, may I throw a challenge to all hon. Members in this House.

Immediately this House adjourns, let all hon. Members return to their respective

Divisions and organise themselves and forget talking politics and set up projects in every Division and invite me. I shall be there with the staff of the Community Development to give every assistance necessary, so that by the end of this year, we shall all come here during the next Budget Session to congratulate ourselves instead of criticising ourselves. (*Applause*).

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Mr Chairman, I wish to comment on the challenge. It would have been a welcome challenge if the Minister had not advised us to stop talking politics. May I say, Sir, that as politicians we will not exist if we stop talking politics. If the Minister would withdraw that part of his challenge, we on this Side of the House accept the challenge.

I want to raise the question of the transfer of Catering Rest Houses from this Ministry to the Tourist Corporation. At page E 14 of the Estimates, under Head 405, the footnote says: "Catering Rest Houses—Ownership transferred to Tourist Corporation" and the footnote under the Head we are now discussing says: "Catering Rest Houses—running costs transferred to Tourist Corporation." But there is no indication of the terms of the transfer of the assets of the Government Catering Rest Houses to the Tourist Corporation.

The transfer must be on terms as I think it would not be proper for Government to hand over the assets of the Rest Houses to the Tourist Corporation as a gift.

The next point I would like to deal with is the question of Sports Organisation in the Region. With the achievements of Hogan Bassey and Dick Tiger, I think this Ministry should do everything to encourage Boxing. (*Laughter*). In the Estimates there is provision for a Sports Organiser. I wonder whether it is a Sports Organiser we really need or a Sports Adviser or Coach. It is a pity that the Eastern Region has not been doing very well in Football as we used to do. But I think we are picking up. In boxing we have Hogan Bassey as our World Champion. We should give a lead to the whole country in Football and Athletics. Our Sports Commission train our youths in order to achieve our objective.

I have to inform the Minister that Uyo Division has laid out a Sports field which is

[Mr E. O. Eyo]

going to be the largest in the whole Region. For that, Uyo Division had received £250 from the Sports Commission. I hope the Minister has been to Uyo on the invitation of the Local Government Commissioner to see this sports field which, I repeat, is going to be the largest in the Eastern Region. The people of Uyo Division are raising money, and we need a substantial grant from the Sports Commission. £250 is too small a sum. If the Minister has not been to Uyo I will invite him to do so and see things for himself, and he will be satisfied that we need something between £25,000 to £50,000 to complete that our Sports field.

Now, I wish to comment on the provision made for the Y.W.C.A. The provision in 1957-58 was £300. This year only £100 is provided, that is a drop of £200. Well, I do not know how many Members are familiar with the work done by the Y.W.C.A. but I think it is a very good institution, particularly for bachelors. (*Laughter*). I think Government will do well to restore the original provision of £300. In fact, any sum voted for the Y.W.C.A. will be money well spent.

The same goes for the Girl Guides Association. The provision has dropped from £1,000 in 1957-58 to £380 this year. No explanation has been given for this drop. Those of us who are interested in the two Associations would advise Government to restore the original grants or provide more grants.

**An hon. Member:** Are you interested in Boy Scouts Association?

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Of course, I am.

*Mr K. Kiri rose to speak.*

**Mr Chairman:** Does the hon. Member choose to read his speech?

**Mr K. Kiri (Degema Division):** Yes, Mr Chairman, I am very much in sympathy with the Boy Scouts Association, the Y.W.C.A. and the Girl Guides Association. These are very useful Associations in the Eastern Region. They build up the womanhood, the manhood and the spirit of sportsmanship in our lives. The Easterner should be proud of the recent

victories of the two distinguished sportsmen from the East now resident in the United Kingdom. These two men have placed Nigeria on the map of the world of sportsmen. (*Hear! Hear!*).

Here in Nigeria at the end of every year those finalists representing the various Regions in the National sports competition—we often find in the North, East and in the West, Easterners in the East, Easterners competing very favourably and winning more prizes than any other Region in the Federation. There is no reason why we should not go all out to encourage these fields of activities. If there is any other means whereby the Ministry of Finance could find it possible to encourage these groups of associations in the way of more financial help, I support it, Sir.

**Mr G. I. Oko, M.B.E. (Awgu Division):** Mr Chairman, I have one or two points to raise. One of them is the inadequate vote for Special Community Development (Assistance to Projects) in this year's Estimates; the vote is only £15,000. In the years past this vote used to be something in the neighbourhood of £50,000. Now that people have many projects going on everywhere in the Region it is high time that this vote should be given further consideration by the Government. Much responsibility has been placed in the hands of the people to raise funds for community interest including primary education. I think this time that taxes are increased, the provision to make up for education is now the responsibility of the people; the same for the fund to make up for various aspects of developments of rural areas. Government said that there is very limited money to give out for development but this is where Government benefits more, because a shilling paid out in the way of Community Development (Assistance to Projects) or grant fetches three more shillings from the people for the glory of the Government. When a project like hospital is taken up by the people, Government may give say only £10,000, the people raise the rest of the fund locally and complete the project both by cash and kind. Government gets the praise. I sincerely beg the Minister of Welfare to look into this matter and see to it that this fund is increased.

The second point, Sir, is about the Inspection of Community Development projects in

the rural areas. I think it is high time the Regional Government should appoint an Inspector of Community Development Projects, whose duty it should be to go round from place to place, take down the records of people's achievements and to assist the projects by payment of the grants made available by the Government. Usually, District Officers keep the accounts of this fund. In rare cases this comes to the notice and the approval of the people, the way that such money was being spent. I do not condemn entirely the activities of some of the District Officers but I will very much appreciate it if Government will adopt the method suggested. I hope that Government will consider this matter on its merit and appoint Inspectors whose duty it should be to inspect the progress of Community Developments Projects.

Another point, Sir, is about the challenge thrown to the Members of this House by the hon. the Minister of Welfare. I would like to say that my people of Awgu have already accepted the challenge and have begun with so many projects. I, therefore, appeal to the hon. Minister to give his attention and grants to the projects now in hand at Awgu.

My next point, Sir, is about the Community Development Training Centre at Awgu. This centre benefits so many people in this Region by training their staff and councillors. I would like to draw the attention of the hon. the Minister of Welfare that in this centre students hardly find enough comfort while attending courses. There are a lot of things needed that ought to be there including accommodation. These things are very essential for the improvement of the centre. I want the Minister to visit this centre and see things for himself.

**Mr Ogon:** I want to make just a few points. The first is that I want to join the Minister of Welfare in congratulating the Lady Welfare Officer at Calabar, and to ask that the Minister should build a Remand Home in Ogoja Province. Our problem in Ogoja Province is that there has been a lot of unfavourable publicity about slave trade in Ogoja Province. The fact is that in Ogoja Province there are a lot of people coming from elsewhere to sell their children. A Remand Home will check a lot of these unscrupulous people who go about selling their children.

The second point I want to raise is about Community Development, raised by the Member for Awgu. Sir, a lot of local initiative has been killed by the fact that no sufficient provision is made for this. This project is easiest by constructing roads all over the rural areas. Somebody said that if you want to know a very bad road, it must be a Community Development Road. Yes, in many of these roads the local people have worked about 15 miles for themselves. Take the case of a village in Ikom Division where a 15-mile road has been worked by about 300 taxable adults. They have been on the road for two years. Now, they say they have no provision for the completion of the road.

Finally, Sir, I want to raise a point about the Parliamentary Delegation that went to Fernando Po last year. Unfortunately, the Minister of Welfare studiously did not tell us about what efforts he is making to implement the decision taken then. I want to say, Sir, I personally do not view it from the point of view of capitulation coming from this Region, because capitulation is a mild word for it. I view it from the angle that this is a dictatorship and that these Nigerians are condemned.

The only point I wanted the Delegation to make was the point of non-treaty labourers.

This is an Island made up of about 72,000 people of which Nigerians form about 46,000 and now 23,000 are treaty labourers, that is, those who go there under treaty. Other Nigerians are those who strayed there on their own and there is no protection whatever for them. The Delegation, Sir, I think should have released the report for which we have been waiting for a long time now. I see their difficulty in not dis-owning their previous report but I said that there were cases of arbitrary arrest, cases of imprisonment without trial and so on, and that Nigerians are dying. But there was nothing done to increase the ration. The ration is the same as those given during the war years.

Oil given is grade 4 and not wanted in this country at all. This is oil that cannot be consumed by human beings; very bad oil. I am not asking that the Minister of Production should do something to allow certain quantity of edible oil to be exported to the people in the Fernando Po Island.

[MR OGO]

Again, if you see the postcard to Fernando Po you are told that you can take up to two wives; but they give the same provision as the unmarried man. In other words although you can take up two wives you have to feed them on the one ration you are given. As a result most of the men who go over are unmarried; so that we are really creating a social problem in this Island. I agree with the Delegation that the fault is not so much that of the Spanish Authority. These are people who will be willing to do anything instructed them. The fault is that the Federal Government or the Regional Government is not interested enough to improve the lot of these people. I think the time has come when we should recommend that a Nigerian should be the official representing Nigeria in that place. Here again, Sir, the Nigerian building is very filthy. The Administrative Assistant there who has a wife owns a farm. The Nigerian Labour Officers there are doing their best. They bring reports to him but he does not take any action. It is interesting to note that the number of people that died between 1st October, 1956 and February, 1957 is 93; the number repatriated as unfit is 157 and on the report of the Labour Department, Annual Report, they give the amount paid as compensation for wounds as £295. In other words, if you share this money to the people, some receive £1, and others five shillings. If you notice in the agreement, the first time you are working in Fernando Po you are under contract. They pay £1 per month there and £1 here, that is £2. In other words you are working free because £1 cannot buy you one shirt. Now, after working for the first twelve months you are poor to go back home; you are ashamed to go back home. Then what do you do? You go on second contract. They will pay you £8. In other words, you are forced to work for them for eighteen months, and these are not eighteen months ordinary labour. You cannot organise labour; it is unthinkable to organise trade union; it is even unthinkable to organise the Ibo State Union. The moment you do that in Fernando Po you are rounded up and imprisoned.

The Delegation admitted that in many of the farms people work from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Now, when you are working in Fernando Po every minute you are bending down. There

is no minute for rest; there is no time for breakfast; no time for launch and so the people work all the time. You may ask why then do the people go there? Why musn't they go? It is our moral obligation as Government to make provision for these people. To the Minister of Welfare, I say that it is shameful that in this twentieth century, we cannot provide employment for these 46,000 fellows who are compelled to go to Fernando Po to seek employment under very unfavourable conditions.

*Question, That the sum of 15,090 for Head 459—Ministry of Welfare—stand part of the Schedule—put and agreed to.*

#### HEAD 460—COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £42,930 for Head 460—Community Development—stand part of the Schedule.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### HEAD 461—SOCIAL WELFARE

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £11,570 for Head 461—Social Welfare—stand part of the Schedule.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### HEAD 462—MINISTRY OF WORKS

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £104,170 for Head 462—Ministry of Works—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Minister of Works (Mr O. U. Afiah):** Mr Chairman, for about a month now, I have listened with great interest to the speeches made by hon. Members on matters affecting my Ministry, namely Works. I think it would be true to say that one of the greatest needs today of the people in the rural areas is for improved water supply. The Speech From The Throne has outlined the policy of my Ministry but I would like to tell hon. Members, in rather more detail, what we are doing about rural water supplies. It is, I feel sure, a subject very close to their hearts and mine.

We have embarked on an ambitious plan which is scheduled for completion in two

years from now. Under a generous grant from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund we are trying to give water to every village in the Region. We have set aside £500,000 for what we call water points—that is, wells and springs improvements. A further half a million pounds has been set aside for pumped and piped supplies. And finally, we have allocated £75,000 for water supplies for institutions, such as hospitals and secondary schools.

All the Local Government Councils were circulated in May, 1956 asking them to send in a list of the water points they needed. Some replied promptly but others were very slow and even today two replies are outstanding. This has delayed planning the scheme for it was naturally impossible to prepare estimates and so forth until we knew where we had to put the supplies. However, our plan is now ready and I am glad to be able to inform the House that it should be possible, with the money available, to provide water points, that is, wells and spring improvements, for all the places recommended by Local Government Councils.

A detailed breakdown of allocations can be found under Head 467 of the Estimates. Here I must emphasise, so that there can be no possible confusion, that we hope to provide wells and spring improvements for all the villages recommended by the Councils. I did not say we would be able to provide pumped and piped supplies for all who want them.

Pumped and piped supplies are very costly. Although we have set aside £500,000 for them it is estimated that only about 36 such supplies can be installed for that amount. Fortunately in most areas in the Region it is possible to obtain water by sinking a well or by enclosing a spring. But in the dry hilly country—the “waterless zone” we call it—you have to sink deep boreholes before water can be reached and then it must be pumped up to the surface.

We shall be allocating pumped and piped supplies on the basis of need. This, hon. Members, will agree, is the only possible criterion. Those who at present have polluted water supplies that carry disease have the greatest need. Those who have to travel far to get their water come next in order of priority.

We shall distribute these pumped and piped supplies as fairly as we can throughout the Region, but in the last resort those whose supplies are infected with disease and those who have to travel 5, 6, 7 or even more miles to fetch water, must have priority.

We have engaged extra staff for this Rural Water Supply Scheme, but I regret to say we have still been unable to recruit sufficient. There is a world-wide shortage of qualified technicians, and the salaries they can command in the world market are high. Local contractors who can sink wells would be considered for award of contracts in order to help speed up the scheme.

Sir, I turn now to Urban Water Supplies. It has been a year of great progress.

*Onitsha.*—During the year the Onitsha Scheme was 99 per cent completed at a cost of £138,000. It is now supplying 1,000,000 gallons of water per day, an increase of 80 per cent as compared with 1957.

The water is obtained from a dirty and polluted stream (River Nkissi) and after passing through a modern filtration plant and being chemically treated, it is pumped as clean and pure water into the Township. In addition there has been considerable expansion of the mains system.

*Calabar.*—The improvement scheme is well advanced and it is expected to be in operation by next June. It will supply 600,000 gallons of water per day, an increase of 70 per cent when compared with 1957.

The total cost is £58,900, of which £20,000 is required this coming year to complete the present scheme. This however, does not include extension to the distribution now requested by the Calabar U.D.C., i.e. to the districts of Ediba-Ediba, Edgeley, Efut and other places. A scheme for this is being prepared by the Public Works Department.

*Enugu.*—(Where there are complaints of water shortage) is supplied with 1,200,000 gallons per day and this is a greater supply per head of population than in any other town in Nigeria. Nevertheless, my Ministry has plans to provide an additional 400,000 gallons per day during the year 1958–59 at a

[MR AFIAH]

cost of £23,600. Plant for this extension is on order in U.K. and part of it is already delivered. The work on extension is temporarily suspended owing to a dispute with the village over the lease of the new catchment areas. If necessary, my Government will seek powers for compulsory acquisition.

I would also draw attention to the rapid development of Enugu. My Director estimates that at the present rapid rate of expansion even the augmented water supply now to be constructed will be insufficient by 1961, and he is preparing plans for a new scheme to provide 4 million gallons per day. This further scheme is not part of the present Estimates.

*Aba.*—It was expected that the new water supply scheme would be completed and in operation by the end of 1957, but due to slow progress on the part of the contractors for the construction of the new water works, this target date has not been achieved.

I have just returned from an inspection of the *Aba* Scheme and am glad to say the contractors now hope to finish in June, and then it will supply 600,000 gallons per day to the population of *Aba*, an increase of over 100 per cent as compared with 1957.

The cost of the scheme is £106,200 and the £36,500 in this year's Estimates is for the completion of the present scheme as originally planned.

The *Aba* Town Council has now asked that the scheme be extended to include the districts of *Eziukwu*, *Ndiegoro* and *Ogbor* and the Director of Public Works is now working out a scheme and estimate for this extension. The cost however, is not included in the above figures.

*Port Harcourt.*—The extremely rapid growth of *Port Harcourt*, the importance of which increases daily, has outgrown all previous forecasts of population and water requirements. It has therefore, been necessary for my Ministry to reconsider the whole of the water supply plans for this town, and a new scheme has been prepared which will provide 3,200,000 gallons of water, with provision for further extension if required to satisfy the needs of a population

of 200,000 which at present rate of growth may be reached soon after 1970.

The cost of the scheme is £373,000. At this figure it is extremely "cheap", and is less than one half the cost of similar schemes in other Regions of Nigeria and in Ghana.

Work has already commenced on the sinking of the new boreholes required for the scheme, and it is proposed to bring the two new boreholes, which are on the site of the present Waterworks, into use as soon as completed. This will provide an immediate increase of 100,000 gallons of water per day to the present supply (an increase of 25 per cent). After this however, no increase will be possible until the new waterworks at the *Air Port* and *Diobu* are constructed. My Ministry aims to complete the scheme in 1960.

I am glad to report that the Drilling Company has made excellent progress on the boreholes at *Port Harcourt*. I visited there very recently. The nine boreholes at the *Regional Store* site have been completed and tested. The first was tested for 7 days over 24 hours a day, and produced 30,000 gallons of water an hour. The quality of the water was good. I also visited the new boreholes at the *Airport* site. One has been completed and another is under construction. The contractors hope to finish the work by the end of this month, and to move to *Umuahia* next month. The same firm may well be employed to expedite the *Rural Water Supply Scheme*.

The sum included in the Estimates for 1958-59, viz: £148,000 is the amount required for the boreholes, preliminary building construction, and to allow orders to be placed in U.K. for essential plant.

*Umuahia.*—My Ministry proposes to commence work on the *Umuahia* Water Supply this financial year and the sum of £18,000 provided in the Estimates is for the construction of the essential boreholes, essential preliminary construction, and to allow plant to be ordered in U.K.

A contract for the boreholes has been placed and work will commence in May next. As soon as this is completed two boreholes will be developed using temporary plant with an

immediate increase in the supply by at least 40,000 gallons a day, i.e. 200 per cent over the present supply.

This however, is not the final scheme which will provide 280,000 gallons per day in 1960 when my Ministry expects to complete the scheme.

*Abakaliki.*—The item in the Estimates £2,700 is for the provision of new plant. Hitherto the amount of water pumped at Abakaliki has been limited by the inability of the E.C.N. to supply sufficient power or to operate a 24-hour day.

The E.C.N. now proposes to extend their supply to 24 hours per day and also to change over its supply from a Split Single Phase 460 Volts to 3 Phase 400 Volts, which is the standard supply throughout Nigeria. Unless P.W.D. Plant is changed to this new system the P.W.D. Plant will be inoperative after December, 1959. The item of £2,700 in the Estimates is therefore, essential to allow plant to be ordered and installed before that date, and so avoid closing down the supply. The immediate effect will be to provide an additional 32,000 gallons per day, which will almost double the quantity now being supplied to the Township.

In addition to the seven installations listed in the present Estimates, my Ministry proposes, when funds are available, to construct further supplies in the more important towns in the Region. This scheme will be known as the Second Urban Water Supply Scheme and preliminary planning is under consideration.

Mr Chairman, having dealt with the water side of my Ministry, the House will wish to learn that we have not been idle in the building field.

A vast building programme spread over every Province has been in hand covering the needs of every Department of Government as well as those of the Federal Government. In the latter case substantial agency fees accrue to the Revenue of this Government. Some notable buildings include the Supreme Court, Enugu; General Hospital, Brass Division; Post Offices at Ikot Ekpene, Opobo, Agbani, Awgu, Ogoni, Ahoada, Ikeduru, etc., together

with a very large quantity of both senior and junior service accommodation for all Departments of Government.

It is not always sufficiently realised that, quite half the buildings constructed by the Public Works Department, do not appear in the Estimates of my Ministry. We build for other Departments of Government.

A list of all the buildings completed during the past year would be so long that it would bore the House to listen to it. To give Members some idea of its scope I will just list the buildings completed or in hand for one Department of Government, namely, the Medical Department :—

Construction of an Out Patients Block at Calabar; a Hospital and Quarters at Ikot Ekpene; Maternity Ward at Aro Hospital; Hospitals at Opobo and Yenagoa; an Operating Theatre at Ogoja; additional wards and a new Out Patients Block in Enugu; a Regional Pathology Laboratory; a Federal Government Chemists' Laboratory in Enugu; a Training School, Operating Theatre, Ward and Laboratory at Oji River; a Rural Health Centre at Nsukka; a T.B. Clinic and New Ward at Port Harcourt; Conversions and Extensions to the General Hospital at Port Harcourt; Extensions to the Hospitals at Degema, Umuahia, Okigwi, Owerri and Aba; and Extensions to Health Visitors Training School and the Nurses Preliminary Training School at Aba.

The list is equally long for many other Departments. Some idea of the scope of the Public Works Department's activities may be gained from the fact that during the past year about 100 new Senior Service quarters were built.

Before concluding I would like to deal briefly with points raised by Members during the course of the Debates on several issues in this House.

I should like to thank the hon. Chidolue for his congratulations on the completion of the Onitsha Urban Water Supply Scheme. His remarks are greatly appreciated. He will have heard what I have had to say about speeding up the Rural Water Supply Scheme and extending it to Institutions.

*Eastern House of Assembly Debates*

943

[Appropriation Bill—

10 APRIL 1958

Committee]

944

[MR AFIAH]

The hon. H. U. Akpabio, Member for Uyo, asked about a water supply for Uyo Township. This has been included in the Second Urban Water Supply Scheme which awaits the provision of loan funds before it can be started.

I noted the opinion of Chief Agbasiere, Member for Orlu, that Rural Water Supplies are being neglected and that Government is concentrating too much on Urban Water Supplies. I hope, however, that the exposition I have given today about the Rural Water Supply Scheme will have convinced him that we have no intention of neglecting Rural Water Supplies.

The hon. G. I. Oko, Member for Awgu, mentioned that the water on the Awgu plain is infested with Guinea Worms. We are aware of that and, as he would have heard, Government is giving priority to schemes for areas that have infested water supplies at present.

I have noted the remarks of the hon. J. E. Eyo, Member for Abak. He asked that local contributions for Rural Water Supplies should be waived. These contributions were imposed because the money available was insufficient to provide water for every village in the Region. I will, however, look into his suggestion carefully.

The hon. N. L. P. Apreala, Member for Brass asked about a water supply for Yenagoa Hospital. Provision for this has been made in the 1958-59 Estimates.

The hon. E. W. Udonkim, Member for Opobo, suggested that the Qua Falls should be used by the Electricity Corporation for generating electricity to supply the Calabar Province. Investigations as to the potentials of the Qua Falls had been made by the former Government Electricity Undertaking, but it is understood that the potential consumption of the neighbouring areas is too small to justify the expense of Hydro-Electrical development involved.

The hon. G. C. Okeya, Member for Owerri Division, said Owerri Province had been allocated only 9 per cent of the Rural Water

Supply vote for construction. I think there must have been some misunderstanding there. Of the £520,700 allocated for water points (wells and spring improvements) Owerri Province has been allocated £123,400. This is nearly one-quarter of the whole allocation.

As for pumped and piped supplies, only £95,750 out of the £500,000 available has so far been allocated. When the full list of pumped and piped supplies is decided and published I think the hon. Okeya will find that Owerri's claims have not been overlooked. The hon. Okeya asked why Owerri town had not been included in the list for pumped and piped supplies. The reason is that Owerri is a town, and as such, will come under the Second Urban Water Supply Programme. The pumped and piped supplies we are now dealing with are for rural areas, and not for urban areas like Owerri.

The hon. Okeya also asked about Electricity for Owerri town. I dealt with this when his question on this topic was answered. However, consideration is being given to the general question of supply of electricity to minor towns in the Eastern Region.

Dr the hon. Obonna criticised my Ministry very severely and said rural water supplies are no longer allocated by need. As I have already explained, we propose to construct each and every water point recommended by Local Government Councils. I think that the Local Government Councils know the needs of the people and so I am content to accept their recommendations.

The hon. P. N. Okeke, Member for Onitsha, complained that Onitsha town was being compelled to contribute £22,000 to revenue for the water supply undertaking, when only £61,400 was being spent on the Onitsha Installation from Appendix C. He pointed out that Port Harcourt, for example, was only having to contribute £14,000 to revenue against an expenditure of £269,000. I can understand the hon. Okeke's concern, but I am glad to be able to put his mind at rest.

The expenditure shown under Appendix C, is only the new expenditure now going on to improve existing installations. Some towns already have fairly adequate water supplies, and therefore the expenditure required on



them is comparatively small. As I stated before during last financial year, £138,000 was spent on the Onitsha water scheme.

When it comes to deciding how much a town must contribute to revenue, all towns are treated the same. When calculating the revenue to be taken from each supply, we only ask the town to pay an amount sufficient to cover the maintenance costs, plus a contribution to the renewals fund to permit the replacement and renewal of machinery and mains, plus a contribution to a sinking fund. Each town therefore, only pays Government what it costs Government to operate that particular town's water supply.

The question of the drying up of wells was raised by two Members, the hon. Rev. Opara from Owerri and hon. Enyi of Afikpo. I have detailed some Engineers to investigate the cause or causes of this problem.

However, I wish to let hon. Members know that maintenance of wells is the responsibility of the County Councils which own them.

Winding up, Mr Chairman, I want to assure all hon. Members that as a man from the rural area, and with the co-operation of my colleagues who, in the majority, are from the rural areas, I hope to leave no stone unturned in seeing to it that the rural water supply scheme is fully implemented within the scheduled time.

I thank the staff of my Ministry for being alert to the task of implementing this scheme.

**Mr W. Abengowe (Aba Division):** Mr Chairman, I wish to say that the speech of the hon. the Minister of Works as far as I am concerned and as far as Aba Division is concerned has worsened the situation. We in Aba Division have on various occasions complained to the Minister about water problems in our rural areas. We have two water pipe engines—one at Omoba and another at Mbawsi. The engines have been out of order for a long time, and the communities concerned are suffering from lack of water supply. The Minister visited these pipes when he was on tour. He promised to see about their repair, but until now, nothing has been done. In his speech, the Minister did not mention the situations at Omoba and Mbawsi to my disappointment. May I also say, Sir, that

I see here in the Estimates, with regards to Aba water installation the sum of £36,500. I do not know how far this will be able to cope with the teeming population of Aba Urban District Council area. There can be no economy in water; there can be economy in other forms of social services but not in water.

We have Corporations and various Industries coming into Aba and these have increased considerably the population of Aba township. I want to say, Sir, that the number of points mentioned by the Minister will certainly not be enough for the growing population.

In conclusion, may I inform the Minister of Works that the rural areas of Aba Division are suffering from acute shortage of water supply. This is one of the necessities and amenities that the rural areas of this Region need urgently. May I plead with the Minister to (a) cause the water engines at Omoba and Mbawsi to be repaired without further delay; (b) provide more money to the rural areas of Aba Division for improving the water supply system in the various communities; and (c) to provide more water points and larger quantity of water for Aba township and the urban areas around the township.

**Mr R. O. Ukuta, M.B.E. (Nsukka Division):**

I only want to point out to the Minister of Works about Nsukka Township Water Supply. This work has been hanging almost for over six months now, and they use obsolete pipes made of asbestos that the volume of water burst these asbestos every day and they could not be able to supply the people of Nsukka with water. We do appreciate the work they are doing; but how long is this work going to take? Sometimes when they order pipes from Port Harcourt—the wrong pipes will be sent to Nsukka and the Inspector there will say that this is not the type and it will take a very long time to get new ones.

I have to warn this Ministry that the announcement of a programme of work and its implementation take much time and the people are hoping against hope each time. Let there be more grease to the elbow of the Ministry of Works and let us get the Nsukka township water earlier.

**Rev. M. D. Opara (Owerri Division):** Mr Chairman, Sir, I would like to correct

[REV. OPARA]

one thing said by the Minister. Looking at Head 467 while he was speaking he said that Owerri Province out of the half million pounds for Rural Water Supply has £123,000. Looking at this Head under Owerri Province, Sir, you will find £32,000 and not £123,000. He was replying to what was said by an hon. Member from Owerri. If you look under Owerri Division, for rural water supply the two Counties—Mbaise and Owerri—have only £8,000 and if you look at Nsukka township, you will see that Nsukka has £8,750—that is one town having more than a Division.

Sir, the Member for Nsukka is complaining of very bad asbestos pipes. We would like to have such pipes in Owerri instead of having none. (*Laughter*). Even Nsukka people who have been favoured still complain of what they have. We who do not have would like to have what they do not want. When the Minister was speaking, he did not mention some of the pumped water installations in Owerri Division which are not functioning. I thought he would make mention of his plans to rebuild or improve them.

He said also that Owerri township is a small township. I am not sure, Sir, that Nsukka or Ikom or Abakaliki has larger population than Owerri! He should not say that because Owerri is a small place, therefore, it should not enjoy the amenities enjoyed by other townships. The population is more than 10,000 and if water pump is being installed in other urban areas we should also have a share in what is given to other places. Mr Chairman, we of the Owerri Division always complain of water and the best the Ministry of Works can do for Owerri Division at the moment is to give us water, and if possible to come and see the different areas we complain of. He was mentioning places where people go six or seven miles to fetch water but I am telling him that there will be places where you travel for about twenty miles and there is no water; even the wells or boreholes dug in those areas have no good water and some of them go dry. We believe that he will come to our aid and help us about water.

**Chief G. N. Agbasiere (Orlu Division):** Mr Chairman, last year the Minister of Works came and told us that if each village or community should deposit £1,500 Government

would contribute equivalent amount to provide them a borehole. After his announcement we found that Government was not prepared to provide the rural areas with good water supply. Let me take as an example: if a village could contribute £1,500 to the cost of a borehole why then should it not be able to provide or make available good source of water supply for its clan. In some villages and families we sometimes see young people digging holes with the hand and I think at least many boreholes will provide sufficient water for a village or family all the year round. Why should not the Government distribute this amount to each village or Division and let each Province have water supply for its own people. Of course, I agree with hon. Ukuta that boreholes cannot help us at all. There are one or two at Orlu but still they do not provide sufficient water for the people. The people are always complaining that after two or three months the boreholes go bad and they ask other people to come and repair them. Why does Government not think well? Government could distribute the money to the people. If, for instance Orlu could get about £2,900, the approximate share of each Division by my calculation, let Government allow Provinces and we will arrange for good water supply for ourselves. In some villages sources of water are about seven miles away and you see women carrying their pails and water pots to fetch water from these very far places which must be done on foot in not less than three to four hours. Women travel about seven miles to fetch water with the result that they grow very thin. For example, I travel about ten miles to Oguta to fetch water from where my house is. I therefore, appeal to the Government, Sir, to make adequate provision for the supply of water to rural areas. Without that, rural areas are not going to have water in this world or in the world to come. (*Laughter*).

**Mr Ikoku:** Mr Chairman, in speaking to this debate I am anxious to get certain information from the Ministry of Works. I will like to know, Sir, what is being done to safeguard workers particularly daily paid workers who are under the employ of the foreign contracting firms. I will like to know secondly, Sir, what is being done to give Nigerian contractors a fair share of contracts being awarded through the Ministry. Thirdly, I would also like to know what is being done

to enable the Nigerian contractors to get a higher percentage of contracts given out than at present. I will like to point out, Sir, that I am aware of the fact that all the contracts are awarded by the Tenders Board which technically is under the Ministry of Finance, but most of these contractors have to work through the Ministry of Works and as far as I can digest the complaints, there seems to be faults.

Firstly, the workers under these foreign contracting firms complain of insecurity of employment. It is true they are still subject to a lot of frustration, but the complaint is that they are not being given what should be their share of wages by these contracting firms.

The second complaint is that there is a growing tendency for the non-Nigerian firm of contractors to monopolise the contracts.

Thirdly, Sir, there is a fear that the method of awarding contracts is such that it favours just a handful of contractors because the work available is not spread over all the contractors. I will like to point out, Sir, that we on this Side of the House would like to know what the Minister and his Ministry plan to do because the building business is a very important one and my own rough Estimate is that something like 100,000 people derive their livelihood from that job and proper handling of the industry is certainly going to help a lot as regards provision of adequate employment for a good deal of the labour force in the Region.

It is also true that a good deal of money gets into the hands of these contracting firms and while we are very busy to Nigerianise here and yonder, I do not think it will be a very wise policy for the Government to continue without applying breaks at the appropriate moment but continue giving away all the contracts to expatriate firms. Here I must add that some of our Nigerian contracting firms are not efficient. That is quite true but I think it is the duty of the Minister to make sure that they drop the inefficient ones and those who still remain on the list should be given a very fair share of the contracts awarded. There is the suggestion, Sir, that selective system of awarding contracts should cease and what we would like now is to divide the various contracting firms into category depending on their ability to perform the job and that

the firms of contractors in a particular category should be invited to tender for job within that category. It is not enough to invite a handful of them—invite all of them. For example, if we say £0 to £10,000 should be the lowest category and that 50 contractors should register under that category, all the 50 contractors should be invited to tender for the job and not just the question of a handful of them being invited. There is a feeling that because of the system of examining these tenders before the Tenders Board actually meet, there is a great deal of “bend bend” business.

**The Chairman:** Order! Order! What do you mean by that?

**Mr Ikoku:** There is a good deal of “bend bend” business (*Laughter*) and not altogether a fair way of getting things done. In other words, there is a possibility of favouritism. In other words, the envelopes containing the contracts are opened before the Tenders’ Board actually meet. Now, it is possible then that by the argument being used by these contractors, it is possible for the information so elicited to be communicated to a few contractors who happen to be wealthy and their suggestion is that these contracts should not be opened at all until the Tenders’ Board actually meet. There is a complaint, Sir, that while the Government is doing all in its power to be fair, to both Expatriate and Nigerian contractors, Expatriate firms who want to give out buildings on contracts tend to be very parochial.

**An hon. Member:** Blood is thicker than water in this business and they support their own expatriate friends.

**Mr Ikoku:** It is true that blood is thicker than water but the blood of our Ministers is our own blood, not that of expatriate friends. So they cannot have it both ways. If they want to apply the term that blood is thicker than water, and therefore expatriate firms should take all the contracts from their expatriate commercial firms, then we have the right to demand from our Government that all our contracts be reserved for us. (*Hear! Hear!*). But it would not be sensible to demand them. To begin with, Sir, we have not got all the skill to perform these things and that is why we think that the best thing for the Government to do is to try and take many of these

[MR IKOKU]

firms into confidence and then sit down and talk it over. It is something which cannot be achieved by way of legislation or by unnecessary accusation—something that can only be ironed out by a series of interviews and discussions.

My last point, Sir, is that it is the duty of our Government to help our indigenous contracting firms to compete more favourably with those building businesses and I think a firm of contractors have suggested that the P.W.D., Ministry of Works, should go to the trouble of assembling plant for building and should be in a position to hire them out to our contractors. I think this is something which should be looked into. In other more advanced countries such steps are taken. The Government actually purchases the heavy equipment and keep them, make them available to contracting firms on a hire basis because these firms just have not got the capital to sink into the expensive equipment. This matter has to be looked into and in fact if we have to discuss this argument of blood being thicker than water, I think, two factors contribute to the supremacy of expatriate firms. The first factor is that they have got the cash and they can always fall back on the banks and draw the money. The second is that because they have the money, they can assemble expensive equipment to do their work, and to bring out the qualified people.

My advice to the Minister is not to rush into any decision but it is more important at this stage that he should buttress his plan and his ideas through regular consultations with both the expatriate and the Nigerian contractors, so that this constant exchange of ideas will help him to find out ways and means of helping both sides to benefit in the whole Region.

**Mr Kiri:** Mr Chairman, in associating myself with the views expressed by the Leader of the Opposition, I wish to draw the attention of this House to realise that we cannot build the Eastern Region up in one day. This Region has got to be built by the labour and efforts of Nigerians resident in the Eastern Region. It is most unfair to say that our contractors could not compete favourably with the expatriate contractors without considering the odds against local contractors. Yes, they

have not the capital. Once you give them the capital, they could recruit experts who will do the job. I refer you to one Mr Oni in the West. His workshop is just as big as any P.W.D. workshop. The Western Government I think, through one way or the other aided Mr Oni to recruit experts so that today he could compete favourably with any expatriate firms in this country.

I am suggesting to the Minister that he should do all he could to encourage local contractors because there are at least two advantages we have in building up and employing local contractors. By employing local contractors Government provide contractors the opportunity to develop the "know-how" which is the hardest thing in the field of business. Once local men can organise themselves, once they have the capital they will be able to recruit experts anywhere in the world to do the job.

To discriminate against these contractors indiscriminately under the pretext that they are not equally qualified as capitalised expatriates is to say that we are not as yet capable to rule ourselves, because we are not as good as more advanced countries in the art of government. (*Shouts of No, no.*) We are learning from Britain because that is a more advanced country in the art of government. Let the Government improve our contractors by helping them to organise and to make loans available to them to procure capital goods and enough money for the recruitment of expatriates anywhere in the world to do the job. Qualified men and women even if they are Nigerians would not receive a lower salary structure because they are being recruited by a Nigerian firm. I can refer you to Mr L. P. Ojukwu who is running a very successful business; he is having qualified expatriates and local people because he can afford to pay them. He can compete favourably with his expatriate counterparts because he has the capital. The idea that because one is an expatriate, one is automatically superior to the indigenous contractor is what I disagree with. I call the attention of the Minister of Works to the urgent matter of rural water supply and the need for water in the whole Region. May I request the hon. Minister to please remember that when he was in the Elementary School, he was taught (like anyone of us) that there are four necessities of life. First and foremost, air, then water, food and shelter.

The hon. Minister of Works has been so fortunate to provide, at least, one of these essentials, and that is water. The hon. Minister should give water to areas having infested water supply first and next in the order of need are areas surrounded by sea water, e.g. creek islands. How does the hon. Minister expect people to have fresh water in a land surrounded by salt water? His first attention should have been there. It is because the hon. Minister is ignorant of such areas that he could not imagine that salt water areas should have priority claim to places where one has to trek miles away to get fresh water. I am calling upon the hon. Minister to please tour the Rivers areas and see things for himself. May I call the attention of the hon. Minister that the whole of Degema Division like the other inland places he mentioned are all urban areas—Bonny qualifies for urban, Buguma is urban, Abonnema is urban, and yet no action has been taken to provide these places with good water. Mr Chairman, Sir, I am appealing to the hon. Minister that to do his work well he is not to sit in his office all the time but to tour the Region and witness the needs of the people in person.

**Mr C. A. Abangwu (Nsukka Division):**

I want to say a few words about rural water supplies in respect of Nsukka Division. Some Members have spoken especially the Member for Owerri who seemed to have said that a lot of money is provided for water supplies for Nsukka Division. I would agree with that. That was so this year but if you look into the Estimates for the previous years you will find that it has never been so. One of the hon. Members from Nsukka Division has spoken about the present borehole water supply in Nsukka township. I would mention a few other projects for the towns of Oroko, Eha Alumona and Ohodo. These are very large towns with very large populations for which provision has been made in this year's estimates. I would only draw the attention of the Minister to this; that these towns have been made aware that Government had been good enough to provide these large amounts of money for rural water supplies for them and each time we meet them the next question is: when is the water going to be provided? I am very glad that I have understood that the Ministry of Works is going to start soon with these projects. I would mention that Nsukka County Council had already provided the sum

of over £5,000 which had been contributed as our own quota for the supply of this water. I am asking the Government therefore, to expedite action with the firm that had been awarded this contract as early as possible so that thousands of people who are suffering for lack of water supply may get it this year.

I hope that before we come back next year for the Budget Session we should have to thank the Government for having provided water supplies for these three towns.

*Question, That the sum of £104,170 for Head 462—Ministry of Works—stand part of the Schedule—put and agreed to.*

**HEAD 463—PUBLIC WORKS**

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £373,380 for Head 463—Public Works—stand part of the Schedule.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**HEAD 464—PUBLIC WORKS  
EXTRAORDINARY**

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £117,140 for Head 464—Public Works Extraordinary—stand part of the Schedule.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**HEAD 465—PUBLIC WORKS  
RECURRENT:  
MAINTENANCE SERVICES**

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £39,240 for Head 465—Public Works Recurrent: Maintenance Services—stand part of the Schedule*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**HEAD 466—PUBLIC WORKS  
RECURRENT:  
MAINTENANCE WORKS**

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £162,430 for Head 466—Public Works Recurrent: Maintenance Works—stand part of the Schedule.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**HEAD 467—RURAL WATER SUPPLIES**

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £469,970 for Head 467—Rural Water Supplies—stand part of the Schedule.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Committee report Progress: to sit again Tomorrow.*

(2) The Public Lands Acquisition (Amendment) Bill—Second Reading. *Further deferred until Tomorrow.*

**ADJOURNMENT**

**The Minister of Production (Dr M. I. Okpara):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until tomorrow at 9 a.m. May I remind members of the Committee of Selection that there will be a meeting immediately after the adjournment in the Committee Room.

**The Minister of Transport (Mr P. O. Ururuka):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Adjourned, accordingly, at ten minutes past 2 o'clock p.m.*

EASTERN HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Friday, 11th April, 1958

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

PRAYERS

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

BILLS PRESENTED

(1) University of Nigeria  
(Provisional Council)

Bill to provide for the establishment of a Provisional Council to be known as the Provisional Council of the University of Nigeria and for matters ancillary thereto; presented by the Premier; read the First time; to be read a Second time today.

(2) Peace Preservation

Bill to provide for the preservation of public peace in any area of the Region, presented by the Premier; read the First time; to be read a Second time today.

(3) Commissions

Bill to make inadmissible in a Commission of Inquiry such evidence as is not admissible in a court of law and, secondly, to make it an offence for a person who is present at a Commission as a witness to refuse to take an oath legally administered or to produce a document legally required by the Commissioners or to answer a question which he can legally answer, presented by the Premier; read the First time; to be read a Second time today.

(4) Public Service

Bill to provide for the salaries and allowances of the Chairman and other members of the Public Service Commission and to charge such salaries and allowances on the Consolidated Revenue Fund, presented by the Premier; read the First time, to be read a Second time today.

(5) Public Prosecutions

Bill to provide that the salary and allowances of the Director of Public Prosecutions are charged in the Consolidated Revenue

Fund of the Region, presented by the Minister of Justice; read the First time; to be read a Second time today.

(6) Pharmaceutical Corporation

Bill to provide for the winding-up of the Pharmaceutical Corporation; presented by the Minister of Commerce; read the First time; to be read a Second time today.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

(1) Hours of Sitting of the House

**The Minister of Production (Dr M. I. Okpara):** Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the Resolution of this House relating to the Hours of Sitting and bearing date the 12th of March, 1958, be revoked. This is the first of several motions designed to allow us to complete the business of the meeting today.

**The Minister of Transport (Mr P. O. Ururuka):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

Resolved: That the Resolution of this House relating to the Hours of Sitting and bearing date the 12th of March, 1958, be revoked.

(2) Exemption from Standing Order

**The Minister of Production (Dr M. I. Okpara):** Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the proceedings of the House at Today's sitting be exempted from the provisions of paragraph (3) of Standing Order 4—Sittings of the House.

**Mr Speaker:** In what manner do you really want it to be exempted?

**Dr Okpara:** It is proposed, Sir, that we should sit from 9 a.m. till 1 p.m. and break until 3 p.m. and sit from 3 p.m. till 6 p.m. and resume again at 9 p.m. and continue if possible till the next day when the business is over.

**The Minister of Transport (Mr P. O. Ururuka):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

Resolved: That the proceedings of today's sitting be exempted from the provisions of paragraph (3) of Standing Order 4—Sittings of the House.

### (3) Adjournment Sine Die

**The Minister of Production (Dr M. I. Okpara):** Mr Speaker, I beg to move that at its rising today this House do adjourn *sine die*.

**The Minister of Transport (Mr P. O. Ururuka):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

Resolved: That at its rising today this House do adjourn *sine die*.

### (4) Warrant to meet Expenditure

**Mr Speaker:** I gather there is some difficulty about meeting the financial demands of Members of this House in relation to their expenses. As you are aware, until the Estimates are approved and the Warrant signed by His Excellency, nobody is authorised to or can possibly get money from the Funds. A method has been devised to enable the Minister in-charge to sign a Special Warrant which will enable some money to be drawn and if possible enable Members to get something out of it. The Minister in-charge will move in the usual way, asking for the authority of this House to sign a Special Warrant.

Does anybody object to this ?

**Hon. Members:** No.

(With the consent of the Speaker and the general concurrence of the House, Notice was dispensed with pursuant to Standing Order 23 to enable the Minister of Finance to move the following Motion on Warrant to meet Expenditure).

**The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke):** Mr Speaker, I rise to move that this House authorises the Minister of Finance to issue a Warrant to meet expenditure not exceeding

£1,200 in accordance with section 77 (2) of the Nigeria (Constitution) (Amendment) Order in Council, 1958. The object of this Motion is already explained by you, Sir, and I hope Members will be grateful.

**The Minister of Transport (Mr P. O. Ururuka):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

Resolved: That this House authorises the Minister of Finance to issue a Warrant to meet expenditure not exceeding £1,200 in accordance with section 77 (2) of the Nigeria (Constitution) (Amendment) Order in Council, 1958.

## SPECIAL COMMITTEES

**The Minister of Production (Dr M. I. Okpara):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the following be Members of the various Committees of the House.

### (i) Standing Orders Committee:

Mr Speaker (*Chairman*).  
Mr Okoi Arikpo.  
Mr J. A. Etuhube.  
Mr C. A. Abangwu.  
Mr M. E. Ogon.

### (ii) House Committee:

The Minister of Welfare (*Chairman*).  
Chief I. I. Morphy.  
Mr O. B. Nalelo.  
Chief G. N. Agbasiere.  
Mr V. K. Onyeri.  
Mr S. N. Alo.  
Mr J. O. Okeh.

### (iii) Committee of Privileges:

The Minister of Town Planning (*Chairman*).  
Professor Eyo Ita.  
Mr O. B. Nalelo.  
Rev. O. Efiang, C.B.E.  
Mr S. O. Achara.  
Mr K. Kiri.  
Mr O. Oketa.  
Mr M. C. Awgu.  
Mr P. U. Amaefunah.



(iv) **Public Petitions Committee:**

The Minister of Health (*Chairman*).

Chief I. I. Morphy.

Mr S. J. Amachree.

Dr A. N. Obonna.

Mr D. E. Akilo.

Mr O. C. Manu.

Mr J. O. Okeh.

(v) **Statutory Corporations**

**Committee:**

The Minister of Commerce (*Chairman*).

Mr Okoi Arikpo.

Mr A. J. Ekpe.

Mr G. C. Okeya.

Mr O. Oketa.

Rev. M. D. Opara.

Mr P. A. Onwe.

(vi) **Public Accounts Committee:**

Chairman (to be nominated by Mr Speaker).

**Mr Speaker:** I nominate Mr A. J. Ekpe.

**Dr Okpara:**

Mr M. U. Etuk.

Mr M. N. Yowika.

Mr J. W. E. Anaba.

Mr S. E. K. Iwueke.

Mr M. N. Onwuma.

(vii) **Standing Committee on Finance:**

The Minister of Finance (*Chairman*).

Mr A. G. Umoh.

Mr J. A. Agba.

Mr R. O. Ukuta, M.B.E.

Mr K. J. N. Okpokam.

Mr G. I. Oko, M.B.E.

Mr P. N. Okeke.

Mr N. O. Onwudiwe.

Mr J. M. Ito.

On the advice of the hon. the Attorney-General, it was agreed to make nominations to the Finance Committee in accordance with the existing Standing Orders, whether or not it would eventually exercise its functions.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Local Government (Chief A. N. Onyiuke):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**ORDER OF THE DAY**

**(1) The 1958-59 Eastern Region Appropriation Bill**

(Third Allotted Day)

*Considered in Committee of Supply (Progress 10th April).*

**HEAD 426—HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £68,520 for Head 426—House of Assembly—stand part of the Schedule.*

**Sub-head 2—Motor Basic Allowances**

**The Premier (Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe):** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to increase Sub-head 2 by £420. I might say at this stage that I intend moving other Motions to increase Sub-heads 3, 10, 13 and 15 and so I owe this Committee an explanation. When the Draft Estimates were being prepared, Government had not at that time taken any decision on the privileges and allowances to be enjoyed by the Government Chief Whip. Recently, however, a decision was taken that the Government Chief Whip should receive the same scale of allowances and privileges as those enjoyed by Parliamentary Secretaries. Provision must therefore be made for the allowances of the Chief Whip and I put this amount under the Sub-head which I shall move to be amended. For the information of the House, it is a fact to say that it is the practice elsewhere that the Government Chief Whip should be entitled to some of these allowances. In some places the allowances are based on what the Ministers receive but judging his affairs, the allowances should be based on what the Parliamentary Secretaries receive.

Sir, I beg to move.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr E. O. Eyo (Uyo Division):** I rise to support the amendment. I wonder whether I could put in a claim for arrears from January, 1954 to April, 1956 being the period I served as Government Chief Whip.

*Question put and agreed to.*

### Sub-head 3—Local Transport and Travelling

**The Premier:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to increase Sub-head 3 by £450.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

### Sub-head 10—Up-keep of Speaker's House and Grounds

**The Premier:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to insert after "Speaker's" the words "and Government Chief Whip's" and to increase the Sub-head by £70.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

### Sub-head 13—Hospitality Allowance

**The Premier:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to increase Sub-head 13 by £60.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

### Sub-head 15—Soft Furnishings for the Speaker's House

**The Premier:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to insert after "Speaker's" the words "and Government Chief Whip's" and to increase the Sub-head by £50.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Question proposed, That an increased sum of £69,570 for Head 426—House of Assembly—be inserted in the Schedule.*

**Mr S. G. Ikoku (Enyong Division):** Mr Chairman, Sir, we would like to draw attention to one or two points under this Head—House of Assembly. First, Sir, is the question of the production of the *Hansard* in this House. I think the matter causes Members of this House a good deal of headache, and we hope, that very special attention would be paid to

this aspect of the work of the House of Assembly. I do not pretend to know all the intricate problems connected with the production of the *Hansard*, but I think the question of staffing is most important. We need an experienced and capable Editor; and we need to have experienced and efficient stenographers and Verbatim Reporters. No doubt, if encouragement was given to our people, there could be more efficient, but the position right now is one which causes Members a good deal of inconvenience. I am quite sure many Members will agree that they find it very difficult to correct their speeches, and we do not mean by this criticism to run down the Verbatim Reporters. We only hope that steps will be taken to render them more efficient in their work. You realise that we are given six days within which to correct our speeches and hand back, but, to be honest about it, some of us find it impossible to correct our speeches within six days because you just have to keep thinking and thinking whether what you actually said is what you now see on paper. There is a very great temptation to rewrite whole paragraphs, and I do not think that is very helpful in the work of this House. So I am suggesting, Sir, that Government, or rather the Premier, should not spare money at all in giving us very efficient Stenographers as Verbatim Reporters in this House.

My second point is to congratulate the Government for including Sub-head 16—Air conditioning of the House. I think every Member will be very happy to come back here and find that this House is air-conditioned. I must confess, Sir, that the heat is getting too much. While congratulating the Government about this I think this is a convenient stage to let the Government know that they should begin now to think in terms of a new House of Assembly. They may not be in a position to vote money for it in the next year or two, but I think they should begin to think in terms of a new House. This thing we have here cannot continue much longer. I must say, Sir, that when it was built it was the best in the country but now times have changed and I think we are lagging behind. The whole idea is not to compete with other Regions but to have a real House of Assembly—something worthy of the name. All these alterations and breaking down wings to provide room for new galleries will not do. The

whole thing is a patch-up and it can be described as an old garment which should be discarded and a new one bought.

I want to draw attention to the need for the training of some of the officers of this hon. House in Parliamentary proceeding. The former Government Chief Whip benefited from such a course and we have succeeded in taking him. (*Laughter*). I think the Leader of the House also benefited from such a course but there are other officers in this House who should have the opportunity of undertaking these courses in order to raise the standard of performance in this House.

**Hon. Members:** Name the order!

**Mr Ikoku:** All Members cannot go on these courses. I think it is the official whose duty it is to guide the House who should have priority. (*Interruptions*). What is the point in having a Chief Whip who cannot give the necessary guidance to his back-benchers? I do not think the hon. Doctor is serious in suggesting that we should ballot for these courses. I think the officials of the House should have it first.

The other point, Sir, is a tickling one but I will take the risk of raising it. I have discussed it with other Members of this House, the Leader of the House and the hon. Premier. It is the problem that faces hon. Members as regards their vehicles. They are given £1,000 advance to purchase vehicles for which they have to pay interest. Almost every Member here, without exception, has bills with the various companies which they cannot pay. Something has to be done about it. Members are being called upon to discharge certain duties in their constituencies and if this House is to continue to reflect the majority opinion of the Region, Members should be encouraged to do more extensive touring of their constituencies. No Member who knows that he will have to face a heavy bill each time he goes on tour will undertake any touring. I am saying, Sir, that something ought to be done about it. I am not, however, suggesting that hon. Members should be given conditions similar to those enjoyed in the Civil Service. But look at our Friends on the other side! They have basic allowances for their cars.

**Hon. Members:** Who are those?

**Mr Ikoku:** Those Ministers opposite! (*Laughter*). They have basic for their cars and if I am not wrong they draw double basic for these vehicles. They do not use their private cars for they also have Ministerial cars. I am not for any one moment suggesting that their privileges should be curtailed nor am I saying, Sir, that all hon. Members should be paid basic with which to repay their advances. All we are asking for is the consolidated allowance. I would like to add, Sir, for those who are very fond of making comparison, that this is the position in the Federation. I think the figure is £140 or £160 consolidated motor allowance in the Federal House. Of course it is quite easy for people to jump up and say "the hon. Members want to take away the money". But it is a question of being able to discharge our functions. What is the point in pretending that you are representing a constituency when, in fact, the only time they see you in the constituency is during the election campaign. After the election you just go away, you sit down and you do absolutely nothing. I would like to add this as regards mileage which we draw at the rate of 1s per mile. It must be quite clear to everybody, because there are certain sections of the population who think that each time you travel out you are paid 1s a mile. We only draw it when we come to the meeting for this House and on no other occasion. I would like to point out that even here other Regions are better off. In the Federation they get, I think, 1s 3d a mile. In the Northern Region, 1s 3d a mile. We are not asking for 1s 3d a mile. We are satisfied with our 1s. But what we are saying is that it is high time Government considered the payment of consolidated allowance, maintenance allowance to Members of this House.

My next point, Sir, is the question of the House of Chiefs. It is rather unfortunate that no provision has been made and of course we are in a position to know that no such provision could be made. It is only to be regretted that the Premier did promise the Region that the House of Chiefs would be set up early this year, but that has not been done. We know that the constitution amendment does not allow for it. But my point is this: the necessary preliminary work has not yet been undertaken, and we would like this preliminary work to be undertaken soon. After all, the Resumed Conference will be

[MR IKOKU]

sometime in September or October and we would like to write in a House of Chiefs into our new Constitution. We do not want to procrastinate any longer on this issue. I am calling upon the Premier to get his Committee going as quickly as possible so that this matter could be gone into and so that we could go to the Resumed Conference and say that we have agreed on this and have it written in the Constitution. There is no point, Sir, in the delegates from the Eastern Region going up to the Resumed Conference to argue on provisions for a House of Chiefs. Other Regions usually agree among themselves and just go to the conference with settled views, and I think it is about time we copied them. In any case this House should have an opportunity of debating the principles for the classification and codification of chiefs, and I will like to make it quite clear that it is not our intention on this side of the House to make Chiefs some sort of potentates. We regard them as spokesmen of our tradition and I think a word of advice here is useful. Many people must realise that traditions are not things which are absolute and immutable. As Lord Hailsham put it:

“Traditions are mere lamp posts. The wise men use them to find their way. It is only drunkards who hang on them for support”.

So we must be quite clear what we are doing with this House of Chiefs and I think the hon. Premier should give this House an opportunity to debate the principles involved before the Resumed Conference.

The last contribution, Sir, is about Sub-head 17. I notice, Sir, up to recently, our Clerk of the House has been graded on the same scale with Permanent Secretaries—Group 7; and now there has been some reshuffling and the Permanent Secretaries are going up to Group 5. But I notice that he is still down here in Group 7. I think this Legislature is sufficiently important to the Region to occupy and enjoy the status of a full Ministry by itself and I think we too must have a sense of pride. Our own Permanent Secretary should not be inferior to other Permanent Secretaries.

**Mr N. L. P. Apreala (Brass Division):** I am in support of almost all the points raised by the Leader of the Opposition. It is a very happy relationship for a Member of the House

to be in regular touch with his own constituency. We as Members find it very difficult to tour our Divisions very regularly. I feel, Sir, that lots of misunderstanding in the different Divisions are arising as a result of hon. Members not travelling to visit them regularly and to educate them about the deliberations in this House which are essential to them. We come here to pass Laws and Bills. These Laws and Bills are very very important to the people, but the mere fact that we find it very costly to tour and tell them about what is done in the House, they remain uninformed. In some places the people do not have access to newspapers or radio news or even the *Hansards* of the House. In so many cases they find it difficult to understand what we are doing. One or two people in my Division told me that we come here to make laws privately (unknown to them) and hand them to the police to prosecute them. If anything could be done by the Government to encourage Members of the House to travel regularly I think it will do a lot of good to ourselves and even to the Government in the way of educating the masses.

Another thing I would like to add is that all along in the past except from 1952, hon. Members of the Rivers area were allowed the use of launches occasionally. This was an opportunity given to them to travel once or twice in the year and they go round. This is done because travelling by the creek and rivers areas is more costly. For purposes of comparison, one could come from Onitsha to Enugu at a cost of only four shillings for 67 miles by the lorry or bus. But if you happen to travel sixty-seven miles in the Rivers area I am sure you will spend nothing less than £20 in buying petrol or some other means of travelling; not only the four shillings with which one could easily join a lorry and then come to Enugu. I therefore feel, Sir, that Government should consider this appeal seriously and give the same then existing opportunity offered to the Members of the Rivers area. I repeat they were provided with launches occasionally to tour the Division.

In conclusion, some sort of consideration should be given to some of the workers in this House (the House of Assembly). I do not mean very much the high officials in this House or the senior men but men in the junior rank—just as an example the Serjeant-at-Arms. If you look round, Sir, in the whole Federation,

for example, the Serjeant-at-Arms in the Western Government earns about £500 per annum or more and it is his assistant that earns £200 per annum. But here we have a Serjeant-at-Arms who is a figure of attraction. His personality is imposing and a blessing to this House. If you look at his uniform and the carpet on the floor they are identical. (*Laughter*). Lastly, Sir, you wish to hear him. Many of us are sometimes taken unaware when we are sitting revising or looking over, perhaps, what we want to say in the morning, he comes near the door and announces the Speaker in his roaring voice; then everybody is put on the alert. Mr Speaker, that makes your entry to the House noticeable and dignifying. I therefore suggest, Sir, that if other Governments would be paying their Serjeant-at-Arms £500 and more, there is no reason why we should not pay an encouraging amount, at least £360 or £400 per annum.

**Hon. Members:** That is not enough. More—£600.

**Mr Apreala:** With these, Sir, I conclude.

**Mr M. E. Ogon (Ikrom Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I just wanted to agree with the suggestion for building a new House and I want to congratulate the Leader of the Opposition for it seems to me he is abandoning the idea of a C.O.R. State. I think that we really need an enlarged House so that we shall have to give effect to the White Paper. But, Sir, the other reason is that an enlarged House will make room for the offices of the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the House.

Sir, I am also grateful that this question of Members' Consolidated Allowances has been raised. I think, Sir, we should take the question of Members' salaries, Ministers' salaries and allowances and our allowances out of politics. For that reason, Sir, I have had considerable pressure from the Black-benchers that I should rise on their behalf to support the Motion.

I want to say also that I join to pay tribute to the work done by the Clerk of the House, but at this time, Sir, I think we have gone to a stage of development when we will not only get one Clerk Assistant of the House. If you notice, I think we ought to have at least two Clerks Assistant of the House, and preferably,

Sir, one of them should be a lawyer to understudy the present holder of Clerk of the House. I think, Sir, it will be a pity if we allow him at a further stage to retire without passing on his experience to a younger man.

I want to support what the Deputy Whip said about the Serjeant-at-Arms. We should not do anything that will reduce the dignity of the Eastern House. It is known that the standard of debate in the Eastern House is leading throughout the whole country and if that is so, in having officials, we should do everything to see that our staff here do not suffer anything that will look below their dignity.

I know, Sir, that this is a very tricky question but I do not want to look up when I say something about it. If we are going to raise the post of Clerk of the House to the post of Permanent Secretary Group 5, so also should we raise our Speaker.

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

**The Premier:** Mr Speaker, I rise to make a few remarks on the points raised by the previous speakers and to thank my hon. Friend opposite for his observations in connection with the activities of this House. I assure him that the Government has taken a serious notice of the need to have an experienced Parliamentary Journalist to edit our *Hansard* and arrangements are now in hand for an experienced and an efficient Editor to be seconded to us. He was highly recommended by the Federal Government and we hope that in the immediate future he will arrive and assume duties and I am quite sure that some of the fears expressed by my hon. Friend will be a thing of the past by then.

On the question of Verbatim Reporters, we are finding ways and means of ensuring efficient production of the speeches of the Members and I do hope too that Members would realise that proper pronunciation is also important to enable our Verbatim Reporters to follow them intelligently (*Laughter*).

On the question of a new House of Assembly I am very glad that the hon. the Leader of the Opposition has made the suggestion. It would appear as if the proposals in the White Paper are already being implemented. It would also appear as if the sign on the wall shows that the C.O.R. State might... (*Interruptions*). However, I would like to

[THE PREMIER]

assure my Friends Opposite that whether we are going to have a C.O.R. State or not, and whether we are implementing the proposals in the White Paper or not, the suggestion for a new House will be borne in mind.

We on this side of the House—the Government Bench—have been shocked at the unanimity of both ways. I have waited throughout the sitting of this House of the Budget Session for one word to come from the Opposition praising the Government Bench for the cut of 10 per cent, and I waited too for one word to come either from the Opposition Bench or from the Back Bench, suggesting a 10 per cent or 5 per cent cut in the salaries of Members of this House. We are quite familiar with public opinion. The trend of public opinion is that we are trustees and it is a life of labour. We are working in order to serve our country . . . (*Hear! Hear!*). Especially when the Opposition came to this House during the Second reading of the Appropriation Bill and even suggested that this Region is on the verge of financial bankruptcy. However, we appreciate the fact that our hon. Members have been doing a lot to serve their constituencies and we are happy that they want to get nearer to the electorate so that they will know what is happening, and we do hope that they will also assist in interpreting to them correctly, Government Policy.

In view of the unanimity of the suggestion to re-consider this question of consolidated allowances to Members, Government will give it due consideration and an announcement will be made shortly. (*Hear! Hear!*). In regard to the points raised by my hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition regarding the emolument of the Clerk of the House, and by the Government Whip, regarding the Serjeant-at-Arms and other officials of this House, we do hope that when we present the Supplementary Budget, whatever is our decision will be reflected therein.

Finally, I assure the Leader of the Opposition that we are putting in hand the matter of the House of Chiefs as pointed out by His Excellency in His Speech From The Throne, and also we are almost ready to present our memorandum on the proposition so that the two sides could compare notes with His Excellency and as soon as possible come to a

decision to be reflected in the Constitution. It is not necessary for us to wait until September for the Resumed Conference to discuss it with the understanding that as soon as we all agree, we will ask the Secretary of State to ask Her Majesty-in-Council to amend the Constitution.

I think this answers most of the points raised and I am grateful to everybody for the way they have made Government to appreciate that they require the reconsideration of their allowances.

*Question, That an increased sum of £69,570 for Head 426—House of Assembly—be inserted in the Schedule, put and agreed to.*

#### HEAD 427—JUDICIAL

*Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £101,860 for Head 427—Judicial—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Premier:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to create a new Sub-head under "Other Charges" entitled Sundry Expenses of the Judicial Service Commission with a provision of £250 and a new Sub-head under "Special Expenditure" entitled Purchase of Typewriter with a provision of £50. By section 180F of the Nigerian Constitution Amendment Order in Council, 1958, a Judicial Service Commission for the Region is to be established with effect from 1st April, 1958. The Commission will exercise for the Judicial similar functions to those exercised by the Public Service Commission or the other branches of the Public Service. In order that the Commission may carry out its functions properly, there must be adequate financial provision to cover advertisement, travelling expenses of the members of the Commission and of candidates, stationery and typewriter. The estimates for these two new Sub-heads are the minimum amounts required for the functions I have mentioned.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Question proposed, That an increased sum of £102,160 for Head 427—Judicial—be inserted in the Schedule.*

**Mr O. Arikpo (Obubra Division):** Mr Chairman, I rise to bring to the notice of the House some of the difficulties which are facing the Judicial Department of this Region. The

Judiciary is the main bulwark of democracy in any country and without a sound and efficient system of physical facilities for the Judiciary it is very difficult to maintain a high standard of democratic organisation in the community. The Judiciary in this Region, Sir, is one of the best, I think not only in Nigeria but in West Africa. In the quality of Officers, Judges and Magistrates and in the amount of work which is covered by them from year to year depends our ability to maintain the system. The Judiciary is a revenue-earning Department and a good deal of its expenditure comes from funds earned by that Department. Now, with the development of new attitudes towards punishment, more and more people prefer to pay fines than to be detained in prison for any length of time; so that the Judiciary, in fact, earns annually a very handsome amount of revenue for the Government. It is therefore regrettable, Sir, that the Judiciary in this Region is not well accommodated. The standard of comfort and accommodation of the High Courts in this Region is scandalous and it has gone on for a considerable time. To take as an example, one of the worst courts which one can ever enter is the High Court in Onitsha; there have been promises year in year out by various Government in this Region, that Onitsha is going to be provided with a new High Court, and these promises have yet to be fulfilled. I am therefore rising to express great disappointment that the Estimates show no sign of remedying this very deplorable condition of the court accommodation in this Region. Not only is the building of courts a capital expenditure of a good type, it is a revenue or an income-yielding expenditure, and one would have thought that the building of new courts both for the High Court and the Magistrate's Court would receive the priority attention it deserves. It is very disappointing that this tardy attitude of the Government—not only the present Government, but all Governments in this Region towards the building of courts—still continues. One hopes, Sir, and I would certainly hope, that later in the year, when a Supplementary Estimate is introduced, that this deplorable and scandalous position will be remedied.

I would also like to express disappointment that no steps have been taken to increase the number of Magistrates in the Region. Anybody who has been to the court—whether a professional or a layman—knows that our

Magistrates in this Region are over-worked. In such circumstances, it is almost impossible for justice to be done and for people to see that justice is being done. Magistrates who sit everyday with a court list of fifty or sixty cases cannot, with all the best will in the world, have enough time to deal with litigants, whether in civil or criminal cases, with the same amount of care and attention which they ought to give to the work. If this situation goes on any longer, I fear that the whole administration of justice in this Region will break down. You will appreciate the appalling conditions, the long process through which litigants are forced to go through before their cases are attended to, particularly in civil cases. There is only one answer to this and it is to create more magisterial districts in order to lighten the very heavy burden which all Magistrates in this Region are carrying.

Along with that, Sir, I would like to point out that our Magistrates are under-paid. When Magistrates have to preside over cases, before them appear counsel whose fees amount to four or five times the Magistrate's salary. It is not at all easy to expect the high degree of rectitude which is expected of any member of the Bench. If there have been complaints about the quality of justice, the fault is partly due to the fact that our Magistrates are under-paid. The difficulty in our finding suitable men to fill some of these vacancies when they do occur, is because of the very low salaries attached to the post of Magistrate. I am not allowed to propose increases but later in the year there is going to be a Supplementary Budget and I hope Government will take that opportunity to consider some of the measures adopted in other Regions. In other Regions, between the post of Magistrate Grade I and Chief Magistrate, there is an intermediate Grade of Magistrate called Senior Magistrate to which every Magistrate who has had 5 years experience either at the Bar or on the Bench automatically goes and that carries an emolument of £1,650. I do hope that Government will consider introducing a similar measure in this Region in order to improve the very poor salary conditions of these Magistrates.

I would like to make the point that it is very important to increase the number of magisterial districts in this Region in order to facilitate the work of the administration of justice.

**The Premier:** I am grateful to the learned Member for Obubra for his suggestion with regard to the increase of Magisterial Districts. This matter will be taken up with the Chief Justice.

I am afraid I do not agree with him that the Magistrates here in this Region are under-paid. A comparison between what obtains here and the West will prove my point. In the West the qualification required is five years post call and the initial salary is £1,000 consolidated. In the East the qualification is three years post call with an initial salary Scale A from £1,014 by £42, per annum to £1,380 and there is also an extension to £1,434 by £54 to £1,650. So that I think we are fair enough to our Magistrates in this Region compared with what obtains in the Western Region. I will agree with him that there have been complaints on the part of Magistrates that their salaries should be consolidated. We shall give due consideration to same. As for Chief Magistrates, the qualification required in the West is seven years post call and the salary is £2,040 consolidated. The same obtains here in the East. There is however, a post of Senior Magistrate in the West—a buffer between Magistrate and Chief Magistrate—but the qualification required is seven years post call experience and the salary is £1,600.

I do hope that the Ministry of Justice—if the learned Member will care to make suggestions to the Minister of Justice—will consider how best we can consolidate salaries of our Magistrates. That is my point.

*Question, That an increased sum of £102,160 for Head 427—Judicial—be inserted in the Schedule, put and agreed to.*

**The Chairman:** Order! Order! The Ministerial Bench had opportunity to make speeches in this House yesterday. Today we have already approved in principle that unless business ends we shall not go away. I therefore request that all speeches, ministerial or otherwise, should be as brief as possible.

#### HEAD 429—MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £12,680 for Head 429—Ministry of Agriculture—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Minister of Agriculture (Mr P. O. Nwoga):** Mr Chairman, I would not like to take much time of the House explaining the policy and programmes of the Departments under the Ministry of Agriculture as these have been clearly set out in details on pages 2 to 5 of the White Paper on Self-Government and adequately summarised in paragraphs 19 to 21 of the Speech From The Throne.

From the onset, Sir, I would like the hon. Members to appreciate two very important facts in connection with the policy and programme of the Agricultural Department.

Firstly, that the policy and the programmes for its implementation are long term and the results are not immediately realised.

Secondly, that the programmes set out on pages 2 to 5 of the Government White Paper for Self-Government do not apply wholesale to all the parts of the Region. It follows, therefore, that only those Members or people in the area or people who visit the area of a particular activity of the Agricultural Department can fully appreciate the particular work being done in that particular area. For instance, it is the people in Bende, Ikom, Ahoada, parts of Brass, Calabar and Ikot Ekpene, etc. Divisions that can really appreciate the work of the Department in connection with cocoa cultivation. While the work of the Department in connection with rice can only be fully realised in Abakaliki, Nsukka, Calabar and Rivers areas.

On this background, Mr Chairman, I shall proceed to show that the Department of Agriculture is vigorously pursuing its declared policy and programmes and that the vote which this House approved in the past and is being called upon to approve today has been spent and will continue to be spent in the best interest of the people of this Region. A brief examination of some aspects of the programmes in pursuance of the declared policy of this Department will, perhaps, throw some light on and vindicate the claim that the Department of Agriculture is alive to its responsibilities to the people of this Region.

Take for example, the policy of distribution of improved seeds and seedlings. In 1957, the Agricultural Department bought 600,000 oil palm seeds of the various improved strains



from WAIFOR, germinated them on existing Provincial Farms and planted the germinated seedlings for distribution this year. The Department has already applied for some 400,000 improved seeds from WAIFOR for similar treatment this year. This means some one million improved palm seeds for the Region. With luck, at least, some 500,000 of these should grow to maturity in the Region in about five years' time. What is here said of oil palms applies equally to cocoa, rubber, cashew and other economic trees being introduced for the diversification of the economy of this Region.

In 1956-57 alone, the Department, in pursuance of its declared policy of diversification of cropping and reaching out to people, distributed to interested farmers in this Region 138,652 seedlings of oil palm, 50,825 of Amazon Cocoa, 9,955 budded citrus, 4,621 of kola, 3,258 of coffee, 1,044 of coco-nut and some 8,519 of other tree crops such as rubber, cashew.

Mr Chairman, Sir, the Department does not only issue these improved seeds to farmers and leave them to their fate, but it is also the usual practice of the Agricultural Department staff in the Region to follow up these distributions with instruction on the proper lay-out of plantation of the seeds which are issued. Any farmer who applies for oil palm or cocoa seedlings has his plantation lined up for him by the Agricultural Field Overseers in the area.

The grant for oil palm subsidy continues to be paid to farmers. In the last financial year, the Agricultural Department paid out approximately £800 of which £595 was paid out by the Agricultural Officer at Abak for distribution in his area which includes Ikot Ekpene area.

The work on annual crops continues as laid down in the Policy Paper. Already, trials on yam, cassava, maize and cow-peas continue with a view to improving upon existing materials. The use of fertilisers is being popularised and the Department of Agriculture and the U.A.C. are conducting sales of fertilisers to farmers.

The work on rice is proceeding most vigorously and increased production is quite

evident. The development of inland and mangrove swamps of the Region to grow rice is proceeding with the work of the Department at Adani, Abakaliki, Calabar and Rivers areas respectively.

Trials on the control of yam beetles by use of insecticides are going on in the Region with the work at Onitsha, Nsukka and Ogoni Divisions. This is actually conducted by the Federal Entomologist in co-operation with our Agricultural Officers as the Region has no Entomologists on the staff.

Mr Chairman, it cannot be too often repeated that the work of the Department of Agriculture is mainly educative, demonstrative and advisory. In order to educate and advise the farmers rightly, researches and experiments are carried out. These are usually long processes and the results are not immediately achieved as the experts have to satisfy themselves that the new crops, animals or methods which they wish introduced will do better than the existing ones under local conditions. Without such experiments, new introductions may result in a waste of time, money and energy.

In order to demonstrate for the farmers to copy improved methods, the Department of Agriculture has opened up Demonstration Farms in various parts of the Region. Arable and permanent crops are grown and soil conservation measures are adopted by ridging on the contour, making of contour bunds and strip cropping. Permanent crops usually grown include oil palms, coffee and citrus. Fertilisers are applied to crops and nurseries for supply of seedlings to farmers are run on these Demonstration Farm Centres. There may be some livestock—poultry or pigs in a two pen piggery.

The main idea is to teach the farmers by ocular demonstration what we want them to do on their farms. Frequently, groups of farmers are conducted round the Demonstration Farm Centres and what is being done is explained to them. From this short description, Mr Chairman, I cannot agree with the hon. Member for Ikot Ekpene, Mr Etuhube, when he described these Demonstration Farm Centres as being used to train pen-pushers. The Demonstration Farm Centres are opened to train farmers and not pen-pushers. Hon. Members who have the

[MR NWOGA]

opportunity are invited to visit Demonstration Farms at Akwete, Ukpabi, Oron, Essane, Aba, Uyo and other Divisions to see what is being done in these centres for themselves.

Mr Chairman, I would like at this juncture to dispose of other points raised by Members on this Department during the course of the debate on the Speech From The Throne, the White Paper for Self-Government and the Budget. Before doing so, Sir, I would like to remark that it would be to the advantage of this hon. House if hon. Members would spend some time to studying their *Hansards* in order to avoid the repetition of the same criticisms year in and year out even though they had been adequately answered in the previous Sessions of the House.

Hon. Akpabio and hon. Kiri made the point that the Agricultural Department is wasting too much time in experiments and that the Department should embark on large-scale plantations. Mr Chairman, this point has been raised again and again in this House and has been adequately answered each time. It has been explained that it is necessary for the Agricultural Department to carry out experiments in order to find out facts which they will give to the farmers and that in introducing new crops or livestock the experts must satisfy themselves that the new introductions will grow well under local conditions. Unless this is done they cannot claim to know better than farmers and their introductions may prove to be a failure. Experiments are long because it takes time to arrive at conclusions and they have to see the off-spring of new introductions to be sure that these are satisfactory or not.

The Agricultural Department cannot start to make its own plantations. That is farmers' job. The Department produces materials and shows the farmers what to grow and how to grow them. It is then left to the farmers to get on with the job. It is not correct to say that the results of the experiments are not being put to use. The growing of upland and swamp rice in this Region, the introduction into the Region of the new varieties of oil palm, cocoa, coffee, cassava, maize, pigs, poultry, etc., and the popular use of artificial fertilisers are all based on experiments which have been carried out in the Region.

Hon. Chidolue made the point that Eastern Ogbaru has land suitable for growing of rice. We are aware that Eastern Ogbaru has land suitable for growing swamp rice. A field Overseer of Agricultural Department is stationed at Atani, the Agricultural Officers pay regular visits to the area and the farmers there are being encouraged to grow swamp rice. The response from them has been very slow and disappointing. The extension staff are, however, still persisting in their encouraging the farmers to grow swamp rice.

Hon. Apreala made the point that water yam produced in Brass Division is small sized and that the Department should do something about it. Well, the experiments of the Agricultural Department have shown that increase in yield and size of yams can be obtained with the use of artificial fertilisers. The extension work staff of the Agricultural Department have been carrying on campaigns for the popular use of the fertilisers in the Region. The general response has been encouraging and more and more farmers are applying mixed fertilisers to their crops. I hope the hon. Member will urge his people to take advantage of the advice of the Agricultural Department in this connection.

My hon. Friend, Mr Etuhube made the point that the policy on Agriculture is not being run successfully. Mr Chairman, I really do not understand what the hon. Member means by saying that the policy on Agriculture is not being run successfully. He did, however, make the statement that the programme as stated in the Self-Government White Paper (pp. 2 to 5) were not being carried out.

Mr Chairman, I have said enough in the course of this speech to prove that the Department is following its declared policy and programme and also to prove the futility of the allegation of the hon. Member. If he were a farmer I would describe him as an absentee farmer. But I would rather call him an absentee Member who knows not what obtains in his constituency. If he were interested, he would have known that 2,678 and 3,808 oil palm seedlings were distributed to the farmers in Ikot Ekpene in 1956 and 1957 respectively.

Mr Chairman, I do not intend to reply to the points raised by other Members in

connection with Fisheries and other Departments of the Ministry in this speech. All I can say is that if any Member has strong feelings about any of the points raised in connection with fisheries or Forestry he is at liberty to see me for necessary explanation and information, as I am sure most of the points which they have raised are being taken care of.

Mr Chairman, I think I have said enough to enable the Members to see the necessity for approving the Estimates on Agriculture now before the House.

**The Chairman:** As the hon. the Minister of Agriculture rightly pointed out, people have had ample opportunity and have in fact taken opportunity to discuss Agriculture. We cannot discuss this subject indefinitely. I therefore propose to put the question.

*Question, That the sum of £12,680 for Head 429—Ministry of Agriculture—stand part of the Schedule, put and agreed to.*

*Sitting suspended at 10.30 a.m.*

*Sitting resumed at 11 a.m.*

#### HEAD 430—AGRICULTURE

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £279,790 for Head 430—Agriculture—stand part of the Schedule.*

##### Sub-head 1, Item (25)—Principal of School

**The Minister of Agriculture (Mr P. O. Nwoga):** Mr Chairman, I rise to move to reduce Sub-head 1 Item 25, Principal of School by £1,600. This reduction is necessary to make savings for some other pressing need. The post of Principal of School is at present vacant. The Nigerian who is the substantive Principal is at present the Acting Director of Agriculture in the Head Office and the Principal Research Officer is being appointed at Umudike. This Officer will look after the School which will be put under care and maintenance basis for the time being. As the post of Principal will still be necessary and have to be filled eventually, it is being shown in the Estimate without financial provision.

Sir, I beg to move.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Mr Chairman, I am wondering whether the Minister is saying that for sometime that the school has existed, we have not had any experienced Principal in the School. If we attach any importance to this school, is it not rather dangerous to suggest that no financial provision should be made for the Principal of the school? The fact that the Minister does not want to fill the vacant post should affect the financial position in the Estimates. What, if within a couple of months the substantive holder of the post who is now Acting Director of Agriculture has to go back to his former post? Then we will be forced to make financial provision for him either through the Finance Committee or by Special Warrant.

**Mr Nwoga:** There has been a Principal for the School who is now the acting Director and I did say that a Principal in-charge of Research is being appointed and that he will look after the school as well as looking after the Research for the time being. Much depends on the number we have there at the moment, and I do not think the Government is going to consider it necessary to fill the post within the next two or three months. What is the need of locking up £1,600 when we can do something else with it somewhere under the same Head?

**The Chairman:** The position is that one individual, in the meantime, is going to fill two posts. He is going to be in-charge of Research and controlling the school, and he is not going to draw more salary than is required.

*Question put and agreed to.*

##### Sub-head 1, Item (45)—Agricultural Assistants

**The Minister of Agriculture:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to reduce Item (45) of Sub-head 1 by £1,500.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr Ikoku:** Mr Chairman, Sir, the item in question is 12 Agricultural Assistants—£1,990, and the hon. Minister is calling for a reduction by £1,500, leaving only £540. We will like to know, Sir, whether this reduction means that some of these twelve Agricultural Assistants are being retrenched or what?

[MR IKOKU]

Obviously, twelve Agricultural Assistants cannot be paid just about £500! What provision is being made for them?

We don't want agitation!

**Mr Nwoga:** Note that last year we had two and this year it is being increased to twelve. The provision now is for two only.

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Sub-head 6—Provincial Farms:  
Maintenance and General Labour**

**Mr Nwoga:** Mr Chairman, I rise to move to reduce Sub-head 6, Provincial Farms: Maintenance and General Labour—by £500. This arises out of the need to make a saving for some other pressing need.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Sub-head 13—Pilot Scheme:  
Mechanical Cultivation of Arable  
Crops**

**Mr Nwoga:** Mr Chairman, I rise to move to reduce Sub-head 13—Pilot Scheme: Mechanical Cultivation of Arable Crops—by £900. This arose out of the need to make a saving for some other more pressing need. The Department of Agriculture will concentrate on the groundnut and soya beans experiment with fertiliser this year.

Sir, I beg to move.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Sub-head 14—School of Agriculture:  
Maintenance**

**Mr Nwoga:** Mr Chairman, I rise to move to reduce Sub-head 14—School of Agriculture: Maintenance—by £2,500.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Members have been crying that agricultural services are inadequate in their own areas but now the proposal is to reduce this Sub-head by as much as £2,500!

**Mr Nwoga:** If the hon. Member will exercise a little patience he will be told of the need shortly.

*Question put and agreed to.*

**New Sub-head 21—Rural Training  
Course at Asaba: Regional Grant**

**Mr Nwoga:** Mr Chairman, I rise to move that a new Sub-head 21—Rural Training Centre at Asaba: Regional Grant—under Head 430 be created and a provision of £7,000 be inserted therein. This provision does not affect any alteration in the total sum asked for under Head 430 as this amount is equivalent to the savings effected by the reductions just made under this Head of Estimates.

The reason for this request is obvious. At first it was intended to withdraw the whole of the grant for this centre as it is not fulfilling the object for which this Region undertakes to make grants for its up-keep. However, it is now felt that it will be unreasonable to withdraw support from it altogether without giving due notice to its authorities.

Reduced scale of grant is, therefore, being made to the Centre this year and this will be progressively reduced until about 1960 when we would completely withdraw our support from the scheme.

Sir, I beg to move.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Question again proposed, That a sum not exceeding £279,790 for Head 430—Agriculture—stand part of the Schedule.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**HEAD 434—MINISTRY OF COMMERCE**

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £200,240 for Head 434—Ministry of Commerce—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Minister of Commerce: (Mr J. U. Nwodo):** Mr Chairman, I did during the Appropriation Bill reply to points raised by the hon. Members in this House. I dwelt at length on the policy of my Ministry and except any hon. Members wish to raise new points, I propose to proceed straightaway with the amendments in the Order Paper. Well, I do not move the first Amendment. Sir, on the second amendment, I beg to move to create the following Sub-heads under special expenditure.

Stores on Indent	...	...	£	
Printing of Co-operative Manual			2,260	
Grant to Rural Industries	...	...	100	
			1,000	

Sir, Indents under Head 434 Sub-head 7 were placed well in advance of the financial year 1957-58, but have not yet been received. Crown Agents advice indicate shipment by mid April, or May. These indents, include series of equipment for pottery and de-greasing tanks for sheet metal. There is also a sum of £100 which was authorised by Special Warrant for the publishing of Co-operative Manual. Unfortunately the Registrar of Co-operatives was transferred to act as my Permanent Secretary and the printing was delayed. It is intended to ask for this provision, so that it can be carried out when the substantive holder of the Department resumes. In November, 1957 the sum of £2,000 was made available to the Secondary Industries by Special Warrant in order to assist small rural industries by way of providing raw materials and light equipment. However, before issuing grants each recipient must be thoroughly investigated, and this takes time. Thus it has not been possible to dispense with the whole £2,000, although deserving cases are still under investigation. I had mentioned this in my Budget speech that there were some of these industries which we have already helped by providing them some stock of material such as the Ikot Ekpene Raffia Work, Awka Carving and in no case, Sir, is money given to persons being aided other than the Department making payment for the purchases approved by the Chief Industrial Officer. The grants so far issued have been fresh impetus to the various undertakings, particularly in hand-woven textile and woodwork. Output has increased and thereby sales. Most recipients are now in a position to finance their raw material purchases from these sales.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### Sub-head 18—Share Capital in Williams and Williams (Nigeria) Limited

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Mr Chairman, I rise to move to leave out Sub-head 18. Sir, the provision of £50,000 is in respect of the share capital in Williams and Williams (Nigeria) Limited. May I say, Sir, that we are not

opposed to any form of investment by Government, but what we want is sound investment. But it seems rather unwise that Government should decide to charge this sum to our revenue and allow it to appear in the Estimates. May I say that in 1954 when, the Government decided to invest £100,000 in the Nigerian Cement Company, the then Financial Secretary came before the House and moved a formal resolution seeking the approval of the House for this investment which was financed from our reserves. The Financial Secretary had the opportunity to give the House all the details about the investment. That was fully debated and Government had to effect this investment from reserves. Our only objection to this is that it is not sound to call upon us to charge this against the revenue of the Region. Our position is that we prefer it to be financed from our reserves, otherwise, Sir, all other commitments of that Company will have to be borne on the Estimates every year. It is safer if the Government went to the reserves and financed that investment from our reserves after the House had formally given approval for the investment. But if we allow this procedure, it will mean that every time, after this amount has been exhausted, Government will have to come before the House and seek approval for more money. I do not see any necessity for this.

**Mr Nwodo:** The point my hon. Friend has raised is rather a technical one and a matter for the Minister of Finance. As Minister of Commerce, I am more concerned with the House giving me money to finance industries for which I have completed negotiations. It is purely outside the scope of what I asked from the House. Whether the money is going to come from reserves or from the Treasury, it will come from the finances of the Region. I think, Sir, that it does not make much difference and it is unnecessary to waste the time of the House on a matter of this nature.

**The Chairman:** Surely the hon. Member of the Opposition is entitled to his opinion. If there is no explanation, I think he is entitled to know in view of the precedent which we created last year, when we put money in another venture and decided to use the reserves. He is asking why this was not done in this case. The Minister of Finance, do you want to explain, or are you taken unawares?

**The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke):** Mr Chairman, this money is required actually to fulfil this Government's side of the contract with Williams and Williams. It will go to form the Capital investment of the company. It is not intended of course, to finance the recurrent necessarily from Regional funds. I really do not see anything wrong with this—it is the expenditure which the Minister of Commerce is to undergo this year.

**Mr O. Arikpo (Obubra Division):** Mr Chairman, there is everything wrong in carrying expenditure of this kind on recurrent estimates. On a previous occasion we have had a special resolution to raise the money out of the reserves of this Government for the purposes of capital investment of this type. Why has it not been done in this case? Why should it be carried on recurrent estimates? (*Interruptions*). Mr Chairman, I must say that they do not know. (*Laughter*)... It is wrong.

**The Chairman:** I assume we have exhausted the debate on the matter. I will proceed to put the question.

*Question put and negatived.*

#### Sub-head 19—Housing Estate for Williams and Williams (Nigeria) Limited

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Mr Chairman, I rise to move to leave out Sub-head 19. This is quite different from Sub-head 18 (*Interruption*). It is not the same. Sub-head 18 dealt with actual investment in the Company. Now we are being called upon to provide £50,000 for the Housing Estate of this Company. I hope the Minister will this time see the difference. Government won on the investment, but must this House be burdened with making provision for the administration of this their new Company? Because that is how I look at it. They are going to make provision for the Housing Estate for Williams and Williams (Nigeria) Limited, and our view is that having started on this wrong procedure, every time that the new company wants a house or is short of money to pay its staff Government will have to go either to the Finance Committee to vote money for it or prepare supplementary estimate and submit to the House. Why not have a free hand and then run this

new Company from the reserves? Why do they want to tie their hands down by seeking approval of this House on annual appropriation? That is just the point. We want to give Government a free hand by suggesting to Government to finance this investment from reserves. But we do not want the House to be burdened every time this new Company wants money.

**Mr Arikpo:** Before you reply, just one more point we would like cleared up. Now you are going to have a Housing Estate for a company—no doubt a company in which you will have shares. Who draws the income from that Estate—is that the Company or the Government who puts out the money? We want to know.

**The Premier:** The point raised by the hon. the Opposition Chief Whip is that this House, by voting this money, will be liable to recurrent expenditure. My answer is that it is not true because what we are asking this House to vote is a special expenditure which is not recurrent. So that the points raised by him do not arise.

Now on the question raised by the learned Member for Obubra, naturally if we earn any money from the Estate it would be reflected in our estimate of revenue, but it does not go to the Company. I can give him that assurance. There is an agreement between ourselves and the Company. Now, the other point is why we should insert this sub-head in the Estimates. I am surprised that that point was raised. We have no capital budget like, say, the Northern, or the Western Region and the Federal Government. Had we a capital budget then we could appreciate the fine point in his argument. But I can assure him that by the time we meet for supplementary budget we might have a capital budget. His points do not arise.

**The Chairman:** I gather you are satisfied with the explanation and you wish to withdraw.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Yes, Sir.

*Amendment by leave withdrawn.*

**Mr Ikoku:** Mr Chairman, I want to mention this point to the Minister of Commerce and I would like him to clarify the point

to this House. It is in connection with two Corporations—the Cinema Corporation and the Pharmaceutical Corporation. We have a Bill to the effect that the Pharmaceutical Corporation is being wound up and I don't want to remind the Minister of Commerce that there are six bills outstanding to the tune of £20,211 2s 3d to the account of that Corporation and for a long time, Sir, these bills have not been paid and we would like to know what is happening.

The second point is the Cinema Corporation. We would like to know from the Minister of Commerce how that Corporation is really working. Our opinion, Sir, is that the Corporation is almost at a deadlock. The Board members find it absolutely impossible to work with the Chairman and a resolution was taken by the Board on the 14th of March this year and submitted to the hon. Minister. We do not know what steps he has taken. It is complained, Sir, that about £29,000 worth of building contracts have been given out without prior approval by the hon. the Minister and without tenders being invited. There is a complaint that a building has been put out for £12,000 whereas in fact £11,000 was paid to the contractor concerned. There is also a complaint, Sir, that during the London Constitutional Conference £50 of the Corporation's money was loaned to a friend in London and the money has still not been repaid. There is a complaint, Sir, that the financial report submitted by the Secretary of the Corporation in connection with the European tour last year has been rejected by the Chairman and the Chairman has been invited to submit his own report but till today he has refused to do so. Two committees have been set up by the Board of the Corporation to go into the affairs of the Corporation and both committees have found that the Corporation is guilty of gross, I quote: "Mal-administration and squandermania". Now the position is that the Board members refuse to attend any meeting over which the Chairman is likely to preside. I like to remind you, Sir, that this resolution which was taken by the members of the Board of the Corporation was taken by a full meeting of the Board and all five members, other than the Chairman, voted in support of this motion and the motion is in the possession of the hon. the Minister of Commerce. I will like to know what steps he has taken. You know the general

idea in the air is that Corporations should be wound up. But right now I am not telling the Minister or suggesting to him that the Corporation should be wound up. It is quite possible that the Corporation will have some useful function to perform but it cannot perform these functions without being efficient, and I think the problem with the Corporation now is that its inefficiency stems from the activities of the Chairman *vis-a-vis* members of the Board, and this House would like to know what the Minister of Commerce proposes to do.

**The Chairman:** I advise you take the opportunity of being a Member of this House to discuss this matter with the hon. the Minister of Commerce in his office where he has his files and will be able to give you the necessary information. Have you done that?

**Mr Ikoku:** Well, if he extends that invitation to me I will do so, but all we want to hear from him is that he is going to go into the matter because these facts I have mentioned are in his possession and he has not taken steps. For that matter, I would like to add that if the facts came into his possession before the incident that led to the removal of the Chairman of the Tourist Corporation, I do not know why he should have taken such prompt action in the case of that Corporation but not in the case of the Cinema Corporation.

**The Chairman:** It is my view that hon. Members as they are aware, have opportunity to discuss quite a lot of matters within the portfolio of any particular Minister in the Ministerial Office. If Members do that, obviously we can be acquainted with what are considered the actual facts. I do not think it is right to expect Ministers to answer questions of this nature without any notice at all. All the Member has indicated is that he possessed certain information and wants the Minister to tell him all about them now in a debate of this nature. I do not suppose it is wrong for him to do it but surely in fairness to the Ministerial Bench, you ought to give adequate notice on this type of question.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Sir, I wish to dwell on the policy of the Co-operative Department. I am very interested in the co-operative movement and I wish to remind Members that the

[Mr E. O. Eyo]

co-operative movement in Great Britain started as far back as 1844, that is over 100 years ago, and it is only of recent years that we in the Eastern Region have established a Co-operative Movement. I should like to refer to the annual report of the Co-operative Department for the year 1955-56. Page 2 of the report sets out the number of co-operatives in the Eastern Region. I observe that there are more Co-operative Societies in the Calabar Province than in the other Provinces put together. I would like to see more and more societies established in the other Provinces. There are 721 Credit Societies in Calabar Province, 7 in Ogoja, 18 in Onitsha, 98 in Owerri and 22 in Rivers giving a total of 866 Credit Societies. Then we have Thrift Societies—8 in Calabar, 6 in Ogoja, 19 in Onitsha, 7 in Owerri, 11 in Rivers, giving a total of 51. Then we have Consumers Societies, none in Calabar Province, none in Ogoja, 5 in Onitsha, 1 in Owerri, none in Rivers, giving a total of 6 Consumers Societies. Then we have Processing and Marketing Societies—14 in Calabar Province, 6 in Ogoja Province, 1 in Onitsha, 10 in Owerri, none in Rivers, giving a total of 31. Then we have Craft and Industries Societies and other societies. There are in all 144 women's societies of which 134 are in Calabar, none in Ogoja, 5 in Onitsha, 5 in Owerri, and none in Rivers. I would like the Department to concentrate on the establishment of Producer's Co-operatives. The Department should encourage the establishment of not only Consumers' Co-operatives but also Producers' Co-operatives and get our people to be interested in the Co-operative Movement. The N.C.N.C. has declared its political objective to be the projection of a socialist commonwealth in Nigeria. The N.C.N.C. must prove this by getting its Government to be more interested in the Co-operative Movement.

The Co-operative Movement of Great Britain has more than ten million members, that is about a third of the total population of Nigeria. Let our Co-operative Department organise our farmers to form Palm Produce Producers' Co-operatives and Cocoa Producers' Co-operatives. These Producers' Co-operatives should control production on a large scale to qualify for appointment as Licensed Buying Agents. Our Marketing Board should give advances to these Co-operatives to enable

them to produce more palm oil and palm kernels and cocoa in the Region.

The Co-operative Department appears to be under staffed at the moment. I suggest an increase in the establishment to enable the Department to meet the demands made on it in all the Divisions in the Region. The Co-operative Movement should not be confined to Calabar Province but must spread throughout the Region.

I note from the annual Report of the Co-operative Department that there are two Co-operative Banks in the Region, one in Calabar Province and the other in Owerri Province. But Government gave the two Banks a grant of only £10,000. I do not think £10,000 is enough for the two Co-operative Banks. The Department should ask Government for more grants to the two Banks. I suggest £100,000 to each of the two Banks in Calabar and Owerri Provinces. If Government makes a grant of £100,000 to the Owerri Provincial Co-operative Bank and a grant of £100,000 to the Calabar Provincial Bank, then the two Banks will make more money available to the various co-operative societies for their development. The money will reach the farmers of the village level and they will be even grateful to Government. I will end by paying my tribute to the work done by the Co-operative Department in Calabar Province and to urge the Department to spread its activities all over the Region.

**Mr Nwodo:** Mr Chairman, I did reply to these points raised by the hon. Members when I made my speech on the Appropriation Bill. I did indicate that my Ministry had given a guarantee of £30,000 last financial year, that is, 1957-58 to Co-operative Marketing Society. With Co-operatives there is surely a purely joint responsibility between my Ministry and the Ministry of Production and I am happy again to refer the hon. Member to the effort of the Ministry of Production to advance the prosperity of this very Department. Last year, it guaranteed overdraft of £50,000 to the Co-operative Cocoa Marketing Society. My Ministry also made a grant of £28,000 to the Co-operative Societies to help pay their staff. As is required by law that the accounts of the Co-operative Societies are to be audited every year, it is my Ministry that makes the heavy subsidies to Co-operative



Societies to enable them pay their staff. It is also a fact that the expansion of Co-operative Societies has been held up in various places in the Region due to lack of staff. I did say during my speech that when the finance of the Region becomes healthier, I will come forward with a proposal, asking for increase in establishment.

The other point raised by the Leader of Opposition is in respect of the Cinema Corporation and the Tourist Corporation. Now, as for the Cinema Corporation, it is true that the members of the Board have resolved and passed a vote of no confidence in the Chairman, but this resolution coincided with the time that Government was examining the affairs of the Cinema and other Corporations. It is intended to take a final decision in the reorganisation of these Corporations after their accounts have been audited by a chartered accountant. Then, and only then, would the Minister propose the line of reorganisation and suggest to the Executive Council whether the Corporation should be wound up or should be revived and what amount, if any, was actually required to inject as new capital into the Corporation in order to get it working. It might therefore at this stage amount to anticipating the decision of the Government one way or the other to say that I should have taken a decision on the resolution of the members of the Board. On the whole, the points raised are well taken by me and I am already investigating the facts surrounding the circumstances.

As for the Chairman of the Tourist Corporation, it is becoming a regular feature here, Sir, that when there is any hitch with any member of the public service or corporation, the usual procedure is to run to either a member of the Government or a member of the Opposition and ask that the matter be raised on the floor of this House.

**Mr Ikoku:** On point of correction, Sir. It seems the Minister is referring to a portion of my speech. Mr Chairman, Sir, I did not raise the issue of the Chairman of the Tourist Corporation. I did not raise that issue. I only made a reference to the fact that I am rather shocked by the delay as regards the Cinema Corporation and the speed as regards the Tourist Corporation. I have not raised the issue as to the correctness or otherwise of the removal of the Chairman of the Tourist Corporation.

**Mr Nwodo:** I welcome this opportunity to explain to the House what led to the suspension of the Chairman of the Tourist Corporation.

Already wrong impression is being created that for one reason or the other I have, due to some political consideration or parochial interest, unnecessarily removed the Chairman of the Tourist Corporation; but I will tell you, Sir, what led to the removal of the Chairman. I instituted an enquiry into the working of this Tourist Corporation on receiving the information that it was not working as satisfactorily as has been anticipated in this House. You know I have had occasions to defend this Corporation more than once in this House, but the latest information I have from the audited accounts of this very Corporation is that up to 31st December, 1957 it has made a loss totalling £20,334 16s 9d. Now, how did this come about? The members of the Corporation were holding frivolous one-and-a-thousand meetings.

In the month of April, 1957, the Chairman of the Tourist Corporation whose salary is £600 per annum which is £50 per month, drew £50 salary and drew £94 10s 0d subsistence allowance. He has a chalet to himself in the Catering Rest House which is not liable to be rented even when he is not occupying it.

He drew in May £30 transport allowance; £97 13s 0d subsistence allowance; all told with salary: £177 13s 0d; June £142 4s 0d; July £177 1s 0d; August £163 1s 6d; September £163 8s 0d; October £143 9s 0d; November £146 12s 0d; December £227 4s 3d. Being dissatisfied with this situation, I decided that my Permanent Secretary should call the attention of the Chairman to this anomaly and to request him (the Chairman) to limit the number of meetings of the Board and his touring programme. My Permanent Secretary wrote. With your permission, I read:—

“I am directed by the hon. the Minister of Commerce to refer to your letter TC. 5/206 dated 18th March, and to say that he is alarmed at the extremely heavy amounts paid in respect of subsistence and transport allowance to Board members, particularly to the Chairman.

2. It cannot be expected that the Corporation can show a profit if these overheads

[Mr NWODO]

are not drastically reduced in the future. Pending receipt of the Audited Report, I am to ask you to ensure that no Board meetings are held more than once a quarter until further notice. Where it is not possible to refer urgent matters for decision to the Board by letter and it is considered that an emergency Board meeting must be convened, I am to ask you to seek the Minister's approval for such an emergency meeting, stating the purpose of it and giving reasons why the matter cannot be dealt with by correspondence.

3. With regard to the Chairman, I am to say that he should not visit any Rest House for inspection or other purposes more than once a quarter and should rely on the reports of the Catering Adviser. The visits of the Chairman to the Headquarters of the Corporation should be restricted to one visit per month."

Now, this is the reply of the Chairman:

"With reference to your letter No. S.1055/VI/9 of 24th March, 1958, please inform the hon. the Minister of Commerce that the content of the letter is ill-conceived and malicious.

2. The work of the Corporation must be carried on as efficiently and honestly as it has been going on for the past twelve months, as long as the present Chairman is in office.

3. The Chairman of the Corporation is a part-time Chairman, and the only one at that in the Eastern Region. His salary is £600 as against £1,500 and over of Chairmen of other Corporations in the same Eastern Region. The volume of work in the Tourist Corporation which requires the attention of the Chairman is much more than most of the Chairmen of other Corporations who receive £1,500 and over. Therefore, the part-time Chairman of this Corporation must of necessity visit the Headquarters regularly to see to the proper working of the Corporation. He does not visit Enugu for pleasure, but for the business of the Corporation. His daily subsistence allowance is only £3 3s. He is a Chemist and Druggist running three branches of his pharmacy. It does not therefore require anybody else except one with evil eyes not to

see that the Chairman is making more sacrifice than some of those who have no private business to sacrifice for the Region, but receive from £2,000 to £3,000 from the poor tax-payers' purse. The Chairman uses his private car to run between his station and Enugu and gets 1s per mile and receives no basic allowance, while there are those in the service of the Region who receive substantial basic allowance for cars bought for them by the Government and still claim mileage allowance and nobody grudges them . . ."

Mr Chairman, his main argument here is that it is ill-conceived and malicious to question his holding frivolous meetings and to restrict him to a number of meetings which justifies the expenses and the amount of business to be transacted. In his last statement he said:

"I think you will cease to exhibit this nude example of official pettiness any more where I am concerned, otherwise I shall be forced to make very grave expositions of discrimination and nepotism in the Administration. May I refer you to my letter T.C 5/132 of 18th December, 1957 for further reading."

Over the radio what has he said other than that there has been misunderstanding between him and the Minister about the day to day affair of the Corporation. I would have thought he would have come out either through the members of the Government or the Opposition to make the grave expositions of what he, the Chairman, described as "discrimination and nepotism in the Administration."

Now the second letter which we wrote to him was in respect of the Corporation trying to flood their establishment with employment. This letter reads:—

"The attention of the hon. Minister of Commerce has been drawn to two advertisements appearing in the *Eastern Sentinel* of March 21st and 22nd, advertising posts of Secretary and of Accountant.

2. I am to say that the Estimates for the year 1958-59 have not yet been submitted to the hon. Minister, nor has the Audited Report of Messrs Akintola Williams been received. At a recent meeting of the Board with the hon. Minister, the Board obtained the Minister's approval to defer

the question of the appointment of a General Manager until some information had been received about the finances of the Corporation and it is therefore not understood why these two posts have been advertised at this time.

3. In the case of the Secretary, the salary offered is £804 but the qualifications demanded for a salary of this size fall far short of what should be expected. In the case of the Accountant, here again a salary of £816 is offered but the qualifications asked for also fall far short of what could reasonably be expected. It simply states that preference will be given to candidates who have a recognised accountancy qualification, but as these are few and far between it is more than likely that someone without any qualifications will be appointed.

4. I am directed by the hon. Minister to request you not to fill these vacancies until the Audited Accounts have been received, until you have submitted your Estimates and until the future organisation of the Corporation has been decided by Executive Council."

Again the Chairman replies as follows:—

"With reference to your letter No. S 1055/VI/10 of the 24th March, 1958 please inform the hon. the Minister of Commerce that in the present state of the Corporation, the office of a Secretary or an Accountant is far and above more important than that of a General Manager and the Corporation cannot do otherwise than to fill these posts immediately, except you wish that the Corporation be folded up immediately.

"Provisions will be made for the two posts in the Estimates 1958-59 and nobody can now safely prejudge the qualifications of the prospective holders of these offices without prejudice. . ."

That is his view; he anticipates approval; Estimates have not been submitted; he anticipates the qualification of the people who will be employed, when even advertising for applicants with the knowledge of office routine and accountancy; if eventually a Standard Six pass applies and he is satisfied in his desire, he absorbs him into the post. He continues:

"I am afraid, these two posts must be filled immediately because those honestly and sincerely concerned with the affairs of

the Corporation realise that the work of the Corporation is suffering greatly because of these two vacant offices. The appointment of these two offices has nothing to do with the fate of the Corporation in the hands of the Executive Council, but before then the Corporation cannot fold its hands and wait indefinitely."

Is this the sort of a Chairman that one will retain in office? I hope, hon. Members, that I have been able to X-ray the facts which led to my taking the decision to suspend the Chairman of the Tourist Corporation. (*Hear! Hear!*).

**The Chairman:** Order! Order!

**Mr Ikoku:** Mr Chairman, Sir, I am glad that the Minister has taken the opportunity to inform this House and that was precisely what I tried to do in connection with the Cinema Corporation. But I think the Minister was very sharp for immediately he heard me mention the Tourist Corporation, he gave us a correct or rather an outstanding and accurate information. I must say that the letter from the Permanent Secretary is the type of letter we want to have written more and more often in this Region to all the Corporation Chairmen. (*Hear! Hear!*). We must say, Sir, that the type of letter the Chairman wrote in reply is the type of letter we just don't want to have in this Region any more. (*Hear! Hear!*). While speaking here earlier on the Information Service, I did make a point that some of these Corporations are beginning to have some wonderful ideas about themselves, that they are some entities over and above the Ministries, and the reason why they have this idea is that we come to this House to pass a Law—an Ordinance for them. So they think they are all and all. I once again call on the Government to see the need for amending our Law as regards the Corporations.

We want these Corporations to be under the authority of the Ministries. We cannot stand it for any reason whatsoever for a Chairman to go about flouting the authority of his Minister in the way he likes. We can't stand it, even though we would like it for political reasons, to see the hon. Minister of Commerce embarrassed from time to time. This action is not an embarrassment but an insubordination.

[MR IKOKU]

It is quite different from embarrassing. We would like to see him harrassed from time to time but we do not like him to be disgraced and ridiculed. (*Hear! Hear!*). We will give our own continual support to Government in whatever measures they take to bring this Corporation under the thumb of the Minister. (*Hear! Hear!*).

**Mr K. Kiri (Degema Division):** Mr Chairman, I think hon. Members must have thought I rise to speak because the person concerned comes from my constituency. What I want done, Sir, is justice. The treatment meted to Mr P. G. Warmate and the Tourist Corporation should apply to other Corporations. (*Hear! Hear!*). The Minister of Commerce has been kind enough to reveal all that took place between the Chairman and himself but this House is entitled to hear the real facts from the other side—meaning the Corporation. The Members of the House who created this Corporation are entitled to know all about the expulsion. This is my only comment on the matter.

*Question proposed, That an increased sum of £203,600 for Head 434—Ministry of Commerce—be inserted in the Schedule.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### HEAD 436—EDUCATION

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £5,338,300 for Head 436—Education—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Minister of Information temporarily holding the Portfolio of Education (Mr B. C. Okwu):** I rise to introduce Head 436 to the House. As hon. Members already know, the Ministry of Education has been so very much in the news these days that I am afraid that there is not much that I can speak about it that hon. Members do not know already. Nevertheless, it is a Ministry of great importance which alone consumes over 37 per cent of the revenue of the Region, and what is more, it was given the greatest prominence in the speech of the hon. the Minister of Finance. If I may, Mr Chairman, I will confine my speech to a general restatement of policy and summary of our present accomplishments in the field of education. As you are aware, the Government recently took hard decisions

which, though somewhat unpopular, were realistic, inevitable and in the interest of the economy of the Eastern Region. However, let not our present difficulties blind our people to the fact that our achievements in the field of education are not only spectacular but second to none in the Federation of Nigeria.

At this stage, I crave your indulgence, Mr Chairman, to pay tribute to hon. G. E. Okeke, the substantive holder of the portfolio for Education and to say that all the sides of the House join me in congratulating him on his recovery and welcoming him back to the Region. It is also proper and fitting that I should express the gratitude of the people of the Eastern Region to the Christian Missionaries for their role in the field of education. Private persons have also made valuable contributions. Today, Local Government Councils have been called upon to play an ever increasing role in the field of education. They have taken up the challenge and they will be given every assistance possible from my Ministry.

It is correct to say that in view of recent decisions, we are passing through an era of consolidation in our educational advancement. We want to introduce reinforced concrete into our educational fabric as a jumping-off ground to further advancement. On the eve of our national independence we need to infuse more intensely into our educational system our native background and way of life to replace undue emphasis on alien concepts, so that our youths will be free from every trace of inferiority complex, have abiding faith in our race, in our past, pride in our traditions and confidence in our future. Continued emphasis will be laid not only on scholarship but also on character and moral principles, to ensure the best physical and intellectual development of our youths. It is with the above ends in view that the Government decided to appoint a committee of experts to review the educational system and make recommendations to the Government. The present trend in our educational policy is still based on highest standards at the minimum cost.

As a result of the phenomenal advance in primary, secondary and teacher training programmes, thousands of youths are being turned out from our educational institutions yearly. For these, employments in one form

or another must be provided. But it is quite clear that unless our agricultural, industrial and commercial expansion received equal degree of attention as education, the Region will be confronted with the problem of mass unemployment of these youths. Quite apart from the foregoing consideration may I say that from now on everything possible will be done to instil into the minds of our youths the spirit of individual initiative and adventure into various new fields of human endeavour, for it is not our policy to build a nation of pen-pushers and wage-earners. As the saying goes, besides St. George, surely there are other cathedrals. Encouragement will continue to be given for the development of individual aptitudes to the highest possible level so that our youths will be fully equipped to take their rightful place in the independent Nigerian society that is in the offing. Poverty will not necessarily be a hinderance to the talented and enterprising youth from reaching the highest possible development of his or her gifts. Our scholarship scheme will see to that.

It is necessary to acknowledge the Region's gratitude to the teaching profession for its indispensable role in our educational programmes. Teaching is a noble profession and it is correct to say that this Government has done much to enhance the status of teachers and will continue to do so, all things being equal. I have in mind, Sir, the stupendous expansion in teacher training facilities and salary improvements for teachers. The Government appreciates the fact that under the present circumstances of our Region, teachers are people of many parts. They take part in all sorts of activities in the life of our people. Within reasonable limits, this will be allowed.

Hon. Members will recall that in the course of the debate on Universal Primary Education during the emergency meeting of the House in February and again in His Excellency's Speech From The Throne at the opening of the present session, it was stated that the combined estimates for the Ministry of Education and the Education Department would be limited to a sum of the order of £5.2 million. The actual figure that appears in the Draft Estimates is £5,172,500, (of which £189,120 represents the cost of running the Ministry of Education for the full year and £4,983,380 is the corresponding figure for the Education Department also for the full year).

Grants-in-aid, which amount to £4,513,470, account for approximately 87 per cent of the total expenditure. As usual primary school grants claim a preponderance of the amount available and it is estimated that the figure of £3,363,370, provided for this purpose represents 64 per cent of the gross cost of maintaining all assisted primary schools in the Region. This means that the served communities are being asked to raise 36 per cent of the total cost by meeting the Assumed Local Contribution at the rates recently laid down by Government. Hon. Members will note that this figure is considerably below the 45 per cent stipulated in Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1954.

Under secondary education, the estimate of £316,250 represents a reduction of £70,000 on the original estimate of £386,250. This reduction has been achieved by increasing the rate of Assumed Local Contribution in secondary schools from £9 to £16.

Under teacher training a similar reduction has been achieved by decreasing the grant from £24 to £15 which has brought down the original estimate of £563,350 (by £72,000) to £491,350.

The reduction in the grant under Special Purposes, namely, £12,500 as compared with £62,130 in 1957-58, has been made possible by the fact that a number of schemes that would normally have qualified for assistance under this item will be financed from Colonial Development and Welfare funds.

At this point in my speech I shall crave your leave, Mr Chairman, to make a brief survey of the educational facilities in this Region for the benefit of hon. Members. They will, in the course of this summary, be able to have in their mind a clear picture of what the position is as regards education.

As hon. Members are aware, the introduction of Universal Primary Education in 1957 greatly quickened the already rapid rate of expansion of Primary Education. There were great increases in 1957 over 1956 figures. Schools increased by 39 per cent from 4,772 to 6,654; enrolment by 47 per cent from 904,235 to 1,330,000; teachers by 26 per cent from 29,671 to 37,397, nearly 35 per cent of this increase being new output from training

[MR OKWU]

colleges. This vast increase was not necessarily at the expense of quality. The number of trained teachers, excluding those of Preliminary Training Centres, increased by more than 3,000 during this period. Almost all the probationers were trained for several weeks prior to the opening of the 1957 school year by experienced certificated teachers. The quality of school buildings improved. There was an all out building programme. It is estimated that in the two years ended December, 1957 more than 2,000 permanent school buildings in both new and old schools were completed by Local Authorities, Voluntary Agencies and local communities.

In 1957, 349,586 children registered for U.P.E. in 1958. In spite of the re-introduction of Assumed Local Contribution in Standards I to VI in 1958, enrolment is very heavy in the urban areas and generally good in most other areas, except in a few backward localities.

1957-58 has seen a steady expansion in secondary education with a 10 per cent increase in enrolment. In 1956 there were 13,334 pupils in Secondary Grammar and Commercial Schools; in 1957 it had increased to 14,446, and in 1958 enrolment is estimated at 16,500. This means that one in every five children who pass Standard VI will be going into a Secondary School.

15 new Grammar Schools and 4 new Commercial Schools have opened in 1958. These include two new Local Government Schools: Agwu County Secondary School, Lengwe, and County Council Secondary School, Abakaliki. Of the other new Grammar Schools, six have been opened by Mission Voluntary Agencies and six are private.

There are now 83 Grammar Schools and 17 Commercial Schools: a grand total of 100 Secondary Schools.

Forty-two schools now take the West African School Certificate, and eight schools run Higher School Certificate courses. There is only one school with a Technical bias—Bishop Shanahan College, Orlu, and Government feels that there is a need for expansion here.

Total Government Grants-in-aid to secondary schools in 1956-57 was £278,789. Due to

the necessity of making economies, and the raising of the Assumed Local Contribution from £9 to £16, the 1958-59 expenditure is expected to remain about the same as the previous financial year. The new Assumed Local Contribution will mean some increased fees in all the schools in the Region whether they are government, voluntary agencies' or Local Government owned.

Under the Colonial Development and Welfare Plan, 57 Secondary Schools are receiving building grants totalling £129,350.

Technical education in the Region run by Government comprises a combined Technical Institute and Trade Centre at Enugu and four Handicraft Centres, situated respectively at Aba, Calabar, Enugu and Port Harcourt.

At present, handicraft training facilities are provided for approximately 2,800 senior primary school pupils. They attend their respective centres weekly each pupil receiving two hours' training per week over a period of two years. It is proposed to extend this type of training to some other centres in the Region, which will approximately double the existing facilities.

One recognised independent trade school operates on a small scale at Ahiara. Some of the larger companies have their own trade schools, such as U.A.C. Limited, who have opened a trade school at Aba, Shell-BP Company, who are opening a trade school at Port Harcourt this month and U.T.C. who have proposals for a trade school at Enugu, providing a site can be found for them.

A Regional Advisory Committee on Technical Education has been set up and its sub-committee is carrying out a survey to assess the technical needs of the Region. At present, facilities for technical education are inadequate and attention will be given to expansion as soon as funds become available.

In the field of teacher training, expansion in anticipation of the requirements of Universal Primary Education began in 1956. In the previous year there was a total of 53 training institutions with an enrolment of 4,395. In 1956 the number of colleges rose to 80 with a total enrolment of 5,767. It was in this year that for the first time Local Government owned Training Colleges were opened. There

were three of these. In 1957 five more were opened bringing the total to eight, while the over-all totals became 114 with an enrolment of 7,885. The figures for 1958 will not be available for sometime yet, but it is known that there will be 3,369 men and 900 women completing their courses this year.

It is considered that enough training colleges now exist to serve the needs of the Region although geographically they are not evenly distributed.

The year 1957-58 has seen big developments in girls' and women's education.

There was a striking rise in the number of girls receiving primary education during 1957, especially in the more backward areas, and it is to be hoped that this will be maintained.

Two new girls' secondary schools were opened in 1957 and one in 1958, bringing the number to twelve, and one school completed its double stream last year. Only four of the schools have been in existence long enough to be recognised for the West African School Certificate, but their results compare well with those of other types of secondary school in this or any of the Regions.

Encouraging also is the increase in the number of girls proceeding to higher studies. In this connection the Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology has made a valuable contribution with its Intermediate classes, and it is interesting to note that in 1957 the women finalists did better than the men, considering their numbers. Thus, there is a supply of women to go forward to the University College, Ibadan, by direct entry as well as those who enter by the preliminary examination; in fact, in the current academic year there are no less than eight women undergraduates in residence from one Eastern School alone. So far, however, women have not chosen science at the University because they have had little if any opportunity of taking science subjects in secondary schools. To meet this need, the Nigerian College is offering an intensive preliminary science course for girls, leading to the Intermediate course, and it is hoped that through this gateway women will enter not only science, teaching and the medical profession but also some of the many

useful, if less ambitious careers which are opening up for those with a science background.

In all the women's efforts towards higher education both at Intermediate and at University level, the Eastern Region Scholarship Board has played a most generous part.

In teacher-training the number of trained women teachers going out at the end of 1957 was 781 as compared with 390 in 1956, while in 1958 it is expected to be in the neighbourhood of 900. Thus in two years the output of the women's training colleges will have increased by over 125 per cent, and it seems unlikely that further expansion will be necessary.

At the Women's Occupational Training Centre, Aba, the third course in dressmaking commenced in January, 1958. Although these courses were not enthusiastically greeted at first because they awarded no teaching qualifications they are becoming more popular because of the excellent technical training given. The first secretarial course in the Region for girls with secondary education is planned to open at the Centre in January, 1959 and to last for two years, and the aim will be to turn out fully qualified Secretary-typists who will fill a pressing need whether in government or commercial offices.

The annual scholarship awards made by the Region are tenable in overseas and West African Institutions, but the present policy is to make a maximum use of local institutions, namely, the University College, Ibadan, and the Nigerian College of Arts Science and Technology. Awards of scholarships as at 1st January, 1958, total 536, detailed as follows:—

- 246 in the United Kingdom and Eire.
- 41 in the University College, Ibadan.
- 16 in the Nigerian College of Arts, Science and Technology.
- 12 in the United States of America and Canada.
- 6 in the University and Kumasi Colleges, Ghana.
- 5 in Furah Bay College, Sierra Leone.
- 2 in Germany.
- 1 in Switzerland.
- 28 unplaced but placeable in 1958.
- 176 in Secondary Schools.

[MR OKWU]

At least 120 post-secondary and 120 secondary school scholarships are proposed under the 1957-58 Scholarship Scheme, and it is hoped to announce these before long.

In the last two years over forty scholars returned from overseas on the completion of their studies.

In respect of Teachers' Grade II Examination, Government has decided to invite the West African Examinations Council to conduct the External subjects—Principles of Education, English Language and Arithmetic Processes—as from this year. The Council also conducts these subjects for the Northern and Western Regions and the Federal Territory. The Department will continue to conduct the rest of the papers and those for Teachers' Grade III Examination.

In conclusion, Sir, I think hon. Members will be interested to hear the stage of Nigerianisation in the Education Department. In all branches of the service there is at the present time a total of 148 Senior Service posts of which 125 are filled.

Of these 125 posts, 74 are filled by Nigerians and 51 by expatriates. When the figures are broken down, of the 51 expatriates 27 are in the Technical Branch with a total of 30 filled vacancies. This means that there are only 24 expatriates in the combined Provincial and Institutional branches with a total of 95 filled posts. In other words, in the Provinces and Institutions there are very nearly 4 Nigerians to one expatriate.

Sir, having dealt with these points, Members now know what the position is. Sir, the next point I want to clear is about E.T.C. teachers who are receiving training. Many Members of the House might have probably been approached by these teachers complaining that the salaries which they received while in training have been cut down by Government. I will like to explain, Sir, that as far back as 1955 a group of Educationists representing the principal voluntary agencies met Government and made representations to the effect that an undesirable atmosphere was created whereby in a Higher Elementary Training Institution there were three categories of students. The first category represent those who enter Higher Elementary Training institutions after

passing their standard six and passing their probationary period in the teaching field. These do four years and received no allowances or salaries. We had a second category—the ex-E.T.C. teachers who after obtaining their Lower Elementary Certificate and doing two years teaching in the field enter Higher Elementary Training Colleges to do extra two years in order to obtain their Higher Elementary Certificate. These received their full salaries as Lower Elementary certificated teachers minus the capitation grant of £24. Then you have a third category—ex-Secondary school students who after obtaining their School Certificate enter training colleges and these used to receive an allowance of £36 per annum. So the result was that there were privileged classes within the training institutions—those with money to play with and those with little or nothing. It was felt that this was highly undesirable and should be corrected by the Government. With your permission, Sir, I wish to quote from the minutes of the meeting which was held between these two bodies and the Government in 1955. It says:—

“It was generally agreed that the present system of allowances payable to teachers in ... training institutions was highly undesirable for the reason that the variations in the rate gave rise to discontent ... of teachers in training.”

These bodies met the Government and recommended that the payment of salaries should be discontinued and insisted that there should be a uniform allowance of £45 in respect of the ex-E.T.C. teachers and in respect of ex-secondary school teachers in training and those who entered the training colleges after passing their standard six should also receive £45 from their third year. So Government examined these proposals and decided to modify them by saying that the ex-E.T.C. students and the ex-secondary school trainees should receive £40 and those trainees with standard six pass should receive £30. Provision was made for those of them who got married before they entered the training institutions to receive £40 for their wives or for their families, that is exclusive of the £40, thus making a total of £80. I wish to say that I too have received strong representations from these students, and I am glad to say that the Government arrived at this decision after taking



into consideration all the factors involved. It did not give us pleasure to do that. The possibility of a reconsideration will depend on how soon the finances of the Region improved.

Sir, I am aware of your injunction that we should be as brief as possible. I do not think that there is any other thing very important which was not touched during the February meeting that I should waste the time of the House by repeating. I can only say that as far as we are concerned in the Ministry of Education, our present difficulties are a challenge to all of us whether you belong to Government or to the Opposition here and outside, because in the life of any nation, it may happen that at a time or another, the nation may have to pass through a difficult period. We are fully alive to our problems, and given time, we will be able to consolidate the grounds already covered and be in a position to lighten whatever burden that may have fallen on the shoulders of the people in the rural areas.

**Mr Ikoku:** Mr Chairman, I thank the Acting Minister of Education for certain clarifications. I wouldn't like to raise the issue of salaries in the Women's Training College because the Minister himself has promised that he will look into the matter if I take it up with him later in the Ministry.

Sir, there is just one point to which I would like to draw the attention of the House and that is the position and the working conditions of teachers in voluntary agency schools. We must admit that we cannot interfere unduly in the running of these schools because they are not ours. On the other hand, the voluntary agencies, Sir, must agree that we are contributing the lion share towards the cost of running these institutions, so we too must have a say on how they are carrying on their business.

I would like to point out, Sir, that the housing of teachers in the voluntary agency schools is very much below what would be regarded as acceptable. That is the case in primary schools, it is the case in secondary schools and also is the case in teacher training institutions. What hurts one most about some of these voluntary agency schools is the apparent discrimination that is going on. A secondary school tucked away in the bush—thanks to Government grants—can lay hands on electric plant which supplies light to the

whole school but a few Nigerian teachers living on the same ground are not entitled to the supply of electricity.

There is nothing at all to justify this, but there is that feeling that some of the teachers are inferior and others are superior. I will go on to add, Sir, that there are some of our boys who have been Overseas and had their full teachers' qualifications plus a University degree and came back and have been refused certain responsibilities in voluntary agency schools. When these young men join the Government Service, Sir, they are given senior service appointment and the rest of it.

I think there should be some line of demarcation drawn between church duties and school duties. The tendency in the voluntary agency school is to say that once you are not a reverend you cannot be the head of a school. So, the interesting point, Sir, is that the man who is denied the opportunity of running this school in some cases (I won't say in all cases) is better qualified to run an institution than the man who is discharging the functions.

What I am driving at, Sir, is that we have been very particular, in the past decade or so in this country, in seeing to the Nigerianisation of the Public Service, and what I am saying in this House now is that the Government should consider a corresponding Nigerianisation of the Voluntary Agencies. That is my point.

My last point is to thank the Government for agreeing to conduct an inquiry into the system of education in the Region and here I would like to tell them, Sir, that this shouldn't be the usual inquiry we have in this country. An attempt to kick up dirt in order to give trouble is not what we want. What we want is information and this information should be assembled without fear or favour. Let us know how the various educational institutions in this Region are run.

I would like to refer the Government to the Royal Commission of Inquiry set up in Britain, I think in 1931, to investigate the causes and make recommendations as to the cure of the great depression of that period. That Report has become a standard work with students of Economics the world over.

Now, it is the type of thing we want as regards this Commission to be set up in the

[MR IKOKU]

Eastern Region. Let us have the document which will be a sort of standard work or a mine of information for both Government or any other person who is interested in the problems of education in the Region.

In this connection, I would like to suggest that the investigating Commission should have the power to call for the accounts of institutions even where the institutions do not want to produce these accounts. That is where the managers, and I hope they will be very few, who will refuse the petition. The Commission should have the power to extract them, and secondly, Sir, I think the organised Teachers' Unions in this Region, both the Nigerian Union of Teachers and the Eastern Teachers' Association—if it is not dead yet—should be given an opportunity of making representations on behalf of the teaching profession before this inquiry.

**Mr O. Arikpo (Obubra Division):** Mr Chairman, Sir, I want to raise the matter as regards the policy of discrimination on the part of the Ministry of Education and the Department associated with it. Some two years ago the Roman Catholic Mission applied for permission to build an elementary training centre at Ugep in Obubra Division at the expressed request of the Ugep community which provided free land and labour. The Ministry refused to grant permission to the Mission ostensibly on the grounds that there was opposition to this project by some members of the Obubra Divisional Council. Since then there has been a series of correspondence and it is quite clear, and I believe the Ministry has been aware of that, that such opposition which existed then has disappeared, but the Ministry seems to be unable to grant permission to the Roman Catholic Mission to open this centre. I raise this matter now because there have been considerable correspondence with the Ministry and interviews with the Minister of Education and the Minister of Local Government and I have personally conducted correspondence with the Premier on this matter. In all cases I have received personal assurances that nobody wanted to prevent a worthy educational institution from being erected but those assurances have ended there and the Ministry has given no reason for withholding permission up to the present moment;

and I think I am entitled to make reference to the policy act on the part of the Ministry to prevent an area which is most insufficiently served with Teacher-Training institution facilities to have what is going to be the first Teacher-Training institution and I would like the Minister not only to explain why there have been these delays but also to give the assurance that the proposal will receive his immediate attention and that permission will be granted to the Roman Catholic Mission to open this elementary training centre.

**Mr Okwu:** Mr Chairman, I have noted the representations which he has made. I want to assure him that there is no intention on the part of my Ministry to stop the building of the college in his place but the objections come from the Obubra District Council, not from the Ministry.

#### **Sub-head 90—Buildings and Furniture : Secondary Technical School**

**The Minister of Information temporarily holding the Portfolio of Education (Mr B. C. Okwu):** Mr Chairman, I beg to move that Sub-head 90—Buildings and Furniture—be reduced by £28,000.

This, Sir, is a scheme where we thought we had made commitments to the value of £28,000 for erecting the Technical School at Port Harcourt. Now the project is to be suspended and we have found that the commitment was not actually made. There is thus a saving of £28,000 which we intend to transfer to another Sub-head. I shall be moving that later where that money shall be needed.

#### *Question proposed.*

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Mr Chairman, the Minister has only informed the House of a decision to suspend the scheme without giving reasons. Surely, items like buildings and furniture for a Secondary Technical School at Port Harcourt, are very important items and the amount involved is only £28,000. All the Minister has said is that the Government has decided to suspend the scheme. But I am sure that the House would wish to know why Government has taken this decision. The Government wanted £28,000 for this scheme and provision is in the Estimates. Why does Government decide to suspend the scheme ?

**Mr Okwu:** Mr Chairman, Sir, I think the hon. Member is entitled to know the facts. The Minister of Finance, early in this House, had moved a resolution asking for a transfer into the General Revenue Balance of a sum of £280,400 from Appendix 'A', C.D. and W. Scheme which was approved by the House at the material time; it was thought that with the Technical School project at Port Harcourt we were committed to the tune of £28,000. We have now found that this commitment will no longer be retained and, therefore, the Government decided to transfer this money to another scheme which we intend to carry on with later.

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### **Sub-head 91—Buildings: Technical Wings: Government Secondary Schools**

**The Minister of Information temporarily holding the Portfolio of Education (Mr B. C. Okwu):** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to increase Sub-head 91 by £28,000. The reason is that the Government intend to add Technical Wings to the Government Secondary Schools at Umuahia and Afikpo. It is a question of transferring from Sub-head 90 to 91.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £5,338,300 for Head 436—Education—stand part of the Schedule.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### **HEAD 437—MINISTRY OF FINANCE**

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £50,400 for Head 437—Ministry of Finance—stand part of the Schedule.*

#### **Other Charges**

**The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke):** Mr Chairman, I rise to move to create the following new Sub-heads under "Other Charges" and include provisions as follows:—

Contingencies Fund: Regional ...	£	75,000
Contingencies Fund: C.D. and Welfare ... ..		100,000

The reason for creating these Sub-heads springs directly from the new Constitutional Instrument. Hitherto, as hon. Members are

aware, a Supplementary Provision during the course of a financial year has been secured on the authority of the Standing Committee on Finance. However, now by sections 154A and B, which Members will find at page B 200 in the *Eastern Region Gazette* Extraordinary No. 1 of the 25th March, money can only be spent if it has been authorised by law.

It will be clear to all Members that the Standing Committee on Finance cannot make a law so it cannot authorise me to sign the necessary warrants for supplementary expenditure. Some Members may ask why there is a need for supplementary expenditure to be incurred. Leaving aside completely unforeseen contingencies such as a Royal visit, there are inevitable demands for money additional to that provided by the Appropriation Law. For example, it is extremely difficult to calculate exactly how much will have been spent on a particular capital project by the 31st March. Again, difficulties of supply or difficulties in sea transport, often lead to the late delivery of plant and equipment. This may have been quite properly ordered against appropriated funds in one year, and not arrive until the following, or even the next succeeding financial year.

It is to meet the unforeseen and to iron out the difficulties I mentioned that the Government proposes to create Contingencies Funds. The appropriations which I now seek are the limits to which the Government can spend money not already appropriated to specific items without recalling the House. This procedure is provided for by section 154B (5). It is in line with United Kingdom practice and has already been adopted in the West.

After the Appropriation Bill has passed through the Third reading I shall move the creation of appropriate appendices into which these sums will be credited. They will then be used to augment existing heads or create new sub-heads in accordance with rules which are now being drafted.

The two sub-heads should be considered together; the first is for Regional expenditure only and would have an effect on our budget balance. I am advised however that we shall not spend the whole of the £350,000 set aside as statutory expenditure for Lump Sum Compensation. I am advised that a saving of

[DR IMOKE]

£75,000 can safely be quoted there. Consequently, the creation of this sub-head does not affect the budget balance.

The second sub-head relates to C.D. and W. expenditure. As I have on many occasions informed hon. Members, C.D. and W. expenditure is exactly matched by revenue. The second sub-head of £100,000 will therefore be matched by appropriate revenue items in Heads 411 and 412, and by an appropriate insertion in Appendix A.

Sir, I beg to move.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Question proposed, That an increased sum of £225,400 for Head 437—Ministry of Finance—be inserted in the Schedule.*

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Mr Chairman, I would like, in future to see all votes, chargeable to the consolidated revenue fund separated from the rest of the votes not so charged to enable the House to know what votes are subject to appropriation.

I would like to see the Draft Estimates and the Memorandum bound together under one volume for convenience of Members who oftentimes have the Draft Estimates with them without the Memorandum.

I would ask the Minister of Finance to make a statement on the question of transfer of Government property, particularly the assets of the Catering Rest House to the Tourist Corporation. If Government has decided to hand over the assets of the former Government Catering Rest Houses to the Tourist Corporation, the House would like to know on what terms. I raise this point because when once any Government property is handed over to any of our statutory corporations, they cease to be Government property as such.

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### HEAD 438—ACCOUNTANT-GENERAL

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £451,600 for Head 438—Accountant-General—stand part of the Schedule.*

#### Sub-head 25—Share of Revenue Collection Costs

**The Minister of Finance:** Mr Chairman, I rise to move to reduce the sum appropriated by £50,000 being the sum provided in Sub-head 25—Share of Revenue Collection Costs. This amendment arises solely from the new Constitutional Order in Council which charges to the Consolidated Revenue Fund, our share of the collection costs of revenue assigned to us by statute. Consequently, it is not appropriated. The appropriate section in the amending Order in Council is No. 89, page B 205.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Question proposed, That a reduced sum of £401,600 for Head 438—Accountant-General—be inserted in the Schedule.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### HEAD 441—PUBLIC DEBT CHARGES

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £33,750 for Head 441—Public Debt Charges—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke):** I rise to move to leave out Head 441. Members will note that this Head contains two Sub-heads. Sub-head 2—Statutory Sinking Fund—Federal Loan has never been subject to appropriation. Hitherto Sub-head 1, the Interest, has been. However, by section 154E of the Constitution, page B 202 in *Gazette*, the Public Debt which is charged on the Consolidated Revenue Fund includes, by definition, interest as well as Sinking Fund payments. Consequently, Sub-head 1 has no longer to be appropriated and the whole Head disappears from the Schedule to the Appropriation Law.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Head accordingly left out.*

#### HEAD 442—MINISTRY OF HEALTH

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £13,430 for Head 442—Ministry of Health—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Minister of Health (Mr E. P. Okoya):** Mr Chairman, during the debate on the Speech From The Throne and on the Second reading of the Appropriation Bill many hon. Members raised certain points on Health and so I would like to take this opportunity of replying to certain points made by various Members so that they will be able to know the position of things. But first I would like to emphasise the essential points of Government's policy for Medical and Health Services.

Our ultimate object is so to expand and co-ordinate Medical Services in association with Local Government bodies, Local Communities and Voluntary Agencies as to bring full facilities within the reach of all, both in terms of distance and of cost. We are setting about achieving this aim of a National Health Service for the Region in a methodical fashion. Our long-term plan can broadly be divided into two main sections—the field of Curative Medicine and the field of Preventive Medicine. I will take first the former, which is concerned with Hospitals and such Institutions for the care of persons who are sick or hurt. Under the 1955–60 Development Plan for Medical and Health Services we are expanding and improving Government Hospitals and Training Institutions. From Regional funds we are providing for further expansion, such as the Hospital at Yenagoa and an operating theatre at Ogoja. Under this section also comes that very important part of our policy—the Rural Hospital programme—about which I shall have more to say later. We are operating, in association with Voluntary Agencies, Joint Hospitals under the administration of Boards of Governors which are largely autonomous and on which local interest is fully represented. And we are encouraging Voluntary Agencies still further by making considerable financial provision for Bed-Occupancy grants to assist with the recurrent expenses of running Voluntary Agency hospitals, for training grants for nurses and midwives successfully trained, and for salary grants to permit Voluntary Agency nurses to be paid on rates comparable to their colleagues in Government Service. All this is aimed at the improvement and development of curative medicine in the Region.

The same extensive programme applies in the field of Preventive Medicine. This is the field of medicine, which, by means of early diagnosis like mass radiography and of health

services like ante-natal care for pregnant mothers, seeks to prevent people from becoming sick. In association with experts of the World Health Organisation, campaigns are being carried out for the wholesale eradication of such diseases as yaws. A pilot scheme for malaria eradication is also being conducted. Our leprosy service—for which so much is owed to Voluntary Agencies—is already second to none in the world, but we are still further expanding it in another separate 5-year Development Plan. And of course one of the most important aspects of this part of our policy is the Rural Health Centre programme. These Rural Health Centres are true bases of preventive medicine: they are the counterparts in the field of preventive medicine of the Rural Hospitals. They serve a dual role—partly as a means of following up the mass treatment campaigns and so preventing a recurrence of the disease which has been eradicated, and partly as a means of bridging the gap between Hospitals and the people and of bringing medical facilities within the reach of all.

In the implementation of this policy the main emphasis is being placed on the development of the rural areas in order that these areas which have been neglected in the past might also enjoy facilities comparable with those in the bigger towns.

Now, the hon. the Leader of the Opposition is fond of accusing this Government of planlessness. I would like to offer him an invitation. Let him come at any time to my Ministry and we will give him facts and figures on these programmes which will establish beyond doubt the progress we are making in a comprehensive and co-ordinated plan, I repeat, Mr Chairman, plan of development. These programmes which I have mentioned will stand the closest scrutiny. We have already completed four rural hospitals and seven more are in course of construction. Three of the hospitals completed have become Joint Hospitals, that is to say we have relieved the sponsoring communities of financial responsibility for their maintenance whilst at the same time preserving local interest and independence in management. We are also making good progress with a first programme of Rural Health Centres and are planning a second one. We are devoting £90,000 to the substantial rebuilding of the Enugu Hospital. The work is going on now. We are providing another

[MR OKOYA]

two wards and other buildings for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Umuahia, Ikot Ekpene, Opobo and Degema Hospitals are at this moment now being rebuilt; work is going on at Okigwi and Owerri, Port Harcourt and Aba, and the construction of the Yenagoa Hospital is now almost complete.

Now, all this costs money. There is an old Spanish proverb which says "Take what you want" said God "take it— and pay for it". In this world you do not get anything unless you are prepared and able to pay for it. We cannot therefore do everything we want to do all at once. I myself would like to see more and more Doctors employed in those hospitals where both the Director of Medical Services and I are well aware the staff is hard put. But Doctors are not easy to recruit and have to be paid for. I too would like to see a Specialist Teaching Hospital in this Region, and it is the aim of Government to build one—but at a conservative estimate that would cost us £3 million to build. The case of the mentally sick is a pressing problem. We would like to build a full-scale Mental Hospital for which we have the site. According to the recommendation given by A. Carrothers, a Consultant of W.H.O., a full-scale Mental Hospital should have 720 beds and cost £1½ million. So too the problem of tuberculosis treatment needs close attention. All these things which need to be done cost money. It is in the light of that consideration that I would turn to points made by hon. Members in their speeches.

First I agree with the hon. Eronini that the Doctor's House in Owerri is about 30 years old. We have completed a new Doctor's house and the Director of Medical Services has posted another Doctor there now that it is complete. I shall bear in mind the hon. Member's request for a T.B. Annex. I am sorry to note that the hon. Onwuma finds the Enugu Hospital as he put it "very shameful". We are doing our best to improve it and I suggest he has a look at the rebuilding going on. I am rather inclined to think that he has not been to the Hospital for the past two or three months. I am pleased to note that hon. Achara and others appreciate what Government is doing in Okigwi and I thank them for their appreciation. The hon. G. I. Oko

wants me to look into the matter of a grant for the Awgu Hospital. I have already done so and met a delegation from this Council and the District Officer Awgu on the 15th of last month on this very subject. Hon. J. E. Eyo thinks that Rural Health Centre grants are being "dumped in one area". As I have explained, what we are implementing is only the first programme. It is however important that these centres should be so grouped as to be under close medical attention rather than scattered about in isolation. I would like to assure the hon. Member for Abak that sympathetic consideration will be given to one or more Rural Health Centres in that Division in association with the Local Government bodies. Indeed, my determination is to do so in association with Local Government bodies.

I turn now to Dr the hon. Onubogu's remarks about dangerous drugs. My Ministry is well aware of this problem and of the need for some form of control. Pharmacy is a designated subject—that is to say, in the interests of uniformity Regional Governments have agreed not to legislate piecemeal—and there is a Central Pharmacy Board in which such matters are vested. This matter of the control of dangerous drugs has been taken up with the Federal Government and the present Ordinance is under revision. It is my view that there ought to be checks on the importation and disposal of such drugs as would enable them to be traced from the time they enter the country until they enter a patient by way of a doctor's prescription. It is a nation-wide problem and I intend to take up the matter with the Federal Ministry of Health.

The same hon. Member made certain complaints about the Hospital Law. All that this Law—which I would remind Members was debated by this House—seeks to do is to set certain minimum standards for what it calls "Hospitals", by which is meant, broadly speaking, any institution for the care of the sick. There must be certain standards in these matters and this concept is by no means new. Nevertheless, if the hon. Member or Doctor or any other body of persons for that matter will make positive suggestions for improving what they consider to be wrong about this Law, I undertake to give their proposals my full consideration.

I do not agree with him at all, however, when he says that grants now provided for medical practitioners settling in rural areas should be given regardless of whether the project is in town or country. The whole purpose of this provision is to encourage settlement by Doctors in rural areas which are far less well served in this matter than the towns.

Dr the hon. Obonna has complained that nothing is being done at the Owerri Hospital. In fact, work to the value of £17,300 on an Out-Patient Block and staff quarters is going on now. The hon. Member also complained that my Ministry has not kept its promise to the Mbaise County District Council in respect of the Rural Hospital Project. The position is that a grant of £10,000 was given to the former Native Administration which set aside another £10,000 from its own reserves. Although no undertaking of assistance beyond £10,000 has ever been given, I am in fact prepared to share the cost of this additional building with the Council. I propose to utilise funds other than Regional for this purpose, and it may take a little time before my intention can be given effect, but I hope this statement which is indicative both of our good faith and our good intentions will allay the hon. Member's fears.

The hon. P. N. Okeke and hon. Etuk would like more money to be given to the Voluntary Agencies. So would I, and I share their appreciation of the splendid work done in such institutions. I shall have in mind what they said, but I would remind Members of what I said earlier in my speech. No Government anywhere in the world ever has enough to do all the things it would like to do all at once.

I would turn to a remark by the hon. Obayi who said—and I have checked his remarks against the verbatim record—that “Government has nothing to spend in Nsukka Division on health as compared with other Divisions which have Government and other Hospitals”. I believe this hon. Member has not been too fair to my Ministry. A very great deal has been, and is being done for the Nsukka Division. Apart from considerable grants-in-aid to the Voluntary Agency Hospital there, Nsukka Division has been selected as the Demonstration area in the Rural Hygiene

for the whole Region. For some years past an intensive campaign led by experts of the W.H.O. has been concentrating its efforts there with the result that the scourge of yaws which was once a serious problem there has virtually been wiped out. The pilot scheme for malaria eradication which I mentioned earlier is being conducted in Nsukka Division. Another W.H.O. expert in Public Health Administration has recently taken up residence there. A very considerable quantity of drugs has been distributed free in this Division. A major Demonstration Rural Health Centre Headquarters and Training Centre, as Members well know, has recently been completed there at a cost of over £10,000 and was formally opened recently by me. A considerable quantity of equipment has been provided free to Rural Health Centres built by the Local Government Councils in this Division, and in addition three more grants of £3,225, £3,100 and £2,000 have recently been approved for other Rural Health Centres in the Nsukka Division.

Mr Chairman, Sir, I have not got enough time to reply in detail to all the points raised by Members but I would like to assure all Members that I am prepared at any time to explain any of the points I have not mentioned in this my speech.

**Mr R. O. Ukuta, M.B.E. (Nsukka Division):** We pray the Regional Government for assistance in providing an electrical plant in the Voluntary Agency hospital at Nsukka. That is the only request. We do appreciate the health centre. We want the Doctors in the health centres to give injections in order to curb these quack Doctors in the rural areas because the men in the rural areas do not know that those Doctors do not know what are preventive medicines or curative medicines (*Interruptions*). When a man in the rural area goes to the health centre for injection and he is not injected he will say “Oh! the Doctor refused to treat me”. So I hope the Minister of Health will take this into consideration.

**Dr A. N. Obonna (Owerri Division):** Mr Chairman, Sir, I must express my thanks to the hon. Minister of Health for the work done by that Ministry and, in fact, I must say that right from the beginning this is one of the Ministries that has a declared policy which we have seen carried through, day after day, and I

agree that Doctors are more important. We all know they work very hard and should be given some priority. We want less cases going to court but we cannot say that of the

and what occurs in other Departments should apply to them. Dissatisfaction is apparent in the fact that during a period of three years there have been 34 resignations among the

here.  
Practically every Division has got an hospital according to plan. The original policy of the

funds become available and that in the interim date, because I know that taxes are being paid in through vigorous action of the Department of the Board of Internal Revenue.

*Eastern House of Assembly Debates*

1027

[*Appropriation Bill*—

11 APRIL 1958

*Committee*]

1928

[MR E. O. EYO]

made to understand that unless somebody dies in the First-class grade there is no prospect of promotion for them.

I observe that there is no provision for the post of a Chief Accountant. I have examined the Estimates of other departments and it is only in the Medical Department that there is no provision for a Chief Accountant, which I think is very essential since the Medical Department also handles large revenue.

The Ministry of Health should be congratulated for all the good work it has done so far for the Region.

My people have asked me to thank Government for agreeing to provide two rural health centres at Mbiaso in Western Nsit and Nung Udoe in Ibesikpo.

I am wondering why there should be some disparity in the salaries and conditions of service of Nigerian Nursing Sisters employed by Government and the Missions. I am informed that the latter offer a lower scale of salary. There should be no disparity in salary scales and conditions of service. After all, the Missions own more hospitals than the Government. I would like to see more of our girls who qualify as Nursing Sisters in the United Kingdom joining the Missions. I observe that but for the voluntary agencies the Government would not have been able to train enough nurses and midwives for the Region.

I have to pay my tribute to the work that is being done by the Roman Catholic Hospital at Anua in Uyo Division. I understand that this Hospital has had approval to prepare nurses for Part I examination of the Nursing Council in England. What is the Medical Department doing about the training of Government nurses? I only know of the Preliminary Training Centre at Aba, where after six months trainees are sent to the Government hospitals at Aba, Port Harcourt, Calabar and Enugu. It is rather shameful that a mission hospital has been approved to train nurses for Part I examination of the Nursing Council in England but none of the Government Teaching hospitals has been so approved. Government Teaching hospitals must raise their own standards and

prepare their nurses for this examination as well. The Minister of Health deserves our congratulations for carrying on the good work of his predecessor.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Finance (Mr A. O. Chikwendu):**

I beg leave on behalf of the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria to correct certain erroneous impressions created in this Chamber. In the first place, the Society condemns the attempts of any quacks or charlatans to dabble in the practice of either medicine or pharmacy. The society strongly repudiates the reference to Chemists as quacks in their professions and also resents the suggestion that Chemists administer dangerous drugs to members of the public.

The hon. Doctor who, perhaps due to his absorbing interest in politics, has forgotten his forensic medicine . . .

**The Chairman:** Will the hon. Member be good enough to withdraw that.

**Mr Chikwendu:** I withdraw, Sir.

He proceeded to miseducate this House by referring to the following anti-biotics as dangerous drugs:—penicillin, streptomycin, M. and B, and aureomycin. These, Sir, within the Pharmacy Ordinance are not dangerous drugs but they are on the poison list.

Dangerous drugs are classified as such because they are habit forming, they lead to what is called drug addictions and the short list comprises, opium, morphine, cocaine, Indian Hemp, codeine, pethidine, and their derivatives.

Chemists are trained and qualified people who are licensed to import, to compound, to mix, to dispense, and to sell drugs and poisons. They manufacture all drugs and poisons, standardise them, and pass them on to Doctors for use in their service to humanity. The rule is that Doctors consult patients and prescribe medicines and the Chemists dispense the prescriptions. But in our country most private practitioners elect to dispense the medicines themselves. They fail to co-operate with the Pharmacists. Some of them go to the extent of hawking tablets and patent



medicines. With your permission, Sir, I read from the British Pharmacist what the law is in the United Kingdom.

**The Chairman:** You do not have my permission to read that.

**Mr Chikwendu:** The convention, Sir, is that a Pharmacist is answerable to any mistakes a Doctor may make in his prescriptions. Occasionally a Doctor may prescribe overdosage of poisons like arsenic. It is the duty of the Pharmacist who has his codex at his beck and call to point out the error.

**The Chairman:** You are referring to the speech made by a Doctor in this House. I believe his complaint was that Pharmacists were practising medicine and not whether they can compound or do anything. If you like to refer to that, I may allow you; otherwise, it would appear out of order.

**Mr Chikwendu:** I am saying, Mr Chairman, how Doctors and Pharmacists co-operate, one depending on the other. Doctors consult the patients and the Pharmacists dispense the medicines. I am trying to point out to you, Mr Chairman, that in our own country it would appear as if there is overlapping between the two professions. That is the point I am trying to make. Doctors should make the fullest use of Pharmacists. That is done all the world over. I was pointing out, Sir, why it becomes necessary that Doctors should work in full co-operation with the Pharmacists because a Doctor may prescribe what is called chemical incompatibility. (*Applause*).

**The Chairman:** I think all these are irrelevant.

*Question, That the sum of £13,430 for Head 442—Ministry of Health—stand part of the Schedule, put and agreed to.*

#### HEAD 443—MEDICAL SERVICES

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £1,444,300 for Head 443—Medical Services—stand part of the Schedule.*

#### Sub-head 38—Guinea Worm Survey: Completion

**The Minister of Health (Mr E. P. Okoya):** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to create a new sub-head 38 under Special Expenditure—

Guinea Worm Survey. The sum of £650 was provided by Special Warrant in 1957-58 for a survey by a member of the staff of Ibadan University into the problem of guinea worm infestation. By the end of the year only £386 had been spent and £270 is required to complete the survey in 1958-59.

Sir, I beg to move.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### Sub-head 39—Maternity Ward Arochuku Hospital: Completion

**The Minister of Health (Mr E. P. Okoya):** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to create a new Sub-head 39 under Special Expenditure—Maternity Ward, Arochuku. The sum of £5,909 was provided for by Special Warrant; but up to 31-3-58 only £2,600 had been spent and the building is in progress. To complete the work the unspent balance of £3,310 is required.

Sir, I beg to move.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### Sub-head 52—Umuahia Joint Mission Training School

**The Minister of Health (Mr E. P. Okoya):** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to create a new Sub-head 52 under Special Expenditure—Umuahia Joint Mission Training School. A total provision of £30,000 (Estimates £15,000, Special Warrant £15,000) was made during 1957-58, to cover the cost of additional wards and other buildings at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. So far £29,820 has been issued and the building is in progress. The balance of £180 will be required.

Sir, I beg to move.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### Sub-head 92—Purchase of Launch and Motor Vehicles

**The Minister of Health (Mr E. P. Okoya):** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to create a new Sub-head 95 under Special Expenditure—

[MR OKOYA]

Purchase of Launch and Motor Vehicles. Under the Eastern Region Development Plan 1955-60 for Leprosy Control £12,000 is provided for launches and vehicles. The £9,210 now sought is required to meet the cost of launches now being completed.

Sir, I beg to move.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Question proposed, That an increased sum of £1,457,270 for Head 443—Medical Services—be inserted in the Schedule.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### HEAD 448—LEGAL

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £30,260 for Head 448—Legal—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Minister of Justice (Mr R. O. Iwuagwu):** Mr Chairman, Sir, I am going to be very brief because on Wednesday the 26th March, 1958, I replied to the speeches of hon. Members in so far as they referred to my Ministry. My answers, I presume, covered most of the activities of my Ministry.

Mr Chairman, I do not intend to speak on the Legal Department and the Judiciary, as there are no outstanding points which need clarification as far as those Departments are concerned. My speech, therefore, is to be centered around the proposed Customary Courts.

At this stage it is not possible to envisage the amount of deficit (if any) that will be incurred by County Courts. These courts are a new creation, and as is stated earlier, any deficit incurred by any of the County Courts will be borne by my Ministry. All things being equal, District and County Courts will be established or declared in Awgu, Udi and Nsukka Divisions sometime next month. Arrangements have almost been completed for the introduction of those courts. The original plan to provide one County Court for Awgu and Udi Divisions has been dropped, and instead Awgu and Udi Divisions will each have a County Court. This, no doubt, will allay the fears of the people of Awgu.

People have been asking whether this Ministry will provide the necessary funds for the erection of customary courts buildings. My answer has always been in the negative. With your permission, Sir, I refer hon. Members to section 9 of the Customary Courts Law, 1956, which states thus:

“No customary court shall be constituted unless the Minister is satisfied that proper provision shall be made by a council for:—

- (a) the payment of members of a customary court;
- (b) the remuneration of the customary court Registrar and other officers; and
- (c) such accommodation and supply of equipment as the proper functioning of the customary court may require.

A reasonably adequate scale of sitting fees has been worked out, and I do hope it will satisfy all concerned when it is released.

A substantial increase in the fees of customary courts is anticipated and all fees, fines, and penalties payable in respect of or as a result of proceedings in any customary court and the proceeds of sale of any forfeiture ordered by such customary court shall be paid to and form part of the revenue of the Council responsible for the maintenance of such court.

In order to assist in raising the revenue of our councils, I am appealing to hon. Members to help in the drive to put an end to the prevailing practice whereby some councillors, tribal unions and chiefs exercise judicial powers without proper authority. A lot of revenue is lost by this illegal practice. Moreover, this practice constitutes a criminal offence punishable on conviction by imprisonment or fine or both.

With the kind co-operation of the Ministry of Welfare, the Awgu community centre is being used by my Ministry for the training of Registrars and Presidents of customary courts.

There is a provision in the Customary Courts Law, 1956, for the appointment of Assistant Customary Courts Advisers who shall at all times have access to District and County Courts and to the records and proceedings of such courts and may, of their own motion where there is a *prima facie* case

of miscarriage of justice, advise the court in any proceedings as the justice of the case may require it. It is proposed to request the appointment of such officers as soon as circumstances permit.

It is the intention of my Ministry to codify our native laws and custom, and with the co-operation of all, this objective will be achieved in the very near future.

You are all aware of the recent press releases in which it was stated that legislators including local government councillors would not be considered as eligible to hold office as members of customary courts, provided that they would not be precluded from presenting themselves as candidates for selection as court members on the understanding that they would relinquish their positions as legislators and councillors on appointment as court members. The position of teachers was clarified in my speech of Wednesday the 26th of last month.

Mr Chairman, the Leader of the Opposition, in speaking here in this hon. House on 9-4-58, tried to suggest the winding up of the Ministry of Justice, because he said that since the Attorney-General was raised to a status of Minister, there was no need for a Minister of Justice. (*Laughter*).

His other alternative suggestion was to merge the two Ministries of Local Government and Justice. He went on to say that the Minister of Justice was charged with a mere establishment of Customary Courts.

Sir, his statement in that connection is untrue. The Minister of Justice is charged with many responsibilities other than the establishment of the Customary Courts in this Region.

Mr Chairman, in the *Eastern Regional Gazette* No. 19 Volume 6, dated 28-3-57 page 133, the Minister of Justice is charged with the following Ministerial responsibilities:

1. Administration of Justice including Customary Courts.
2. Matters arising under the Collective Punishment Ordinance Section 3 (In this present Session one Bill entitled Riot Damages Law received the blessing of this House (*Hear! Hear!*)).

3. The Legal Department (subject to the limitations conferred by section 119 (2) of the Nigeria (Constitution) Order in Council 1954).
4. Administration of Estates.
5. Evidence.
6. Fingerprints, Identification and Criminal Records.
7. Trustees (as defined in item 30 of the concurrent Legislative List).

Sir, the leader of the Opposition should be taught that a Nation, a Country, a Region for that matter without Justice is doomed to perpetual lawlessness, chaos, and maladministration. (*Applause*).

I therefore, resist the Leader of the Opposition's wicked and malicious suggestion to scrap the Ministry of Justice. Hon. Arikpo is to be assured that my Ministry has placed on the priority list the erection of a High Court building in Onitsha as soon as funds are available. (*Applause*).

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Mr Chairman, I rise to move to reduce Sub-head 1 item 1 by £300. The amendment is necessary in view of the fact that the post of Attorney-General is a Ministerial one and all Ministers have voluntarily surrendered 10 per cent of their salaries. Our new Attorney-General, I hope, will also be generous enough to surrender 10 per cent of his salary. The Attorney-General has accepted this political appointment and accepted this post. I do not see why he should earn more than the other Ministers. I appreciate the grave responsibility of the Attorney-General and I do not feel very strongly to press the amendment, but I would like to know what the Government thinks about it.

**The Chairman:** Do you wish to withdraw?

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** I will withdraw.

**The Chairman:** But you haven't done so, or you are waiting for other Members to speak on it?

**Dr Onubogu:** Mr Chairman, I just want to take a few minutes to congratulate the Minister of Justice on his appointment as a Minister of Justice (*laughter*), and to warn him that there is a planned and constant perversion of the course of justice in the

[DR ONUBOGU]

Eastern Region. The attention of the House has already been called by one of the speakers, but I just want to rub it in.

I have in mind two cases: a man at Kano who took action in Court and the case was fixed about two months ahead. There was another man in the Cameroons—all two are Easterners. Each was given Hearing Notice. To their surprise when the days came, they went to court—not the same day, on different days—simply to find that the summons had not been served the respondent. This happens a great deal here in the Eastern Region. The respondents keep on moving about the town and yet the bailiffs say they could not find them. The Minister of Justice, the Attorney-General and the Chief Justice for that matter should see this. This is your work; you better start with that, Mr Attorney-General. (*Laughter*). It is so rampant now that I am saying with the emphasis at my command that the course of justice is being perverted. Something should be done to get summonses served properly. I have nothing more to add, for everything has been said about the subjects under the Minister of Justice's portfolio. I think he is the right man in the right place.

**The Premier:** Mr Chairman, in view of the fact that the Opposition Chief Whip does not press, I take it that he only wants information and I am glad to give him the information.

We took into consideration the fact that, even all things being equal, ministerial appointments are purely political, but other responsibilities of politicians involved technicalities in the field of law which required specialist training and we took into consideration that even in Whitehall, whereas Ministers are paid a specific salary, both the Attorney-General and the Solicitor-General receive higher pay than their political colleagues. Then we also took into consideration the fact that when the decision was made, it was not quite clear that it was a moral issue on which the new Ministers were concerned and that we were taking this decision as individuals and at that time he was not a party to this decision, not being a member of Executive Council. So we felt that it was unfair to ask him to make a sacrifice under circumstances which he was

unaware and that it was a moral responsibility on our part, and that we shall not ask him to make that sacrifice. We also decided that it will equally apply to the Commissioner in the United Kingdom who is not a member of the Executive Council. These are the three factors. First of all, that the job of an Attorney-General is not purely political but that it borders on the field he specialises and that it is an added responsibility. As a Minister he was not a party to it. That is why we decided that we shall not insist that he makes the sacrifice.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Mr Chairman, from what the hon. the Premier has just said I am not impressed at all by what the Minister of Justice has said. When the Leader of the Opposition suggested the merging of the two Ministries it was not suggested that the Minister of Justice should lose his job—some other work should be found for him to do. What interests us is not who is made a Minister or who is not. What I am saying, is that now that we have got a qualified person appointed the Attorney-General of the Eastern Region, he should head the Ministry of Justice and all the Departments under this Ministry. If the Attorney-General does not head the Ministry of Justice, then I do not know what will be his Ministry. The Solicitor-General is going to be the head of the Public Service section of that Ministry and, in my view, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry. After the Attorney-General comes the Solicitor-General, but all this must flow from a Ministry. I am saying that we must have the Attorney-General to head the Ministry of Justice, and it is left to the Premier to find another job for the present Minister of Justice. We want the whole Ministry reorganised now that we are a self-governing Region, just as the Premier has carefully reorganised his office.

I have in mind the revision of the Laws of the Eastern Region. I understand that the Western Region will soon publish its Law Reports. I would like the same thing done here. Everybody will agree that most of our laws are obsolete. I would like to see a revision of all the laws of the Eastern Region.

I would like also to suggest a division to be headed by the Director of Public Prosecutions. We would like to have a Legal Draughtsman

who will assist the Attorney-General in his responsibilities for Government legislative programme. The whole structure falls under one Ministry—the Ministry of Justice. We must look up to the Attorney-General and nobody else.

I observe that Government proposes that the post of Solicitor-General should be a political appointment. Here I disagree. The Solicitor-General must be a civil servant. He will head the Public Service Section of the Ministry of Justice. He should be the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry and must therefore be a civil servant. The Attorney-General will be appointed by the Government of the day, but the Solicitor-General remains as a permanent civil servant to serve under any Attorney-General.

**The Chairman:** Before we really make a mistake about it, I believe you are aware that the Solicitor-General in the Western Region is not a political appointment. It is a civil service appointment, and in the Eastern Region, I think it is clearly indicated it might be a political appointment. So that in the Western Region, as in the Eastern Region, a Permanent Secretary must of necessity be a civil servant.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** That is my point, Sir. We want the Solicitor-General to be next to the Attorney-General. Let him know that he is a civil servant. As a matter of fact he will be the constitutional adviser to the Attorney-General.

I am watching with keen interest the way and manner the post of Solicitor-General will be filled. It is not just anybody who can be appointed to the post and I hope that those who are aspiring to the post will be interviewed by the Public Service Commission. However, there is one thing which makes me complain about the Public Service Commission, and that is this. When a vacancy occurs, long before it is filled, the public knows who is going to be appointed. The person goes before the Public Service Commission and he is in fact appointed. I hope this will not be the case in respect of the Solicitor-General. The person to be appointed should have considerable experience and should be a Senior Crown Counsel.

**The Chairman:** Will it be easy for you to guess who it will be?

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** It will not be easy. At the moment there is a strong rumour of who has been earmarked for the post and the gentleman is not even a member of the Legal Department. I am inclined to believe the rumour because of such rumours in the past which were confirmed by subsequent appointments by the Public Service Commission. I consider the post of Solicitor-General to be next to that of the Attorney-General. The person to be appointed should be a lawyer with considerable experience and must be a civil servant, hence my suggestion that he must be a Senior Crown Counsel in our Legal Department.

**Mr Arikpo:** Mr Chairman, supporting what Mr Eyo has just said, I want to add that the post of Solicitor-General is a very important one. He requires high professional qualification. Secondly, I would like to say that I entirely agree with the Premier's explanation about the emoluments attached to the office of Attorney-General. I would like to see it continue like that and I would like that if we have a properly qualified person in the Ministry of Justice the same conditions will apply to him. The two offices are very important—the Ministry of Justice and the Attorney-General's Office. The two offices should be merged the Attorney-General being the political head and the chief law officer of this Region. I do not personally mind whether the Solicitor-General is a politician or a civil servant but he should also be a lawyer of outstanding merit because he is next to the Attorney-General. He is the second lawyer of this Region. Therefore you couldn't possibly attach a salary of £2,400 to that office. I will be very pleased to hear that it is changed to just below what the Attorney-General earns and he will be the next man if you decide to make it a political office. But from the point of view of continuity and policy, I personally feel it would be much better to have a permanent appointment and a man, who whether he is taken from the ranks of practising lawyers or not, once he is appointed a civil servant, he remains there and as Mr Eyo suggested, he is the permanent legal adviser to the Government in that Department. Once that is done we will be able to differentiate between the Solicitor-General and the Director of

[MR ARIKPO]

Public Prosecutions who is a permanent official with constitutional links with the Attorney-General but in matters of prosecution entirely independent of the Attorney-General. We would like that reflected in the arrangement of the Estimates and in the re-organisation of the Legal Department. The Attorney-General will have under him an officer who will be responsible to him for the whole work of legal drafting and so on, but the Director of Public Prosecutions is an institution by himself because the Attorney-General wants to show the public that he does not influence prosecutions and therefore that although he is the first law officer of the Region he is not in a position to interfere with public prosecutions. I would like the Premier to take these matters into consideration.

What is still important is that when we have a properly organised Attorney-General's office I think there will be no need for a Ministry of Justice. The whole of the question of customary courts and so on can be administered by a division within the Attorney-General's Office under the Director of Public Prosecutions, because he is a man who sees that prosecutions are fairly and honestly handled and he should exercise supervisory functions over the whole of the customary courts in the Region.

**The Premier:** I am very grateful to the speakers opposite for the suggestions they have made. I think it is now time for me to call their attention to the fact that ever since we started the Second reading of the Appropriation Bill they have overlooked a very significant statement made by the Minister of Finance and I feel that had they borne this statement in mind it would not have been necessary for them to point out all these matters. For example, with your permission, may I just quote what my hon. colleague said in his speech at page 10—

“On the 8th August last year the Region became self-governing, and a number of changes in Ministerial organisation took place. It may be that further changes will be necessary. For these, and to implement the Self-Government proposals we have just debated, a supplementary budget will be presented to the House later in the financial year”.

And then he made these points:

“As experience strengthens and invigorates our Ministerial system, changes in the organisation of the Government become necessary. One that is imminent is the integration of Ministries and Departments. This will ensure that the Ministry dog wags the tail”.

My point, Sir, is that we are all aware of the fact that Amendment Order in Council was only signed within the last fortnight, so that in preparing these Estimates it was not possible to take into consideration all these changes. I know that in the North and West they have almost concluded their policy of integration. We have succeeded in organising some of our own Departments and integrating them. But unfortunately it is not possible to integrate all these Departments, so that we have only Ministries and then real divisions. That was what my colleague had in mind when he mentioned it. Now that they have made all these points I want to assure them that the question of integration is being taken up by this Government and that is why we thought we should have a supplementary budget and in our supplementary budget we should be able to integrate.

We may not follow other details of your suggestion but I can assure you that some of the statements made by the Opposition Chief Whip and the hon. Member for Obubra Division are already in train, although we do not intend to have a law revision. That is a matter of opinion and we will be able to explain to them why we did not feel that before independence we should revise our laws; but having the Directors of Public Prosecutions as a separate institution is quite obvious. The intention is to allow him to exercise his constitutional powers and then having made the Attorney-General the head of that Ministry I would ask that in order not to embarrass any of my colleagues, it will be left for us to integrate and after integration, naturally we come here. (*Interruption*). I wouldn't like to come and say that the Attorney-General will be at the head, the Minister of Justice will be so and so, but I think we all agree on one point that whether we call it Attorney-General's Chamber or Ministry of Justice, makes no difference. It is quite obvious that we must have a Ministry over which the Attorney-General will be head, so that if they can just be patient and bear in

mind the statement made by the Minister of Finance they will agree that they are trying to anticipate us.

**Sub-head 1, Item 7—Crown Counsel,  
Scale A**

**The Minister of Justice (Mr R. O. Iwuagwu):** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to leave out 5 and insert 7 in Head 448, Sub-head 1, Item 7. Due to typographical error, 5 was inserted instead of 7. The change from 5 to 7 will not have any adverse effect on the sum of £7,710 budgeted for that item.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Question again proposed, That a sum not exceeding £30,260 for Head 448—Legal—stand part of the Schedule.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**HEAD 449—MINISTRY OF LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT**

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £115,870 for Head 449—Ministry of Local Government—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Minister of Local Government (Chief A. N. Onyiuke):** Mr Chairman, the estimates for my Ministry follow the general pattern for this year; they are the result of the need for economy, to enable our finances to recover from the strain put on them by the experiment in U.P.E. I deplore this necessity as much as anyone, but we cannot escape from the harsh logic of facts and figures; and, like my hon. Colleagues, I have reluctantly had to accept some reductions and economies in the estimates for my Ministry.

Hon. Members will note a number of changes in the personal emoluments Sub-head, caused by the introduction of the grade of Executive Officers. There is an apparent reduction in the number of Assistant Secretaries in the Ministry from 8 to 3, but this is only apparent; the other 5 posts will be filled by 2 Higher Executive Officers and 3 Executive Officers. There is also an apparent abolition of the 17 posts of Examiners of Accounts; here again, these posts are partly replaced by the posts of 2 Higher Executive Officers

(Accounts) and 7 Executive Officers (Accounts), a total of 9 in all. Last year, when I was speaking on a similar occasion, I explained that these 17 posts of Examiners of Accounts were intended to form the nucleus of an Internal Audit Service for Local Government Councils. Unfortunately, we were faced with various technical difficulties over recruitment during this last year, and in fact only 2 of these 17 posts have so far been filled.

Three more candidates have recently been selected and will shortly, I hope be formally appointed. Now, these officers have to be trained in their duties if they are to be of real use to Councils, and this training takes up the time of busy officers; so it is just as well not to recruit too many at once. I have, therefore, made provision in the Draft Estimates for 9 posts only which will enable 4 more officers to be recruited this year. I hope to increase the establishment next year, as I am positive that these officers are going to be of very great value to Councils. I have been disturbed, over the last few months, to note the increasing volume of evidence of laxity in the control of Local Government funds; reports from my own staff, and from the Director of Audit, show that many Local Government treasurers are not up to their work and that others are dishonest. Executive Officers (Accounts) will be very necessary to make frequent surprise checks on treasuries to combat dishonesty, and to help the weaker treasurers in keeping their accounts up to date.

It will also be seen that reductions are proposed in the clerical staff of my Ministry. This is really only accepting the facts as they are; this staff has regularly been under strength last year, and in view of the need for strict economy a reduction is being made in their nominal strength.

On the other hand, hon. Members will note that three new items appear under "Other Charges". Item 12 is to cover the cost of the Local Government Service Board, which has been set up to advise me on matters of appointments and promotions to senior posts in scale 4 and above, and on all questions of dismissal of staff. This Board consists of a Chairman and 4 members; the Chairman receives remuneration of £450 per annum and each member receives £300 per annum, plus mileage for travelling to attend Board

[CHIEF ONYIUKE]

meetings. Item 13 is inserted to enable me to assist Local Government Councils in sending staff for further training at Ibadan and elsewhere. Item 14 is not really new, but has been transferred to my Ministry's Head from the Administration Head of the Estimates.

I should like to say a few words about an item which I consider of great importance, namely, Item 15, Special Grants to Local Government bodies. In the years 1955-56 and 1956-57 a total expenditure of £155,000 was authorised for this purpose. Applications were received from very many Councils, and after careful scrutiny, schemes totalling this amount were approved and promises were made to Councils that grants would be made to them. However, money was not paid out to any Council until it had prepared a detailed scheme and was ready to put it into operation. At the end of the last financial year a total of £103,446 had been so paid out, leaving a balance of £51,554 which had been promised but not yet paid. Government is morally bound to make good these promises, and I have every intention of seeing that those promises are made good.

I do not, however, expect that all Councils' schemes will be completely ready this year, and so provision of £48,000 has been inserted, leaving a balance of £3,554 to be provided in 1959-60. I wish to make it absolutely clear, however, that these are not in any way new grants that are being made, but only old promises that are being redeemed.

Hon. Members will note that a number of former items under Other Charges are not included in these Estimates. The cost of Local Government Inquiries will in future, as the Local Government Law provides, be a charge on Councils' own revenues, and so will the cost of Local Government elections. The cost of publicity is now met by the Ministry of Information.

Finally, I wish to refer to the omission from this year's Estimates of any contribution to the Local Government Loans Fund.

*Sitting suspended at 4.30 p.m.*

*Sitting resumed at 5 p.m.*

**Chief Onyiuke:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I was saying that hon. Members will recall that the Fund was started in 1955-56 with a contribution of £100,000 transferred from the Federal loan account, and that a further contribution of £100,000 was made to the Fund last year. I should like to quote the statement made by my hon. Colleague, the Minister of Finance when he moved the Appropriation Bill last year: he said, in this connection:

“A contribution of £100,000 to the fund has been made for the second year and it is planned to make other contributions annually in future with the intention of building up the Fund to sizeable proportions. It will be appreciated by the House that this Government cannot commit itself to future contributions of a definite size until such time as the financial position is clarified.”

Unfortunately, Government finds itself unable to make any contribution to the Fund this year, as its financial position does not permit it. I accepted this fact reluctantly, but I can assure hon. Members that I shall press, with all the energy I can, for contributions to be made to the Fund in future years. I should also like to make it clear that this does not mean that I will be unable to offer any loans to Councils this year. As Councils repay their loans by instalments, these repayments go back into the Loans Fund and become available for making further loans. With those sums, together with an amount which I kept in reserve last year against such a possible contingency, I shall have a reasonable sum at my disposal this year to make loans to Councils. Yesterday the hon. Mr E. O. Eyo suggested that there was £113,000 available in this Loans Fund and that money should be transferred from this to Head 450 to bring the grants for all Local Government Councils to the same level as they had in 1957-58. I should first like to point out that this full sum of £113,000 is not immediately available since I have already made promises to Councils to give them loans totalling approximately £70,000 out of this, and I do not propose to go back on those promises. The amount left in the Loans Fund would not be enough to make up the cuts in grants.

The hon. E. O. Eyo also made great play yesterday with the suggestion that the two Municipalities and the 18 independent District Councils were being treated worse than other



Councils by having their grants reduced. This is not, of course, correct. All Councils are in effect having their grants reduced equally. The actual figures for District Councils which were within County Council are bigger this year, but they are only taking over the reduced grants of the former County Councils while they are taking over the full functions and liabilities of those County Councils. All Councils will, therefore, have to exercise economy in this coming year in exactly the same way as the Regional Government is having to exercise economy. I have had to modify the estimates of Councils this year to make sure that their expenditure is not greater than their revenue and to make sure that they keep an adequate working balance of 15 per cent of their revenue to enable them to meet necessary payments before they collect their rates. This has meant in most cases that they will have to be content with keeping the level of their services at the same rate as last year and postponing their Development Schemes until their financial position is easier. Councils will have to regard this coming year as one for consolidation of existing services.

Having cleared the air, Mr Chairman, I beg to move the insertion of a new Sub-head 16, with a provision of £500 being payment to Port Harcourt Municipality in respect of Petroleum Storage Fees due to them from 1st April, 1957 to 31st January, 1958. Last year, provision of £1,400 was made under such a sub-head. In Port Harcourt only the issue of licences and collection of fees for storage of petrol was carried out by the Municipality. Elsewhere it is done by the District Officers. The reason for this was that Port Harcourt was formerly a first-class township and therefore under the petroleum regulations, the Town Clerk there carried out these functions and not the District Officer. My Government has decided that from the 1st of February this year these duties should be carried out by the District Officer to bring Port Harcourt into line with the rest of the Region. In future, therefore, the Municipality will not be entitled to any payment for these services which it will not be carrying out. But we have always reimbursed the Municipality any arrears for this service and it is entitled to payment for the work it carried out between the 1st of April, 1957 to the 31st January, 1958. It is therefore necessary to make provision

for this payment which was not made in the financial year 1957-58.

Mr Chairman, I beg to move.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Question proposed, That an increased sum of £116,370 for Head 449—Ministry of Local Government—be inserted in the Schedule.*

**Mr P. U. Amaefunah (Awka Division):**

Mr Chairman, the Ministry of Local Government is a very difficult Ministry to manage as it is difficult to control human minds and associations of individuals. Our new County Councils, I prophesy, might prove a failure unless transfers of Secretaries of Councils are effected without further delay. This is to avoid the son-of-the-soil mania among Councils and Councillors. (*Hear! Hear!*). This will spell efficiency and trust in Councils and sanity and responsibility will be the order of the day among the Councillors. Mr Chairman, the old adage which says that travelling is a part of education always stands correct. Some Secretaries always fall a prey to the whims and caprices of the clique formed by some Councillors who keep on ransacking every part of the constituency, going afishing and monkeying about. They should go on transfer after every one or two tours.

There should have been a provision in the law barring certain people from standing county election in the Eastern Region. These Councillors should, by law, declare their income—and I suggest £300 per annum—before they stand election because certain people without any visible means of livelihood drift into Councils to form a clog in the wheel of progress. The Board of Internal Revenue will then come round with a big stick to cudgel off some parts of their declared income.

Mr Chairman, there is a move by the Ministry of Local Government in conjunction with the Ministry of Education to bar teachers from taking part in active politics or standing election for that matter. These teachers are not directly responsible to the Government as they teach in Voluntary Agency Schools and are denied certain amenities enjoyed by Government teachers. I ask: where does Government propose to get

[MR AMAEFUNAH]

Members of this hon. House? By a process of elimination, it must not be among the civil servants where we have the real brains and who by provisions of the General Orders are not to show their political leanings; not among the crop-farmers who have not the requisite educational qualifications; not among traders who detest anything political. It must be among the humble, painstaking teachers or barristers in the Eastern Region. This is a thing to think about and the Premier has to use his good offices to warn these two Ministries.

I thank the Ministry of Local Government for the formation of the Tenders Board set up for the various Councils for the award of contracts. This will go a long way to minimise corruption in the Councils.

We in Awka Division detest the way Administrative Officers are posted to Awka. Within the last two years we had over eight District Officers each spending roughly three months.

**An hon. Member:** Yes, you are correct.

**Mr Amaefunah:** The result was that none had time to settle in order to plan rural development. Awka Division never benefited from their short stay. There is always trouble and friction between the District Officer and the Council Secretary who regards himself as the District Officer.

Yesterday, my hon. Friend, Mr E. O. Eyo quoted figures to show reduction in grants to Local Government bodies in the Eastern Region. He forgot that these Councils collect and control rates ranging from fifteen shillings to twenty shillings per tax-payer in their various areas of jurisdiction. Last year they paid heavy precepts to County Councils above them and this is not the case this year. I will take two examples, Sir: Aguata and Njikoka in Awka Division had capital grants of £11,018 and £11,093 respectively last year and paid precepts to the tune of over £18,000 each to the Niger County Council and yet maintained their other social services. This year, £20,200 will go to Aguata as capital grants and £20,338 to Njikoka and each will collect and control rates and there will be no precepts paid. Ditto for all the other Councils in the Eastern Region.

I refer my hon. Friend to page E 112, Appendix B of the Draft Estimates. The provision therein is open to all Local Government bodies in the Region.

Mr Chairman, I have one thing to suggest in this direction. As Local Government bodies form part and parcel of the Regional Government, as they receive block grants from the Regional revenue, as they collect and control rates in their areas of authority, I humbly submit that their accounts should be submitted to the Accountant-General for strict checking, to the Regional Auditor for careful and competent auditing, and to the Public Accounts Committee for proper scrutiny.

**Mr A. G. Umoh (Enyong Division):** Mr Chairman, the hon. the Minister of Local Government did say in his last speech that this year is a year of consolidation and that Local Councils will not be allowed to undertake any capital work. I have a particular case of a secondary school that was proposed to be built by the Lower Cross County Council, since two years now. I realise that secondary schools are within the portfolio of the Minister of Education, but, Sir, where a Local Government Council has to build a school it is true that it needs the co-operation of the Minister of Local Government as well as that of the Minister of Education. About two years now, the Lower Cross County Council sent a delegation to the Minister of Education of which I was one, asking for permission to open a secondary school in the Ibiono section of Enyong Division. It is absolutely essential that there should be a secondary school there. The people realising the Government's policy of 50/50 contribution, decided to contribute and on that occasion we were able to present a sum of £1,200 to the Minister. The people were busy collecting more as the Minister had told them that if they had £4,000 he would give them the balance for a secondary school. Last year, when the Lower Cross River County wrote to ask the Minister's permission to undertake the building, the answer that came to us was that the Minister of Local Government was not disposed to granting permission to start as he was anxious to wait until the County Councils are wound up and the responsibility for the school would be taken up by the Ibiono District Council. Following that, we of the County Council had to transfer the responsibility for this school to the Ibiono

District Council and the Ibiono District Council, I understand, has put in a petition asking for £6,000 to supplement the local contribution towards the building of this school. I feel it is a great effort by the people to think of erecting a secondary school for the education of their children. This amount of £6,000, I am told, was inserted in the current Estimates of the Ibiono District Council. I know that the Ibiono people are willing to pay a secondary school rate to cover this amount if only the hon. the Minister of Local Government allows this item to remain in the Estimates. If the Minister's statement about consolidation is applicable in all cases, it is going to kill the initiative of the Ibiono people towards this school. That is why I wish to appeal to the Minister of Local Government to be gracious enough to allow that we undertake this capital work by granting us permission to collect our rates to establish this secondary school.

**Mr Ikoku:** Mr Chairman, I would like to draw attention to a few points, but before doing that I would like to pay tribute to the Minister of Local Government. It is one of the most hard-worked Ministries because it has to deal with the various needs of the communities and each community regards itself as important as any other. Therefore whether they number 10,000, 100,000 or 1,000 for that matter, they demand the same attention and care from the Minister of Local Government and I like to say that I think the Minister is handling the work efficiently because he is doing the first thing that should be done and that is to go out and see these communities himself.

The first point is the question of basic allowances payable to Principals of County Teacher Training Colleges. These gentlemen were authorised to own cars and they were allowed to draw their basic. But somehow some time ago this privilege was withdrawn. These Principals are very responsible people. They collect fees and travel distances to banks to bank this money, and also to collect the monthly salaries and grants due for the schools. I think the use of motor vehicle is imperative in the discharge of their duties. So, I would like the Minister to consider the matter of removing these basic allowances from the frigidiare and allowing these teachers to collect their basic.

The second point, Sir, is about Ogoja Town Council. This Council has not been functioning for about two years and I do not know what is happening. There seems to be a deadlock; and this is where the Minister has to apply his experience in the affairs of Local Government. In particular the people of Ishibori, Ogboja, Abakpa and Igoli are anxious to be grouped in the Ogoja Town Council. Furthermore, they want their traditional rulers to be represented. But the important thing here is that the Minister should make up his mind to investigate thoroughly. I am not saying that the Minister should go by all I tell him. He should assemble the facts and take a decision. You will agree that no decision is worse than a bad decision. When the people of Ogoja area hang about for about two years without their Town Council functioning they just do not know where they are. The same goes for Obudu District Council. Here too, the matter has been reported to the Minister about courts being closed in the area without permission, Councillors making use of the Council's vehicles as they like and drawing allowances into the bargain. I think the Minister has got to investigate this complaint.

And then in my own area, Sir, we have the case of the Ibiono Rural District Council. Their funds have not been improperly managed and the Minister has sent an Examiner of Accounts and again an Auditor to check the accounts of this District Council. It has been discovered, Sir, that for the past two years, the cashier has not balanced his books and that periodic withdrawals have been going on in the Council. They just withdraw money and then all of a sudden another lump sum is pumped in. But at this stage the Accountant went a little bit too fast for them, so he caught them with a deficit of round about a thousand pounds. We wonder what the Minister is doing about it because, from evidence available, there is the suggestion that the Councillors knew what was happening with this manipulation of accounts. If the Minister discovers that this is the case, I would suggest that he takes a very firm action against the District Council right away. There is no need allowing it to live up to September and I strongly suggest that if it is established that Councillors have condoned these withdrawals of money the Councillors should be surcharged to recover the money. It is just

[MR IKOKU]

not enough to dissolve the Council. The Ibiono people want their money back.

Still under Enyong Division, Sir, I will remind the hon. Minister that Mr Grant had conducted an investigation—an inquiry—into the structure of local government in Enyong Division and he came across a rather tricky problem—the problem of a very small group of people who are sandwiched between larger groups and he did recommend that these little pockets should be grouped together to form the Upper Eburutu Rural District Council. I am strongly suggesting that the Minister should give more thought to it—I know he has been given thought to the problem—he should give more serious thought to the problem and at least try to solve the problem before September when our new Council comes into being.

Then there is the last point. I think the Minister might have been told about this. The Okon people of Eket Division are very anxious to have their own separate District Council and they are prepared even to pay the cost of the inquiry to determine whether or not they deserve this District Council. I think the Minister should do all in his power to look into the matter and assess the situation.

In winding up I would like to say that we are quite happy so far with the way the Minister is handling his job. We all have noticed in this House that his Parliamentary Secretary does not even read answers to questions which suggests that the Minister is very active and is self-assured and is quite ready to go on.

*Question proposed, That an increased sum of £116,370 for Head 449—Ministry of Local Government—be inserted in the Schedule.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### HEAD 452—PRODUCE INSPECTION SERVICE

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £105,090 for Head 452—Produce Inspection Service—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Minister of Production (Dr M. I. Okpara):** I rise to move one of the several amendments which stand in my name—that is

to insert a new Sub-head 1 (3) One Senior Produce Officer, Scale B 4 or CT 5 and 6, and to insert £1,188 per annum as the provision for the new post. Also, to renumber Items (3)–(25) as Items (4)–(26). I do not intend to waste the time of the House but the objects of this amendment, as well as of the others which closely follow are four:—

(1) The increase in the provision will be met by the Eastern Regional Marketing Board and not by the Government. Members will recollect that the total expenditure by the Produce Inspection Department in the three Regions are reimbursements by the Regional Marketing Boards of the Regions concerned. In the 1957–58 Approved Estimates a total of £111,030 was approved for the Produce Inspection Service as compared to £233,280 for the Western Region and £125,195 for the Northern Region. Members will observe that additional provision asked for is just about £4,000 which if added to the provision in the Draft Estimates will bring the total for 1958–59 financial year to an amount still less than that approved for 1957–58.

The purpose for the additional provision and for the increase in the establishment has been fully explained to the Eastern Regional Marketing Board which has agreed to accept the additional charges.

(2) The main purpose for the increase is to introduce a more efficient Produce Inspection Service for the whole of Ogoja Province and to strengthen the new inspection scheme which is already working satisfactorily.

In instituting a new inspection scheme in the Ogoja Province Government is desirous to improve the production of soya beans, benniseed and groundnuts as a means of diversifying the economy of the Eastern Region.

(3) It is estimated that the Marketing Board reserve will be increased by at least £50,000 if the envisaged increase in the establishment takes place.

(4) From 1954, the entire Produce Inspection Department has not increased its establishment and the necessity to do so is overdue.

For these reasons I commend the increase to hon. Members.

Mr Chairman, I beg to move.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Minister of Production (Dr M. I. Okpara):** Mr Chairman, I rise to move that Sub-head 1 (4) formerly Sub-head 1 (3) should be increased from £4,030 to £4,660 and the establishment raised from 6 to 7.

As the hon. Members are fully aware the establishment is now brought to its normal strength. The reason for the general increase in the establishment follows the ones adduced in respect of Sub-head 1 (3).

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Minister of Production (Dr M. I. Okpara):** Mr Chairman, I rise to move that Sub-head 1 (10) formerly Sub-head 1 (9) should be increased from £1,290 to £1,560 and also the establishment from 4 to 5.

The increase is essential in the general plan to provide the amenities referred to when I dealt with Sub-head 1 (3).

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Minister of Production (Dr M. I. Okpara):** Mr Chairman, I rise to move that Sub-head 1 (11) formerly sub-head 1 (10) should be increased from £4,380 to £4,780 and the establishment from 25 to 29.

The reasons for the increase have been adequately explained when treating Sub-head 1 (3).

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Minister of Production (Dr M. I. Okpara):** Mr Chairman, I rise to move that Sub-head 1 (15) formerly Sub-head 1 (14) should be increased from £7,896 to £8,298 and the Establishment increased from 16 to 17.

The increase in the establishment is a part of the general increase which has been explained when treating Sub-head 1 (3).

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Minister of Production (Dr M. I. Okpara):** Mr Chairman, I rise to move that Sub-head 1 (17) formerly Sub-head 1 (16) should be increased from £36,000 to £37,800 and the establishment from 168 to 176.

The reasons for the increase have been explained while I was dealing with Sub-head 1 (3).

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Minister of Production (Dr M. I. Okpara):** Mr Chairman, I rise to move that Sub-head 1 (20) formerly Sub-head 1 (19) should be increased from £1,900 to £1,990 and the establishment from 16 to 17. The increase is for the reasons already adduced in respect of Sub-head 1 (3).

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Minister of Production (Dr M. I. Okpara):** Mr Chairman, I rise to move that Sub-head 1 (21) formerly Sub-head 1 (20) should be increased from £2,030 to £2,120 and the establishment from 18 to 19.

The reasons for the increase have been adequately touched in discussing Sub-head 1 (3).

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Question proposed, That an increased sum of £109,970 for Head 452—Produce Inspection Service—be inserted in the Schedule.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Schedule as amended agreed to.*

#### Postponed Clauses

*Clause 1 agreed to.*

*Clause 2.*

**The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke):** Mr Chairman, I beg to move that Clause 2 be amended (a) by leaving out in lines 4 and 5 the words "thirteen million, two hundred and thirty-five thousand, one hundred" and

[DR IMOKE]

inserting therefor the words "thirteen million, three hundred and fifty thousand, two hundred and ten"; (b) by leaving out in line 6, the figures "421 to 467" and inserting therefor the figures "421 to 440, 442 to 467"; and (c) by leaving out "£13,235,100" and inserting therefor "£13,350,210" in the marginal note to the Clause.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 2 as amended agreed to.*

*Clause 3 agreed to.*

*Clause 4.*

**The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke):** Mr Chairman, I beg to move that Clause 4 be amended (a) by leaving out in lines 1 and 2, the words "thirteen million, two hundred and thirty-five thousand, one hundred" and inserting therefor the words "thirteen million, three hundred and fifty thousand, two hundred and ten" (b) by leaving out "£13,235,100" and inserting therefor "£13,350,210" in the marginal note to the Clause.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 4 as amended agreed to.*

#### Title

**The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke):** Mr Chairman, I beg to move that the title of the Bill be amended in lines 1 and 2 by leaving out the words "thirteen million, two hundred and thirty-five thousand, one hundred" and inserting therefor the words "thirteen million, three hundred and fifty thousand, two hundred and ten."

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Title as amended agreed to.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

**The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to report that a Bill for a Law to appropriate the increased sum of £13,350,210 to the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1959, has passed through the Committee stage with amendments.

I beg to move that the Bill as amended be now read the Third time and passed.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read the Third time and passed.*

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order! Standing Order 7 sets out the order of the business of each sitting day, unless the House otherwise directs.

I think it is proper to deal with the Motions relating to appendices to the Estimates immediately after the passage of the Appropriation Bill.

Is it the wish of the House that the order of business for today be varied to enable the Minister of Finance to go ahead with the Motions?

*Aye.*

#### LOCAL CONTRIBUTIONS ACCOUNT

**The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke):** Mr Speaker, I beg to move, That a new Sub-head for £33,500, Contingencies Fund, be created in Appendix A, Colonial Development and Welfare Local Contributions Account.

In making this motion, Sir, I would refer you to my speech earlier today that a new Sub-head Contingencies Fund, C.D. and W. be created.

This Sub-head is to enable transfers to be made to Revenue Head 412 of the Local Contribution as and when it becomes necessary to draw on the Contingencies Fund. This will only arise if the amount shown in Sub-head 1 to 9 for 1958-9 are exhausted. In effect, therefore, this Sub-head enables schemes to progress unhindered by drawing on the unexpended balances for 1959-60.

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Commerce (Mr J. U. Nwodo):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

Resolved: That a new Sub-head for £33,500—Contingencies—be created in Appendix A—Colonial Development and Welfare, Local Contributions Account.

**The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke):**

Mr Speaker, Sir, I rise to move, That the Accountant-General be authorised to withdraw sums amounting to £693,626 from the Colonial Development and Welfare, Local Contributions Account, in accordance with the details set out in Appendix A to the Estimates of the Eastern Region of Nigeria for the year 1958-59.

**The Minister of Local Government (Chief A. N. Onyiuke):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

Resolved: That the Accountant-General be authorised to withdraw sums amounting to £693,626 from the Colonial Development and Welfare, Local Contributions Account, in accordance with the details set out in Appendix A to the Estimates of the Eastern Region of Nigeria.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT LOAN FUND**

**The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke):**

Mr Speaker, I rise to move, That the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance, in conjunction with the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government, be authorised to expend on Local Government Loans the sum of £113,000 from the Eastern Regional Local Government Loan Fund, in accordance with the details set out in Appendix B to the Estimates of the Eastern Region of Nigeria 1958-59.

**The Minister of Transport (Mr P. O. Ururuka):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

Resolved: That the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance, in conjunction with the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government, be authorised to expend on Local Government Loans the sum of £113,000 from the Eastern Regional Local Government Loan Fund in accordance with the details set out in Appendix B to the Estimates of the Eastern Region of Nigeria, 1958-59.

**URBAN WATER SUPPLIES ACCOUNT**

**The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke):**

Sir, I beg to move, That the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Works, Eastern Region of Nigeria, be authorised to expend the sum of £252,100 in accordance with the details set out in Appendix C to the Estimates of the Eastern Region of Nigeria for the financial year 1958-59, for the purpose set out under Sub-heads 1 to 7 of the said Appendix.

**The Minister of Local Government (Chief A. N. Onyiuke):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

Resolved: That the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Works, Eastern Region of Nigeria, be authorised to expend the sum of £252,100 in accordance with the details set out in Appendix C to the Estimates of the Eastern Region of Nigeria for the financial year 1958-59 for the purpose set out under Sub-heads 1 to 7 of the said Appendix.

**COCOA AND PALM GROVES**

**The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke):**

Sir, I beg to move, That the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Eastern Region of Nigeria, be authorised to expend upon the introduction of cocoa varieties and the rehabilitation of natural palm groves the sum of £3,500 as set out in Appendix D to the Estimates of the Eastern Region of Nigeria for the financial year 1958-59, such expenditure to be made in anticipation of reimbursements from the Eastern Region Development Corporation grants.

**The Minister of Commerce (Mr J. U. Nwodo):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

Resolved: That the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Eastern Region of Nigeria, be authorised to expend upon the introduction of cocoa varieties and the rehabilitation of natural palm groves the sum of £3,500 as set out in Appendix D to the Estimates of the Eastern Region of Nigeria for the financial year 1958-59, such expenditure

Mr. Speaker

Resolved: That the Permanent Secretary

## Eastern House of Assembly Debates

1063 [Public Lands Acquisition Ord.  
(Amdt.) Bill—

11 APRIL 1958

Second Reading]

1064

**Mr Speaker:** Yes.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Then the Opposition will oppose this. May I remind you that last time you ruled against us on this ground that having allowed the Second reading it was not proper to refuse consent to the remaining stages of the Bill, being taken the same day.

**Mr Speaker:** It is the intention of the Government, especially in view of the importance of this Bill that all stages should be gone into today, and unless Members see fit to raise formal objections to that, I think we should proceed. If you object and draw my attention to the particular Standing Orders, I will automatically refer them to Government for explanation.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** We would not mind, Sir, with other Bills, but surely if the Government really wants us to debate the University (Amendment) Bill properly then we should not take all the stages to-night. It is only the University (Amendment) Bill that we should like the Government to defer for a month or two, and reconvene a meeting of the House. It is a very important Bill and a very serious issue for the Region, and we would like a full dress debate on it. We do not want to rush this Bill through to-night. We can co-operate in respect of other Bills which are not so important, but we do not see how we can co-operate to-night in rushing through a Bill on such a controversial issue.

**Mr Speaker:** Is it the provision of the Bill that you are against or on principle you do not think we should really have the Bill through?

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** We would want a full dress debate on the Second reading and debate the Clauses in Committee. I am afraid we cannot properly do all this to-night.

**Mr Speaker:** I would allow all Members of the Opposition to have their say. We have the whole day and whole night to do it.

What is your point, Mr Arikpo?

**Mr Arikpo:** My point is that with the best intentions in the world it is unfair that this House should be called upon on the last day

of the sitting, after a very heavy programme, after sitting over-time to consider the provisions of the Bill. We are asking that the Bill be deferred till another meeting.

**Mr Speaker:** You are all conversant with the provisions of this type of Bill. We have a University of Nigeria in the original Bill and Members of the Opposition are very well aware of the contents. All you want to do is to temporise, but I feel that unless there is anything in the Standing Orders which prevents the Bill from going on, I think it should go on.

**Mr Arikpo:** There is a provision that the Bill should be read after six months.

All we are saying, Mr Speaker, is that a matter of this kind must not be rushed. After all the University is not being built in May. It is going to require a lot of planning.

**Mr Speaker:** After all, whether you accept this Bill or not it is not going to take effect immediately.

**Mr Arikpo:** That is the more reason why we should not rush over it.

*Sitting suspended at 6 p.m.*

*Sitting resumed at 9 p.m.*

**The Minister of Town Planning (Mr E. Emole):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I rise to move that a Bill entitled "A Law to amend the Public Lands Acquisition Ordinance Chapter 185" be read a Second time.

Since the 1st of October, 1954, Sir, this Government has been empowered, under the provisions of the Public Lands Acquisition Ordinance, to acquire lands for public purposes of the Region.

Nevertheless, in accordance with its declared policy, before the power of compulsory acquisition is invoked, every effort is first made to obtain title by private treaty, with the voluntary agreement of the landowners.

The success of this policy can be measured by the fact that out of 26 acquisitions of land so far undertaken by this Government, no



less than 23, or 88 per cent of the total, have been successfully negotiated by mutual agreement between Government and the landowners.

The Bill which is now before this House contains amendments to two sections of the principal Ordinance. Since its publication, however, it has become clear that the proposed amendment of section 3, as it stands in the Bill is unnecessary. What is already provided in the Law is adequate for our purpose just now. In these circumstances I propose to move an amendment in Committee to delete section 3 of the Bill.

This House is therefore now concerned only with the proposed amendment to section 2 of the Ordinance, which relates to the definition of the words "public purposes". Forty-one years have elapsed, Sir, since the Principal Ordinance was enacted. In that time, and particularly over the past few years, new conceptions have arisen regarding the forms of activity which it is considered right and proper for the Government to engage in or to promote in the public interest—ideas which were undreamed of in 1917 when the Principal Ordinance became law.

This Government conceives it to be its duty, Sir, to take active measures to promote, either directly, or through the agency of other approved organisations, the economic, agricultural and industrial development of the Region. It is also anxious to cater, on a more generous scale than heretofore, for the welfare of its people by introducing improvements in housing conditions and other social and educational amenities.

If this ambitious programme is to be carried through successfully it is necessary for the definition of "public purposes" to be revised and expanded, as proposed in the Bill. Thus, if, for one reason or another, (possibly merely owing to a dispute as to ownership rather than unwillingness to part with possession, or disagreement on terms) it should become impossible for Government, or an organisation approved by Government to acquire land required for any of these purposes by free negotiation and agreement, use could be made in the last resort, of compulsory powers, and the danger of having to shelve a project of importance to the welfare or economy of the Region would be averted.

Needless to say, Government will continue to exercise its powers under the Ordinance, as amended, with the same care and consideration for the interests and feelings of the owners of land as it has shown up to the present and as its record of 23 acquisitions by voluntary agreement out of 26 testifies.

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Transport (Mr P. O. Ururuka):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*

*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

*Clause 1.*

**The Minister of Town Planning (Mr E. Emole):** Mr Chairman, Sir, I beg to move, in page C 41 Clause 1 line 1, to add the word "Ordinance" after the word "Acquisition".

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 1 as amended agreed to.*

*Clause 2 agreed to.*

*Clause 3.*

**The Minister of Town Planning (Mr E. Emole):** Mr Chairman, Sir, I beg to move to leave out in page C 42, the whole of Clause 3.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 3 accordingly left out.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported with Amendments: as amended, read the Third time and passed.*

## (2) The Finance Law (Amendment) Bill

*Order for Second reading read.*

**The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I rise to move that a Bill for a law to amend the Finance Law, 1958 be read a Second time. I explained the background of the measure contained in this Bill when I moved the Resolution in this House on the 28th of March.

[DR IMOKE]

I appreciate that certain interests are not entirely satisfied with this measure. It has, however, been made abundantly clear during the debates in this House that it is necessary to build up our reserves. I have emphasised before that this is essentially an expenditure problem at this stage. Nevertheless, it is necessary that we should tap all possible sources of revenue. This measure not only taps a new source of revenue but it protects or helps to protect an existing source, i.e., the petrol revenue. If there were no tax on auto-gas oil, more and more people would switch to using it. The petrol revenue would therefore suffer. This measure helps to offset this tendency.

There are certain basic users of auto-gas oil to tax whom would be damaging to the whole economy and might have far-reaching effects. It is, therefore, proposed during the Committee stage to insert an additional clause which will give to the Governor in Council, i.e., to Executive Council, the power to exempt certain persons or class of persons.

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Commerce (Mr J. U. Nwodo):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr Ikoku:** Mr Speaker, Sir I could see that it is somewhat a mockery when we accepted the Estimates where the revenue from this source of income is embodied.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*

*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

*Clauses 1 to 3 agreed to.*

#### New Clause

**Chief Morphy:** Mr Chairman, Sir, we want to know the reason why some persons are being exempted. How are the persons to be exempted. If we let this Bill pass we shall be passing a discriminatory Bill into Law.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Mr Chairman, the position is that either Government wants this tax or it does not. I hope it is not an arrangement whereby the Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries and some Civil Servants will be exempted from paying this tax. If it is, I am afraid we will be compelled to vote against it. We are not going to support any means whereby certain people will seek shelter under exemption from this tax by order of the Governor in Council. Any person who owns a car and draws his allowances cannot rightly expect to be exempted from paying tax on gas oil. If we had any idea of the class of persons who are likely to be exempted from paying this tax then we might consider the matter; otherwise, we are opposed to the amendment.

**The Chairman:** If the Minister of Finance were to give an indication of the person or class of persons intended to be exempted that will not prevent His Excellency in Council from deciding on some other person or persons. It is an enabling section and I think it will be unfair either by way of a general statement or information to indicate what person or class of persons are intended to be exempted. It will depend very much on the circumstances.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Mr Chairman, the point is that we must be guided by certain principles. Under what circumstances will the person or class of persons be exempted from this tax? We want to know.

**Mr Ihekwoaba:** Mr Chairman, I am feeling that we are giving loopholes to this law. If we are introducing a Bill which will eventually bring in revenue, I don't think some people should be exempted. I was here in the House when the question of the petrol tax was being debated. There was no provision for certain persons to be exempted from paying it. Why should it be applied to this diesel oil tax? I want to say, Sir, that Ministers should take advice. A Member had warned that the tax on diesel oil would not work.

**The Chairman:** We have already approved that. This House accepted the resolution.

**Mr Ihekwoaba:** I know that, Sir, but no class of persons should be exempted from paying this tax because every person who lives in this Region, will reap the benefit from this tax when carried out. That is my point, Sir.

**The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke):** Mr Speaker, I wish to explain the point made by the Chief Whip of the Opposition. I do not think there is any Government in this world which would make a law of this nature and then exempt members of that Government from paying the tax. The aim of this part of the Bill is to enable the Government to exempt certain services of national interest when the economy of the country would be affected if these services were allowed or made to pay this tax.

I am not prepared to give examples, but there are certain Corporations which run their services with plants or generators run by this diesel oil or fuel, and if such are made to pay this tax the out-turn will be so high that the economy of the Region may be affected. That is why Government has considered it necessary to add the exemption clause.

**The Chairman:** The Minister's assurance is that this is not intended to enable Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries to form a privileged group. Is the Opposition now satisfied?

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** We are not satisfied.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*New clause added to the Bill.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported with an Amendment, as amended read the Third time and passed.*

### (3) The Peace Preservation Bill

*Order for Second reading read.*

**The Premier (Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe):** Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the Bill for a Law to provide for the Preservation of the Public Peace be read a Second time.

The existing legislation, known as the Peace Preservation Ordinance, Chapter 166 of the Laws of Nigeria, was enacted in 1917 and is quite inadequate in the present circumstances. Moreover, some of the powers which it conferred on Residents have now become out-of-date with the abolition of the office of Resident.

The more important sections of the Ordinance empower the Governor to require the surrender of arms and ammunition, but

curiously enough there is no provision for the prevention of meetings and assemblies within a proclaimed area, nor for preventing the circulation of misleading reports, nor for the imposition of a curfew, or for the control of traffic. Again, there are neither provisions for compelling person suspected of inciting disturbances to report to the Police, nor for the making of orders restricting the movement of such persons. In short, the existing legislation is totally inadequate.

This inadequacy was revealed during the recent disturbances in connection with the Universal Primary Education. It was necessary, when those disturbances became serious, for His Excellency the Governor to request His Excellency the Governor-General to declare a state of emergency and, thereafter, to bring in a series of regulations to cover the points I have just enumerated, as they have been lacking in the Peace Preservation Ordinance.

The purpose of this Bill is to make it possible for the Governor of the Region, acting on the advice of the Executive Council, to take steps in the event of disturbances to ensure the maintenance and restoration of public order.

I would in particular draw the attention of the House to certain Clauses of the Bill. Clause 3 permits the Governor by proclamation, to declare a proclaimed district for the preservation of public peace. Under Clause 4, he appoints persons to be competent authorities for the purposes of the law. Clauses 5 and 9 to 12 make it possible to forbid the possession of arms and ammunition by any person in the proclaimed district and also deal with the surrender of such arms and ammunition.

Clause 13 requires Chiefs and members of Local Government Councils to take all possible steps to prevent and suppress civil disturbances. Clause 17 sets out in detail the matters which, in the interest of preservation of peace and good order, may be covered by regulations. In this connection I would draw special attention to provision for regulations for the control of arms and ammunition and explosives, the imposition of a curfew, the prevention of misleading reports, censorship of the press, and the prevention or restriction of meetings and processions.

[THE PREMIER]

In short, this legislation is designed to give the Government of the Region adequate powers to deal with matters affecting the peace and good order of the Region.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Local Government (Chief A. N. Onyiuke):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr Ikoku:** Mr Speaker, Sir, this is a wonderful Bill. The powers being sought to deal with suspects are rather far-reaching and the purpose, I take it is to make sure that officers charged with maintenance of law and order are in no way handicapped by the inadequacy of the law to deal with suspects. So far we agree. But there is a very real danger that this law could be abused. Any serious situation, Sir, demands very firm action but the recurrent fear for giving people too much power is that there is always the tendency to abuse that power. For example, Sir, you have a competent authority—somebody is named as competent authority by His Excellency—I dare say this man is going to be the District Officer. Then this competent authority, once he is satisfied—the Bill says: “Any person who is reasonably suspected by a competent authority” Clause 7. Immediately the competent authority so suspects, all he does is to issue a warrant in duplicate; hand one to the man to be apprehended and send a copy to His Excellency; and the man is carried away and dumped in a prison named by this competent authority and inserted on the warrant. We would have thought that the Governor presiding over the Security Council, would be in a position to know through intelligence reports that certain individuals in the Region are ring-leaders and would then direct that these people be apprehended. But that is not the case. Any competent authority—which means in effect District Officers—will just fill in a warrant, hand you a copy and dump you in a jail of his own choice and merely send a copy to the Governor. Mark you, Sir, he is not acting on the instructions of the Governor at this stage. The Governor knows of this detention and this arrest only on receipt of the duplicate copy of the warrant. This is a very major power to hand to District

Officers. Merely because he is satisfied in his own mind—he does not need any person to help him—he signs a warrant and lands the man in jail. Again, Sir, this man is locked up in jail not only for the duration of the disturbances. He continues in jail for three months and then periodically every three months, His Excellency on advice of Executive Council, will consider what is going to happen to him. He is not yet before a court. All this time he is languishing in jail and every three months he waits to hear whether he will face trial or whether he will carry on in jail. No attempt is made to bring him before a Magistrate’s Court. Mark you, Sir, this man is undergoing this ordeal merely because the District Officer thinks that he is guilty of the offence. A fundamental principle in our law, Sir, is that you must drag the accused before an impartial Judge or Magistrate where he could be proclaimed guilty; and he is not actually guilty until he is so found guilty. If because of a state of emergency some steps have to be taken, we can understand if it is done as a result of the direction of the Security Council or of His Excellency. His Excellency sends a message to the District Officer in Enyong Division; he is satisfied by intelligence report that Ikoku is behind this thing and apprehends him. I can understand that. The point has been raised that the people who make the report may not be immortal. But the report is sent up to a committee and it is sifted. There may be other reports coming in from other sources which contradict that report and will compel His Excellency to order further investigation.

Now, my point Sir, is that an ordinary District Officer—and we know the type of District Officers we now have in this Region—simply because he does not like you, he says he is satisfied. That is what is before us. Section 7. I will go further, Sir, to add that this man is remaining in jail for three months and languishing in jail every three months depending on the wish of the Governor. He is not in fact depending on the wish of the Governor. For, according to our constitution, wherever we see the Governor, this is to be construed the Governor on the advice of the Executive Council. It is not the Governor in his discretion. In other words, this man is detained in jail for political reasons as decided by the Government. Government says this man should be kept in jail. That is what it

comes to—nothing more and nothing less. If the Government had brought in a Bill telling us that somebody misbehaved or could be reasonably suspected during an emergency and he should be apprehended for that period and that immediately the emergency is lifted he should be taken to a Magistrate or a Judge to defend himself, we can understand that. But he continues in jail for long periods and every three months the matter may be reviewed and he may continue for another three months. Why? Let me tell them that under the British we at least had the opportunity of going to the law courts to defend ourselves and now they are coming here to twist the law.

**An hon. Member:** The law is the same.

**Mr Ikoku:** Well then, why do you want an amendment. Let us go home if the law is the same; no need for amendment. What I am saying is that it is a big disappointment to the people of this Region.

**An hon. Member:** Go on, we will reply.

**Mr Ikoku:** Sir, they should kindly reply because this is very serious. They cannot just get hold of somebody and dump him in jail simply because a District Officer suspects him. I raise the point, Sir, that the direction should come from the Security Council. This is the point I raise and the hon. the Premier retorted to the effect that the Security Council is not infallible. Yes. But don't forget, Sir, these are a handful of people who are experienced in this job, and as I understand it the Inspector-General of Police is a member. And any time, Sir, such a body is more competent than the District Officer—any time infinitely more competent than the District Officer. I must tell this Government that we are thoroughly disappointed that they are trying to bring in a law which so shamelessly curtails the liberty of the individual. If he has misbehaved and they suspect he has misbehaved, detain him for the duration of the emergency. Immediately the emergency is over, take him to the law courts and let him defend himself. Don't leave him in jail one day extra. They preach so much about freedom. This is their opportunity to demonstrate their belief in freedom. Mr Speaker, Sir, I oppose and will oppose this Bill very vehemently.

**Mr Ekpe:** Mr Speaker, Sir, another point in the Bill which beats me is the provision—Clause 18—which says that if a rebellion, civil commotion, civil disturbance or rioting breaks out, a chief or local councillor who does not take part to prevent or suppress such a commotion shall be guilty. Now, many of us realise the position with which some of the local chiefs and councillors are faced during an emergency. Fortunately, we have not had experience of this in our Division but in various Divisions where there was emergency, I realised, by reading through the papers what happened to local chiefs and councillors. I heard, Sir, that in Owerri Division, even the chiefs who tried to help the situation had to be surrounded by women and chased about. How can such a person be expected to help to suppress a commotion or a rebellion? I feel, Sir, that this is just a way of trying to create more trouble for the local councillors and the chiefs.

The law as it stands now is nothing short of an effort to put political opponents into difficulties. That is how I look at it. Long before this Government came into existence, there had been emergencies in the Region and the law as it stands now had been quite adequate to deal with them.

In 1949, something happened here in the Colliery. It was this law, the law we are intending to repeal at the moment which was used to meet that situation. So, in my opinion, Sir, I feel that this law is most unnecessary at this stage.

It is quite true that District Officers are well becoming more and more party supporters. Now, there is no doubt that many of the District Officers we have are eye servants; people who look at party chiefs and want to do what will please them and the party in power. Now, having this in mind, we have our fears that it would not be a long time before a political opponent is nabbed. Take a place like Opobo Division where nearly always we have been returning Opposition Members. Now, take, Sir, a District Officer who has the sympathy of the party in power; what do you expect will happen to an Opposition Member in a state like that where emergency is declared? Well, certainly, all the leading persons will be in danger of being sent to jail without trial. So,

[MR EKPE]

I feel this is very important indeed. In fact, it shocks me that this Government is bringing forward a Bill like this.

My suggestion is that this Bill should be shelved until the Government has properly studied it and in fact consulted other laws for peace preservation in other parts of the country and perhaps in other parts of the world. I am quite prepared to oppose this Bill because I feel it is not in the interest of preservation of peace and order but is a calculated attempt to create some difficulties for political opponents.

**The Attorney-General (Mr M. O. Ajegbo):**  
Mr Speaker, Sir, there is nothing wonderful about this Bill at all. I think it is just a pity that the hon. the Leader of the Opposition has not read the Peace Preservation Ordinance. Clause 1 of which he complains is just merely a reproduction of section 4 of the Peace Preservation Ordinance which reads as follows:

(1) "Any person who is reasonably suspected by a Chief Commissioner or a Resident of having been guilty:

- (a) as principal or accessory of any offence under Chapter VI or VII of the Criminal Code; or
- (b) of any offence punishable by law, being an act of violence or intimidation; or
- (c) of inciting to an act of violence or intimidation tending to interfere with or disturb the maintenance of law and order, in any proclaimed district after the same has been proclaimed, may, under warrant of a Chief Commissioner or a Resident be arrested in any part of the Protectorate and detained during the continuance of the proclamation in a prison named in the warrant or any such other prison that may be directed by the Governor, without bail, and shall not be discharged or tried by any Court without the direction of the Governor; and every such warrant shall for the purposes of this Ordinance, be conclusive evidence for all matters therein contained and of the jurisdiction to issue and execute such warrant, and of the legality of the arrest and detention of the person mentioned in such warrant.

(2) Every such warrant shall state the character of the offence of which the person to be arrested thereunder is suspected. A copy of the warrant shall be given to each person arrested on the occasion of his arrest.

(3) A Chief Commissioner or a Resident who issues such warrant shall immediately send a copy to the Governor.

(4) On the expiration of a period of three months after the arrest of each person detained under this section and so from time to time on the expiration of each succeeding period of three months while such person is detained, the Governor shall consider the case of such person and decide thereon; and the decision of the Governor in that behalf shall be certified under his hand or under the hand of a secretary and forwarded to the officer in charge of the prison in which such person is detained, who shall record such decision by endorsement on the warrant filed in his office."

Now, Sir, about Clause 13 and to which my hon. Friend Mr Ekpe referred, Clause 13 is equivalent to and a mere re-enactment of section 10 of the Ordinance and I read it to him:

"If any rebellion, civil commotion or riot resulting in harm to any person or loss of life or damage to property shall take place in a proclaimed district, any chief or native authority"

(The only difference is that instead of the native authority which no longer exists, we have a number of local government councils).

"who takes part in, instigates or neglects to take proper measures to prevent or suppress such rebellion, civil commotion or riot, or neglects to bring to justice or deliver up persons taking part in or accused or suspected of taking part in such rebellion, civil commotion or riot, shall be liable to a fine of five hundred pounds or to imprisonment for three years."

The only new thing in this Bill is Clause 17. As you know, the Peace Preservation Ordinance exists up to this moment; it has not been repealed. It is only when this Bill is passed into law that this Ordinance will cease to apply to this Region. The only change made is that instead of "Chief Commissioner" or a

“Resident,” which no longer exists, we have a “competent authority” who may be designated. In any case, if it is the District Officers they are doing the work of Residents these days. So that the point I am making is that I cannot see the substance of my hon. Friend’s argument. The law still subsists up to this moment; it is only when this Bill is passed that the Peace Preservation Ordinance ceases to be law in this Region. There are no fundamental changes; the changes are only consequential. The only new thing is Clause 17 and that was enacted because of the experience the Government had in the recent U.P.E. disturbance. I think my hon. Friends of the Opposition should know that the Peace Preservation Ordinance is applied in the North, in the West, and in the Federation and that we are just making it a Regional law; that is all.

**Mr Ikoku:** The Law which has been quoted specifically states that the Governor will give the direction. I would like the hon. Attorney-General to tell the House who was the Governor at that time?

**Mr Ajegbo:** I would like to refer my hon. Friend to clause 17 of the Bill which says “Governor in Council”. In other Clauses of the Bill it is the “Governor”.

**Mr Arikpo:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I have listened with interest, to the hon. Attorney-General’s explanation. When the Premier introduced this Bill he pointed out that the Bill was introduced as Law in 1917 and he later on said that its provisions were inadequate. We have the Attorney-General who tells us that the present Bill repeats most of the provisions of the 1917 Ordinance. I want to say that I am most shocked that a Lawyer should get up in this House and try to convince the House that a provision made in this country in 1917 which gives the individual practically no right to resort to the courts should be repeated in 1958. I am most shocked to hear a lawyer say that; but I am sorry.

Sir, as has been pointed out, this Bill was passed into law in 1917 under conditions which were very different from conditions in 1958 in the Eastern Region. We should leave that because we are having self-government under a Government which seeks

powers to exercise more repressive measures than were exercised in 1917. Sir, in 1917 it was within the power of one who was in most respects a disinterested person in the maintenance of law and order. In 1958 the position is quite different. It has been pointed out again and again that political considerations are now very important. If the White Paper on Self-government which was introduced becomes law and put into effect, most of the people in the Divisions and the Provinces will be appointed agents who will consider that they owe loyalty to the Government which appointed them. They will be nothing but mere political agents, and they are asked in this House to accept a provision which will put in the hands of Government political agents the power of detaining indefinitely any person who happens to hold views which the Government does not like. It is quite true that the Government can use its majority to pass this Bill, but we like to state very emphatically that this is one more example of what we have been complaining about, that this Government is rapidly moving towards a Police State. The Government has been very careful not to define under the Definition Clause who will be the competent authority in this particular instance. How do we know, Sir, that the hon. Ogon will not be appointed the competent authority for Ikom?

**Government Supporters:** You can be appointed competent authority.

**Mr Arikpo:** But I have a political view, a political inclination. How do we know that these competent authorities will not be Government agents appointed to repress the Opposition activities against Government measures? And we are saying that a measure which was considered adequate in 1917 during the war years, when it was necessary to introduce a certain amount of repressive legislation in the interest of security, is not only suitable for a self-governing Region in 1958, but is in fact insufficient to provide for Government power. We have stated again and again...

**Government Supporters:** You are trouble makers.

**Mr Arikpo:** The term “trouble maker” is a relative term and is a person who has the courage of telling you that you are doing the wrong thing. It is just that.

[MR ARIKPO]

Sir, we are no less concerned as the Government that there should be peace and good Government, but we maintain that anybody who breaks the law should be punished according to law. Any measure which deprives any citizen of this Region of his right to resort to court, is to my mind a repressive measure.

We are told, Sir, that the only change in the law is the provision empowering the Governor in Council to make regulations, but one would have thought that a Government which claims to believe in democratic institutions and claims to be progressive would have taken the opportunity to remove from this law those parts of it which are repressive. I have in mind the provision that a person merely because he is suspected can be detained indefinitely subject to three monthly periodic reviews.

Finally, Sir, the Attorney-General has suggested that clause 17 of the Bill which refers to the Governor in Council distinguishes between the Governor and the Executive Council. That may well be, Sir, but in view of our constitutional position, I want to suggest that where a Bill is meant to refer to the Governor in his discretion, it should say so because under the provision of our constitution, Governor means Governor in Council—in other words Governor acting on the advice of the Executive Council. So that the mere stating here that the Governor in Council may do such and such, does not remove the constitutional position which is that the Governor means the Governor in Council. That is to say the Governor in Council is just redundant. If we mean the Governor acting in his discretion, it should be specifically stated in that way. I would like to see during the Committee stage an amendment to say whether the "Governor" means the Governor acting in his discretion or acting on the advice of the Executive Council. If these repressive provisions are removed, Sir, I assure the hon. Premier that we will support without a division. Only fascists would like to see this type of thing which cuts down most drastically the liberty of the individual. We would like to warn the Government that if self-government is going to mean the taking away of the rights and liberties of individuals, then it is not worth having. I am sure that no lawyer

would support any provision which wilfully cuts down the liberty of the subject to approach the courts and claim the right to be dealt with by the court according to the law. I am most shocked that a lawyer should get up and support such a provision. I would like an undertaking from the hon. the Premier that at the Committee stage this reprehensible provision of the law would be removed. If this assurance is given, Sir, we will not oppose.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*

*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

*Clauses 1 to 13 agreed to.*

*Clause 14.*

**The Premier:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move that in the third line of Clause 14 the word "or" be deleted and "of" be inserted.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Premier:** The Chairman, I beg to move that in page C 66, Clause 14, line 6, "Law 1958" be left out and "Ordinance" be inserted

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 14 as amended agreed to.*

*Clause 15.*

**The Premier:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move that in page C 66, Clause 15, line 8, "Attorney-General" be left out and "Director of Public Prosecutions" be inserted.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 15 as amended agreed to.*

*Clauses 16 to 18 agreed to.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported with Amendments: as amended read the Third time and passed.*

**(4) The Commissions of Inquiry Ordinance (Amendment) Bill**

*Order for Second reading read.*

**The Premier (Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe):** Mr Speaker, I move that a Bill for a Law to amend the Commissions of Inquiry Ordinance be read a Second time.



As the principal law now stands, it is open to a Commission of Inquiry to admit any evidence, whether written or oral, which might be inadmissible in civil or criminal proceedings. Recent experience has shown that unscrupulous persons may attempt to turn a Commission of Inquiry into an opportunity for making false statements and allegations which they cannot prove.

The Government has, therefore, considered it necessary to amend the Law in order that evidence which is inadmissible in a Court of Law shall not be allowed to be given in a Commission of Inquiry. Clause 2 of this Bill provides accordingly.

It has also been found that certain persons appearing before Commissions of Inquiry refuse to give evidence on oath, when they do not wish to assist the Commission by giving correct evidence or by tendering correct documents.

As the Law now stands, such persons cannot be compelled to take an oath, and it is now intended to provide that it shall be an offence to refuse to take an oath before giving evidence.

Clause 3 of the Bill provides for suitable penalties for persons who refuse to take an oath legally required by a Commission of Inquiry. Similarly it is made an offence for any person to refuse to produce a document legally required by a Commission or to answer a question which he can legally answer.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Local Government (Chief A. N. Onyiuke):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*

*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

*Clauses 1 to 3 agreed to.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported without Amendment, read the Third time and passed.*

## (5) The Public Service Commission Bill

*Order for Second reading read.*

**The Premier:** Mr Speaker, I move that a Bill for a Law to provide for the salary and allowances of the members of the Regional Public Service Commission be read a Second time.

Section 180c of the Nigeria (Constitution) (Amendment) Order in Council, 1958 which came into force on 1st April, 1958 provides for the establishment of a Regional Public Service Commission.

Paragraph 6 (a) of that section provides that there shall be paid to members of the Commission such salary as may be prescribed by any Law enacted by the Legislature of the Region and such allowances as may be prescribed by or under any such Law.

It is provided also that the salary of a member of the Commission and his conditions of service other than allowances shall not be altered to his disadvantage during his continuance in office.

The Government has considered the duties and responsibilities attaching to membership of the Commission and has decided that appropriate remuneration would be £2,640 per annum for the Chairman, and £2,400 per annum for each of the members.

It has also decided that they should receive allowances such as are paid from time to time to members of the Public Service holding appointments at equivalent salaries.

The amounts payable under this Law are under the terms of the amended Constitution Order a charge upon the Consolidated Revenue Fund of the Region.

This Bill will give effect to the requirements of the Nigeria (Constitution) (Amendment) Order in Council and to the decisions of the Government.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Local Government (Chief A. N. Onyiuke):** Sir, I beg to second.

Eastern House of Assembly Debates

1083

[Director of Public  
Prosecutions Bill: 2R]

11 APRIL 1958

[Pharmaceutical Corp.  
(Liquidation Bill): 2R]

1084

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*

*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

*Clauses 1 to 5 agreed to.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported without Amendment, read the Third time and passed.*

**(6) The Director of Public  
Prosecutions Bill**

*Order for Second reading read.*

**The Minister of Justice (Mr R. O. Iwuagwu):** Mr Speaker, I move that a Bill for a Law to provide for the salary and allowances of the Director of Public Prosecutions be read a Second time.

Section 228 of the Nigeria (Constitution) (Amendment) Order in Council, which came into operation on the 1st April, 1958, provides that there shall be a Director of Public Prosecutions, appointed by His Excellency the Governor, on the recommendation of the Public Service Commission of the Region.

It is also provided that there shall be paid to the Director of Public Prosecutions such salary as may be prescribed by any Law enacted by the Legislature of the Region and such allowances as may be prescribed by or under such Law. It is further provided that the salary of the Director and his conditions of service other than allowances shall not be altered to his disadvantage during his continuance in office.

The Regional Government has considered the duties and responsibilities of the post and has decided that a salary of £2,640 per annum would be commensurate with these duties and responsibilities. It has also decided that the Director of Public Prosecutions should draw such allowances as are paid from time to time to members of the Public Service holding appointments at an equivalent salary.

The Constitution provides that such salary and allowances shall be a charge on the Consolidated Revenue Funds of the Region.

This Bill makes provision in accordance with the requirements of the Nigeria (Constitution) (Amendment) Order in Council and the decision of the Regional Government.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Commerce (Mr J. U. Nwodo):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*

*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

*Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported without Amendment, read the Third time and passed.*

**(7) The Pharmaceutical Corporation  
(Liquidation) Bill**

*Order for Second reading read.*

**The Minister of Commerce (Mr J. U. Nwodo):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that a Bill to provide for the winding up of the Pharmaceutical Corporation be read a Second time.

Sir, the Pharmaceutical Corporation was constituted by a Law passed in this House in 1955. It was given power to manufacture and to carry on the sale and distribution of drugs, poisons and all medical stores and equipment whatsoever.

It was also given power to borrow money to enable it to perform the functions for which it was set up. Government recommended to the Finance Corporation that the Pharmaceutical Corporation should receive a loan of £50,000. This was duly granted and paid in two instalments in February and May, 1956.

At the inaugural meeting on 7th September, 1955, the newly appointed Board of the Corporation was advised to proceed cautiously and to exercise the strictest economy.

The Chairman went overseas to interest foreign firms in the Corporation and succeeded in appointing a German firm as managing agents.

On his return, the Board, feeling inspired by the response of overseas interest, and desirous of carrying out the duties imposed on them by Law, decided to embark on a much more ambitious scheme than could be financed by the original loan of £50,000.

Without awaiting approval of a loan of such magnitude, orders were placed for machinery, and for buildings, and staff was engaged on the assumption that additional finance would be available.

The Chairman and Board Members were all persons of high reputation and had the interest of the Corporation and of the Region at heart when these plans were made. They did not even draw any salaries since the Corporation was started, preferring to wait until the Corporation was revenue-earning before considering themselves. Their mistake was only that of being over-optimistic, by committing the Corporation to liabilities beyond the financial resources assured to them.

At 31st December, 1957 a firm of Chartered Accountants has stated that the Corporation is indebted to the extent of £199,248. To enable the Corporation to continue, a further sum of money, estimated at £75,000, would be required to provide the additional machinery required to make the factory a complete manufacturing unit, and for working capital to enable it to operate until it becomes revenue-earning.

Thus, if one ignored for the time being the original loan from the Finance Corporation, which is not yet due for repayment, Government would have had to find £225,000 to enable the Corporation to carry on.

Considering the need at present, to conserve the Region's financial resources, Government feels that it cannot at present provide £225,000 and has decided that the Corporation should be wound up.

This does not mean that the sum of £199,248 owing by the Corporation is completely lost. The sum mentioned includes provision for completing the houses which will have a saleable value equal to, if not in excess of, cost price. Certain contracts entered into but never put into operation, may be cancelled

to reduce the liability, and the machinery already purchased may either be sold or operated on a simpler scale.

The object of the Bill therefore is to wind up the Corporation as Government does not wish at present to commit itself to the capital expenditure required, and with this end in view, the Law is designed to empower the Liquidator to dispose of the assets to the best advantage, and to pay the debts either in part or whole of the Corporation. As a matter of fact, the Liquidator shall have power to compromise claims, particularly in those cases where, although there are contracts to provide a service to the Corporation, that service was never performed.

It is not possible, at this stage, to say what the final deficit will be, since the extent to which the Liquidator shall be able to dispose of assets profitably, or compromise claims, is not known. If all goes well however, the final deficit will not be more than a few thousand pounds. That will be reported to the House in due course. It is considered, however, that the Government is better advised to wind up the Corporation rather than provide the large sum of money necessary to continue it.

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Local Government (Chief A. N. Onyiuke):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*

*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

*Clauses 1 to 17 agreed to.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported without Amendment, read the Third time and passed.*

**(8) The University of Nigeria (Provisional Council) Bill**

*Order for Second reading read.*

**The Premier:** Mr Speaker, I move that a Bill for a Law to provide for the establishment of a Provisional Council to be known as the Provisional Council of the University of Nigeria and for matters ancillary thereto be read a Second time.

[THE PREMIER]

Three years ago, this House passed the University of Nigeria Law, No. 23 of 1955, which provided for the establishment of a University of Nigeria "so soon as may be after the commencement of the Law." When the House discussed the provisions of the Law and finally took its decision it was the intention to start a University as soon as possible. It has now been possible for us to implement the provisions of that Law.

I have on another occasion stressed the need in this Region for a University and our determination to establish a University which, at least, we can with pride leave for posterity. I recalled that there were oppositions from various quarters to the idea but I pointed out that the opposition could only come from people who, being fully aware of the value of a University and its influence in improving the general standards of any nation, were opposing the establishment of a University in our Region in order that we may continue to remain under-developed.

Every year we vote vast sums of money for sending our children to Universities in other parts of the world. We pay highly for the cost of transport to overseas countries and we get in return education adapted to fit the ways of living of other nations. Mr Speaker, I do not mean that it is a bad thing to know how the others live nor do I say that we should not allow ourselves to be influenced by the knowledge so acquired. Indeed we must, in order to keep abreast with modern trends, adopt the technique and borrow the experiences of other nations. It is nevertheless imperative that we must have education which is fundamentally Nigerian in content. Only in a University of our own can our culture shine forth.

As the various services in the Region expand we need more trained people for the public services, and although we are increasing our effort to produce University trained personnel, the rate at which the services are expanding is greater than the rate at which we are producing material for filling the vacancies. Ibadan University which serves the whole of Nigeria, turns out only a handful of graduates every year and we are forced to continue to go round the world begging for admission into Universities. This is bound to continue

until we are able to establish in our own land a University which will serve our own needs, and this Government has now come to the threshold of establishment of such a University.

Under section 7 of the University of Nigeria Law, there is provision for the establishment of a Council which will control the finances of the University and which will be the supreme governing body of the University with power to manage all matters of the University. This body, however, is not a body corporate and cannot hold land, nor can it contract.

Section 3 of the law does provide for a body corporate which shall consist of the authorities of the University and the members of the staff and students of the University for the time being. It is established to "have entire control of and superintendence over the general policy and property of the University College and may act in such manner as appears to it to be in the best interests of the University College." It is this body which shall have perpetual succession and common seal and may in its corporate name sue and be sued.

As we approach detailed problems of establishing a University, it has become necessary that there should be a body which will be an administrative and executive unit to deal with preliminary work of the University. There must be a body which will undertake the detailed planning in consultation with the architects and other organisations concerned. This body will also deal with the recruitment of the initial staff of the University.

It is not considered desirable that these functions should be performed by Government since the public will thereby know less about the progress of the University, and Government is apt to move more slowly than a specially constituted Council or Board. The need to ensure the independence of the University makes it necessary that Government should, from the outset, withdraw from any act that may pull the budding University into the tentacles of slow Government machinery.

The corporate body provided under section 3 of the University of Nigeria Law cannot come into existence until the University is itself fully established, since its members will be the authorities and members of the University. It is therefore necessary that until the

University is fully established, a temporary or a provisional body should be set up to perform the preliminary duties which will precede the University and which are now pressing.

This same problem was encountered when the University College of Ibadan was established and the solution at that time was the same as we are now proposing, that is to say, the setting up of the provisional council.

Under section 5 of the University College Ibadan (Provisional Council) Ordinance No. 25 of 1948, it was provided that "(1) The Council shall be a body corporate having perpetual succession and a common seal. (2) The Council shall have power to sue and to be sued, to enter into contracts, to engage staff, and to take, purchase and hold all moveable and immovable property whatsoever, whether the same is situate within Nigeria or elsewhere, and to grant, demise, alienate, or otherwise dispose of the same, and to do all other things incidental or appertaining to a body corporate:

Provided that the Council shall not alienate, mortgage, charge, or demise any of its immovable property without the approval in writing of the Governor in Council."

In fact, the provision of this Provisional Council Law is not unique and is the natural step to take for building an institution such as is contemplated. It is unfortunate that this point was not taken up when the University of Nigeria Bill was passed into Law so that provision could be made for the setting up of such a temporary body to deal with the initial problems of the University.

The Bill seeks to restrict the total membership of the Provisional Council to five of which one shall be a Chairman. This is because the nature of the duties which the Council will perform requires that it must not be unwieldy. They must be able to meet as often as possible at short notice and will frequently have to take quick decisions. This cannot be achieved by a Council with many members and it will

be difficult to find large numbers of able men who will be available to devote their time for such duties. For this reason the Bill also provides for a quorum of three.

As hon. Members will observe, the Council shall be a body corporate having perpetual succession, the power to hold land and a common seal. It shall also have power to do all things which appear to it to be requisite and necessary for the establishment of the University of Nigeria in accordance with the provisions of the University of Nigeria Law, 1955.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Local Government (Chief A. N. Onyiuke):** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*

*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

*Clauses 1 to 9 agreed to.*

*Clause 10.*

**The Premier:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move in lines 6 and 9 of Clause 10, Sub-clause (2), to delete "alien" wherever it appears and insert "alienate".

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 10 as amended agreed to.*

*Clauses 11 to 15 agreed to.*

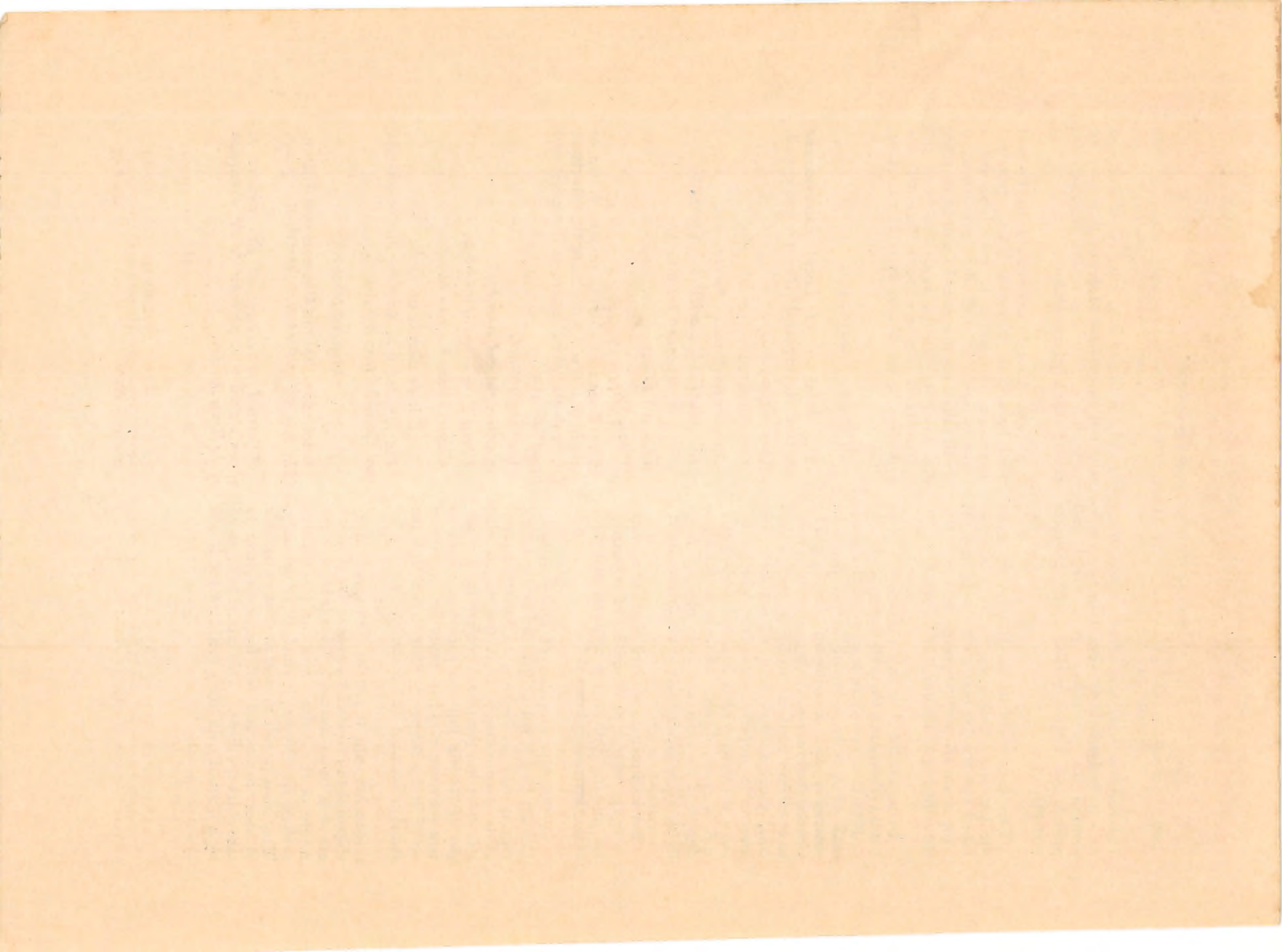
(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported with Amendments; as amended read the Third time and passed.*

## ADJOURNMENT

Resolved: That this House do now adjourn. (The Minister of Production, Dr M. I. Okpara).

*Adjourned accordingly at five minutes to eleven o'clock p.m. pursuant to the Resolution of the House this day.*



# Index to the Eastern House of Assembly Debates

SECOND SESSION, FIRST MEETING

11th March to 11th April, 1958

## ABBREVIATIONS

(Adj. Deb.) = Adjournment Debate  
 1R = First Reading  
 2R = Second Reading  
 3R = Third Reading

Com. = Committee  
 E.R. = Eastern Region  
 Q = Question

## A

	Column	Column
<b>ABA:</b>		
Nbawsi and Omoba Water Pumps ..	223Q	
Nsulu Leprosy Clinic .. .. .	437Q	
Tax Clerks of Local Government Councils .. .. .	73Q	
Tax Defaulters .. .. .	395Q	
<b>ABAK:</b>		
Annang Joint Hospital .. .. .	701-2Q	
<b>ABAKALIKI:</b>		
Abakaliki County Council Funds ..	695-6Q	
Abakaliki-Obubra Road .. .. .	702-3Q	
Abakaliki-Yahe Road .. .. .	702Q	
Cinema Corporation .. .. .	493Q	
Development of Abakaliki Urban Area ..	223Q	
Electricity (Adj. Deb.) .. .. .	72	
Electricity Supply .. .. .	270-271Q	
Ezzambo Market .. .. .	658Q	
Ishielu District Council—Distribution of Amenities .. .. .	657-8Q	
Ishielu District Council Headquarters ..	658Q	
Ora Bridge, Nkalagu .. .. .	698Q	
School Population .. .. .	602Q	
Urban District Council .. .. .	493-4Q	
Water for the Urban Area of Abakaliki ..	224Q	
<b>ABANGWU, MR C. A.:</b>		
Appropriation Bill: Com. Head 462 ..	953-4	
Governor's Speech—Debate on the Address .. .. .	143-153	
Self-government in the E.R.: <i>Motion</i> ..	526	
Standing Orders Committee: Member ..	960	
<b>ABENGOWE, MR W.:</b>		
Appropriation Bill: Com. Head 462 ..	945-6	
Death of Alhaji the hon. Adelabu (Adj. Deb.) .. .. .	559-560	
Felling of Trees on the Oguta-Mbidi Road .. .. .	274Q	
Gunpowder and Match Industry .. .. .	664Q	
Nbawsi and Omoba Water Pumps .. .. .	223Q	
Nsulu Leprosy Clinic .. .. .	437Q	
Public Holidays (Amendment) Bill: Com. ..	50-51	
Self-government in the E.R.: <i>Motion</i> ..	323-332	
Surgical Specialists .. .. .	437Q	
Tax Clerks of Local Government Councils .. .. .	73Q	
Tax Defaulters in Aba Division .. .. .	395Q	
Transport Allowances: U.P.E. Scheme ..	271-2Q	
Western Ahoada District Council .. .. .	608Q	
<b>ACHARA, MR S. O.:</b>		
Appropriation Bill: 2R .. .. .	720-724	
Com. Head 423 .. .. .	857-8	
Com. Head 444 .. .. .	879-880	
Governor's Speech—Debate on the Address .. .. .	180-182	
Motor Basic Allowances .. .. .	892-3Q	
Okigwi-Ezinaechi-Uboma-Etiti Road ..	495Q	
Okigwi-Isuikwuato-Ahaba and Okigwi-Owerri Roads .. .. .	495Q	
Okigwi-Mballa Mamu River Road .. .. .	702Q	
Petition by members of the Moneylending profession against the Moneylenders Bill .. .. .	35-6	
Standing Orders Committee: Member ..	960	
Water Supply in Okigwi Division .. .. .	700-701Q	
<b>ACQUISITION OF LAND BY ALIENS BILL:</b>		
Presented and 1R .. .. .	396	
2R .. .. .	689-690	
Com. .. .. .	690-691	
3R .. .. .	691	
<b>ADELABU, ALHAJI ADEGOKE:</b>		
Death of (Adj. Deb.) .. .. .	558-560	
<b>ADJOURNMENT DEBATES:</b>		
Catering Rest House—Chalet No. 4 ..	436	
Death of Alhaji the hon. Adelabu ..	558-560	
Delay in Printing the Draft Estimates ..	126-130	
Dismissal of Workers by a Foreign Firm of Building Contractors .. .. .	597-8	
E.R. Development Corporation .. .. .	691-4	
Electricity in Abakaliki .. .. .	72	
Employment Discrimination in Port Harcourt .. .. .	392-4	
Misrepresentation in the <i>Daily Times</i> ..	394	
Payment of Taxes .. .. .	126	
Pharmaceutical and Tourist Corporations Report in the <i>Daily Times</i> of the Role of the Opposition .. .. .	890	
<b>ADMINISTRATION:</b>		
Merger of Interpreters and Clerical Services .. .. .	165Q	
<b>AFIAH, MR O. U., Minister of Works:</b>		
Appropriation Bill: Com. Head 462 ..	936-945	
<b>AGBA, MR J. A.:</b>		
Acquisition of Land by Aliens Bill: Com. Allowances to Higher Elementary Teachers-in-Training .. .. .	690-691	829-830Q

	Column		Column
Appropriation Bill: 2R .. .. .	703-9	<b>ANABA, MR J. W. E.:</b>	
Com. Head 435 .. .. .	871-2	Appropriation Bill: Com. Head 435 ..	874-5
Criminal Code (Amendment) Bill: Com.	585	Ediba Postal Agency .. .. .	221-2Q
Farmers in Ogoja and Obudu Divisions..	601Q	Exodus of Women from Obubra Divi-	
Governor's Speech—Debate on the		sion .. .. .	221Q
Address .. .. .	103-8	Public Accounts Committee: Member ..	961
Magistrates' Court at Obudu .. .. .	168Q	Self-government in the E.R.: <i>Motion</i> ..	473-4
Public Holidays (Amendment) Bill: Com.	49-50	<b>ANOKE, MR R. O., Parliamentary</b>	
Riot Damages Bill: 2R .. .. .	594-6	<i>Secretary, Ministry of Works:</i>	
Self-government in the E.R.: <i>Motion</i> ..	340-347	Motions for leave to bring in Bills ..	240
Standing Committee on Finance: Mem-		<b>APPROPRIATION BILL (1958-59):</b>	
ber .. .. .	961	Presented and 1R .. .. .	563
Students and Politics .. .. .	832Q	2R .. .. .	563-573, 609-656, 703-752, 757-828
Teacher Councillors .. .. .	607Q	Com. Clause 1 .. .. .	1054
Welfare of Illegitimate Children (Affilia-		Com. Clause 2 .. .. .	1055
tion Orders Bill: 2R .. .. .	675-8	Com. Clause 3 .. .. .	1055
<b>AGBASIERE, CHIEF G. N.:</b>		Com. Clause 4 .. .. .	1055
Appropriation Bill: Com. Head 462 ..	947-8	Com. Head 420 .. .. .	837-9
Governor's Speech—Debate on the		Com. Head 421 .. .. .	839-848
Address .. .. .	194-5	Com. Head 422 .. .. .	848-857
House Committee: Member .. .. .	960	Com. Head 423 .. .. .	857-9
Motions for leave to bring in Bills ..	230	Com. Head 424 .. .. .	860-862
Self-government in the E.R.: <i>Motion</i> ..	512-4	Com. Head 425 .. .. .	862-3
<b>AGIM, MR D. S. A.:</b>		Com. Head 426 .. .. .	962-972
Motions for leave to bring in Bills ..	238-240	Com. Head 427 .. .. .	927-5
<b>AHOADA:</b>		Com. Head 428 .. .. .	863-6
Western Ahoada Rural District Coun-		Com. Head 429 .. .. .	975-981
cil .. .. .	607-8Q, 696Q, 835-6Q	Com. Head 430 .. .. .	981-4
<b>AJEGBO, MR M. O., Attorney-General:</b>		Com. Head 431 .. .. .	866
Appointment as Attorney-General ..	659-662	Com. Head 432 .. .. .	867-8
Oath of Allegiance .. .. .	660	Com. Head 433 .. .. .	868
Peace Preservation Bill: 2R .. .. .	1075-7	Com. Head 434 .. .. .	984-999
<b>AKILO, MR D. E.:</b>		Com. Head 435 .. .. .	868-877
Governor's Speech—Debate on the		Com. Head 436 .. .. .	999-1013
Address .. .. .	191-4	Com. Head 437 .. .. .	1013-5
Public Petitions Committee: Member ..	961	Com. Head 438 .. .. .	1015-6
Self-government in the E.R.: <i>Motion</i> ..	481-4	Com. Head 439 .. .. .	877
<b>AKPABIO, MR H. U.:</b>		Com. Head 440 .. .. .	877
Appropriation Bill: 2R .. .. .	774-7	Com. Head 441 .. .. .	1016
Foreign Companies .. .. .	663Q	Com. Head 442 .. .. .	1016-1029
Governor's Speech—Debate on the		Com. Head 443 .. .. .	1029-1031
Address .. .. .	187-191	Com. Head 444 .. .. .	877-883
Self-government in the E.R.: <i>Motion</i> ..	515-9	Com. Head 445 .. .. .	884
<b>ALO, MR S. N.:</b>		Com. Head 446 .. .. .	884
Appropriation Bill: Com. Head 450 ..	887-8	Com. Head 447 .. .. .	884-7
Cinema Corporation .. .. .	493Q	Com. Head 448 .. .. .	1031-1041
Development of Abakaliki Urban Area ..	223Q	Com. Head 449 .. .. .	1041-1051
Electricity Supply for Abakaliki Urban		Com. Head 450 .. .. .	887-890, 893-900
Town .. .. .	270-271Q	Com. Head 451 .. .. .	899-910
House Committee: Member .. .. .	960	Com. Head 452 .. .. .	1051-4
Local Government (Amendment) Bill:		Com. Head 453 .. .. .	910-914
Com. .. .. .	689	Com. Head 454 .. .. .	914
Scholarships .. .. .	168-9Q	Com. Head 455 .. .. .	914
School population in Abakaliki .. .. .	602Q	Com. Head 456 .. .. .	914-922
Self-government in the E.R.: <i>Motion</i> ..	339-340	Com. Head 457 .. .. .	922
Water for the Urban Area of Abakaliki ..	224Q	Com. Head 458 .. .. .	922
<b>AMACHREE, MR S. J.:</b>		Com. Head 459 .. .. .	922-936
Public Petitions Committee: Member ..	961	Com. Head 460 .. .. .	936
<b>AMAEFUNAH, MR P. U.:</b>		Com. Head 461 .. .. .	936
Appropriation Bill: 2R .. .. .	766-9	Com. Head 462 .. .. .	936-954
Com. Head 435 .. .. .	869-870	Com. Head 463 .. .. .	954
Com. Head 449 .. .. .	1046-8	Com. Head 464 .. .. .	954
Committee of Privileges: Member ..	960	Com. Head 465 .. .. .	954
Governor's Speech—Debate on the		Com. Head 466 .. .. .	954
Address .. .. .	135-140	Com. Head 467 .. .. .	955
Self-government in the E.R.: <i>Motion</i> ..	396-401, 476	3R .. .. .	1056
		<b>APREALA, MR N. L. P.:</b>	
		Appropriation Bill: 2R .. .. .	625-9
		Com. Head 426 .. .. .	967-9



	Column
Governor's Speech—Debate on the Address .. .. .	213-7
Motions for leave to bring in Bills ..	229-230
Rest Houses in Divisional Headquarters: Motion .. .. .	242-3
Self-government in the E.R.: <i>Motion</i> ..	479-481
<b>ARIKPO, MR O.:</b>	
Appropriation Bill: 2R .. .. .	639-648
Com. Head 427 .. .. .	972-4
Com. Head 434 .. .. .	987-8
Com. Head 436 .. .. .	1011-2
Com. Head 448 .. .. .	1038-9
Finance Law, 1956: Variations to Fourth Schedule .. .. .	576-7
General Revenue Balance: <i>Motion</i> ..	581
Governor's Speech—Debate on the Address .. .. .	82, 84-8
Peace Preservation Bill: 2R .. .. .	1077-1080
Public Lands Acquisition Ordinance (Amendment) Bill: 2R .. .. .	1063-4
Riot Damages Bill: 2R .. .. .	591-2
Standing Orders Committee: Member ..	960
Statutory Corporations Committee: Member .. .. .	961
<b>ATTORNEY-GENERAL:</b>	
Appointment of .. .. .	659-662
<b>AWGU:</b>	
Acquisition of Awgu Government Station Land .. .. .	756Q
Oji River—Awgu—Okigwi Road .. .. .	891-2
<b>AWGU, MR M. C.:</b>	
Appropriation Bill: 2R .. .. .	772-4
Committee of Privileges: Member .. ..	960
Governor's Speech—Debate on the Address .. .. .	210-213
Iyi Oji Cult .. .. .	606-7Q
<b>AZIKIWE, DR N., Premier:</b>	
Appointment of Attorney-General ..	659-660
Appropriation Bill: 2R .. .. .	785-795
Com. Head 420 .. .. .	838-9
Com. Head 421 .. .. .	839-840, 844-5
Com. Head 426 .. .. .	962-3, 970-972
Com. Head 427 .. .. .	972, 975
Com. Head 434 .. .. .	988
Com. Head 444 .. .. .	883
Com. Head 448 .. .. .	1035-6, 1039-1041
Business Statement .. .. .	38-9
Commissions of Inquiry Ordinance (Amendment) Bill: 2R .. .. .	1080-1081
Delay in Printing the Draft Estimates (Adj. Deb.) .. .. .	128-130
Dick Tiger—British Empire Middle-weight Champion .. .. .	596
E.R. Development Corporation (Adj. Deb.) .. .. .	694
Governor's Speech—Debate on the Address .. .. .	117, 284-297
Motions for leave to bring in Bills ..	226
Nigeria (Constitution) (Amendment) Order in Council, 1958, and the Nigeria (Offices of Governor-General and Governors) (Amendment) Order in Council, 1958 .. .. .	437-9
Peace Preservation Bill: 2R .. .. .	1069-1071
Com. .. .. .	1080
Privy Council in the E.R.: <i>Motion</i> ..	443-8
Produce Inspection Board: <i>Motion</i> ..	581-2
Public Holidays (Amendment) Bill: Com.	52-3
Public Service Commission Bill: 2R ..	1082

	Column
Self-government in the E.R.: <i>Motion</i> ..	301-5, 319, 342, 433, 537-556
University of Nigeria (Provisional Council) Bill: 2R .. .. .	1086-1090
Com. .. .. .	1090
Visit to Nsukka (Adj. Deb.) .. .. .	752
Welfare of Illegitimate Children (Affiliation Orders) Bill: 2R .. .. .	671-2, 680

## B

### BENDE:

Tax Clerks of Local Government Councils .. .. .	73Q
---	-----

### BOXING:

Dick Tiger—British Empire Middle-weight Champion .. .. .	596
--	-----

### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE:

Exemption from Standing Order .. .. .	40-43, 301, 958-9
Business Statements .. .. .	36-9
Adjournment <i>sine die</i> .. .. .	959, 1090

## C

### CALABAR:

Hope Waddell Training Institute ..	601-2Q
------------------------------------	--------

### CHEMISTS AND DRUGGISTS:

(Adj. Deb.) .. .. .	298
---------------------	-----

### CHIDOLUE, MR E.:

Abagana—Aguleri Road .. .. .	698-9Q
Governor's Speech—Debate on the Address .. .. .	153-8
School of Music .. .. .	835Q
Self-government in the E.R.: <i>Motion</i> ..	320-323

### CHIKWENDU, MR A. O., Parliamentary

<i>Secretary, Ministry of Finance:</i>	
Appropriation Bill: Com. Head 442 ..	1028-9
Self-government in the E.R.: <i>Motion</i> ..	514-5

### CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS BILL:

Presented and 1R. .. .. .	39-40
2R .. .. .	56-64
Com. and 3R .. .. .	582

### CHILDREN'S ALLOWANCE: .. .. .

.. .. .	166-8Q
---------	--------

### CHIME, MR E. A., Minister of Welfare:

Appropriation Bill: Com. Head 459 ..	922-930
Children and Young Persons Bill: 2R ..	56-9
Dismissal of Workers by a Foreign Firm of Building Contractors (Adj. Deb.) ..	597-8
House Committee: Chairman .. .. .	960
Welfare of Illegitimate Children (Affiliation Orders) Bill: 2R .. .. .	673-5

### CINEMA CORPORATION:

Cinema in Abakaliki .. .. .	493Q
Film Show for hon. Members .. .. .	71

### COCOA:

Cocoa and Palm Groves: <i>Motion</i> ..	1058
---	------

### COMMERCE:

Co-operative Marketing of Oil Palm Produce: <i>Motion</i> .. .. .	1059
---	------

### COMMISSION OF INQUIRY:

U.P.E. Scheme Disturbances: <i>Motion</i> ..	246-266
--	---------

	Column
<b>COMMISSIONS OF INQUIRY ORDINANCE (AMENDMENT) BILL:</b>	
Presented and 1R.. .. .	957
2R.. .. .	1080-1081
Com. and 3R .. .. .	1081
<b>COMMITTEE OF SELECTION:</b>	
Meeting .. .. .	956
Members .. .. .	169
Motion .. .. .	169-173
Report .. .. .	960-961
<b>COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE:</b>	
Committee of Selection: Members ..	169
Finance Committee: Members ..	961
House Committee: Members ..	960
Privileges, Committee of: Members ..	960
Public Accounts Committee: Members ..	961
Public Petitions Committee: Members ..	961
Standing Orders Committee: Members ..	960
Statutory Corporations Committee: Members ..	961
<b>COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES:</b>	
Visits to .. .. .	697-8Q
<b>CONTINGENCIES FUND:</b>	
Motions .. .. .	1061-2
<b>CORPORATIONS:</b>	
Pharmaceutical and Tourist Corporations (Adj. Deb.) .. .. .	33-4
Tourist Corporation .. .. .	891Q
<b>CRIMINAL CODE (AMENDMENT) BILL:</b>	
Presented and 1R.. .. .	395
2R.. .. .	582-5
Com. .. .. .	585-6
3R.. .. .	586

## D

<b>"DAILY TIMES":</b>	
Misrepresentation in the <i>Daily Times</i> (Adj. Deb.) .. .. .	394
Report in the <i>Daily Times</i> of the role of the Opposition (Adj. Deb.) .. .. .	890
<b>DICK TIGER:</b>	
British Empire Middleweight Champion ..	596
<b>DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS BILL:</b>	
Presented and 1R.. .. .	957-8
2R.. .. .	1083-4
Com. and 3R .. .. .	1084
<b>DISTURBANCES:</b>	
Commission of Inquiry into the U.P.E. Scheme Disturbances: <i>Motion</i> ..	246-266
<b>DOGS ORDINANCE (AMENDMENT) BILL:</b>	
Presented and 1R.. .. .	40
2R.. .. .	70-71
Com. and 3R .. .. .	71
<b>DRAFT ESTIMATES:</b>	
Delay in Printing the Draft Estimates (Adj. Deb.) .. .. .	126-130, 163-4

## E

<b>EASTERN REGION DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION:</b>	
(Adj. Deb.) .. .. .	691-4
Motion .. .. .	449-466

	Column
<b>EDUCATION:</b>	
Allowances to Higher Elementary Teachers-in-Training.. .. .	829-830Q
Commission of Inquiry into the U.P.E. Scheme Disturbances: <i>Motion</i> ..	246-266
Grants-in-Aid .. .. .	753-4Q, 831Q
Headmasters in Standard VI Schools ..	168Q
Hope Waddell Training Institute, Calabar .. .. .	601-2Q
Ogoni Education Rate .. .. .	608Q
Regional Scholarships .. .. .	272-3Q
Scholarships .. .. .	168-9Q
School of Music .. .. .	835Q
School Population in Abakaliki .. ..	602Q
School Syllabus .. .. .	697Q
Schools in the E.R. .. .. .	599-600Q
Shanahan Memorial College, Uboma ..	604-5Q
Students and Politics .. .. .	832Q
Teacher Councillors .. .. .	607Q
Training Centres and Secondary Schools	832-6Q
Transport Allowance: U.P.E. Scheme ..	271-2Q
Women's Training College, Enugu ..	603-4Q, 606Q
<b>EFIONG, C.B.E., REV. O.:</b>	
Appropriation Bill: 2R .. .. .	744-9
Committee of Privileges: Member ..	960
Governor's Speech—Debate on the Address .. .. .	108-9
Self-government in the E.R.: <i>Motion</i> ..	468-473
<b>EKPE, MR A. J.:</b>	
Committee of Selection: Member ..	169
Governor's Speech—Debate on the Address .. .. .	131-4
Peace Preservation Bill: 2R .. .. .	1074-5
Public Accounts Committee: Chairman ..	961
Self-government in the E.R.: <i>Motion</i> ..	313-320
Statutory Corporations Committee: Member .. .. .	961
<b>ELECTRICITY:</b>	
(Adj. Deb.) .. .. .	72
Owerri Town .. .. .	699-700Q
Supply in Abakaliki .. .. .	270-271Q
<b>EMOLE, MR E., Minister of Town Planning:</b>	
Appropriation Bill: Com. Head 453 ..	910-913
Committee of Privileges: Chairman ..	960
Public Lands Acquisition Ordinance (Amendment) Bill: 2R .. .. .	1064-6
Com. .. .. .	1066
<b>ENUGU:</b>	
Tax Clerks of Local Government Councils .. .. .	73Q
Women's Training College .. .. .	603-4Q, 606Q
<b>ENYI, MR U.:</b>	
Appropriation Bill: 2R .. .. .	781-2
Self-government in the E.R.: <i>Motion</i> ..	360-362
<b>ENYONG:</b>	
Police Post at Biakpan .. .. .	275-6Q
<b>ERONINI, MR E. U.:</b>	
Appropriation Bill: Com. Head 451 ..	901-3
Com. Head 453 .. .. .	913-4
E.R. Development Corporation (Adj. Deb.) .. .. .	691-3
Governor's Speech—Debate on the Address .. .. .	158-162
Public Holidays (Amendment) Bill: Com. .. .. .	50

**ETUHUBE, MR J. A.:**

Appropriation Bill: 2R .. .. .	620
Self-government in the E.R.: <i>Motion</i> ..	405-410
Standing Orders Committee: Member..	960

**ETUK, MR M. U.:**

Appropriation Bill: 2R .. .. .	740-744
Criminal Code (Amendment) Bill: 2R ..	584
Motions for leave to bring in Bills ..	234-5
Public Accounts Committee: Member..	961
Public Holidays (Amendment) Bill:	
Com. .. .. .	51-2
Self-government in the E.R.: <i>Motion</i> ..	509-512

**EYO, MR E. O.:**

Appropriation Bill: 2R .. .. .	709-717
Com. Head 420 .. .. .	838-9
Com. Head 421 .. .. .	841-2, 844, 848
Com. Head 422 .. .. .	853-6
Com. Head 424 .. .. .	860-861
Com. Head 426 .. .. .	962
Com. Head 428 .. .. .	863
Com. Head 430 .. .. .	982-3
Com. Head 434 .. .. .	985-8, 990-992
Com. Head 435 .. .. .	868
Com. Head 436 .. .. .	1012
Com. Head 437 .. .. .	1015
Com. Head 442 .. .. .	1026-8
Com. Head 444 .. .. .	877-9, 883
Com. Head 446 .. .. .	884
Com. Head 448 .. .. .	1034, 1036-8
Com. Head 450 .. .. .	889, 893-8
Com. Head 451 .. .. .	903-7
Com. Head 453 .. .. .	914
Com. Head 459 .. .. .	930-931

Catering Rest House—Chalet No. 4  
(Adj. Deb.) .. .. . 436

Children and Young Persons Bill: 2R .. .. . 63-4

Committee of Selection: *Motion* .. .. . 169-172

Delay in Printing the Draft Estimates  
(Adj. Deb.) .. .. . 130

E.R. Development Corporation: *Motion* 449-454,  
460

Exemption from Standing Order: *Motion* 41-2

Finance Law (Amendment) Bill: Com... 1068-9

Governor's Speech—Debate on the  
Address .. .. . 74-82, 115-125

Pharmaceutical and Tourist Corporations  
(Adj. Deb.) .. .. . 33-4

Privy Council in the E.R.: *Motion* .. 439-443,  
449

Public Holidays (Amendment) Bill: 2R .. 44-5

Public Lands Acquisition Ordinance  
(Amendment) Bill: 2R .. .. . 1062-3

Self-government in the E.R.: *Motion* .. 480,  
529-537

Shanahan Memorial College, Uboma .. 605Q

Welfare of Illegitimate Children (Affilia-  
tion Orders) Bill: 2R .. .. . 678-680

**EYO, MR J. E.:**

Annang Joint Hospital .. .. . 701-2Q

Appropriation Bill: 2R .. .. . 629-638

  Com. Head 425 .. .. . 862

  Com. Head 444 .. .. . 882-3

Governor's Speech—Debate on the  
Address .. .. . 199-203

Motions for leave to bring in Bills .. 234

Self-government in the E.R.: *Motion* .. 332-7

**F****FARMERS:**

Ogoja and Obudu Divisions .. .. . 601Q

**FINANCE LAW, 1956:**

Variations to Fourth Schedule .. .. . 573-7

**FINANCE LAW (AMENDMENT) BILL:**

Presented and 1R.. .. . 893

  2R.. .. . 1066-7

  Com. .. .. . 1067-9

  3R.. .. . 1069

**FINANCE, STANDING COMMITTEE ON:**

Members .. .. . 961

**FISHING INDUSTRY:**

Oguta .. .. . 561-2Q

**FOREST (AMENDMENT) BILL:**

Presented and 1R.. .. . 40

  2R.. .. . 64-5

  Com. .. .. . 65

  3R.. .. . 66

**G****GOVERNOR, H. E. THE:**

Debate on the Address .. .. . 74-125, 131-163

173-220, 276-298

Governor's Speech .. .. . 1-25

Motion for an Address .. .. . 26-32

**GUNPOWDER INDUSTRY** .. .. . 664Q

**H****HOSPITALS:**

Annang Joint Hospital .. .. . 701-2Q

Grants to Voluntary Agency Hospitals .. 437Q

**HOUSE COMMITTEE:**

Members .. .. . 960

**HOUSING:**

Magistrate's Court at Obudu .. .. . 168Q

Rest Houses in Divisional Headquarters:

*Motion* .. .. . 242-6

**I****IHEKWOABA, MR J. O.:**

Appropriation Bill: Com. Head 435 .. 869

  Com. Head 447 .. .. . 884-5

  Com. Head 451 .. .. . 907-8

Finance Law, 1956: Variations to Fourth  
Schedule .. .. . 575-6

Finance Law (Amendment) Bill: Com. .. 1068

Self-government in the E.R.: *Motion* 353-6,  
359-360

**IKOKU, MR S. G., Leader of the Opposition:**

Appointment of Attorney-General .. 660-661

Appropriation Bill: 2R .. .. . 609-620

  Com. Head 421 .. .. . 845-7

  Com. Head 422 .. .. . 849-853

  Com. Head 423 .. .. . 858-9

  Com. Head 424 .. .. . 861-2

  Com. Head 426 .. .. . 963-7

  Com. Head 428 .. .. . 865-6

  Com. Head 430 .. .. . 982-3

  Com. Head 432 .. .. . 867

  Com. Head 434 .. .. . 988-990, 993,  
998-9

	Column
Com. Head 436 ..	1009-1011
Com. Head 444 ..	881-2
Com. Head 447 ..	886-7
Com. Head 449 ..	1049-1051
Com. Head 451 ..	899-901
Com. Head 462 ..	948-951
Business Statement ..	37-8
Children and Young Persons Bill: 2R ..	59-62
Commission of Inquiry into the U.P.E. Scheme Disturbances: <i>Motion</i> ..	246-257, 259, 263-4
Death of Alhaji the hon. Adelabu (Adj. Deb.) ..	558-9
Delay in Printing the Draft Estimates (Adj. Deb.) ..	126-9
E.R. Development Corporation: <i>Motion</i> ..	460-465
Governor's Speech—Debate on the Address ..	83-4, 89, 93-9, 101-2, 112-4, 173-7, 185, 276-284
Local Government (Extension of Office) Bill: 2R ..	67-70
Misrepresentation in the <i>Daily Times</i> (Adj. Deb.) ..	394
Moneylenders (Payment by Cheque) Bill: 2R ..	55-6
Motions for leave to bring in Bills ..	226-7
Peace Preservation Bill: 2R ..	1071-4, 1077
Police Post at Biakpan ..	275-6Q
Privy Council in the E.R.: <i>Motion</i> ..	448
Public Holidays (Amendment) Bill: Com. Self-government in the E.R.: <i>Motion</i> ..	47-9 312, 375, 424-435, 516
Women's Training College, Enugu ..	603Q
<b>IKOT EKPENE:</b>	
Bridges ..	701Q
Sinking of Wells ..	700Q
<b>IMEH, MR I. U.:</b>	
Self-government in the E.R.: <i>Motion</i> ..	519-520
<b>IMOKE, DR S. E., Minister of Finance:</b>	
Appropriation Bill: 2R ..	563-573 811-828
Com. Clause 2 ..	1054-5
Com. Clause 4 ..	1055
Com. Head 421 ..	847-8
Com. Head 434 ..	987
Com. Head 437 ..	1013-5
Com. Head 438 ..	1016
Com. Head 441 ..	1016
Com. Title ..	1055
Cocoa and Palm Groves: <i>Motion</i> ..	1058
Contingencies Fund: <i>Motions</i> ..	1061-2
Co-operative Marketing of Oil Palm Produce: <i>Motion</i> ..	1059
Finance Law, 1956: Variations to Fourth Schedule ..	573-5
Finance Law (Amendment) Bill: 2R ..	1066-7
Com. ..	1069
General Revenue Balance: <i>Motion</i> ..	577-9
Governor's Speech—Debate on the Address ..	88-92
Local Contributions Account: <i>Motions</i> ..	1056-7
Local Government Loan Fund: <i>Motion</i> ..	1057
Marine Renewals Fund: <i>Motion</i> ..	1059-6
Road Development Expenditure: <i>Motion</i> ..	1060-1061
Standing Committee on Finance: Chairman ..	961
Urban Water Supplies Account: <i>Motion</i> ..	1058
Warrant to meet Expenditure: <i>Motion</i> ..	959-960
Water Supplies Renewals Fund: <i>Motion</i> ..	1060
<b>INDUSTRIES:</b>	
Fishing Industry in Oguta ..	561-2Q
Gunpowder and Match Industries ..	664Q
Metal Industry ..	754-5Q
Owerri Division ..	357-8Q
<b>INFORMATION SERVICES:</b>	
Staff Grading ..	299-300Q
<b>ITA, MR E.:</b>	
Committee of Privileges: Member ..	960
Self-government in the E.R.: <i>Motion</i> ..	495-7
<b>ITO, MR J. M.:</b>	
Bridges at Ikot Ekpene ..	701Q
Self-government in the E.R.: <i>Motion</i> ..	410-412
Sinking of Wells in Ikot Ekpene Division ..	700Q
Standing Committee on Finance: Mem- ber ..	961
<b>IWUAGWU, MR R. O., Minister of Justice:</b>	
Appropriation Bill: Com. Head 448 ..	1031-4, 1041
Criminal Code (Amendment) Bill: 2R ..	583
Com. ..	586
Director of Public Prosecutions Bill: 2R ..	1083-4
Magistrates Courts (Amendment) Bill: 2R ..	586-8
Riot Damages Bill: 2R ..	588-591
Com. ..	683-4
Self-government in the E.R.: <i>Motion</i> ..	526-9
<b>IWUEKE, MR S. E. K.:</b>	
Adulteration of Commodities ..	663Q
Appropriation Bill: Com. Head 435 ..	875-7
Civil Servants ..	663Q
Gunpowder and Match Industries ..	664Q
Members' Commonwealth Visits ..	697-8Q
Metal Industry ..	754-5Q
Public Accounts Committee: Member ..	961
Railway Coaches—Modernisation ..	609Q
Road Accidents ..	755Q
Road Programme ..	755-6Q
Self-government in the E.R.: <i>Motion</i> ..	390-391, 401-5
Shanahan Memorial College, Uboma ..	604-5Q
Tourist Corporation ..	891Q
Trade Negotiations ..	698Q
Traffic congestion ..	494Q
Iyi Oji Cult ..	606-7Q
<b>J</b>	
<b>JUDICIARY:</b>	
Magistrate's Court at Obudu ..	168Q
<b>K</b>	
<b>KIRI, MR K.:</b>	
Appropriation Bill: 2R ..	763-6
Com. Head 434 ..	999
Com. Head 435 ..	872-3
Com. Head 459 ..	931-2
Com. Head 462 ..	951-3
Committee of Privileges: Member ..	960
Governor's Speech—Debate on the Address ..	203-7
Motions for leave to bring in Bills ..	236-7
Riot Damages Bill: 2R ..	593-4
Self-government in the E.R.: <i>Motion</i> ..	418-424