



NIGERIA

**Eastern House of Assembly  
Debates**

**FIRST SESSION**

**FIRST MEETING**

*1st to 6th of October, 1954*

THE HOUSE OF  
BURTON

DEPT.

HOUSE OF BURTON

HOUSE OF BURTON





# Eastern House of Assembly

## ALPHABETICAL LIST OF MEMBERS

### A

Abengowe, Mr N. W. (Aba Division).  
Achara, Mr S. O. (Okigwi Division).  
Afiah, Mr O. U. (Abak Division).  
Agbasiere, Chief G. N. (Orlu Division).  
Agim, Mr E. A. (Ogoja Division).  
Akilo, Mr D. E. (Udi Division).  
Akpabio, Mr I. U. (Ikot Ekpene Division).  
Akpan, Mr S. T. (Eket Division).  
Aligwekwe, Mr D. O. (Okigwi Division).  
Alo, Mr S. N. (Abakaliki Division).  
Anu, Mr D. O. (Udi Division).  
Anyika, Chief N. N. (Awka Division).  
Apreala, Mr N. L. P. (Brass Division).  
Arikpo, Mr O. (Obubra Division).  
Ashirim-Unosi, Mr E. (Ahoada Division).  
Awgu, Mr M. C. (Awka Division).  
Azikiwe, Dr. Nnamdi (Onitsha Division).

### C

Chidolue, Mr E. (Onitsha Division).  
Chikwendu, Mr A. O. (Bende Division).  
Chime, Mr E. A. (Udi Division).

### E

Edet, Mr B.N.I. (Uyo Division).  
Edoga, Mr B. O. M. (Nsukka Division).  
Eko, Mr U. U. (Obubra Division).  
Ekpe, Mr A. J. (Opobo Division).  
Emole, Mr E. (Bende Division).  
Eronini, Mr E. U. (Owerri Division).  
Esin, Dr E. A. (Eket Division).  
Essien, Chief Nyong (Uyo Division).  
Eyo, Mr E. O. (Uyo Division).  
Eyo, Mr J. E. (Abak Division).

### I

Ibe, Rev. M. N. (Owerri Division).  
Ihekwoaba, Mr J. O. (Orlu Division).  
Ikoku, Mr A., o.B.E. (Enyong Division).  
Ikpeme, Mr F. E. (Calabar Division).  
Imeh, Mr I. U. (Abak Division).  
Imoke, Dr S. E. (Afikpo Division).  
Inyang, Mr A. U. A. (Ikot Ekpene Division).  
Ita, Mr E. (Calabar Division).

I—*continued*

Ita, Mr O. O. (Eket Division).  
Iwuagwu, Mr R. O. (Okigwi Division).  
Iwueke, Mr S. E. K. (Okigwi Division).

K

Kiri, Mr K. (Degema Division).

M

Masi, Mr S. O. (Ahoada Division).  
Mbadiwe, Mr K. O. (Orlu Division).  
Mbaka, Mr D. M. (Ogoni Division).  
Mbu, Mr M. T. (Ogoja Division).

N

Njoku, Mr R. A. (Owerri Division).  
Nnaji, Mr D. A. (Udi Division).  
Nwachuku, Mr A. (Afikpo 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. (Nsukka Division).  
Ogon, Mr M. E. (Ikom Division).  
Ojike, Mr Mbonu (Orlu Division).  
Okeke, Mr G. E. (Onitsha Division).  
Okeke, Mr P. N. (Onitsha Division).  
Oketa, Mr O. (Abakaliki Division).  
Oko, Mr G. I. (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).  
Onu-Chima, Mr U. (Afikpo Division).  
Onukogu, Chief S. E. (Owerri Division).  
Onwe, Mr P. A. (Abakaliki Division).  
Onwudiwe, Mr N. O. (Okigwi Division).  
Onyeri, Mr V. K. (Port Harcourt Division).  
Onyiuke, Chief A. N. (Awka Division).  
Opara, Rev. M. D. (Owerri Division).

S

Saronwiyo, Mr F. M. A. (Ogoni Division).

U

Ubani, Chief M. W. (Aba Division).  
Udoma, Dr E. U. (Opobo Division).  
Ugwu, Mr D. C. (Nsukka Division).  
Ukuta, Mr R. O. (Nsukka Division).



Umoh, Mr A. G. (Enyong Division).  
Umoh-Inyang, Mr R. U., M.B.E. (Ikot Ekpene Division).  
Umolu, Mr J. O. (Port Harcourt Division).  
Ururuka, Mr P. O. (Aba Division).  
Uzoigwe, Mr L. O. (Aba Division).

**W**

Warmate, Mr P. G. (Degema Division).

### MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

- President,  
His Excellency Sir Clement Pleass, K.B.E., C.M.G.
- Premier and Minister of Internal Affairs,  
Dr the honourable Nnamdi Azikiwe.
- Minister of Finance,  
The honourable Mbonu Ojike.
- Minister of Health,  
Dr the honourable M. I. Okpara.
- Minister of Land,  
The honourable M. C. Awgu.
- Minister of Education,  
The honourable I. U. Akpabio.
- Minister of Development,  
Dr the honourable W. N. Onubogu.
- Minister of Trade,  
The honourable I. U. Imeh.
- Minister of Transport,  
The honourable E. P. Okoya.
- Minister of Agriculture,  
The honourable E. Emole.
- Minister of Industries,  
The honourable P. O. Ururuka.
- Minister of Welfare,  
Dr the honourable E. A. Esin.
- Minister of Labour,  
Dr the honourable S. E. Imoke.

### OFFICE OF PREMIER AND MINISTRIES OF GOVERNMENT

#### PREMIER'S OFFICE:

- Premier: Dr the honourable Nnamdi Azikiwe.  
Parliamentary Secretary: honourable A. G. Umoh.

#### MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS:

- Minister: Dr the honourable Nnamdi Azikiwe.  
Parliamentary Secretaries: honourable F. M. A. Saronwiyo,  
honourable U. U. Eko.

#### MINISTRY OF FINANCE:

- Minister: honourable Mbonu Ojike.  
Parliamentary Secretary: honourable S. O. Achara.

#### MINISTRY OF HEALTH:

- Minister: Dr the honourable M. I. Okpara.  
Parliamentary Secretary: honourable J. U. Nwodo.

#### MINISTRY OF LAND:

- Minister: honourable M. C. Awgu.  
Parliamentary Secretary: honourable M. E. Ogon,



**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION:**

Minister: honourable I. U. Akpabio.  
Parliamentary Secretary: honourable P. O. Nwoga.

**MINISTRY OF DEVELOPMENT:**

Minister: Dr the honourable W. N. Onubogu.  
Parliamentary Secretary: honourable D. O. Anu.

**MINISTRY OF TRADE:**

Minister: honourable I. U. Imeh.  
Parliamentary Secretary: honourable S. O. Masi.

**MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT:**

Minister: honourable E. P. Okoya.  
Parliamentary Secretary: honourable P. A. Onwe.

**MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE:**

Minister: honourable E. Emole.  
Parliamentary Secretary: honourable B. N. I. Edet.

**MINISTRY OF INDUSTRIES:**

Minister: honourable P. O. Ururuka.  
Parliamentary Secretary: honourable K. Kiri.

**MINISTRY OF WELFARE:**

Minister: Dr the honourable E. A. Esin.  
Parliamentary Secretary: honourable L. O. Uzoigwe.

**MINISTRY OF LABOUR:**

Minister: Dr the honourable S. E. Imoke.  
Parliamentary Secretary: honourable V. K. Onyeri.

**OFFICERS OF THE HOUSE**

THE SPEAKER: honourable E. N. Egbuna.

THE DEPUTY-SPEAKER: honourable E. O. Eyo.

CLERK OF THE HOUSE: Mr A. E. Eronini, M.B.E.

CLERK ASSISTANT: Mr L. O. Okoro.

**MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE OF SELECTION**

The Premier (Chairman).  
The Minister of Finance.  
The Minister of Health.  
The Minister of Land.  
The Minister of Education.  
The Minister of Development.  
The Minister of Trade.  
The Minister of Transport.  
The Minister of Agriculture.  
The Minister of Industries.  
The Minister of Welfare.  
The Minister of Labour.

1st: October, 1954

The honourable E. O. Eyo.  
 The honourable R. O. Iwuagwu.  
 The honourable K. J. N. Okpokam.  
 The honourable P. G. Warmate.  
 The honourable A. J. Ekpe.  
 The honourable A. U. A. Inyang.

#### STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

Mr Speaker (Chairman).  
 The honourable E. O. Eyo.  
 The honourable E. A. Chime.  
 The honourable N. W. Abengowe.  
 The honourable O. O. Ita.

#### HOUSE COMMITTEE

The Minister of Welfare (Chairman).  
 Chief the honourable N. N. Anyika.  
 Chief the honourable G. N. Agbasiere.  
 The honourable M. U. Obayi.  
 The honourable D. M. Mbaka.  
 The honourable J. E. Eyo.  
 The honourable R. U. Umo-Inyang.

#### COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES

The Minister of Agriculture (Chairman).  
 Chief the honourable A. N. Onyiuke.  
 The honourable E. O. Eyo.  
 The honourable G. E. Okeke.  
 The honourable J. H. E. Nwuke.  
 The honourable N. Nweze.  
 The honourable O. U. Afiah.  
 The honourable N. O. Onwudiwe.  
 Chief the honourable M. W. Ubani.

#### PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE

The Minister of Labour (Chairman).  
 Chief the honourable Nyong Essien.  
 Chief the honourable S. E. Onukogu.  
 The honourable U. Onu-Chima.  
 The honourable D. A. Nnaji.  
 The honourable D. E. Akilo.  
 The honourable F. E. Ikpeme.

#### STATUTORY CORPORATIONS COMMITTEE

The Minister of Trade (Chairman).  
 The honourable E. O. Eyo.  
 The honourable P. N. Okeke.  
 The honourable O. Oketa.  
 Reverend and the honourable M. D. Opara.  
 The honourable S. N. Alo.  
 The honourable A. Ikoku, O.B.E.



**PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**

The honourable E. U. Eronini (Chairman).  
The honourable S. T. Akpan.  
The honourable J. O. Ihekwoaba.  
The honourable V. A. Nwankwo.  
The honourable B. O. M. Edoga.  
The honourable E. Ashirim-Unosi.  
The honourable E. Chidolue.  
The honourable A. U. A. Inyang.

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE**

The Minister of Finance (Chairman).  
Reverend and the honourable M. N. Ibe.  
The honourable E. O. Eyo.  
The honourable J. O. Umolu.  
The honourable R. O. Ukuta.  
The honourable R. O. Iwuagwu.  
The honourable K. J. N. Okpokam.  
The honourable G. I. Oko.  
The honourable A. J. Ekpe.





# Debates in the Eastern House of Assembly

Friday, 1st October, 1954

The House met at 3 p.m.

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

## Prayers

Mr Speaker read the prayers.

## Announcements

### APPOINTMENT OF MR SPEAKER

#### The Clerk of the House:

It is hereby announced that by an Instrument under the Public Seal of the Eastern Region dated the 1st day of October, 1954, His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to appoint Ernest Odogwu Nwanolue Egbuna, Esquire, to be the Speaker of the Eastern House of Assembly.

*Mr Egbuna then took and subscribed the oath required by law and took the Chair.*

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

Mr Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Government Party to congratulate you on your assumption of office as the Speaker of the Eastern House of Assembly. It is indeed an occasion for which all of us in the Eastern Region should be proud.

There was a time, Sir, when it was considered absolutely impossible for a Nigerian to preside over a legislature in this country. But, Sir, it has become a reality today, and we are so happy that no other person other than yourself has been accorded this honour to be the first Speaker of the new Eastern House of Assembly, constituted under the Nigeria (Constitution) Order in Council, 1954.

Mr Speaker, we are so proud of you—and we have every reason to be proud of you—and, Sir, we hope that you will in your exalted position, discharge your duties with all sense of responsibility.

I commend you Mr Speaker to the keeping of the Almighty God!

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

Mr Speaker, it is my pleasure to offer the congratulations of the Opposition to you, Sir, on your appointment as the first Speaker of the Eastern House of Assembly. An office such as you now hold, is one of grave responsibility, tact and indulgence and thank God you have the physique and the energy that are called for in the discharge of the duties such as are imposed upon you this day.

May God help you to guide and lead this House in the way it should be led and also to help to establish parliamentary practice and procedure in the Eastern Region of Nigeria, and we all hope that this parliamentary democracy has come to stay.

#### Mr Speaker:

I take this opportunity to thank you for the very excellent things you have said about me in connection with my appointment to this House. It has been a great pleasure to be here, and to serve you. During the last meeting, Mr Premier, a lot of nice things were also said about the Clerk of the House, members of the staff and the



reporters, who made it possible for the House to sit with marked and conspicuous success. On that occasion, I did not have the opportunity to thank you. I take this opportunity to do so now, here.

Traditionally, the Speaker is a very silent man, and is concerned only with conducting the debate of the House and ensuring that the Standing Orders are obeyed. He speaks very little. I see no reason whatsoever for a departure from that traditional stand, and I will be very brief in view of the long programme which is before us. Honourable Members of the House, I thank you once more.

#### APPOINTMENT OF THE PREMIER

#### Mr Speaker:

It is hereby announced that by the Instrument under the Public Seal of the Eastern Region, dated 1st October, 1954, His Excellency has been pleased to appoint Dr the honourable Nnamdi Azikiwe, to be the Premier of the Eastern Region.

Before the Premier stands to take his Oath, I think it is but fitting that I should congratulate him on his elevation to this high office. It is hoped, no doubt, that with his usual candour, ability and skill, he will be able to guide the fortunes of the Government to the glory of the Eastern Region. I have no doubt about his immense ability which has been demonstrated in this House. His appointment is, no doubt, a very popular one and I trust that he will be able to justify the great confidence which everyone in this Region reposes in him. May he be granted a long lease of life to enable him to fulfil the task before him.

It is a unique opportunity which has come. We only join those who have been pleased to appoint the Premier to his high office and dignity in congratulating him.

#### Mr Mbonu Ojike (Orlu Division):

Mr Speaker, I rise to congratulate Dr the honourable Nnamdi Azikiwe upon his elevation to the premiership of Eastern Nigeria. Our joy knows no bounds, for this day, 1st October, 1954, the Doyen of Nigerian nationalism has brought to the three Regions of Nigeria self-government on a platter of gold, and thank God this Herculean task has been accomplished without bloodshed. Only a Zik could have chronicled this epoch.

And, who is this man Zik? Is he not that son of Ogbuefi Obediah Azikiwe of Onitsha, born at Zungeru in Northern Nigeria on 16th November, 1904? Was he not once a pupil of the C.M.S. Central School, Onitsha? Did he not attend the Hope Waddell Training Institute, Calabar, and the Methodist Boys' High School, Lagos?

In 1925, after serving briefly as a clerk in the Treasury Department, Lagos, did not this man Zik proceed to the Land of Uncle Sam in quest of the Golden Fleece? All this we know and more, for when he returned to Nigeria in 1934, he had grown in stature and brain—he had learnt to live in harmony with kindly friend and foe. We came then to know him as Zik the athlete, Zik the scholar with M.A. Honours in Philosophy, M.Sc. Honours in Anthropology, instructor in Political Science in Lincoln University, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.

As an author, his "Liberia in World Politics," 1934, "Renascent Africa," 1937, "Political Blue Print of Nigeria," 1943, "Economic Reconstruction of Nigeria," 1943, are the trees whose fruits we are reaping here today.



[Appointment of the  
Premier]

[Appointment of the  
Premier]

As a journalist Zik belongs to a class himself. The *African Morning Post* when under his editorial direction and the *West African Pilot* together with the *Eastern Nigeria Guardian*, the *Southern Defender*, the *Nigerian Spokesman* and the *Daily Comet* have shown the light in which we have marched to this great day of days.

Is it in the field of practical economics and business that Zik has not in these twenty years inspired and succoured us ?

As a legislator since 1947, Zik is not just another politician; he is a statesman, a diplomat of rare calibre. He as the National President of our great N.C.N.C., has led three Freedom Crusades in and out of Nigeria. This evangelist of a New Nigeria united in freedom is the darling of our people. Indeed he knows all our trials and tribulations. God must have sent Zik to inspire, to guide and to succour Nigeria.

Now that you have been rewarded with the noblest office as the Premier of the Eastern Nigeria, I and other ministerial colleagues as well as the entire officers and members of the N.C.N.C. hereby renew our unflinching loyalty to you. Our confidence is unswerving. In sunshine or in rain, we will be with you no matter how difficult the road to Nigerian Freedom. In unity, may we hereby pledge anew our co-operation and renewed determination to march with you forward to Dominion Status for one Nigeria in 1956.

I congratulate you.

**Mr A. J. Ekpe:**

Mr Speaker, Sir, I feel that today marks the end of a beginning in the political struggle of the people of the Eastern Region of Nigeria in their national independence and self-determination. To Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, who has been this day appointed the first Premier of the Eastern Region, I extend my right hand of fellowship and draw his attention to the grave responsibility placed upon his shoulders from this day on; and hope that he will be able to carry out these responsibilities, and also the cherished hopes of the people of the Eastern Region that have been on him for the past twenty years.

Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, I wish you a happy and long lease of life and a successful career as the first Premier of the Eastern Region of Nigeria.

**The Premier:**

Mr Speaker, I rise to thank those who have been very gracious in their references to my elevation to the premiership of Eastern Nigeria. Their kind sentiments were full of inspiration. Their message of congratulation was couched in beautiful language; it was expressed in words that stimulated my thoughts and challenged my emotions. It is with humility and a sense of abnegation that I reciprocate the good wishes extended to me today.

When I returned to Nigeria, almost twenty years ago, little did I expect to be a living witness to what is happening before our very eyes today. I had no ambition for public life, in spite of the fact that I was trained in the art and science of Government. Then, I was convinced that the time would come when the Lion and the Palm Tree would appreciate the need for co-existence in their mutual interest, but I never reckoned that I would be an actor in such a drama. I only assumed that if my life was spared, I would merely be one of the spectators whose role would be evanescent.



[Appointment of the  
Premier]

1st October, 1954

[Appointment of the  
Premier]

Seventeen years ago, I returned from the Gold Coast, as a fully fledged nationalist. There, I had received my baptism as a militant journalist. I did not hesitate to join hands with my Nigerian counterparts and we proceeded to proclaim aloud the gospel of freedom. We converted many to this cult of nationalism, whilst many were confused as to the correct path to a fuller, richer and more abundant life. This process of social evolution continues apace.

The transformation which has taken place in Nigerian society, in the last quarter of a century, has been phenomenal. Political freedom has become a reality. Social freedom is no longer a dream. Economic freedom has become accepted as a matter of course. Religious freedom is a fact. As we enjoy the fruits of the labours of our predecessors, let us not forget those who, among others, made the foundations of liberty in Nigeria secure—William Pepple, Ovonramwen, Jaja of Opobo, Herbert Macaulay, Horatio Jackson—names for ever enshrined in our national pantheon.

Today marks another milestone in our march towards political emancipation. Aware of the foibles of humanity, we must not allow the mistakes and disappointments of the past to act as a stumbling-block to the hopes and achievements of the future. There must not be any scope for disintegrating forces to deploy us into a situation where we shall continue to point an accusing finger at our fellow man, whilst we cannot claim to be without blemish. Nor should we encourage the exploitation of the ignorance and poverty of our people in order to satiate the mercenary motives of the more privileged ones.

I count it a great honour to be alive at this stage of contemporary Nigerian history. I regard it as an immortal privilege to be an instrument of social change for the rehabilitation of my people. But I realise how puny I am at the hands of fate and I know how insignificant I am for this historic role. Therefore I must be humble, I must be God-fearing, I must be self-effacing, if I must prove equal to this rare opportunity!

Mr Speaker, this is a chance of a life-time to serve those who have been placed in questionable circumstances by the social forces of history. I pray to God to give me the faith and the courage so that I will live up to expectation. I entreat all of you assembled here on this august occasion to give me your moral support, lest I fail and bring contumely to my race and country from quarters below the equator, which continue to doubt our capacity for self-government.

So let it be, Creator mine  
Whose skilful hands and thought divine  
Did mould my frame without a blame,  
And gave to me this fleeting flame:  
That in this span of strife and hate,  
Buttressed by irony of fate,  
Grant that I live to love mankind  
And thoughtless prejudice rescind;  
And may I live to help the weak,  
And learn to serve the poor and meek,  
That when death wins, I should not miss  
The path-way to eternal bliss.



[Appointment of the  
Premier]

1st October, 1954

[Appointment of Regional  
Ministers]

Now that we have been offered freedom on a platter of gold, let us welcome this unique opportunity by consecrating our lives anew to the service of African humanity, and, in this re-dedication, let us renew our pledge to the land of our birth, in the form of sixteen canons of rectitude in public life:

That we shall not seek to reap where we had not sown;

That we shall not covet our neighbour's yam patch or his pay-packet or his material wealth;

That we shall not deliberately exploit the ignorance of our under-privileged folk;

That we shall not design or manipulate the downfall of the upright;

That we shall not conceal or adulterate the truth;

That we shall not pervert the course of justice;

That we shall not allow ourselves to be corrupted;

That we shall not worship filthy lucre;

That we shall not be a conscious vehicle for the immolation of the guiltless;

That we shall not mislead the innocent;

That we shall expose and excoriate evil in any shape or form;

That we shall be constructive in all we say or do;

That we shall resist injustice with all our might;

That we shall commend and not discredit merited achievement;

That we shall serve without the hope of gain;

That we shall willingly surrender the reins of office in the usual democratic manner.

The Premier is a senior servant of the people. No servant is ever greater than his master. From today, I am a senior, but your humble, servant. If I fail to discharge my duties efficiently, it is your obligation to call me to order. It is your responsibility to discipline me.

By the grace of God, I promise to do my best, but if that is not good enough then I am in honour bound to submit myself humbly to your pleasure. Thereafter, I will not complain. One main thing I beg of you: give me a fair chance to serve my country, and if my services are inadequate, then dispense with me in the usual constitutional manner.

#### APPOINTMENT OF REGIONAL MINISTERS

##### The Premier:

Mr Speaker, I am directed to announce that by an Instrument under the Public Seal of the Eastern Region, dated the first day of October, 1954, His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to appoint the honourable Mbonu Ojike to be the Regional Minister charged with the Portfolio of Finance.

The honourable Mbonu Ojike, after his education in Nigeria, graduated from Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, with a degree of Bachelor of Science and the Master of Arts from the University of Chicago. Since his return to this country, he has played a creditable role in our political advance. He is the author of *My Africa* and *I have two Countries*.



It is, therefore, with great pleasure that I introduce the honourable the Minister of Finance to this honourable House.

**The Premier:**

Mr Speaker, I am directed to announce that, by an Instrument under the Public Seal of the Eastern Region, dated the first day of October, 1954, His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to appoint Dr the honourable M. I. Okpara to be the Regional Minister charged with the Portfolio of Health.

The honourable gentleman was educated at the Methodist College, Uzuakoli, and Higher College, Yaba. Dr Okpara studied and graduated from the Nigeria School of Medicine. Not only is he interested in his profession, but he has shown remarkable aptitude in Social Welfare work, in that he became President of the Recreation Club at Umuahia, Principal of the Youth Club and Treasurer of the Boy Scouts' local Association. Apart from being a medical practitioner, he has been, by his life, an inspiration to youth. It is, therefore, with great pleasure that I introduce the honourable the Minister of Health to this honourable House.

**The Premier:**

Mr Speaker, I am directed to announce that by an Instrument under the Public Seal of the Eastern Region, dated the first day of October, 1954, His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to appoint the honourable M. C. Awgu to be the Regional Minister charged with the Portfolio of Land.

This honourable Gentleman after his education became a schoolmaster for many years, and was an inspiration to young people by his almost saintly attributes, so that he is generally known as the "Spiritual Scientist." He is the founder of the New Bethel College and a lay reader of the Anglican Church and a prominent member of many clubs and unions. It is with great pleasure that I introduce the honourable the Minister of Land to this honourable House.

**The Premier:**

Mr Speaker, I am directed to announce that by an Instrument under the Public Seal of the Eastern Region, dated the first day of October, 1954, His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to appoint the Honourable I. U. Akpabio to be the Regional Minister charged with the Portfolio of Education.

The honourable Gentleman was educated at the Methodist College, Uzuakoli, and later, through the co-operation of the Ibibio State Union, he went to the United States of America. After studying at Tuskegee Institute, Lincoln University (Pa.), he ultimately graduated from Columbia University with a Bachelor of Science degree with honours in education. Later, he obtained the Master of Arts degree in the same field. Since his return to this country, he served as first Principal of Ibibio State College, until responsibilities of State made him to join the Government.

It is with pleasure, Sir, that I introduce the honourable the Minister of Education to this honourable House.

**The Premier:**

Mr Speaker, I am directed to announce that by an Instrument under the Public Seal of the Eastern Region, dated the first day of October, 1954, His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to appoint Dr the honourable W. N. Onubogu to be the Regional Minister charged with the Portfolio of Development.



[Appointment of Regional  
Ministers]

1st October, 1954

[Appointment of Regional  
Ministers]

The honourable Gentleman, after his elementary education, was trained in the Nigeria School of Medicine and became one of the leading physicians in this Region, building up a lucrative practice. When called upon to join the Government early this year, he co-operated and served in the Ministry of Natural Resources. We all hope that in his new Ministry he will carry with him the same verve and zeal. It is with pleasure, Sir, that I introduce the honourable the Minister of Development to this honourable House.

**The Premier:**

Mr Speaker, I am directed to announce that by an Instrument under the Public Seal of the Eastern Region, dated the first day of October, 1954, His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to appoint the honourable I. U. Imeh to be the Regional Minister charged with the Portfolio of Trade.

Mr Imeh was educated at the Abak Government School and became a trained teacher after a course at the Teachers' Training College, Uyo, and the Rural Education Centre. Later, he served in the schools of the Abak and Eket Native Authorities and then joined the Produce Inspection Service. At present he is Minister without Portfolio, and we wish him success in his new office.

It is, therefore, with great pleasure that I introduce the honourable the Minister of Trade to this honourable House.

**The Premier:**

Mr Speaker, I am directed to announce that by an Instrument under the Public Seal of the Eastern Region, dated the first day of October, 1954, His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to appoint the honourable E. P. Okoya to be the Regional Minister charged with the Portfolio of Transport.

Mr Okoya comes from Brass Division, and after his elementary education in that area, he obtained his secondary education at the Dennis Memorial Grammar School, Onitsha, and was trained as a teacher at the Awka College. Then he served for some time as a teacher in the New Bethel College, Onitsha. Since early this year, he has been serving as Minister without Portfolio, and he holds the Intermediate Bachelor of Arts degree from London University.

It is, therefore, with great pleasure, that I introduce the honourable the Minister of Transport to this honourable House.

**The Premier:**

Mr Speaker, I am directed to announce that by an Instrument under the Public Seal of the Eastern Region, dated the first day of October, 1954, His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to appoint the honourable E. Emole to be the Regional Minister charged with the Portfolio of Agriculture.

The honourable gentleman was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, where he graduated with the degree of Bachelor of Commerce and Master of Arts. He is also a qualified legal practitioner and built up quite a practice in Aba. It is with pleasure that I extend to him an invitation to come over to the Government Bench . . . (*laughter*).

And I have the honour, Sir, to introduce the honourable the Minister of Agriculture to this honourable House.



**The Premier:**

Mr Speaker, I am directed to announce that by an Instrument under the Public Seal of the Eastern Region dated this first day of October, 1954, His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to appoint the honourable P. O. Ururuka to be a Regional Minister charged with the Portfolio of Industries.

The honourable P. O. Ururuka, after obtaining his education locally, was trained at Trinity College, Dublin, where he obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree with honours and later a Master of Arts specialising in economics, and having a Diploma in Education. At present he is on the teaching staff of a prominent secondary school.

It is with pleasure that I extend a formal invitation to the honourable gentleman to come across to the Government Bench to be introduced as the honourable the Minister of Industries to this honourable House.

**The Premier:**

Mr Speaker, I am directed to announce that by an Instrument under the Public Seal of the Eastern Region dated this 1st day of October, 1954, His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to appoint Dr the honourable E. A. Esin to be a Regional Minister charged with the Portfolio of Welfare.

After receiving his education locally, the honourable gentleman was trained at Edinburgh University as a physician. On his return to Nigeria he joined the Methodist Medical Mission at Oron where he built a reputation for his kindness, friendliness and humanity.

It is with pleasure, Sir, that I extend a formal invitation to the honourable gentleman to come over to this side of the House.

**The Premier:**

Mr Speaker, I am directed to announce that by an Instrument under the Public Seal of the Eastern Region dated this first day of October, 1954, His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to appoint Dr the honourable S. E. Imoke to be a Regional Minister charged with the Portfolio of Labour.

The honourable gentleman was trained in the Nigeria School of Medicine and became a qualified medical practitioner famous for his urbanity and interest in sports. He is well-known throughout Ogoja Province and the North where he served in the Civil Service and established a reputation for absolute integrity.

It is with pleasure that I extend an invitation to this honourable gentleman to come over to the Government Bench to be introduced to the House as the honourable the Minister of Labour.

*All then took and subscribed the oath required by law as Members of the House.*

**Mr E. O. Eyo:**

Mr Speaker, I rise on behalf of the Government Party to extend our congratulations to our 12 new Ministers. We have every reason to be proud of the new selection of Ministers. You will observe, Mr Speaker, that the *Daily Times* has been making guesses as to who would be the new Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries for the Eastern Region. It is interesting to observe that no such guess has been made in regard



[Appointment of Regional  
Ministers]

1st October, 1954

[Appointment of Regional  
Ministers]

to the North or the West. That being the case, we take it that the whole country is watching the situation in the East and, Mr Speaker, we have every reason to believe that when the names of the twelve new Ministers will be made public, the selection will have 100 per cent backing of the whole country. The country looks up to our Premier for the leadership which the country needs.

Mr Speaker, our new Ministers are well known to us. They are men of ability and integrity. They are men who have been tried and we have no doubt at all in our minds that they will be able to discharge their duties and responsibilities as Ministers of State. They are as good as Ministers of State anywhere in the world. We congratulate them on their new appointments. We hope that they will live up to expectations and will be an example to the rest of the country.

#### **The Minister of Agriculture:**

Mr Speaker, I rise to say just a few words in connection with the events of this evening. To my mind, Sir, this is not an occasion for long speech making. It is an occasion for resolutions. We are here to resolve to put in our very best to see that the affairs of this Region are run smoothly and satisfactorily. The problems before us are immense but we are particularly fortunate in that of all the Regions in this country, we are having the ablest hand controlling our affairs. Personally, Sir, if I can strike a personal note, I would say that I am the most fortunate in that I am going to have my first experience in public life under the very man who has been a source of inspiration to me. I have no doubt whatsoever, Sir, that working under him will help me in a big way to better my best. I am very happy, Sir, that this House has accepted the announcement that I am to be given the chance to serve. I am renewing my loyalty to the Leader of this Government and to the whole Region and to assure you, Sir, that I will do my very best in discharging the responsibilities placed upon my shoulders. If the best that I can offer, Sir, is a poor one, I will be very happy if I am helped to improve it.

#### **The Minister of Industries:**

Mr Speaker, may I express my sincere thanks to the Premier, to the House and to the Governor for the honour done me today. In fact I would rather say that I least deserve the honour, but I know for certain that to whom much is given, much is also expected. The responsibility that is placed on our shoulders will not be valued because of the name but will be valued because of the good things that will come out of it. At this moment I am not prepared to make a very long speech, but all I can tell the House is that I know the great responsibility that lies before me. With the co-operation of my colleagues and the House, I will do my best, for with your help and good intentions the work before us will be quite light. Lastly, I have to promise you that I will do my best to live up to expectations.

#### **The Minister of Welfare:**

Mr Speaker, today is a day of rejoicing for the people of the Eastern Region, yea for the people of Nigeria as a whole. I regard today as a first milestone in a march towards self determination and independence.

When the present Premier visited the United Kingdom in 1947 and told the whole of Britain—I well remember, in company of the honourable Chief N. Essien that Nigeria was ready for self-government, I had, as the President of the Nigeria Union of Edinburgh University, to present him with an address; and, unfortunately he was



in Oxford not well to attend the meeting in the Convocation Hall of the University; and in that address I did mention that when the time should come and if it should be necessary for him to call upon me to serve, I will do so. He has approached me on many occasions and again last month strictly in private in Aba. I told him I will leave my people and my practice. My people will suffer for the time being, but, there is a wider loyalty to which I must give my services. I am here with your co-operation and the co-operation of the people of the Eastern Region as a whole to see what we can do for our people. There was a time when I was in Britain, when the whole British wireless and radio—you read in the papers from the U.N. Assembly when Britain said “we are going to try democracy and we will try it amongst the most fanatical democrats in the Eastern Nigeria.” And when I came back I was not hesitant but put my shoulder to the wheel and worked in Local Government set up. The time has come when the Eastern Region has called upon me and I am prepared to serve under an able Leader who has been an inspiration to me throughout my life.

I thank you very much and I hope you will co-operate with everyone of us.

**The Minister of Labour:**

Mr Speaker, in the words of Abraham Lincoln “There are moments when no man may speak.” I think this is the moment. Naturally I am not a man of words, I believe more in deeds. I am extremely happy that I am called upon to serve this country and more so under an able Leader. It is a great inspiration that my service will have to be under Dr the honourable Nnamdi Azikiwe, and I have no doubt that where I go wrong, with his fatherly and human care, he will come to my help and with him as my guide and with the rest of this House co-operating with all of us, I should be able to do my best for the country.

My only fear is that we have just passed a motion of 7s 6d (*laughter*) . . . I would like to take this opportunity, however, to warn the workers that the motion actually asked the Government to consider and the Government is going to be very serious about considering it.

APPOINTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES

**The Premier:**

Mr Speaker, I am directed to announce that His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to appoint the honourable A. G. Umoh to be Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier's Office. It is with pleasure that I introduce to this House the honourable Member.

**The Premier:**

Mr Speaker, I am directed to announce that His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to appoint the honourable F. M. A. Saronwiyo to be Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Internal Affairs. It is with pleasure that I introduce to this House the honourable Member.

**The Premier:**

Mr Speaker, I am directed to announce that His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to appoint the honourable J. U. Nwodo to be Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health. It is with pleasure that I introduce to this House the honourable Member.



[Appointment of Parliamentary Secretaries]

1st October, 1954

[Appointment of Parliamentary Secretaries]

**The Premier:**

Mr Speaker, I am directed to announce that his Excellency the Governor has been pleased to appoint the honourable V. K. Onyeri to be Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour. It is with pleasure that I introduce to this House the honourable Member.

**The Premier:**

Mr Speaker, I am directed to announce that His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to appoint the honourable D. O. Anu to be Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Development. It is with pleasure that I introduce to this House the honourable Member.

**The Premier:**

Mr Speaker, I am directed to announce that His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to appoint the honourable U. U. Eko to be Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Internal Affairs. It is with pleasure that I introduce to this House the honourable Member.

**The Premier:**

Mr Speaker, I am directed to announce that His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to appoint the honourable S. O. Achara to be Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance. It is with pleasure that I introduce to this House the honourable Member.

**The Premier:**

Mr Speaker, I am directed to announce that His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to appoint the honourable P. O. Nwoga to be Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Education. It is with pleasure that I introduce to this House the honourable Member.

**The Premier:**

Mr Speaker, I am directed to announce that His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to appoint the honourable S. O. Masi to be Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Trade. It is with pleasure that I introduce to this House the honourable Member.

**The Premier:**

Mr Speaker, I am directed to announce that His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to appoint the honourable B. N. I. Edet to be Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture. It is with pleasure that I introduce to this House the honourable Member.

**The Premier:**

Mr Speaker, I am directed to announce that His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to appoint the honourable K. Kiri to be Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industries. It is with pleasure that I introduce to this House the honourable Member.

**The Premier:**

Mr Speaker, I am directed to announce that His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to appoint the honourable L. O. Uzoigwe to be Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Welfare. It is with pleasure that I introduce to this House the honourable Member.

**The Premier:**

Mr Speaker, I am directed to announce that His Excellency the Governor has been pleased to appoint the honourable P. A. Onwe to be Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport. It is with pleasure that I introduce to this House the honourable Member.

*All then took and subscribed the oath required by law as Members of the House.*

**ADJOURNMENT****The Premier:**

Mr Speaker, I beg to move "That this House do now adjourn."

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

Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

Resolved: "That this House do now adjourn."

*House adjourned accordingly at twenty minutes to five o'clock p.m. until 9 a.m. on Saturday, 2nd October, 1954.*



# Debates in the Eastern House of Assembly

Saturday, 2nd October, 1954

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

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

## Prayers

Mr Speaker read the prayers.

### MESSAGE FROM HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

**His Excellency The Governor:**

I have it in command from Her Majesty the Queen to convey to this House the following personal message:

"It is with sincere pleasure that I greet my peoples of the Eastern Region of Nigeria on the occasion of the first meeting of this House of Assembly under the Revised Constitution.

The additional powers and responsibilities with which this House and Government have now been invested mark an important step towards their assumption of full responsibility within the Federation of Nigeria for the affairs of this Region. The trust which you have assumed is a weighty one but I am confident that you will fulfil it with zeal and constant concern for the true interests of those whom you have been called upon to serve. I shall continue to watch with deep interest the well-being and progress of all my peoples in this Region."

### MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES

**His Excellency The Governor:**

I am charged by the Secretary of State to convey to this House the following personal message:

"It is my privilege and gives me great pleasure to send to the Eastern House of Assembly at this its first meeting after the coming into effect of the constitutional changes agreed at the conferences in London and Lagos, my own good wishes as Secretary of State as well as those of Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom for the continued well-being of the Eastern Region and of Nigeria as a whole.

You are meeting in familiar surroundings but with additional powers and responsibilities. I know you will bring to the discharge of these duties the same devotion to the interest of the people of Nigeria and to the purpose of advancing Nigeria along the path to nationhood as marked the discussions in the conference and it is my earnest hope your deliberations will equally serve your country's good."

### MESSAGE FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF THE FEDERATION OF NIGERIA

**His Excellency The Governor:**

I have received the following message from His Excellency the Governor-General, Sir John Macpherson:

"My colleagues in the Council of Ministers and I send our warmest congratulations to you and your Executive Council and to your Legislative House on your



new status and responsibilities. We also send our prayers and sincere good wishes for the peaceful progress of the people of the Eastern Region within the Federation of Nigeria and express our confident hope that there will be harmony and faithful co-operation amongst the Regions themselves and between the Regions and the Federal Government."

### SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR

HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

In the history of every country there are days which its citizens remember and proudly cherish as days which, more than any others, mark and symbolise the main steps in their advance towards nationhood. I believe and trust that in the annals of this Region, and indeed, of all Nigeria, October the 1st, 1954, will find honoured place. For, yesterday, this Region, in company with the other Regions and territories of Nigeria, took its most significant step yet in its steady progress towards self-government and full nationhood.

Like a man approaching his coming of age, this Region too can rejoice in its manhood. But with manhood come the cares and responsibilities of increased freedom. And if we rejoice that the Eastern Region has attained years of discretion, we must not in our rejoicings forget that discretion must be exercised in meeting the greater responsibilities of manhood. It is you, particularly, the legislators and chosen representatives of the people, who must exercise that discretion on behalf of those who sent you here. I know that you will not fail them.

To your Premier and to your Ministers I pledge my co-operation and all the assistance which I and the Civil Service can give them in the difficult and busy times ahead.

Agriculture remains the basis of the economy of the Region, and it is the policy of the Government to ensure maximum utilisation of the land consonant with the maintenance of soil fertility, so as to supply the full food needs of the people, and to maintain and expand the export trade from the Region. To this end, it is proposed that independent statutory corporations should be established.

The Ministry of Development, in addition to the normal functions of Public Works, will be charged with the provision of water supplies, urban and rural. It is the policy of the Government to provide, in rural areas, one water point for every five hundred people. The cost will be high. A sessional paper dealing with the matter will be laid before the House.

The programme of works and development will call for much work to be performed by contract. Tenders Boards will continue to award contracts strictly on merit, with no discrimination whatsoever.

It is the intention of Government to aim at the attainment of universal primary education by the end of 1956. Therefore, it is essential to provide immediately for an expansion of teacher training, and steps have already been taken towards this end.

To ensure that the necessary artisans will be available for new industries, additional technical secondary schools will be provided. At the same time there is a need for more secondary schools; priority will be given to the establishment of such schools in divisions where none exist at present. Their cost will be shared between the Government and the Local Government Councils on a fifty-fifty basis.



[Governor's Speech]

2nd October, 1954

[Governor's Speech]

In order to implement the policy of a planned and realistic national health service in the future, Government is concentrating on filling in the gaps in the present Medical Services. Accordingly, emphasis is being laid on the development of Medical and Health Services in the rural areas. Local Government bodies, Voluntary Agencies and private practitioners are receiving substantial aid for the building of the many rural hospitals and health centres indispensable to the scheme.

A national health service will require large quantities of modern drugs. Government has, therefore, decided to manufacture certain drugs and preparations.

The school medical service is being enlarged to cover all school children.

Government attaches great importance to public health and sanitation, for a disease prevented will not require treatment in a hospital, while on the side of treatment, the fight against tuberculosis is being intensified with the provision of tuberculosis annexes to hospitals and modern drugs, while gains in the fight against other diseases are being consolidated.

Industrialisation of the Region will be the concern of the Ministry of Industries, and it is vital that all resources should be developed and opportunities for industrialisation seized in order that the economy of the Region may become broader and stronger.

Government will take the initiative in encouraging prospective investors to establish basic industries. It is the intention of Government to create an atmosphere attractive to local and foreign investors.

An Economic Planning Mission has been created to investigate the possibilities of industrialisation. The Commission will be able to invite scientists and industrial experts to investigate and advise on industrial projects.

A Sessional Paper describing the activities of the Economic Mission to Europe and America will be laid on the Table of the House.

Land is not only the tool of agriculture, but also the basis of the social institutions of the people. The Ministry of Land proposes to encourage the recording of the system of land tenure, through the making of land rules at the District and County Council level, and to examine the possibility of a measure of unification through consolidation of those rules at Regional level.

Steps will be taken to stop widespread alienation of land, and Local Government Councils and Native Authorities will be encouraged to exercise their powers to control alienation and encourage registration of land.

The Government intends to develop both urban and rural areas. Slum clearance and resettlement schemes will be undertaken energetically.

The recommendations of the Brooke Commission on Native Courts as they affect litigation over land are being studied with a view to their possible application to the Region.

The Ministry of Trade will establish a Board of Trade, composed of representatives of corporate trading bodies and individual traders, to assist the Minister in the promotion of trade, and in the prevention of restraint or monopoly in trade.

The Government is addressing itself, through the Ministry of Transport, to a vigorous road policy upon which agricultural, industrial and commercial expansion will largely depend.



It is proposed that the Government should take over from Local Government bodies certain roads, in order that they may be free to develop new roads and so open up remote corners of the Region at present inaccessible to motor traffic.

Bridges which are beyond the executive and financial capacities of Local Government bodies will also be taken over by the Government.

Inland waterways within the jurisdiction of the Region will be improved so as to facilitate water transport of passengers and goods. The boat-building industry at Opobo is now providing modern craft at economic prices, and considerable development of water transport is expected.

The Government proposes to introduce new measures for the regulation of motor traffic to ensure greater safety for those who travel on the roads. It will also tackle energetically the problem of abuse by law enforcement officials.

The Government attaches great importance to social welfare, which will be the concern of the Ministries of Labour and Welfare. It is realised that the attention which has been given to social problems in the past has been quite inadequate.

It is the intention to create a Sports Council for the encouragement of recreational activities on a large scale throughout the Region; and the collaboration of various voluntary organisations which are already engaged in social welfare work among youths and adults will be sought.

It is planned to invite a team of experts from the United Kingdom to advise the Government on the possibility of introducing social security measures in the Eastern Region.

The Government realizes that the implementation of these policies will call for a large expansion of the Regional revenues; and it is its intention to take the necessary fiscal measures to ensure this.

The political progress of the Region is shown in the regulations made by the Governor-General for the conduct of the elections to the Federal House of Representatives. These provide, in the Eastern Region, for a system of election by secret ballot, with universal adult suffrage for the first time in the history of Nigeria. It is the firm intention of Government that, while freedom of speech shall be accorded to all political parties, the elections shall be carried out in an orderly and peaceful manner.

I pray that Almighty God may guide you in your deliberations.

*His Excellency then retired from the Chamber in procession.*

#### OATH OF ALLEGIANCE OF NEW MEMBERS

Oaths were administered to the following as Members of the House:—

The honourable K. Ozumba Mbadiwe, Orlu Division.

The honourable E. O. Eyo, Uyo Division.

The honourable P. G. Warmate, Degema Division.

The honourable E. U. Eronini, Owerri Division.

The honourable Okoi Arikpo, Obubra Division.

The honourable D. A. Nnaji, Udi Division.

The honourable B. C. Okwu, Awgu Division.

The honourable A. O. Chikwendu, Bende Division.

The honourable J. O. Umolu, Port Harcourt Division.

The honourable E. Ashirim-Unosi, Ahoada Division.



The honourable A. U. A. Inyang, Ikot Ekpene Division.  
 The honourable R. U. Umo-Inyang, M.B.E., Ikot Ekpene Division.  
 The honourable A. J. Ekpe, Opobo Division.  
 The honourable F. E. Ikpeme, Calabar Division.  
 The honourable N. W. Abengowe, Aba Division.  
 The honourable G. E. Okeke, Onitsha Division.  
 The honourable E. Chidolue, Onitsha Division.  
 The honourable P. N. Okeke, Onitsha Division.  
 The honourable U. Onu-Chima, Afikpo Division.  
 The honourable D. M. Mbaka, Ogoni Division.  
 The honourable N. Nweze, Abakaliki Division.  
 The honourable S. T. Akpan, Eket Division.  
 The honourable S. N. Alo, Abakaliki Division.  
 The honourable D. C. Ugwu, Nsukka Division.  
 The honourable J. H. E. Nwuke, Ahoada Division.  
 Reverend and the honourable M. D. Opara, Owerri Division.  
 The honourable E. A. Chime, Udi Division.  
 Chief the honourable A. N. Onyike, Awka Division.  
 The honourable R. O. Ukuta, Nsukka Division.  
 The honourable B. O. M. Edoga, Nsukka Division.  
 Chief the honourable S. E. Onukogu, Owerri Division.  
 Chief the honourable Nyong Essien, Uyo Division.  
 The honourable O. U. Afiah, Abak Division.  
 The honourable J. E. Eyo, Abak Division.  
 The honourable O. Oketa, Abakaliki Division.  
 Chief the honourable N. N. Anyika, Awka Division.  
 The honourable V. A. Nwankwo, Abakaliki Division.  
 The honourable E. A. Agim, Ogoja Division.  
 The honourable D. E. Akilo, Udi Division.  
 The honourable M. U. Obayi, Nsukka Division.  
 The honourable D. O. Aligwekwe, Okigwi Division.  
 The honourable N. O. Onwudiwe, Okigwi Division.  
 The honourable A. Nwachukwu, Afikpo Division.  
 The honourable K. J. N. Okpokam, Ikom Division.  
 Chief the honourable G. N. Agbasiere, Orlu Division.  
 The honourable R. O. Iwuagwu, Okigwi Division.  
 The honourable J. O. Ihekwoaba, Orlu Division.  
 Reverend and the honourable M. N. Ibe, Owerri Division.  
 The honourable S. E. K. Iwueke, Okigwi Division.  
 The honourable N. L. P. Apreala, Brass Division.  
 The honourable G. I. Oko, Awgu Division.  
 Dr the honourable E. U. Udoma, Opobo Division.

### ELECTION OF DEPUTY SPEAKER

#### The Premier:

Mr Speaker, the office of Deputy Speaker is important in the sense that whoever is elected to this post must be conversant with parliamentary practice and understand the Standing Orders, so as to be able to give decisions which would not be inconsistent



with the highest traditions of parliamentary practice. I, therefore, propose to name Mr E. O. Eyo to be Deputy Speaker to this honourable House.

The honourable gentleman hails from Uyo Division of Calabar Province. He was educated at the Government College, Umuahia.

Since he was elected an honourable Member of this House, he has distinguished himself as an able parliamentarian and he has earned the cognomen of being a walking encyclopaedia of our Standing Orders.

Sir, I beg to propose the name of Mr E. O. Eyo.

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

Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Mr Speaker:**

May I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your appointment as Deputy Speaker. I naturally hope that when the occasion arises for you to occupy this Chair, you will perform all the duties appertaining to the office with your undoubted skill and ability.

#### Papers

The following Printed Papers which had been circulated to honourable Members were taken as laid on the Table:

- (i) New Standing Orders of the Eastern House of Assembly.
- (ii) The Approved Supplementary Estimates of the Eastern Region, 1954-55 with the Memorandum thereon.

The Premier laid the following papers on the Table:

- (i) Message from Her Majesty the Queen.
- (ii) Message from the Secretary of State for the Colonies.
- (iii) Message from His Excellency the Governor-General of the Federation of Nigeria.
- (iv) Speech from the Throne.

Ordered:

That the said Papers do lie upon the Table.

#### MOTION

**The Premier:**

Mr Speaker, I rise to move the motion standing in my name, "That the new Standing Orders of the Eastern House of Assembly a copy of which was laid on the Table of the House today be adopted."

In speaking to this motion, Sir, I desire to remind honourable Members that the procedure in legislative assemblies is regulated by Standing Orders, which are to them what Statute Law is to the Courts. According to the practice in the House of Commons, which is our model, all Orders are taken for granted to have originated as Motions and to have received the sanction of the House. Standing Orders are one of the four species now in vogue in the British Parliament, the others being sessional, specific and orders relating to the business of the day. "The main purposes of the Standing Orders are to make the most economical use of parliamentary time, to prevent surprise and to maintain order and decorum."



According to section 71 of the Nigeria (Constitution) Order in Council, 1954, this House is empowered to make its Standing Orders, subject to the approval of the Governor. Section 212 provides that unless this duty has been discharged by the House, existing Standing Orders will continue to be used. The changes made in our new Constitution have made our existing Standing Orders out of date, that is to say, Official and Special Members are no longer to enjoy membership in the House. Mr Speaker, the Premier and Parliamentary Secretaries are now a feature of our system of Government, for which no provision exists in the present Standing Orders. These innovations are considered so fundamental that the Executive Council appointed a Committee, under the Chairmanship of the Acting Attorney-General, with the active co-operation of the Clerk of the House, to prepare the Standing Orders which have been laid on the Table and which I now request the House to adopt.

You are already in possession of the new Standing Orders. As you are aware, it is within your power at any time to vary or revoke any order. This is laid down in Standing Order 55 of the new Standing Orders. The Standing Orders Committee is the machinery for amending any Order, as Standing Order 55 indicates.

May I, with your permission, Mr Speaker, refer honourable Members to the major changes from the old Standing Orders.

Standing Order 3 will enable Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries to sit where they like. In the case of a Minister in charge of any business, it will be possible for his Parliamentary Secretary to be near him and render any assistance required by the Minister. This is, of course, one of the most important duties of a Parliamentary Secretary.

Standing Order 4 eliminates Saturday as a day for the sitting of the House. (*Hear! Hear!*) This is to enable honourable Members to have their week-ends free, in view of the contemplated business arrangements which will entail longer sittings of the House than has been the case hitherto.

Standing Order 11 (2). It will be noted that in certain circumstances questions may be asked of a private Member in respect of a Bill, motion or other public matter connected with the business of the House for which such a Member is responsible, except where information is readily available in official publications or the question is seeking to ascertain the accuracy of statements in the Press or by private individuals. These two restrictions are consistent with the practice in the House of Commons in that such questions will be disallowed.

Standing Order 11 (12) permits of a question on the operations of statutory Corporations. This Standing Order provides that such a question is restricted to those matters for which the Minister is made responsible by the Ordinance or Law concerned.

Standing Order 12 reduces the period of notice of and answers to questions from ten to three days, whilst Standing Order 18 reduces the period of notice of motions from ten to five days.

Standing Order 29 has extended dilatory motions to include not only the adjournment of the debate but also the adjournment of the House, following on the practice in the House of Commons. It also provides that a Member who has moved or seconded a dilatory motion which has been negatived may not subsequently move or second another such motion during the same debate, whether in the House or in Committee



of the Whole House. This is necessary as a safeguard in order to prevent abuse of the time of the House. Upon such a dilatory motion being carried, the business out of which it arose lapses.

Standing Order 36 (3) qualifies the method of challenging the opinion of Mr Speaker after he has declared the result of the votes taken by voices. Any Member now has the right to claim a division in order to avoid any doubt and also to prevent confusion.

Standing Order 31 removes the need for a private Member to beg leave of the House in order to present a Bill.

Standing Order 57 provides for a Committee of Privileges at the commencement of every session, to which any complaint of any breach of privilege of a Member of the House or any contempt of the House shall be referred.

Standing Order 59 provides for a Statutory Corporations Committee to consider any matter concerning the functions or general affairs of any Corporation established in the Eastern Region under the provisions of any written law as the House may refer to it from time to time.

The creation of these two Committees, the Committee of Privileges and the Committee on Statutory Corporations, is an innovation in parliamentary practice in Nigeria, and this Region deserves every praise for its initiative in this respect.

Standing Order 73 (2) reduces from fourteen days to seven the period in which a Member is expected to return a copy of the record of his speech for correction. If the corrected speech is not returned within seven days from the date upon which it was despatched, then the speech will be published without correction.

Standing Order 77 stipulates that any case of doubt about our Standing Orders shall be interpreted in the light of the relevant practice in the House of Commons. It is necessary to emphasise that it is only the practice and not the Standing Orders of the House of Commons which is involved. The latter will act as a guide to Mr Speaker, although it is not obligatory for this House to adopt the same wholesale.

Finally, I wish to express, on behalf of the House, our indebtedness to the Acting Attorney-General who, as Legal Secretary was Chairman of the Committee appointed by the Executive Council to revise these Standing Orders. I have drawn from the commentaries prepared by the learned gentleman, without which it would have been very difficult for me to present this motion. May I, Sir, also extend the thanks of the House to the honourable the Minister of Health, the honourable the Government Chief Whip and the Clerk of the House, who collaborated with the learned Acting Attorney-General to produce these new Standing Orders.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Trade:**

Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

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

Mr Speaker, the only point which I wish to mention is Standing Order 73 (3). There it is stated that the period for the correction and return of a speech by each Member is seven days. Mr Speaker, I feel that seven days is too short a period. I



say this because if it were in the House of Representatives where, after a Member has made a speech in the morning, he receives his speech in the afternoon for correction, I would agree; but here, a Member after making a speech does not get it back for correction for about four days. I do not think this would suit Members, especially those whose homes are at a distance and where postal difficulties must be taken into consideration. When speeches are posted after the adjournment of the House it sometimes takes more than seven days for speeches to reach Members. I do not know whether or not the Premier will consider amending that section of the Standing Orders to read fourteen days as before. That is the point which baffles everyone, and I hope, Mr Speaker, that the Premier will look into the matter.

**Mr G. I. Oko (Awgu Division):**

Mr Speaker, following the speech made by honourable Nnaji I do not know exactly whether Government has the knowledge of the awful delayances of letters and parcels by the Post and Telegraphs Department, and that Postal facilities are not equally attainable in all places. I associate myself with the views expressed by honourable Nnaji, that twenty-one days provided in the old Standing Orders be still followed. A place such as my division (Awgu) which has no Post Office, letters are terribly delayed. A great deal of time is wasted between Enugu the office of despatch to the places of members' residences. I quite agree with my honourable friend, Mr Nnaji that the given period in the old Standing Orders be allowed.

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

Mr Speaker, I am quite in sympathy with those who have spoken on this motion. But there are not only the difficulties with regard to the despatch of speeches to the destination of Members, but also the difficulty that a Member may not be in his house when the speech is delivered—he may be touring—and the papers would lie there sometimes as long as fourteen days. Therefore, Sir, I agree that twenty-one days be the time limit as usual.

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

Mr Speaker, I just want to draw the attention of Members to this fact that in the past it has taken us too long a time to get our Hansard out. We have often held the view, that we could evolve a system whereby our Hansard could be published weekly or fortnightly, for it is not much use Members coming to this House and making speeches which will not be in print and published and delivered to Members until, say, after nine months. This provision has been made, Sir, to ensure that any Member of the House who makes a speech, say, today, with the co-operation of the verbatim reporters will get the speech out the following day at the latest, and will have every opportunity to correct his speech while here at Enugu.

The strong point raised so far is in connection with the last speech made by a Member in this House. Obviously, if a Member is so serious about his speech, there is no reason why he should not correct it the following morning before leaving Enugu. We are not going to wait for six or nine months before our Hansard is out. We want, as far as possible, to have the Hansard published if possible weekly or fortnightly. So, Sir, we are bound to indicate to Members why we felt that seven days only should be allowed from the date of despatch. The point raised, however, is in connection with the last speech made in this House. All other speeches, Sir, will be given to Members within 24 hours, and that would afford Members every opportunity to correct



the speeches and would enable the Government Printer to get our Hansard out in time. I would advise that every Member should co-operate and see that his speeches are corrected and returned within seven days.

**Mr P. G. Warmate (Degema Division):**

Mr Speaker, I think this Standing Order has not taken into consideration the position of Members when they are not residing at Enugu. A Member may deliver his speech to day, but receive a telegram which calls him home and he may be there for a week or so whilst his speech is waiting for correction. Consideration should be given to those who have other business, apart from sitting here at Enugu, and to those who live in places where communication is very poor. I know that there are some areas in Brass Division where it may take even a telegram two to three weeks to be delivered, much less ordinary letters (*Laughter*). I should therefore be glad if Government would delete that section and leave it as it was before. I think that is the wish of the majority of the House.

**Mr G. E. Okeke (Onitsha Division):**

There is one point I should like to make clear with regard to this item. The speech I made on the 22nd of September reached me yesterday. It was no fault of mine that I did not get it in time, but there is no provision in the Standing Order for the punishment of the person responsible for that delay. There is no provision made here to check the reporter, but I am not personally responsible for the delay. I cannot speak regarding postal facilities in all places, but in many areas postal deliveries would take a week or two, and in this item it says from the date of despatch, not even from the date of receipt.

Mr Speaker, I would seriously ask Government to consider this point. There would be no use in reporting a Member wrongly in Hansard. My last speech was nothing like what I had said. Could I allow such a thing to be published in Hansard? All because we want to complete our speeches in time. Whatever is worth doing, is worth doing well.

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

Mr Speaker, the other Members have covered all the points I intended to speak on. (*Laughter*).

**Mr N. L. P. Apreala (Brass Division):**

Mr Speaker, it takes a letter twelve to thirteen days to reach me in my home town Amassoma in Brass Division. If this Government would be prepared to give all towns and villages up-to-date aerodromes, then I think this Standing Order would be acceptable, but if that cannot be done, then the time is not enough.

**The Premier:**

Two main points have been made by honourable Members. The first is that speeches are not delivered in time and the second is that there is bound to be postal delay.

I can assure honourable Members in respect of the first that efforts will be made to have their speeches delivered within twenty-four hours. In respect of the second point, I can give assurance that the difficulties of postal communications will be borne in mind and due consideration will be given to extraordinary circumstances.



The next point is that honourable Members have the power to make amendments to the Standing Orders and if they care to do so with regard to the reduction of the period from fourteen to seven days, then after the Committee of Selection has appointed members of the Standing Orders Committee, it will be proper for any Member to table a motion in this House asking for such an amendment.

*Question put and agreed to.*

### ADJOURNMENT Announcements

#### The Premier:

I beg to move, "That this House do now adjourn."

With your permission, Sir, I wish to make two announcements. The first is in respect of the Committee of Selection which is charged with the responsibility of appointing members to all the committees of the House.

May I refer honourable Members to Standing Order 54 which reads : "(1) There shall be a committee to be known as the Committee of Selection appointed at the commencement of every session to perform the functions allotted to it by these Standing Orders, and for such other matters as the House may from time to time refer to it. (2) The Committee of Selection shall consist of the Premier as Chairman, all other Ministers and six Members to be elected by the House. The Committee may sit notwithstanding any adjournment of the House and shall inform the House when any Member has been nominated to any Committee. (3) The quorum of the Committee shall be the Premier and five other Members of whom at least two must be Members who are not Ministers."

This Government accepts it as a parliamentary code of behaviour that the Opposition is entitled, as a matter of courtesy, to at least one seat on each of all the committees mentioned. I have in mind all the Committees which are appointed by the Committee of Selection in this House. In fact, the Government feels that this gesture is desirable and should be accepted as part and parcel of our parliamentary convention in this part of the world.

I propose, therefore to contact the Opposition, through the usual channels, so as to confer with the Leader or his appointee and ascertain his views on the membership of this Committee, so that at the earliest opportunity we should be able to appoint these members from the House and the Committee of Selection can proceed with its work.

The second announcement is that the Government, after due consideration, has decided that November 10th, 1954, shall be the date for the Federal elections to the House of Representatives.

#### The Minister of Finance:

Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

Resolved:

"That this House do now adjourn."

*House adjourned accordingly at twelve minutes to eleven o'clock a.m. until 10 a.m. on Monday, 4th October, 1954.*

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# Debates in the Eastern House of Assembly

Monday, 4th October, 1954

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

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

## Prayers

Mr Speaker read the prayers.

## OATH OF ALLEGIANCE OF NEW MEMBERS

Oath was administered to the honourable R. A. Njoku as a Member of the House.

## MOTIONS

### The Premier:

Mr Speaker, I rise to move "That a humble Address be presented to the Governor praying His Excellency to convey to Her Majesty the Queen the loyal and dutiful thanks of the Eastern House of Assembly for Her Majesty's Most Gracious Message on the occasion of the first meeting of this House under the revised Constitution. The said Address to be presented to the Governor by Members of the Executive Council."

### The Minister of Trade:

Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

### The Premier:

Mr Speaker, I rise to move "That this House expresses its thanks to the Secretary of State for the Colonies for the message of greetings and good wishes on behalf of himself and Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom on the occasion of the first meeting of this House under the revised Constitution."

### The Minister of Transport:

Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

### The Premier:

Mr Speaker, I rise to move "That this House expresses its thanks to His Excellency the Governor-General of the Federation of Nigeria for the message of greetings and good wishes on behalf of himself and the Council of Ministers on the occasion of the first meeting of this House under the revised Constitution."

### The Minister of Agriculture:

Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

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

Mr Speaker, I rise to move

“That a humble Address of thanks be presented to the Governor for His Excellency’s most gracious Speech from the Throne. The said Address to be presented by Members of the Executive Council.”

Mr Speaker, last Saturday, His Excellency the Governor addressed this House from the Throne. The Speech from the Throne outlined Government’s policies and programmes. The object of this motion, therefore, is to afford Members an opportunity to debate Government’s policies and programmes as outlined in the Speech from the Throne. I wish to add, Sir, that this is the first time that this House has been afforded such an opportunity. With your permission, Sir, may I read the opening paragraph of His Excellency’s speech.

“I believe and trust that in the annals of this Region, and indeed, of all Nigeria, October the 1st, 1954, will find honoured place. For, yesterday, this Region in company with the other Regions and territories of Nigeria, took its most significant step yet in its steady progress towards self-government and full nationhood.”

Mr Speaker, His Excellency rightly pointed out the significance of the date, the 1st October, 1954. It was on that date that we launched the revised Constitution. May I, with your permission, trace the events which led to the new Constitution. I will begin from last year. In this Region the supremacy of the Legislature over the Executive was challenged in this House. That brought about a political crisis which ended in the dissolution of this House on the 6th May, 1953. On the 31st March, 1953, there was also another political crisis; this time in the House of Representatives. The four Action Group Central Ministers in the Council of Ministers had to resign their appointments over disagreement on the way the motion for self-government in 1956 was treated. Both the Action Group and the N.C.N.C. Members of the House staged a walk-out. That completely paralysed the functions of the Council of Ministers, and the Secretary of State for the Colonies was obliged to invite leaders of political parties in this country for the first time to a Conference in London. The reports of the London and Lagos Conferences are well-known to Members of this House. I wish to stress the achievements of the two conferences; one, for the first time this country has been offered a Federal Constitution; secondly, Sir, in the East and in the West we have, for the first time, an all-African Executive Council and, particularly in the East, we went one step further and demanded that if a vote of no confidence on a Minister was proposed and passed in this House the Minister should resign his appointment or be compelled to leave office. That, to my mind, Sir, was a notable achievement in London, because under the old Constitution, which was known as the Nigeria (Constitution) Order in Council, 1951, it was absolutely impossible to remove a Regional Minister with a two-thirds majority votes of all the Members of the House. Even when this House passed a motion of no confidence by 60 votes against 13 votes we were told that there was no such provision in our Constitution, and so, Sir, in London we insisted that in the Eastern House of Assembly a vote of no confidence passed on a Minister would be sufficient to throw the Minister out of office. Other achievements of the London and Lagos Conferences include the creation of



office of Premier in the Regions, provision for appointment of Parliamentary Secretaries and creation of Ministers as the principal instrument of policy.

Now, Sir, I will deal with the other paragraphs of His Excellency's speech. At paragraph 4, His Excellency dealt with Agriculture.—

“Agriculture remains the basis of the economy of the Region, and it is the policy of the Government to ensure maximum utilisation of the land consonant with the maintenance of soil fertility, so as to supply the full food needs of the people and to maintain and expand the export trade from the Region. To this end, it is proposed that independent statutory corporations should be established.”

Paragraph 5 deals with the Ministry of Development.

“The Ministry of Development, in addition to the normal functions of Public Works, will be charged with the provision of water supplies, urban and rural. It is the policy of the Government to provide, in rural areas, one water point for every five hundred people. The cost will be high. A sessional paper dealing with the matter will be laid before the House. The programme of works and development will call for much work to be performed by contract. Tenders Boards will continue to award contracts strictly on merit, with no discrimination whatsoever.”

Paragraph 7 deals with Education.

“It is the intention of Government to aim at the attainment of universal primary education by the end of 1956. To ensure that the necessary artisans will be available for new industries, additional technical secondary schools will be provided. At the same time there is a need for more secondary schools; priority will be given to the establishment of such schools in divisions where none exist at present. Their cost will be shared between the Government and the Local Government Councils on a fifty-fifty basis.”

Paragraph 9 deals with Health.

“In order to implement the policy of a planned and realistic national health service in the future, Government is concentrating on filling in the gaps in the present Medical Services. Accordingly, emphasis is being laid on the development of Medical and Health Services in the rural areas. Local Government bodies, Voluntary Agencies and private practitioners are receiving substantial aid for the building of the many rural hospitals and health centres indispensable to the scheme.”

Paragraph 12 deals with the most important subject of industrialisation of the Region. It says:

“Industrialisation of the Region will be the concern of the Ministry of Industries, and it is vital that all resources should be developed and opportunities for industrialisation seized in order that the economy of the Region may become broader and stronger. Government will take the initiative in encouraging prospective investors to establish basic industries. It is the intention of Government to create an atmosphere attractive to local and foreign investors.”



Paragraph 14 deals with an Economic Planning Mission.

"An Economic Planning Mission has been created to investigate the possibilities of industrialisation. A Sessional Paper describing the activities of the Economic Mission to Europe and America will be laid on the Table of the House."

I wish to remark that when that time does come Members will be able to debate the contents of the Sessional Paper on the Economic Mission, but I wish to say, at this stage, that the Economic Mission which this Government sent to Europe and America has the support of the people of the Region, and we are looking forward to reading the Sessional paper.

Paragraph 16 deals with Land.

"Land is not only the tool of agriculture, but also the basis of the social institutions of the people. The Ministry of Land proposes to encourage the recording of the system of land tenure, through the making of land rules at the District and County Council level, and to examine the possibility of a measure of unification through consolidation of those rules at Regional level.

Paragraph 20 deals with the Ministry of Trade.

"The Ministry of Trade will establish a Board of Trade, composed of representatives of corporate trading bodies and individual traders, to assist the Minister in the promotion of trade, and in the prevention of restraint or monopoly in trade."

Paragraph 21 deals with the Ministry of Transport.

"The Government is addressing itself, through the Ministry of Transport, to a vigorous road policy upon which agricultural, industrial and commercial expansion will largely depend. It is proposed that the Government should take over from Local Government bodies certain roads, in order that they may be free to develop new roads and so open up remote corners of the Region at present inaccessible to motor traffic. Bridges which are beyond the executive and financial capacities of Local Government bodies will also be taken over by the Government. Inland waterways within the jurisdiction of the Region will be improved so as to facilitate water transport of passengers and goods."

Paragraph 26 deals with Social Welfare.

"The Government attaches great importance to Social Welfare, which will be the concern of the Ministries of Labour and Welfare. It is realised that the attention which has been given to social problems in the past has been quite inadequate. It is the intention to create a Sports Council for the encouragement of recreational activities on a large scale throughout the Region; and the collaboration of various voluntary organisations which are already engaged in social welfare work among youths and adults will be sought."

In this connection I wish to stress the importance of a Sport Stadium in the Eastern Region (cries of "*Hear! Hear!*"). You will remember, Sir, that last Saturday we had occasion to be proud of the athletic achievement in the East when Calabar beat Kano by four goals to three and won the Governor's Cup for the East for the first time. (*Hear! Hear!*).

Paragraph 29 deals with the policy of conducting the Federal Election on universal adult suffrage.

The electoral regulations provide, in the Eastern Region, for a system of election by secret ballot, with universal adult suffrage for the first time in the history of Nigeria. I repeat, for the first time in the history of Nigeria,



[Debate on the Address]

4th October, 1954

[Adjournment]

Mr Speaker, we are proud to be the first people in the whole country to embark upon elections based on universal adult suffrage (cries of "Hear! Hear!"). We of the N.C.N.C. have advocated this over a number of years and in order to live up to the pledge given to the people of this country the moment we assumed office this year, we decided on universal adult suffrage. That, Sir, will be an excellent opportunity given to every adult person over the age of 21 to go to the polls on November 10, and elect the men, I hope including women, (cries of "Hear! Hear!") to represent this Region in the Central House. Why other political parties have not thought it fit to conduct this election on universal adult suffrage has yet to be explained to the people of this country, but I wish at this stage to congratulate the Government on deciding on universal adult suffrage.

Mr Speaker, I wish to invite attention of the House to paragraphs 2 and 3 of the printed Speech:

"Like a man approaching his coming of age, this Region too can rejoice in its manhood. But with manhood come the cares and responsibilities of increased freedom. And if we rejoice that the Eastern Region has attained years of discretion, we must not in our rejoicings forget that discretion must be exercised in meeting the greater responsibilities of manhood. It is you, particularly, the legislators and chosen representatives of the people, who must exercise that discretion on behalf of those who sent you here. I know that you will not fail them. To your Premier and to your Ministers I pledge my co-operation and all the assistance which I and the Civil Service can give them in the difficult and busy times ahead."

Mr Speaker, we acknowledge everything His Excellency said in those sentences and we, on our part, are fully aware of the great responsibility placed on our shoulders, and I can assure you, Sir, that, God helping us, we will not fail in the discharge of our duties. I have never had occasion to be so pleased with a speech delivered by a Governor in this country. We have had occasions, more than thrice, in the House of Representatives to criticise the Speech from the Throne, but today, Sir, I can assure you that there is nothing to quarrel with in the Speech from the Throne. I commend the Speech to the Whole House and so, Mr Speaker, I beg to move (*Applause*).

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

Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

And pursuant to Standing Order 24 (2), debate stood adjourned. Debate to be resumed on Wednesday, 6th October, 1954.

### ADJOURNMENT

**The Premier:**

Mr Speaker, I rise to move "That this House do now adjourn."

**The Minister of Transport:**

Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

Resolved: "That this House do now adjourn."

*House adjourned accordingly at thirty minutes past ten o'clock a.m. until 10 a.m. on Tuesday, 5th October, 1954,*





# Debates in the Eastern House of Assembly

Tuesday, 5th October, 1954

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

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

## PRAYERS

Mr Speaker read the prayers.

## MOTIONS

### The Premier:

Mr Speaker, I rise to move the motion standing in my name which reads:—

“That at Today’s sitting para (3) of Standing Order 18—Manner of Giving Notice—be suspended in accordance with Standing Order 71—Suspension of Standing Orders—so that Private Members’ Notices of Motions on Today’s Order Paper may be debated without the prescribed period of notice being fulfilled.”

### The Minister of Development :

Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

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

Mr Speaker, I rise to move the motion standing in my name which reads:—

“That the Members of the Eastern House of Assembly offer their sincere congratulations to His Excellency Sir Clement John Pleass, K.B.E., C.M.G., on his appointment as the first Governor of the Eastern Region of Nigeria.”

Sir Clement Pleass was born on 19th November, 1901. He is the son of J. W. A. Pleass of Tiverton, Devonshire. He was educated at the Royal Masonic School and later at Selwyn College, Cambridge, where he graduated with a Master of Arts degree. He joined the Colonial Administrative Service in January, 1924, and served in several Divisions in the Eastern Provinces of Nigeria. He was married in 1927 to Sybil, daughter of Alwyn Child of Gerrards Cross. They have one son who is now doing national service in the Army in Germany. Sir Clement was Development Secretary for Nigeria from 1947-1952. As Development Secretary, he was instrumental in launching various Nigerian Development projects in various fields. In the year 1950, he was awarded the C.M.G. In 1952 he succeeded Commander Sir James Pyke-Nott, C.M.G., as Lieutenant-Governor of the Eastern Region. In 1953 he was awarded the K.B.E. and on the 1st of October, 1954, he was raised to the rank of first Governor for the Eastern Region of Nigeria.

Mr Speaker, from the record I have produced, it is obvious that our Governor has had a merited career in the Colonial Civil Service and we are proud today to offer our congratulations to him on his appointment as the first Governor for the Eastern Region of Nigeria. His position today, Sir, is that of a direct representative of Her Majesty the Queen. He will be in direct communication with the Colonial Office in



London and it is our hope that as Her Majesty's representative, His Excellency the Governor will maintain the same relationship as between Her Majesty and Her Majesty's Ministers in England. I am making this point because we have the position quite the same as it is in the United Kingdom. We have the Premier who is the counterpart of the Prime Minister in England and also an Executive Council which is the counterpart of the British Cabinet. We hope, that at all times His Excellency will take his Ministers and the Premier into confidence and will always act on their advice where it is constitutionally provided for him to do so. It is, therefore, with pleasure and pride that I rise to propose this motion.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

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

Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

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

Mr Speaker, in rising to support this motion so ably proposed by our Deputy Speaker, I feel proud to say that His Excellency the Governor was the first Land Officer we had in Port Harcourt in 1927 and when I look into the problems which are confronting this Region today which are more or less of our land set-up—small parts of land—we hope that His Excellency as the first Governor of the Eastern Region will particularly take interest in our land and the Minister of Land who has in his portfolio is invested with the land in our Region, and the acquisition of land by persons other than Nigerians which is a headache today in this Region. Foreigners come and acquire land with nothing but agreements, made with natives who cannot even sign their names. Those agreements were interpreted by interpreters who cannot even sign their names. Some of these agreements were so worded by experts that there is no meaning even in our language to interpret "forever" which is the common word used in these agreements. So, Sir, it would be a pleasure to this Region that His Excellency having been the first Land Officer in this Region and particularly Port Harcourt a Crown Land and the people of that area are groaning because their land was taken away from them with no better agreement. It is hoped that this Government will take upon itself to go into these agreements. We have in our Ordinance Books, Sir, the Illiterate Protection Ordinance in which case when you enter into an agreement the wordings of the agreement must be clearly interpreted to the illiterate native.

**Mr Speaker:**

I do not like to interfere—it would appear that what the honourable Member is now saying is not strictly relevant to the debate which is to offer congratulations to His Excellency.

**Mr E. U. Eronini:**

I hope, Sir, that while congratulating His Excellency the Governor on his promotion, he will look into our lands. He has been District Officer in many of our districts in this Region. He knows our troubles, he knows our country and he knows our problems and we hope it is good enough to appoint such a person who is a familiar figure in the Region to become the first Governor of this Region. It has been the usual practice in Colonial Territories to appoint a Governor from the other territories into Nigeria and for the Eastern Region to start with somebody who has worked in most of her



[*Congratulations to His  
Excellency*]

5th October, 1954

[*on His Appointment  
as Governor, E.R.*]

districts is indeed a blessing. We hope he will do all he can to foster that friendliness that has existed between himself and the people and that he will remain to renew acquaintances and friends and work for the good of this Region.

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

In rising to support this motion, I wish to say that the political crisis in the Eastern Region in which our present Governor took an active part has brought many blessings to the people of Nigeria as a whole and the people of the Eastern Region in particular. I would very much like to praise His Excellency on his tact and patience during that crisis because it was only a person of his type who could have handled the situation without bloodshed. In associating myself with the mover of the motion, the Deputy Speaker, I wish to say that we all who took part in that crisis have got blessings indeed. Without that political crisis, Sir, there would have been no revision of the last Constitution and if there was no revision of the last Constitution, there would have been no room for the appointment of a Governor in this Region and I would say that out of evil some good has come. At that time, I was one of the people who hurled political bullets at His Excellency, while he was Lieutenant-Governor and we thought that he was at that time, the most efficient and most tactful man who could handle a situation of that nature as he did. I feel, Sir, that His Excellency will still bear in mind the problems facing the Eastern Region in his new position. Those problems are great and various.

The Speaker had to call the last speaker to order, but I wish to say, Sir, that it is within the power of His Excellency to see about alienation of our lands. I hope it will not be a diversion from the point at issue that we should stress that all those lands taken by aliens should be reconsidered.

**Mr Speaker:**

The honourable Member must confine himself to the subject matter of the debate.

**Mr D. A. Nnaji:**

However, I still maintain that His Excellency will try to carry on his duties as he was doing when he was Lieutenant-Governor of the Region. It would have been different had a new Governor been appointed as it is in the Western Region where they have got His Excellency, Sir John Rankine, a new man altogether in that Region, but here in the Eastern Region it is jolly different. We had an Administrative Officer rising up to Lieutenant-Governor and from Lieutenant-Governor to the rank of Governor. We are all in support of the motion and we congratulate His Excellency on his new appointment and we must extend our thanks and congratulations to Lady Pleass who made it possible for her husband to climb to the highest part of the ladder.

Thank you.

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

Mr Speaker, the Opposition associates itself with the sentiments expressed in the motion now on the floor. Sir Clement rightly merits the appointment of the Governorship of the Eastern Region of Nigeria. Hard work and industry in his case have been richly rewarded and our only prayer is that he may live long enough to enjoy his richly deserved elevation.

**Chief N. Essien (Uyo Division):**

Mr Speaker, I rise to support this motion before the House. I say, Sir, that gratification is ours in the East: pride is ours in the East: joy is ours in the East in that when His Excellency the Governor for the West arrived West yesterday from outside



the West for the West, the Governor of the East is born in the East and, for that matter, a personality who knows the East from his infancy in the Administration of the East and climbed up to the pinnacle of administrative glory on which he is today (*Cheers*). I say again that ours is the pride of prides which other Regions have not got, and it is gratifying to us, Sir, that it is our bounden duty to hope much for our development and benefits from His Excellency our Governor (*Cheers*).

I support the motion.

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Mr E. O. Eyo:**

Mr Speaker, I rise to move:—

“That, consistent with the Nigeria (Constitution) Order in Council, 1954, which defined the functions of the Executive Council and created Ministers as the principal instrument of policy for the Region, the Controlling Officers of Votes in the 1954-55 Supplementary Appropriation Law, 1954, which was enacted by this House last month, shall be the Permanent Secretaries to the Ministries of the Government, who may delegate this control to their principal subordinates.”

Mr Speaker, I have to draw the attention of the House to page E. 125 of the printed Approved Supplementary Estimates 1954-55, Appendix E. X. a table showing the control of the various votes of the Eastern Region Estimates 1954-55.

Here, Sir, you have Heads of Departments being made to control departmental votes.—

Head 426 Information Service, Controlling Officer—Information Officer.

Head 427 Local Industries, Controlling Officer—Chief Industrial Officer.

Head 429 Printing and Stationery, Controlling Officer—Government Printer.

Head 431 Public Debt Charges—Controlling Officer—Accountant-General.

Head 434 Treasury—Controlling Officer—Accountant-General.

Head 436 Education, Controlling Officer, Director of Education.

This continues right down the list. Heads of Departments being made to control departmental votes.

May I, Sir, invite your attention to the provision under section 121 of the Nigeria (Constitution) Order in Council, 1954. I read, with your permission, Mr Speaker—“Where any Regional Minister has been charged with responsibility for a department of Government he shall exercise general direction and control over that department; and, subject to such direction and control, the department shall be under the supervision of such officer in the public service of the Region (who shall be styled a Permanent Secretary) as the Governor, acting in his discretion, may select.”

That, Sir, is the constitutional provision. The department shall be under the supervision of a Permanent Secretary. That being the case, I fail to understand why Heads of Departments should be made to control departmental votes. Permanent Secretaries to the various Ministries should be the proper Officers to control departmental votes. They may of course delegate this control to their principal subordinates.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

**Mr G. E. Okeke (Onitsha Division):**

Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed,*



**The Minister of Finance:**

Mr Speaker, I am sorry, Sir, that the honourable gentleman has been put to the trouble of moving this motion because I expect that he has been moved to do so by the publication of the Table at Appendix E 10 at page E 125 of the Approved Supplementary Estimates. I am afraid that in publishing this Appendix, my Ministry in fact jumped the gun—no doubt in their eagerness to put the printed estimates into circulation it would, in fact, have been amended in certain particulars. I am, however, glad of this opportunity of informing the House of the general principle governing the control of expenditure and I may say at this stage that the motion as framed is quite acceptable to the Government. It is most necessary, Sir, to distinguish between general control and particular control. Overall general control, that is to say the responsibility for ensuring the avoidance of waste and extravagance in the machinery of Government is the responsibility of my Ministry and the Public Accounts Committee has, of course, a vital role to play in this regard. General departmental control rests with the responsible Ministry and it is here, of course, that the Permanent Secretaries acting under the general direction and control of their Ministers come into the picture. Particular departmental control, that is to say the responsibility for keeping the departmental vote books and for reconciling treasury returns with departmental records, so essential for the detection of fraud and for ensuring that votes are not over-spent without the authority of the Finance Committee is placed by Financial Instructions, fairly and squarely on the heads of departments concerned where it must remain for obvious reasons. The recognition of this fact is inherent in the reference to delegation in the last few words of the motion. The overriding consideration in all this is, of course, that public funds shall only be disbursed in accordance with the Estimates approved by the Legislature where the final control rests.

Sir the Government accepts the motion.

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Premier:**

Mr Speaker, I rise to move the motion standing in my name which reads—"That the following be nominated Members of the Committee of Selection of the Eastern House of Assembly pursuant to Standing Order 54:—

Mr E. O. Eyo

Mr R. O. Iwuagwu

Mr K. J. N. Okpokam

Mr P. G. Warmate

Mr A. J. Ekpe

Mr A. U. A. Inyang."

In accordance with Standing Order cited above, the Chairman of the Committee of Selection is the Premier, and all the Ministers are automatically members. In other words, the Members of the Committee of Selection are the Premier, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Land, the Minister of Education, the Minister of Development, the Minister of Trade, the Minister of Transport, the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Industries, the Minister of Welfare, and the Minister of Labour.

The Standing Order explains the functions of this Committee. It is responsible for the appointment of members of the various Special and Standing Committees of this House.

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Transport:**

Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**ADJOURNMENT**  
**Announcement****The Premier:**

Mr Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn, and, in doing so, may I, with your permission, announce that a meeting of the Committee of Selection will take place immediately on adjournment of this meeting.

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Trade:**

Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*House adjourned accordingly at twenty-eight minutes to eleven o'clock a.m. until 10 a.m. on Wednesday 6th October, 1954.*



# Debates in the Eastern House of Assembly

Wednesday, 6th October, 1954

The House met at 10 o'clock a.m.  
(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

## Prayers

Mr Speaker read the prayers.

## Report from Committee of Selection.

### The Premier:

Mr Speaker, I rise to announce the selection of the following Members of the House on the various Committees as follows:—

### Standing Orders Committee

*Chairman.*—Mr Speaker.

*Members.*— The honourable E. O. Eyo.  
The honourable E. A. Chime.  
The honourable N. W. Abengowe.  
The honourable O. O. Ita.

### House Committee

*Chairman.*—The Minister of Welfare.

*Members.*— Chief the honourable N. N. Anyika.  
Chief the honourable G. N. Agbasiere.  
The honourable M. U. Obayi.  
The honourable D. M. Mbaka.  
The honourable J. E. Eyo.  
The honourable R. U. Umo-Inyang.

### Committee of Privileges

*Chairman.*—The Minister of Agriculture.

*Members.*— Chief the honourable A. N. Onyiuke.  
The honourable E. O. Eyo.  
The honourable G. E. Okeke.  
The honourable J. H. E. Nwuke.  
The honourable N. Nweze.  
The honourable O. U. Afiah.  
The honourable N. O. Onwudiwe.  
Chief the honourable M. W. Ubani.

### Public Petitions Committee

*Chairman.*—The Minister of Labour.

*Members.*— Chief the honourable Nyong Essien.  
Chief the honourable S. E. Onukogu.

The honourable U. Onu-Chima.  
The honourable D. A. Nnaji.  
The honourable D. E. Akilo.  
The honourable F. E. Ikpeme.

#### Statutory Corporations Committee

*Chairman.*—The Minister of Trade.

*Members.*— The honourable E. O. Eyo.  
The honourable P. N. Okeke.  
The honourable O. Oketa.  
Reverend and the honourable M. D. Opara.  
The honourable S. N. Alo.  
The honourable A. Ikoku, O.B.E.

#### Public Accounts Committee

*Chairman.*—To be nominated by Mr Speaker.

*Members.*— The honourable S. T. Akpan.  
The honourable J. O. Ihekwoaba.  
The honourable V. A. Nwankwo.  
The honourable B. O. M. Edoga.  
The honourable E. Ashirim-Unosi.  
The honourable E. Chidolue.  
The honourable A. U. A. Inyang.

(Nominated by Mr Speaker to be Charman: The honourable E. U. Eronini)

#### Standing Committee on Finance

*Chairman.*—The Minister of Finance.

*Members.*— Reverend and the honourable M. N. Ibe.  
The honourable E. O. Eyo.  
The honourable J. O. Umolu.  
The honourable R. O. Ukuta.  
The honourable R. O. Iwuagwu.  
The honourable K. J. N. Okpokam.  
The honourable G. I. Oko.  
The honourable A. J. Ekpe.

#### Mr Speaker:

Under the provisions of Standing Order 68 relating to the Public Accounts Committee, it is my duty to nominate the Chairman. It is my pleasure to nominate as Chairman of this Committee the honourable E. U. Eronini.

#### ORDER OF THE DAY

Order read for resuming the adjourned Debate on Question (4th October) "That a humble Address of thanks be presented to the Governor for His Excellency's most gracious Speech from the Throne. The said Address to be presented by Members of the Executive Council."

*Question again proposed.*



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

Mr Speaker, I rise to support this motion. It is our proud hope that Parliamentary Government of democratic set-up has come to stay in this Region. It is more humane and apt to be efficient and in accord with our tradition than autocratic or foreign control. Our strong determination to adopt Parliamentary Government promises well for the future in this Region. It is hoped sufficient help, direction and efficient service will be accorded us in this Region, particularly during this period of taking over and adjustment. Even though we reject Western Imperialism we accept Western constitutional methods. Our tradition is really in some respects in keeping with parliamentary and constitutional methods of the Western democracy. Mr Speaker, Sir, our tradition is in conformity with the traditional Government of our people, and we hope that a healthy standard and impressive influence will be created in our political life in following up Western democratic constitutional methods. The removal of our Ministers by simple majority vote is remarkable. This Region aims at exchange of alien control for real democratic self-government. The choice of the Eastern Region is not between white imperialism and black dictatorship. Our heritage is self-determination leading us to democratic self-government which will spring from within and from our hearts. We are strong, energetic, vigorous and coupled with the knowledge of the real needs of our people that will help us to go forward. His Excellency's Speech from the Throne depicts the qualities inherent in him and the speech in every respect and in a nutshell links with the manifesto of this party. We are, Sir, very grateful to have an officer in the person of His Excellency who will be able to see to the benefits and wishes of the people, and such a speech is indeed a masterpiece and it is hoped that it will be circulated to everybody and to every person who can read and write in this Region so that they may know what is expected of the Government now in power.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I come now to universal adult suffrage. It was only in 1952 that universal suffrage was extended to the empire of India. But today, in a space of four years—not even four years but only two to four years—we in this Region have universal adult suffrage irrespective of sex. It is indeed a great event and we are grateful to our Government. In our forthcoming election it has been possible to create adult suffrage, irrespective of sex, by secret ballot. It is not an easy task especially at this initial stage but it is hoped that with helping hands we will come out triumphant and be the first in Nigeria to establish adult suffrage with no bloodshed. Our people, even though the majority are illiterate, are now made to taste the fruits of citizenship rights of a parliamentary democracy. Our people must learn and be trained to see beyond the interests of their locality. We are glad also that there are thousands of our people of mature outlook imbued with education and knowledge, and we look forward to this day of universal adult suffrage. Mr Speaker, we are extending the principle of universal adult suffrage to our women and we must help them to go forward. In that respect I am suggesting that the Government consider the possibility of having our women nominated or elected where not elected in local councils, district councils and county councils, that at least two be nominated to local councils, so that those nominated in local councils too will be elected to each district council and those elected to district councils too will be elected to each county council, thereby we will train our women in the school of legislation. In doing so we will encourage the education of our women. It is a fact that some of us have more interest in the education of our female children. When our women are given their place in our local councils the interest will be universal. It was a few years ago, as I have said before, that India had a universal adult suffrage. It is gratifying to note that



the President of the United Nations Assembly, Mrs Pandit, is a woman. Having creditably discharged her office as President of the United Nations Assembly, she has now been appointed as High Commissioner for India in the United Kingdom. What a high office for a woman. What an Indian woman can do, a Nigerian woman can do also.

Mr Speaker, I come again to the vexing question of our produce grading stations. A week ago a question was asked in this House and it was known that £122,000 is to be spent in tarring a road seventeen miles from Okigwi to Afikpo Road. The only reason for that is to carry our produce from Okigwi to Afikpo Road by road and then give transport to railway. If Okigwi is established a grading station the need to carry Okigwi produce by lorry to Port Harcourt will present lucrative lorry transport system as it is now at Orlu. But now £122,000 is to be spent on tarring seventeen miles of road, approximately £7,000 per mile. If that money is given to the Okigwi District, they will be able to construct the bridge between Okigwi and Umuahia and even reinforce and construct bridges between Okigwi and Port Harcourt where the bulk of their oil must find its way.

This seems to be a waste of a large sum of money which could be usefully spent in other spheres. The distance between Okigwi and Port Harcourt by road is 105 miles. The distance between Afikpo Road and Port Harcourt by rail is 106 miles. Produce from Okigwi to Afikpo Road and graded there and thence enrailed to Port Harcourt takes more time, more labour and more money, and the money that would have come into the coffers of the producer is being shifted away into the coffers of the Railway Corporation.

Mr Speaker, Sir, speaking of whistling away our lands to foreign firms and corporations, the time has come in the Eastern Region to go into these agreements. Most of them, Sir, are nothing but agreements made with a native and interpreted to him by an illiterate interpreter who does not understand the wording of the agreement framed by a legal expert. Most of these agreements were not even interpreted in the Ibo language. If there were Ibo translations of these agreements or a translation in the language of the people at that time, it would have been possible to argue on the merits of these agreements today. But, unfortunately, none of these agreements contain any Ibo translation or any other native interpretation so that we cannot say what interpretation was given to the natives in those days. I am asking, Sir, for this to be looked into and see what can be done to withdraw these agreements and make straightforward agreements. After all this Government is the owner of all the land in the Eastern Region or invested in the Government of the Eastern Region. So that the Government of the Eastern Region can make straightforward agreement with the foreign exploiters of native land. Then the Government on the other hand can make agreement with the natives as to pay them some agreed per cent of what Government obtains from these lands.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we are greatly pleased at the allocation of duties to our Ministries. We hope that these Ministerial duties and who they are allocated to will be known even by the ordinary native in the street, so that when it comes he knows which Minister he is to apply to for one thing or another, otherwise the Government has been so changed that for some days or some months there will be confusion in who to approach.

We hope that the time has come when the ordinary native in the street will be able to know what is happening with the Government of this Region. Next to last also we hope that now that tenders have come within the Ministry of Finance a provision



should be made whereby members of the board for tenders will have to be represented, so that African contractors associations will be represented from various provinces and the European or foreign contractors will have representation so that the tendency for contracts to go to one section or to go to the expatriates will come to some sort of amicable settlement.

We hope Sir, that the Government will, with all the new offices created, have a chance of doing well, and to pray to God for help.

**Mr A. O. Chikwendu (Bende Division):**

Mr Speaker, I beg leave to speak to the motion that a humble address of thanks be presented to the Governor for His Excellency's most gracious Speech from the Throne, which outlined the policies which the various Ministries will carry out under the new Constitution. We appreciate the fact that His Excellency has faith in our ability to grapple with the problems which will confront us in our advance to nationhood. The experiences of older nations will be a light to guide our feet. We are aware of the fact that agriculture occupies a prominent place in the economy of the Region. The Government policy of improving soil fertility and increasing food production and expanding the export trade of the Region is sound. We hope that the independent corporations to be established will produce a compelling force in our agricultural life.

The importance attached to urban and rural water supplies is very gratifying. Government is advised to carry out the projects. There is gratitude for the proposed expansion of teacher training preparatory to the introduction of universal primary education. Education should rightly occupy a prominent place in the scheme of things. The importance attached to technical, secondary and higher education will augur well for the future of the Region.

We congratulate the Government on the expansion of medical services. That attention has been directed to rural medical services is indeed very commendable. The idea of a national health service is very sound. The decision to establish drug manufactories, to expand school medical services and the fight against tuberculosis reflect credit on the policy of the Government.

Industries will certainly play a vital role in the future economy of the Region. They should be so diversified as to stimulate and release the energies of the people. Government will be warned to guard against monopolies by one or two wealthy people. It will not be advisable if a few people will so monopolise industry as to hold the whole Region to ransom.

The policy of land is good. We hope that the Minister will carry out his proposals.

The Minister of Trade should provide technical advice to help our enterprisers. He should help them to establish loan and credit societies subsidised by Government. In this way they will be enabled to secure loans to pursue their trade more effectively. The ambition of the people should not be stifled by undue restrictions. The policy of a vigorous road development is good. A good road system is the pivot on which trade and commerce revolve. I will here make a serious appeal to the Minister to attach special importance to the development of roads in Bende Division. We have only dry season roads and in the other part of the year the people of my division are cut off from the rest of the world.



We hope Government will carry out its intention with regard to social welfare. Recreational activities are woefully lacking in the rural areas. We hope that the victories in Commonwealth Games at Vancouver and the laurels gained at soccer fields will offer a challenge to this Government for action.

It is indeed a great political advance that universal adult suffrage is being introduced into this Region. The best way of teaching people how to vote is to give them the chance of practice. The theory is that those constitutions are steadiest which are produced in base. The right to vote should be given to every individual. I believe it is better to give every man the ballot than to deny whole classes of it. It is cheaper to lift men up than to hold them down and the poll in their hands will be more appreciated by society than a sense of wrong in their heads. What men prize most is a privilege and when privileges are denied them they tend to value them more than they are worth. The idea of universal adult suffrage is good. I support the motion.

**Mr A. U. A. Inyang (Ikot Ekpene Division):**

Mr Speaker, Sir, the Speech delivered by His Excellency the Governor of the Eastern Region of Nigeria from the Throne on 2nd October, 1954, calls for exhaustive debate particularly from this side of the House. Obscurely gratified by the assumption underlying the speech the party in power feels that it is going to succeed in the difficult task that lies ahead. The speech contains interesting speculative designs and was delivered by a person, no less than the man at the head of the Government of this Region. A voluntary British expatriate would have shown a transparent pleasure in the scene. Our Governor has not the formal look of an English diplomat, nor the bothered look of an English Governor. The speech, if I may say so, Sir, contains the policy of the Government for the future. It is the habit of the British to count their losses before they count their gains. But that was not the case in the Speech from the Throne. In his opening speech His Excellency said—"In the history of every country there are days which its citizens remember and proudly cherish as days which, more than any others, mark and symbolise the main steps in their advance towards nationhood. I believe and trust that in the annals of this Region, and indeed of all Nigeria, 1st October, 1954, will find honoured place. For, yesterday, this Region in company with the other Regions and territories of Nigeria, took its most significant step yet in its steady progress towards self-government and full nationhood." I cannot agree more, Sir, on that. The Government of the Eastern Region could, if it wished, boast of one achievement—an advancement in our political emancipation, (*Hear! Hear!*) which has been so rapid and so substantial that even critical observers have called it a miracle of political stability, of success in providing for an all African cabinet. The achievement is not the Regional Government's alone. A large part of the credit is due to our overseas officers, one of whom is the present Governor of the Eastern Region of Nigeria. (*Hear! Hear!*). If we scan the Governor's speech critically we shall find it hard to discover any big and overall policy which could embrace the whole Region. I shall be surprised if honourable Members looking back over (say) the last two years, are not in their turn surprised at the frequency with which they have been given to expect the implementation of the Government's policy. They will scarcely ascribe the Speech from the Throne as a new step toward economic stability for the Eastern Region. Taking it all round, Sir, the Eastern Region cannot afford to accomplish the policy mentioned in the Governor's speech. But even this side of the House shares with all its major drawback, which is that the Region has not enough funds



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at her disposal. On paper, Sir, it is perfectly sensible, but in fact one of the amenities does not exist and you will never, by dumping almost eight million inhabitants of a nation in bulk, expect satisfaction from all corners.

I want to mention in passing, Sir, that the present Government of Nigeria being Federal, it would be only fair and proper that the Region should be split into states, according to their traditional beliefs and links. The non-Ibo Provinces of the Eastern Region are bent on creating for themselves a separate state within the Federation of Nigeria. But it is profoundly regrettable that no mention has been made in our beloved Governor's speech in this connection. It is not a matter of an appeal, Sir, but it is a declaration which Government must endorse and which should have found a conspicuous place among other things in the Speech from the Throne. We have determined, and have agreed that the risk is ours. Risk in that it might be feared that the State may not succeed but it has succeeded elsewhere in all Federal Governments. The non-Ibo Provinces are about the richest in the Eastern Region and by customs they are related to one another. I wish to say that it is the wish of those provinces that serious attention should be given to that proposal, and that the Governor should mention it in his speech early in 1955. Turning to paragraph 4 of his speech it is stated that—"The Ministry of Development, in addition to the normal functions of Public Works, will be charged with the provision of water supplies, urban and rural. It is the Policy of the Government to provide, in rural areas, one water point for every five hundred people. The cost will be high. A Sessional Paper dealing with the matter will be laid before the House." This is gratifying, Mr Speaker, but I must say that the need for water supplies for the urban district council area in Ikot Ekpene should be considered. In the case of rural water supplies, it would be suggestive if Government would consider the possibility of making more deep wells available as a temporary measure and of getting a Sessional Paper dealing with pipe-borne water supplies at the earliest opportunity.

It is mentioned at page 4 that a Sessional Paper describing the activities of the Economic Mission to Europe and America will be laid on the Table of the House in the very near future. It would be unfair at the moment to make comments until and unless the Sessional Paper is made available. Such paper should include the terms of reference given to the Missioners by the Eastern House of Assembly.

I do not, Sir, forget to mention paragraph 6 of the speech which deals with universal primary education by the end of 1956. Money, it is said, is available, and arrangements should be made to implement the scheme as soon as possible. We can make do with the existing school buildings, so that the Region can move abreast with the other Regions to avoid discontent. The Western and Northern Regions of Nigeria have started and it would be disheartening for this Region to wait until 1956, if everything is equal. But one thing strikes me most, Mr Speaker, and that is the conclusive sentence of that paragraph which reads—"Their cost will be shared between the Government and the Local Government Councils on a fifty-fifty basis." In the Western Region, Mr Speaker, Local Government Councils are not allowed to share the cost of universal primary education, which is the sole responsibility of Governments. It may interest the public if the Minister of Education could make a statement leading to the real cause of disparity in our educational policy and to say if our policy is an attractive one, compared with those of other Regions, including the Southern Cameroons. There must be a clash of interest in this particular aspect.



Mr Speaker, the Government Chief Whip had his motion passed on 5th October, and it is assumed therefore that generous and resonant tribute has been paid to the Governor of this Region on his appointment as the first Governor of the Eastern Region. We on this side of the House tend to reserve our loudest cheers to him for his Speech from the Throne, but as an individual he has a due portion of national gratitude.

The rise of the honourable Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe to the premiership delights me especially for reasons of personal sentiment, and I join with His Excellency in wishing him and his Cabinet Ministers every success for the time being. Sir, we are much impressed that our ambition as a people is acknowledged. There are many Europeans and Africans who desire friendship, but what is lacking is how to make this a reality. There are many Europeans who have the best interests of the Africans at heart, but because they do not believe that Africans can make serious judgements in national affairs, they tend to disregard their opinion on any subject.

His Excellency said in paragraph 2 of his speech—"Like a man approaching his coming of age, this Region too can rejoice in its manhood. But with manhood come the cares and responsibilities of increased freedom. And if we rejoice that the Eastern Region has attained years of discretion, we must not in our rejoicings forget that discretion must be exercised in meeting the greater responsibilities of manhood. It is you, particularly, the legislators and chosen representatives of the people, who must exercise that discretion on behalf of those who sent you here. I know that you will not fail them." Here, Mr Speaker, we find nothing but satisfaction and hope.

Mr Speaker, turning to the question of trade in this Region, it has been said by one honourable Member in this House that monopoly of trade should not be allowed to continue. I want to agree with him, that such a thing should not be encouraged by the Government. Government must give loans to individuals who are traders in order that they may use same for the benefit of our Region, no matter on what trade they are put.

**Mr E. Ashirim-Unosi (Ahoada Division):**

Mr Speaker, I support the motion. The Speech from the Throne is inspiring. It is a brief outline of Government policy and programme of works for the development of the Eastern Region. It also reminds us of the political advancement which we have attained under the revised Constitution as from 1st October, 1954. In speaking of the political advancement of Nigeria towards self-government, one cannot help looking back with a feeling of gratefulness for the devotion and unflinching courage of that great leader of the nationalist movement, known as the N.C.N.C. to whose activities our present political status is mainly due. I am happy to say that that great leader is the leader and now the Premier of the Eastern Regional Government, Dr the honourable Nnamdi Azikiwe. The news of his elevation to the premiership of the Eastern Region did not come as a surprise to the people of Nigeria, but as a just reward for his unrelenting activities for their political freedom. He has given us the kind of leadership any nation is proud to have, and we wish him more successes in our political objective of self-government in 1956.

In speaking on the Ministry of Development, I have to remark that the introduction of carrying out public works by contract instead of assigning them exclusively to the P.W.D. is commendable. In the past, many development works could not be implemented and subsequently lapsed to the disadvantage of the people in the area for which they



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were intended to serve. For instance, Ahoada Division in 1948 was scheduled to have a hospital, but owing to the usual excuse, lack of skilled workmen in Public Works Department that project was abandoned until the present moment. I trust with the new policy many major works for the division will be carried out as early as possible.

The educational policy of this Region is one which is appreciated by the people of the Region, and I would like to express my gratitude to the Government for recognising the importance of education for our national progress and development. I presume every honourable Member of this House is happy to carry the news of Government's plan to introduce universal primary education by the end of 1956. I would say that some Native Authorities or Local Government bodies have already embarked on the plan as forerunners. I am confident that the Government is prepared to advise on any issue which hastens the fulfilment of the scheme and to give a guide. In Ahoada Division, the Western Ahoada Native Authority introduced a scheme of universal primary education in its area in 1953, and raised by imposing education rates of 12s per taxable adult a total sum of £16,982. The scheme had as its aim to relieve parents or guardians from paying individual school fees. It is a matter of regret that the scheme has defeated its own ends, due to lack of proper piloting. The present situation is that the parents or guardians in addition to paying the education rate are saddled with the burden of school fees ranging from £1 10s to £3 a year for each pupil. The scheme allows additional charges of school fees by managers of schools and the school fees thus collected are not accountable to the Native Authority for the purpose of allocation of grants. The scheme lacks the necessary statistics like number of teachers and their respective salaries, in order to ascertain to what extent the Native Administration with its limited fund is liable. During the last session of the House, the second Member for Ahoada Division raised the question to the Minister of Education as to how many teachers were paid out of this fund and what were their salaries. The question could not be answered, because the figures were not available. I am seriously appealing to the honourable the Minister of Education to look into the matter to save us from the muddle and consequent frustration.

The Government policy of taking over from Local Government bodies certain roads is appreciated. During the visit of the honourable the Minister of Works when the road policy lay in his portfolio, the Western Ahoada Native Authority presented a petition to him asking him to take over some local roads, that is the road connecting Western Ahoada with Degema, and the road connecting Western Ahoada with Owerri Division, and we shall be happy if this policy could be implemented as soon as possible.

I support the motion.

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

Mr Speaker, I rise to support this motion. In supporting it, Sir, I base my observations on a section of the Speech from the Throne, in paragraph 1, beginning from the third line which reads thus:

“ . . . . . I believe and trust that in the annals of this Region, and indeed of all Nigeria, 1st October, 1954, will find honoured place.”

Honourable Members and friends, Good Morning to you all! I wish you a Merry Piece of Time, and this Happy New Day!



This day is a red letter day and a new leaf in the world's history. Nigeria took a remarkably length of time to prepare for this day. Nevertheless we have got it here and now; a period of a thousand years before Him is like an evening gone. It is the united thoughts, aspirations and exertions of the people of Nigeria as a whole which together have caused and produced the manifestation of today: for as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he; so is his environment; and so are all the circumstances around him.

The superlative importance of this day, Sir, lies in the mystery that it is the "First" day when the "First Governor and the "First" Premier with other officials for Eastern Nigeria came to birth in the administration of this country. This first advent of our first Premier shall never repeat itself, because the "First Premier" shall ever be considered and termed the "First Premier" for the East. Any other day that will bring in its own Premier with it will be the "Second Day" with its "Second Premier" but never the "First" any more.

Therefore, my honourable friends, I wish you all a happy "First Day" of our "First Premier" to whom I crave to refer you, in the word of old Pilate, "Behold the man." The man, in the sense of Shakespeare who said in his admiration of man's quality, proficiency and ability:

"What a piece of work is man; how noble in reason; how infinite in faculty; in form and moving how express and admirable; in action how like an angel; in apprehension how like a god—the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals."

Milton, Sir, echoed that sentiment when he said:

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

This cap, Sir, is neither less, nor over the size for Premier with his colleagues to wear meritoriously. Nothing pays more and better than diligence in business, firmness and honesty of purpose, resolute mind, self-reliance, faithfulness in small things and selflessness. These, Sir, are the traits that qualify a man and strengthen his legs to stand before kings and not before mean men. The offices into which His Excellency the Governor, the honourable the Premier and the other officials of this our land of the rising sun are installed today, are the fruits of wasting the midnight oil, returns of sleepless nights, and a reward for their meritorious services. Their services, Sir, have, today, created them, according to Bacon, "Men in great places." May I urge it on them that they are, for that reason, thrice servants:

Firstly, Servants of the state;

Secondly, Servants of business; and

Thirdly, Servants of fame.

"Service," said the Black Prince, "is the badge of Princes and of Kings."

This dawn of Nigeria's Freedom is the offshoot of absolutely selfless service and self-determinism. And today is borne of the Pan Nigeria—London Delegation of the year 1947. The honourable the Premier of today's glory was then as he is now the President of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons, also a no mean Leader of that Delegation. The speaker, (not of this honourable House, but the one who is now holding the floor) was the Father of that Delegation. That Delegation left no stone unturned in presenting to the Colonial Office in London the wholesale demands of Nigeria for freedom. What we have done today in this honourable House is the grant of those demands in a nutshell,



[Debate on the Address]

6th October, 1954

[Debate on the Address]

Nineteen-four-seven, a curious year  
 When out in arms Nigeria went  
 Her rights to claim in Downing street:  
 She fought and won but shed no blood.

N.C.N.C. hoist up your flag!  
 Your success who can now dispute?  
 For you have killed the Richards Law—  
 Ashes to ashes, dust to dust!

Hurrah! for your past successes;  
 Bravo! for the victory you've won;  
 Shoulder to shoulder you have stood  
 And killed also Macpherson's Law!

Mr Speaker, we make no boast, because our battle, or warfare has just begun. The fiercest battle lies within our camp. But in the mean time let us congratulate ourselves for our initial achievements.

Now, Sir, I wish to make a short remark on one of the Portfolios referred to in the Speech from the Throne. That is "Social Welfare." This Portfolio, Sir, embraces the welfare of the people which is the supreme Law. The bedrock of Social Welfare is sound and unbiased justice which is void of favouritism, discrimination, or respect of persons. Justice is the foundation of the Throne of God, and the Excellence of Human Administration. Its essence, property and indispensability in every move of human life and affairs cannot be overestimated. Injustice should not be found in the dictionary of a self-governed nation.

To our new officials, therefore, we now look up for redress of all our grievances, and for enjoyment to the full of fairplay and square deal in their administration of Eastern Nigeria. May Heaven grant them strength and skill in the performance of their duties.

Sir, I support the motion.

**Reverend M. D. Opara (Owerri Division):**

Mr Speaker, in rising to support the Motion I have to thank the Government for its policies as embodied in this Speech from the Throne.

We have been clamouring for a chance in the Government of our country to manage our own affairs. The turn has now come to also manage our own affairs.

It is gratifying, Sir, to note that Government is to provide a point of water for every 500 people in this Region. I do hope that this should not be overlooked because the people in the rural areas need nothing more than water. They need everything else but water is more essential.

In paragraph 7 of this speech, it is noted that Government wishes to introduce universal primary education in 1956 and that technical and secondary schools and teachers training colleges will be built. Well and good, but I wish to draw the attention of the Minister of Education too to say there are so many primary schools and secondary schools built by so many of our people, mostly Africans, that they must be granted aid. I know that he himself has been baptised in the denomination of these schools without



having received Government grant, and he may have experienced some difficulties, but I think he would do all that he can to help those schools mostly owned by Africans to run the places like other schools run by our Government and some grant aided Voluntary Agencies.

The Education Department in the Eastern Region in the past has been like a doctor who every morning says to his patients "Go home, get yourselves cured; when you are well, come back for treatment," and that is why most of these Africans are expected to improve their schools and run them with other Government schools and colleges before grant is given. I hope that the Minister will do all that he can to help our people. We are now in a new era and the system of education in the Region should be changed. We know that when the policy is laid there must be a new change in our education system.

In paragraph 9 of this speech, we hear that the Government is trying or concentrating on filling in the gaps in the medical services of this Region. I have this to say, Sir, that when a man comes to the age of puberty he does not always look for his daily bread or his maintenance from his parents again. To fill in these gaps we shall not be able to look to Britain for a supply of those Medical Officers, and Government should see to it that some people from the continent of Europe or America are employed, and the salaries of these doctors should be made more enticing to draw more people from the outside.

Talking about industrialisation of this Region, I have to thank the officers of the Economic Mission. I have also to warn them that when Government will have need for any visitors care should be taken that capitalism does not breed in this Region, because wherever there is capitalism there must also follow suit Communism, where some people become richer and the poor become poorer. We do not like to suffer economic strangulation in this Region; what we like is a Socialist Government and not a Capitalist Government.

Mr Speaker, I beg to support.

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

Mr Speaker, Sir, while I may not agree with the contents of this Speech from the Throne, I must congratulate his Excellency the Governor for how he said it.

Also, I wish to use this opportunity to inform my friends in the Government Party that the maxim of the Opposition is to unite with the Government in things essential, to be charitably disposed in all things, and on things doubtful to have the liberty to criticise.

Taking away the first two paragraphs from the Speech from the Throne, the rest, Sir, is made up of the usual phraseologies of what Government intends—it is proposed—steps will be taken—it is realised, and so on and so on. These good intentions of Government have taken us nowhere; it is the same old wine in new skins.

Examining the general structure of the Speech, which as you all know is written for his Excellency by the Premier, and should reflect definite policies of the Party in Government, one observes four important acts of omission.

On the issue of inter-racial harmony and unity of Nigeria, the speech is absolutely mute and on the question of a separate state for Calabar, Ogoja and Rivers Provinces the speech says nothing despite article 14 (C) of the N.C.N.C. lip service Manifesto. This, Mr Speaker, convinces me that a major issue like this to be omitted from the Speech from the Throne either by chance or by plan is to be deeply regretted.



[Debate on the Address]

6th October, 1954

[Debate on the Address]

The speech mentions nothing about the position of Eastern Chiefs who, as pillars of our society deserve a place in our national Legislatures and, curiously enough, no programme of consultation or incorporation of the Chiefs in the regional legislatures has been proposed.

The statement also to attain universal primary education by end of 1956 is deplorably ridiculous to when the Western Regional Government has launched their first universal primary education in 1954.

I can see that the question of rural development is contained in only one sentence. The Government does not plan to develop rural areas; it is again a matter of intention. These vain statements impress nobody from rural areas. The Government speaks of a fifty-fifty basis of development which is, as far as our experience goes, a farce.

On the question of the means of exploiting a regional revenue taxation, arbitrary taxation is again suggested as a primary means of expanding revenue.

Lastly, Mr Speaker, Sir, even a prayer is made partial to only those who deliberate in the House and not offered for the people of the Eastern Region.

The speech on the whole, in my modest opinion, is a beautiful nonsense, and should be opposed.

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

Mr Speaker, anybody coming to this House to oppose this motion whereby we are asked to express our thanks for the excellent Speech we heard from the Throne from His Excellency, is not sincere to himself nor to the people who sent him here.

Mr Speaker, the Opposition specified various things for which they oppose the motion.

First of all, they said that nothing was said about states, but I wonder if they had read the Manifesto of the Government, i.e., the N.C.N.C. Government of the Eastern Region, for the N.C.N.C. Government of the Eastern Region is not opposed to creating more states where necessary, who believe they are able to stand on their own. I wish to read from the Manifesto just issued. I will clarify the position of the party in regard to the omission about the states of Ogoja-Rivers in the Eastern Region. Mr Speaker, I wish to read from page 2 of the Manifesto, paragraph 14:—

“The Regions as at present constituted should be divided into smaller states. This arrangement will ensure economic inter-dependence of the parts and political unity of the whole. Any minority group having the financial and human resources to run an efficient state Government will be entitled to do so.”

That is all very well about the question of the speech being silent on the question of states, for I do not think His Excellency has avoided any of the aspects of Government's proposals in this short Speech from the Throne.

Nor, Mr Speaker, as honourable Member from the Opposition side mentioned the omission of Chiefs and natural rulers of the Eastern Region from the Speech from the Throne. I wish to point out, Sir, that we in the N.C.N.C. have respect for the Chiefs and natural rulers and I wish to draw your attention, Sir, to paragraph 17 of the Manifesto just issued by the party:—

“The N.C.N.C. pledges itself to maintain the constitutional dignity and traditions of our natural rulers. The final shape which the constitution of Nigeria will assume must flow out of the past history of our people and not out of text-books or hurried visits to strange and distant lands.”



I wish to say, Sir, that I raised the question of Chiefs in the House of Representatives and the Chief Secretary to the Government told me that there was no Chief or Chiefs in the Eastern Region of Nigeria because the Appointment and Deposition of Chiefs Ordinance did not apply to the Region. The Ordinance, the Chief Secretary to the Government further stated, applied to only the Western and Northern Regions. But the N.C.N.C. having seen that once you recognise the natural rulers, I mean the people who are the real natural rulers, unlike the people appointed to rule other people with autocracy, those natural rulers will be satisfied.

Now, turning to the Speech from the Throne, Sir, there are many things which His Excellency mentioned which require proper attention and close scrutiny, for instance, he said it is the intention of the Government to aim at the attainment of universal primary education by the end of 1956. Anybody who says that because the West are applying for more teachers he would just ask this Region to launch universal primary education without proper plans is not thinking of the good of the Eastern Region.

**Mr Speaker:**

If I may interrupt, we will now take a short recess to enable the reporters to follow their roster.

*Sitting suspended at 11.35 a.m.*

*Sitting resumed at 11.50 a.m.*

**Mr D. A. Nnaji:**

Mr Speaker, I was saying that the Eastern Regional Government has done well in planning the introduction of universal primary education in the Region. Any honourable Member who reads the *Sunday Times* of this week will see that the other Region which boasts of having introduced free primary education has failed woefully. In introducing such a scheme I know that buildings must be provided for, teachers must be trained, and sufficient fund available for payment of teachers' salaries and maintenance of schools. Therefore, it is wise not to marry in haste and repent at leisure.

On the question of the Regional Government taking over some roads from Local Government bodies and Native Authorities, I welcome that proposal and hope that it will materialise. In our own area, Udi Division, many or most of the roads were constructed out of voluntary labour. Poor maintenance of those roads has made it impossible for heavy traffic for the evacuation of our produce.

There is one big road which would have cut the road between Enugu and Afikpo shorter and that road goes from Enugu through Hayes Mines to Agbani and thence to Afikpo Division. We have mentioned that road time and again during previous sittings of this House, and now that the Eastern Regional Government will take over more roads, I hope that that road will be one of them.

There is another one starting from Agbani right up to Awgu Division and thence to Okigwi. This road, too, is beyond the financial capacity of both the Native Authorities in Udi Division and Local Government Councils in Awgu Division. I hope that this road will be taken over by the Regional Government to enable the people of the divisions to construct more roads. After all, there are great quantities of palm produce—palm kernels and palm oil—in our area and it is very difficult to rely only on the railway for their transportation,



[Debate on the Address]

6th October, 1954

[Debate on the Address]

On the question of alienation of land, Sir, I wish to associate myself with the honourable Mr E. U. Eronini. Many years ago, queer agreements were drawn up by semi-literate interpreters who accompanied District Officers to different parts of this Region. Certain people were deprived of their lands and the queer terms—one of the queerest terms—of such agreements was that, saying

“We being aware that it would benefit our people in the future, we have to give this land, without even half-a penny or “anini.”

I have in mind all the lands, not only those acquired by the foreign firms but also the lands acquired by the Government itself. Here in Enugu we were the original owners of this land. Between 1915 and 1928 our people were deprived of their lands because of these queer agreements.

I hope that the new Government of the Eastern Region will probe into these agreements with the intention of making amendments where necessary so that as it is now impossible to drive away the Government and their quarters from this area, Government should pay the people certain compensations commensurate with what they were reaping from the lands before they were acquired.

Mr Speaker, I need not go further than associate myself with those who support this motion and I wholeheartedly support it for and on behalf of the people whom I represent in this House.

**Mr A. Nwachuku (Afikpo Division):**

Mr Speaker, Sir, His Excellency's Speech from the Throne is a masterpiece. I am sure, Sir, that when the policies and programmes contained in this speech will be implemented no one division will be forgotten as it is the policy of the Government that development will be evenly distributed, and as all other honourable Members who have spoken have already trodden the paths I wanted to tread I shall make few observations.

Paragraph 5, Sir:

“It is the policy of the Government to provide, in rural areas, one water point for every five hundred people.”

Afikpo Division has so many social ills but there is none so acute as lack of water supply. A few years ago a plan was mooted by the Church of Scotland Mission to build a Normal College in Oha Ozara area. During preliminary investigation of the area where the college was to be built, they discovered that the streams and ponds there were not fit for drinking and they had, therefore, to peter out and build the college in another division.

After that a Rural Water Supply Officer was invited. He came to our area and had so many wells sunk but the sinking of wells did not solve the problem; rather it aggravated it because all the water contained in the wells sunk taste salt and none of it is being used. Thus provision of good water supply is the urgent need of the people in Afikpo Division and to rid them of this undesired pest attention should be given to it immediately.

Now I come to paragraph 22 where it is stated that

“It is proposed that the Government should take over from Local Government bodies certain roads.”



This paragraph receives the sincere support of all honourable Members in this House. There are two arterial roads I want to mention which, if taken over by the Regional Government, will enhance our trade and raise our economy. One is a road passing through Enugu Divisional headquarters through Agbani to Afikpo. This road stretches to Calabar Province. Another is the road joining Okigwi with the Afikpo Divisional headquarters.

In paragraph 23 it is stated, Sir, that "bridges which are beyond the executive and financial capacities of Local Government bodies will also be taken over by the Government."

This paragraph gives me much pleasure and relief. The topography of Oha Ozara is a peculiar one. There is no outlet or any road leading to Oha Ozara that you can pass without crossing a river. If you are going to Onitsha Province you have to cross Asu River at Uburu and if you are travelling from the Calabar Province via Afikpo you have to cross the Okposi River. With the kind help of the Regional Government this river is being Bailey-bridged this year and for this we are very grateful to the then Minister of Public Works, now Minister of Finance. And again if you are travelling from Abakaliki area you have to cross Aboine River. These two rivers are taking lives and property year in and year out. A few years ago a Reverend Mother attached to the Catholic Mission, Afikpo, was drowned in the Aboine River and their kit car remained in the bed of the river for four months. A Government surveyor was also drowned at Asu Okposi and many traders lost their lives crossing Asu River in Uburu.

All these rivers retard the progress of the people in Oha Ozara area and the food which they grow, especially rice, in great quantities, is being left there without being sold because there is no entrance to this area without crossing a river. Unless these rivers are bridged they will continue to take lives and property and retard progress commercially and educationally. So we shall owe the Eastern Regional Government a debt of gratitude if it will see that these rivers are bridged and that the roads I mentioned are taken over and maintained. I support this motion.

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Premier:**

Mr Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn *sine die*.

**The Minister of Finance:**

Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

#### ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

**Mr D. A. Nnaji:**

Mr Speaker, Sir, there is one big problem which I would like the Eastern Regional Government to solve, and that concerns Her Majesty's Approved School at Enugu.

The Approved School, Sir, is unfortunately attached to the Prisons Department under Head 7 of the Nigeria Approved Estimates. This school should have come under Social Welfare because the children there are not prisoners nor are the workers there prison warders. So I want the Government to consider placing forthwith that Approved School under Social Welfare.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*House adjourned at fifteen minutes past twelve o'clock noon sine die.*



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**FIRST SESSION**  
**1st to 6th October, 1954**

Abbreviation:

(Adj. Deb.) — Adjournment Debate

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