



EASTERN NIGERIA

# PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

EASTERN HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL REPORT

THIRD SESSION (1959-60)

FIFTH MEETING

*16th to 19th February, 1960*

ST. JAMES' CATHEDRAL

WASHINGTON, D. C.

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ST. JAMES' CATHEDRAL

EASTERN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT  
(Formed by Dr the hon. M. I. Okpara, December, 1959)

**MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

PREMIER—Dr the hon. M. I. Okpara.  
MINISTER OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS—Hon. I. U. Akpabio.  
MINISTER OF FINANCE—Dr the hon. S. E. Imoke.  
MINISTER OF TOWN PLANNING—Hon. E. Emole.  
MINISTER OF WORKS—Hon. P. O. Ururuka.  
MINISTER OF STATE CHARGED WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR INFORMATION AND WELFARE—  
Hon. B. C. Okwu.  
MINISTER OF COMMERCE—Hon. J. U. Nwodo.  
MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT—Hon. P. O. Nwoga.  
MINISTER OF EDUCATION—Hon. G. E. Okeke.  
MINISTER OF HEALTH—Hon. E. P. Okoya.  
MINISTER OF STATE CHARGED WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR ESTABLISHMENT AND CHIEFTAINCY  
MATTERS—Hon. O. U. Affiah.  
MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND ATTORNEY-GENERAL—Hon. M. O. Ajegbo.  
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE—Hon. P. N. Okeke.

**PROVINCIAL COMMISSIONERS**

Hon. R. O. Iwuagwu	..	..	..	Onitsha Province.
Hon. E. A. Chime	..	..	..	Enugu Province.
Chief the hon. A. N. Onyiuke	..	..	..	Umuahia Province.
Hon. M. E. Ogon	..	..	..	Ogoja Province.
Chief the hon. J. H. E. Nwuke	..	..	..	Port Harcourt Province.
Hon. P. A. Onwe	..	..	..	Abakaliki Province.
Hon. N. L. P. Apreala	..	..	..	Yenagoa Province.
Hon. E. Chidolue	..	..	..	Annang Province.
Hon. C. A. Okafor	..	..	..	Degema Province.
Dr the hon. A. N. Obonna	..	..	..	Owerri Province.
Hon. E. W. Udonkim	..	..	..	Calabar Province.
Hon. H. U. Akpabio	..	..	..	Uyo Province.

**OFFICE OF THE PREMIER AND MINISTRIES OF GOVERNMENT**

**Premier's Office:—**

Premier: Dr the hon. M. I. Okpara.  
Minister of State: Hon. O. U. Affiah.  
Parliamentary Secretaries: Hon. J. O. Umolu; Chief the hon. S. E. Onukogu.

**Ministry of Internal Affairs:—**

Minister: Hon. I. U. Akpabio.  
Minister of State: Hon. B. C. Okwu.  
Parliamentary Secretaries: Hon. S. O. Masi; Chief the hon. R. O. Ukuta, M.B.E.

**Ministry of Finance:—**

Minister: Dr the hon. S. E. Imoke.  
Parliamentary Secretary: Hon. J. E. Eyo.

**Ministry of Town Planning:—**

Minister: Hon. E. Emole.  
Parliamentary Secretary: Hon. D. O. Aligwekwe.

**Ministry of Works:—**

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

**Ministry of Commerce:—**

Minister: Hon. J. U. Nwodo.  
Parliamentary Secretary: Hon. K. Kiri.

**Ministry of Local Government:—**

Minister: Hon. P. O. Nwoga.  
Parliamentary Secretary: Hon. P. U. Amaefunah.

**Ministry of Education:—**

Minister: Hon. G. E. Okeke.  
Parliamentary Secretary: Hon. D. S. A. Agim.

**Ministry of Health:—**

Minister: Hon. E. P. Okoya.  
Parliamentary Secretary: Hon. M. U. Obayi.

**Ministry of Justice:—**

Attorney-General: Hon. M. O. Ajegbo.  
Parliamentary Secretaries: Hon. L. O. Uzoigwe; Hon. D. A. Nnaji.

**Ministry of Agriculture:—**

Minister: Hon. P. N. Okeke.  
Parliamentary Secretary: Hon. R. O. Anoke.

**OFFICERS OF THE HOUSE**

The Speaker: Hon. D. E. Okereke.  
Deputy Speaker: Hon. C. A. Abangwu.  
Clerk of the House: Mr A. E. Eronini, M.B.E.  
First Clerk-Assistant: Mr L. O. Okoro.  
Second Clerk-Assistant: Mr I. Amaefule.  
Editor, Official Report (*Hansard*): (Vacant).  
Assistant Editor, Official Report (*Hansard*): Mr S. B. C. Melifonwu.  
Serjeant-at-Arms: Mr B. O. Ajumogobia.

Eastern House of Assembly Debates

1 [Announcement; Papers]

16 FEBRUARY 1960

[Oral Answers]

2

EASTERN HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 16th February, 1960

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

PRAYERS

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

ANNOUNCEMENT

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Members, sitting is suspended for 10 minutes. The Premier is unavoidably absent. I think he has some statement to make when he comes back in about 10 minutes time.

*Sitting suspended at 10.5 a.m.*

*Sitting resumed at 10.15 a.m.*

PAPERS

Presented:

- (1) The University of Nigeria Progress Report. (*The Premier*).
- (2) Draft Supplementary Estimates for the Eastern Region including memorandum, February, 1960. (*The Minister of Finance*).
- (3) Votes and Proceedings of the Joint Sitting of the Eastern House of Chiefs and Eastern House of Assembly on 8th January, 1960. (*The Minister of Finance*).

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

**Mr Speaker:** Hon. Members, during the adjournment of the House a number of Papers were distributed to Members. These Papers are deemed to have been laid upon the Table and will be entered upon the Votes and Proceedings of Today.

They are:—

- (1) The Internal Revenue Division (Eastern Region) Annual Report, 1956-57—(Official Document No. 3 of 1960).
- (2) The Agriculture Division (Eastern Region) Annual Report, 1958-59—(Official Document No. 6 of 1960).

(3) The Eastern Region Library Board, Annual Report, 1959.

(4) Address of Welcome presented to the Right hon. Harold Macmillan, M.P., Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Lady Dorothy Macmillan by Dr the hon. M. I. Okpara, Premier of the Eastern Region.

(5) Eastern House of Assembly Debates, Official Report—Third Session, First Meeting—Volume I—31st March to 22nd April, 1959.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

**Mr Speaker:** May I remind hon. Members of the new Standing Order 17 (1) and (2) which reads as follows:—

- “(1) Notices of Questions shall be given by Members in writing to the Clerk and shall not be read *viva voce* in the House.
- (2) When called by Mr Speaker, a Member shall ask his question by rising and begging leave to ask Question No..... of the Minister of....., or such other Member as may be appropriate”.

Fees charged in Government Hospitals

134. **Mr K. J. N. Okpokam** asked the Minister of Health, how the fees charged in Government Hospitals compare with those charged in Voluntary Agency and Joint Hospitals in the Eastern Region.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health (Mr M. U. Obayi):** I am directed to answer as follows: The fees charged in Government Hospitals and Nursing Homes are in accordance with the Hospital Fees Regulations, 1958.

The fees in Joint Hospitals approximate those charged in Government Hospitals but in some instances are a little higher, while in a few instances the fees are actually less.

The fees charged in Voluntary Agency Hospitals are generally higher than in Government and Joint Hospitals.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Will the Minister explain why the fees charged in Voluntary Agency Hospitals are higher?

**Mr Obayi:** Well, as the hon. Member can see, paragraph 1 of this reply is quite explicit. Government Hospitals fees are standardised while those in Voluntary Agency Hospitals are not.

**The Minister of Health:** Voluntary Agency Hospitals are private hospitals and so we do not control the fees charged in private hospitals.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** All I want to know is why these fees are higher? The Minister is obviously evading the question. We on this side of the House want to know why fees charged in Voluntary Agency Hospitals are higher than those charged by the Government Hospitals?

**The Minister of Health:** Voluntary Agency Hospitals are very expensive institutions. Government is spending much money on their own hospitals and to meet up the required expenses, Voluntary Agency Hospitals charge higher fees.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Would the Minister consider the advice of having a laid down uniform rates of fees in all hospitals?

**The Minister of Health:** His suggestion is noted.

#### Provision of a Hospital in Mbaitoli Owerri Division

170. **Mr E. U. Eronini** asked the Minister of Health, whether he is aware that Mbaitoli District is the only District of its size in population in the Eastern Region without a hospital of any kind, and without a Health Centre; if so, will the Minister consider making funds available urgently for the building of a hospital in Mbaitoli.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health (Mr M. U. Obayi):** I am directed to answer as follows: No, Sir, I would like to inform the hon. Member that I have already earmarked the sum of £2,500 for the construction of a Rural Health Centre in the Mbaitoli District Council area in the

second phase of the Rural Health Centre Programme and this project is being pursued.

I would like to explain further that what my Ministry has achieved so far in its drive towards a National Health Service, is to ensure that there is at least one hospital per Division in this Region. Mbaitoli is a District in Owerri Division where there are five fully functioning hospitals.

#### Hours of duty in Queen Elizabeth Hospital

172. **Mr W. Abengowe** asked the Minister of Health, if he is aware that the hours of duty of Nurses and Midwives of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Umuahia-Ibeku, are most inconvenient and unsuitable to the staff of the hospital; if so, will the Minister cause the hospital authorities to rearrange their hours of duty in keeping with what obtains in Government Hospitals in the Eastern Region.

**The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health (Mr M. U. Obayi):** I am directed to answer as follows: I am not aware that the hours of duty were inconvenient to the nurses or midwives. It is important to emphasise that the arrangement of the hours of duty of the staff in the Queen Elizabeth, and other Joint Hospitals are matters for the hospital authorities, and the Boards of Governors on which I am represented. I will, however, take steps to investigate the allegation.

#### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

##### Appointment of Eastern Nigeria Commissioner in the United Kingdom

**The Premier (Dr M. I. Okpara):** I have pleasure in announcing the next Commissioner for Eastern Nigeria in the United Kingdom. He is Mr J. C. Achara who comes from Okigwi Division, where he was born in 1918 at Ovim.

Mr Achara received his early education at the Uzuakoli Methodist College, where he obtained his Higher Elementary Certificate in 1933. He then studied at the Umuahia Government College and the Yaba Higher College, obtaining his Higher College Science Diploma in 1938.

In 1939, he commenced his career as a teacher, holding posts in King's College, Lagos and the Uzuakoli Methodist College until 1944. In 1945 he taught for a year at the West African People's Institute under Professor Eyo Ita. He then became the Senior Science Master at Ondo Boys' School from 1947 to 1948.

In 1949, he left Nigeria to continue his studies in the United States, and after obtaining his B.A. at Lincoln University in 1951, continued to read Education in Claremont Graduate School. He finally returned to Nigeria in 1953.

On his return he was appointed Senior Science Master and Senior Tutor at Aro-Ndizuogu High School, where he remained until 1956.

Mr Achara is at present the Principal of the Okigwi National Grammar School, having been appointed the First Principal of that Institution in 1957.

Mr Achara will shortly be leaving to take up his new appointment and will be accompanied by his wife and four children.

He is an able man of wide experience and strong convictions, and I have no doubt that he will ably represent the interests of Eastern Nigeria with credit in the United Kingdom.

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' DAY

**Mr E. O. Eyo** (Uyo Division): Point of Order. I am so sorry to raise this Point of Order but may I draw your attention to Standing Order 20 (b) which provides that:—

“On Tuesdays the business of Private Members shall have precedence of Government business . . .”

I wish to hear from the Leader of the House why this Standing Order has not been followed. On the Order Book we have at least two very important Private Members' Motions and according to the Standing Order I have quoted, these should take precedence over Government business today.

**Mr Speaker:** There is no Private Member's business on the Order Paper today. The

first day of meeting is essentially that of the Government. If it were another Tuesday to come, then, of course, Private Members would have their day.

#### BILLS PRESENTED

##### (1) Supplementary Appropriation Bill

Bill to make supplementary provision for the Services of the Eastern Region for the year ending on the 31st day of March, one thousand nine hundred and sixty; presented by the Minister of Finance, Dr S. E. Imoke; read the First time, to be read a Second time Today.

##### (2) Corporation

Bill to create the Ministry of Finance a Corporation sole for the purpose of executing instruments, enforcing and defending claims and for all other matters incidental to or connected therewith; presented by the Minister of Finance, Dr S. E. Imoke; read the First time, to be read a Second time Tomorrow.

##### (3) Purchase Tax

Bill to amend the Purchase Tax on Produce (Amendment) Law, 1958 presented by the Minister of Finance, Dr S. E. Imoke; read the First time, to be read a Second time Today.

##### (4) Funds and Accounts

Bill to amend the Funds and Accounts Law, 1959, presented by the Minister of Finance, Dr S. E. Imoke; read the First time, to be read a Second time Today.

##### (5) Local Government

Bill to amend the Eastern Region Local Government (Extension of Office) Law, 1959, presented by the Minister of Local Government, Mr P. O. Nwoga; read the First time, to be read a Second time Today.

#### NOTICE FOR PRESENTATION OF A BILL

**The Minister of State (Information and Welfare) (Mr B. C. Okwu):** I beg to give notice that I intend to present to the House tomorrow the Eastern Nigeria Broadcasting Bill.

**AMENDMENT TO STANDING ORDERS**

**The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke):**  
I beg to move, That the Standing Orders of this House be amended as follows:—

**“Excess Votes Appropriation Bill**

- (i) By the *inclusion* of a new Standing Order as follows:—

“79. No Excess Votes Appropriation Bill covering excess expenditure incurred during the course of a previous financial year shall be introduced into the House until the Public Accounts Committee has examined the details of the excess expenditure and submitted a report. Such a report shall be presented to the House at the same time as the Bill is introduced, and shall be considered by the House at the Committee Stage of the Bill. The provisions of Standing Order 77—Appropriation Bill—shall not apply to this Standing Order.”

- (ii) By the *deletion* of paragraphs (10)–(14) of Standing Order 77 and *inserting* the following:—

“(10) Any Member may move an amendment to reduce by..... pounds the sum to be allotted for any Head of Expenditure or in respect of any sub-head included in that Head or of any item included in the sub-head.

(11) When several such amendments are proposed to the same Head of Expenditure they shall be called in the order in which they appear on the Order Paper and each amendment shall be disposed of before the next is called, and debate on each amendment shall be confined to the sub-head or item which is sought to be reduced.

(12) No amendment for an increase in the sum allocated for any item, sub-head or Head shall be made, except on the motion of a Minister who shall signify to the House the recommendation or consent of the Governor to such increase in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 81 (Public Money).

(13) At least two clear days’ notice of any amendment (whether for increasing or decreasing) shall be required.

(14) An amendment to increase shall take precedence of any amendment to decrease any Head, sub-head or item to which the said amendment to increase relates and if carried no amendment to decrease the Head, sub-head or item concerned shall be called:

Provided that (a) any amendment to increase must if possible be moved to the item or sub-head which it is desired to increase and (b) an amendment to increase an item if carried shall not prevent the sub-head or Head concerned being reduced below the agreed increase in respect of items of sub-heads other than the item or sub-head which has been increased.

(15) After an amendment to a sub-head or item has been disposed of, no amendment or debate on a previous item or sub-head of that Head shall be permitted.”

As regards the amendment to Standing Order 77, hon. Members will recall that at the last Budget Session they found it impossible to speak on various sub-heads of a Head where the Minister concerned had moved to increase provision in that particular Head. Since the amendment to increase took precedence over the amendment to decrease, and since such amendments to increase were invariably carried, Members who submitted notices of motions to decrease the same Head were incapacitated from doing so. The object of the present amendment is to enable a Minister to move to increase a particular sub-head or item and by so doing enable Members wishing to speak on *other* sub-heads or items not included in the Minister’s motion, to do so. When all amendments have been debated, the net total in the Head will then be submitted to the vote of the House.

What we are in effect doing is that we are reverting to the provisions of the old Standing Order 66 which we are now advised are not



in conflict with the provisions of section 154B of the Constitution which reads, and I quote:—

“The proposals for all expenditure contained in the Estimates (other than statutory expenditure) shall be submitted to the vote of the House (Assembly) by means of an appropriation bill, which shall contain estimates under appropriate *Heads* for several services required.”

With regard to the new Standing Order 79, it is necessary to include in the Standing Orders a section which will enable this House to examine the report of the Public Accounts Committee before the Excess Appropriation Bill is considered. This new section was inadvertently left out when the present Standing Orders were drafted. Hon. Members will appreciate that it will not be possible to deal with the Excess Votes Appropriation Bill until this section is incorporated in the Standing Orders.

The above amendments will, of course, give rise to other consequential amendments in the numbering of the Standing Orders.

I would like to suggest very strongly that the Standing Orders Committee considers these amendments as early as possible so that they can report back to this House before its adjournment. If this is done it will be possible to print the new and up-to-date Standing Orders for use during the Budget Session a month hence.

**The Minister of Agriculture (Mr P. N. Okeke):** I beg to second.

**Mr Speaker:** Under Standing Order 64 (2), the proposed amendments to the Standing Orders stand referred to the Standing Orders Committee.

I wish to request the Members of the Standing Orders Committee to meet as soon as the House adjourns today.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### (1) Supplementary Appropriation Bill (1959-60)

*Order for Second Reading read.*

**The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke):** I rise to move: That the Bill be now read a Second time.

These are the only Supplementary Estimates to be presented to the House during the financial year, 1959-60. They were originally prepared several months ago and would in the normal course, have been presented last September. Unfortunately the delay which unavoidably occurred in constituting the new House of Chiefs meant that for the time being the legislative machinery envisaged by our new Constitution for the passing of money bills had not been completely established and that the submission of the Supplementary Appropriation Bill had to be postponed. As matters turned out it was possible to meet the requirements of the various Ministries by resorting to a rather more flexible system of virement than is usually permitted and by drawing more freely on the Contingencies Fund than would otherwise have been necessary. The advances made from this Fund will be repaid from the new Vote provisions before the end of the present financial year.

I should like to explain that since last September two main factors have operated to alter the amount of money requested in the Supplementary Estimates which I am now presenting.

The first is that the provision that would have been sought five months ago has been reduced by savings that have arisen under numerous Sub-heads which would not then be foreseen with any accuracy. This has served to reduce the additional amount requested in this Bill.

Secondly, the Government decided in October of last year to pay an increase of ten per cent in the salaries and wages of all Government servants and employees below the superscale level, in advance of the recommendations of the Mbanefo Commission, which were not made known to us until a few weeks ago and which are now being studied by Government. This decision which applied also to the Voluntary Agencies and to Local Government Bodies cost about £600,000 and this sum is included in the total of £851,000 which is requested in the present Bill. Apart from the ten per cent salary award it has also been necessary to upgrade certain senior posts in the Civil Service to bring them into line with conditions in other Governments of the Federation.

*Eastern House of Assembly Debates*

11 [*Supplementary Appropriation Bill: 16 FEBRUARY 1960*] [*Purchase Tax on Produce (Amdt.) 12*  
*Second Reading*] [*Bill: Second Reading*]

[DR IMOKE]

Hon. Members will observe from the summary at page E 9 of the Supplementary Estimates that the total additional provision now sought amounts to £851,610, while the amount in Schedule I to the Supplementary Appropriation Bill shows a figure of £825,360 only. The difference of £26,250 is accounted for by the fact that expenditure under the Governor's Head and the Public Debt Charges of the Estimates are statutory and are not subject to appropriation.

Mr Speaker, I am happy to say that despite the additional provision now requested, the outturn for the year is still expected to show a surplus. I shall give the latest figures when I come to introduce the Budget in about five weeks time. I can claim, however, that apart from the substantial provision needed to pay the ten per cent salary award the smallness of the additional sum now requested does reflect the remarkable accuracy with which the 1959-60 Estimates of recurrent expenditure were framed a year ago.

On the Capital side, a total additional provision of £76,760 is proposed. Again, this is required to ensure that the prosecution of development projects is not held up because of inadequate provision of funds in the Estimates. Hon. Members will no doubt realise that no new money is called into play in the Capital Budget. The proposals here will make it possible for more funds to be appropriated from the Capital Development Fund which has been established for the purpose. In this great year of Independence, this Government will do everything within its power and resources to forge ahead with our development programme. The additional provision now sought is only an interim requirement. When presenting my Budget next month I shall review the progress of the development programme and the fresh targets which have to be set.

In conclusion, I wish to draw the attention of hon. Members to the memorandum at page E 103 of the Supplementary Estimates which gives details about particular Heads and Sub-heads.

The proposals in the Supplementary Estimates now before the House do not call for further detailed exposition at this stage and

I do not think it necessary to take up more of the time of hon. Members in my present submission to the House.

**The Minister of Agriculture (Mr P. N. Okeke):** Sir, I beg to second.

*And under Standing Order 78—Supplementary Appropriation Bill—the Debate stood adjourned.*

*Debate to be resumed on Wednesday, 17th February, 1960.*

**(2) The Purchase Tax on Produce (Amendment) Bill**

*Order for Second Reading read.*

**The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke):** I beg to move: That the Bill be now read a Second time.

Hon. Members will recall that the Law that is now to be slightly amended was passed by this House in December 1958 in order to make it quite clear that the Marketing Board was in fact entitled to collect Purchase Tax on produce purchased in the Region for mechanised processing within the Federation. The Marketing Board had assumed that it was already authorised to do so by section 20 (1) of the Marketing Board Law, but this interpretation was open to doubt, and the Amending Law of 1958 made Government's intention quite clear.

By an oversight, however, this Law was published with 26th February, 1959 as the date of its commencement. Since, as I have said already, the Board had in fact been collecting purchase tax on this category of produce since 1st January, 1958, it is considered desirable to have this date as the date of commencement of the Amending Law, and this is the purpose of the present Bill.

This is a non-contentious Bill and I am sure that Members will not oppose it.

**The Minister of Agriculture (Mr P. N. Okeke):** I beg to second.

**Mr S. G. Ikoku (Enyong Division):** I agree with the hon. the Minister of Finance that this is a non-contentious Bill. We have just one thing to quarrel with and that is the question of procedure. We have now different dates of commencement and the original

is 26th February, 1959. Under this Amending Bill they want us to quote the date of commencement as 1st January, 1958, that is exactly 14 months back in an attempt to legalise the collection made by the Marketing Board for the period 1st January, 1958 to 26th February, 1959.

I do not think it does our legal men in the Cabinet much credit that this type of thing should happen. It certainly does not. If a law, particularly something that concerns money, is to be passed in this House, it is no use telling us that as a result of an oversight the Marketing Board proceeded to extort money from people in this Region for fourteen months, and it is only today that we are coming to realise that this illegal collection has taken place. And today is the 16th of February, 1960, that is twenty-six months after the illegal collection had started. I do not want to blame the Law Officers unnecessarily but I would like to make it clear that this sort of thing should not have been allowed to happen. If there had been a bit of foresight on the part of those concerned, this sort of thing could have been averted. For example, any smart licensed buying agent who is given a good legal advice could have obstructed the collection of this purchase tax.

It is clear that this House can legalise illegalities through the proceedings of this House, but it would be a bad practice to indulge in this kind of action every now and then. We are now called upon to use the big stick in order to correct the oversight of some of the hon. Gentlemen opposite.

**The Minister of Justice and Attorney-General (Mr M. O. Ajegbo):** I am surprised that the hon. the Leader of the Opposition should have wasted much valuable time speaking on this innocuous Bill. All the Bill seeks to achieve is to validate certain acts which might have been done without lawful authority. It is being done all over the world and the Government makes no apology for bringing the Bill.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time and committed to a Committee of the Whole House.*

*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

*Clause 1.*

**The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke):** I beg to move: That "1959" be *deleted* and "1960" be *inserted*.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 1 as amended agreed to.*

*Clauses 2 and 3 agreed to.*

*Bill to be reported.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported with an Amendment; as amended, read the Third time and passed.*

### (3) The Funds and Accounts (Amendment) Bill

*Order for Second Reading read.*

**The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke):** I beg to move: That the Bill be now read a Second time.

Hon. Members will recall that section 15 of the Finance Accounts, Control and Management makes provision in accordance with section 154 (b) (5) of the Constitution Order, 1958-59 for the issue of provisional General Warrant to permit the Recurrent Expenditure to be incurred at the beginning of the Financial Year in cases where the Annual Appropriation Bill has not become law and the General Warrant has therefore not been signed by the beginning of the Financial Year. By an oversight, a similar provision was not incorporated in the Funds and Accounts Law which governs expenditure from Capital Development Funds. The position is, therefore, that while it is possible for me to sign the provisional Warrant to permit expenditure to be incurred from the Consolidated Revenue Funds in advance of the Annual Appropriation, I have no authority under the Funds and Accounts Law to issue similar Warrant for Capital Expenditure.

The hon. Attorney-General has also pointed out that the existing Funds and Accounts Law which came into operation on 1st of April, 1959, does provide for authority for the various accounts operated by the Accountant-General during the 1958-59 Financial Year.

Eastern House of Assembly Debates

15

[Funds and Accounts Bill:  
Second Reading]

16 FEBRUARY 1960

[Local Govt. (Extension of Office)  
(Amendment) Bill: Second Reading]

16

[DR IMOKE]

The Bill before this House seeks to remove these defects and I am quite sure that Members will agree that it should be passed with expedition and without opposition.

**The Minister of Town Planning (Mr E. Emole):** I beg to second.

**Mr S. G. Ikoku (Enyong Division):** I think we agree entirely that the hon. Minister of Finance should have the power which he seeks. I think it is in the interest of efficient prosecution of the Development Programme. We want to make sure that any transfer or any making of funds available from the Capital Development fund in advance of Appropriation is, in addition to being in accordance with the Constitution, in accordance with the Development Plan itself. This is a very important point as far as I can see. If we allow the Minister of Finance to make money available from the Capital Development Programme as he thinks fit, it is possible for that programme to be amended without this House knowing or giving its sanction; so that we would only say that we agree that money should be made available to prosecute this programme provided the amount is made available in accordance with the Development Plan itself. We do not want to be told that £ $\frac{3}{4}$  million or £1 million has been made available for the Development and we discover after a year that the vote has vitiated the Development Plan itself. We want to make sure that the amount available in advance is in keeping with the Development Plan itself. We also want to make sure that if there is any amendment in the Development Programme, this House should know and approve the reasons for the amendment.

I support the Bill.

**The Minister of Finance:** I would like to point out to the hon. the Leader of the Opposition that I did indicate when I was making the Second Reading of the Supplementary Appropriation Bill that the Development Programme will be reviewed and that the review will come before the House at the next meeting of the Budget Session. This Bill is not intended to give power to the Minister of Finance to play about as he likes with the money in the Capital Fund. The Development Programme, as I said last year, is not a water-tight programme

and is subject to changes. It is the duty of Government to report these changes to this House from time to time.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time and committed to a Committee of the Whole House.*

*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

*Clause 1.*

**The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke):** I rise to move that in the second line of clause 1, "1959" should be left out and "1960" substituted.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 1 as amended agreed to.*

*Clauses 2 and 3 agreed to.*

*Bill to be reported.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported with an Amendment; as amended, read the Third time and passed.*

**(4) The Local Government (Extension of Office) (Amendment) Bill**

*Order for Second Reading read.*

**The Minister of Local Government (Mr P. O. Nwoga):** I beg to move: That the Bill be now read a Second time. The House may recall that the Eastern Regional Local Government (Extension of Office) Law, 1959, was passed early last year and commenced on the 1st of February, 1959. The Law extended the term of office of councillors whose Councils were due for election early in 1959 and whose newly elected members should have assumed office on the 1st of April, 1959. Divisional Officers were busy with registration for the Federal Elections and other matters and it would have been difficult and inconvenient to hold Local Government elections at that time and that is why the Law was passed.

The Councils affected by the Law were listed in the Schedule to it, but unfortunately the Local Councils in Eket Division were also included although in fact fresh elections had recently been held for them. I regret that the mistake was in my Ministry but it can be corrected by deleting all reference to the Local Councils of Eket Division in the Schedule to the Extension of Office Law.

The Law provides that the term of office of any person who was a member of a Local Council in Eket Division on the 31st January, 1959, shall determine on the 31st of March, 1960. If the Law is allowed to stand as it is, therefore, councillors who had just been elected and who were in office on the 31st January, 1959, will only remain in office for about fifteen months instead of for the usual three years period. This would be grossly unfair to them quite apart from the fact that Government would be required to meet the cost of fresh elections. If the Bill now before the House is passed into Law, these councillors will hold office for three years as they properly should.

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

**Mr E. O. Eyo (Uyo Division):** While we do support the amending Bill, we wish to say that we also support the principle of allowing these Local Government Councils to run their normal span of three years. But, would the Minister also give us the assurance that when these Local Councils do run their normal span of three years Government would, in the interests of the people, allow them to go to the polls. Sir, it looks as if the Government has its own special zones in the Region earmarked for perpetual extensions of lives of the Councils. I have in mind, the Calabar Division. Now, the Government supporters in Calabar are bragging that they have been to Enugu and the Minister supports the extension of the life of its Council. I would like to ask, on behalf of Calabar Division, whether the Minister intends again to extend the life of the Council? I would like to make this point: it is not good, and does not speak well of the Government, that each time they have a fever that their supporters are going to lose Local Government elections they decide to extend the lives of the Councils. If we are going to abide by this principle, then we might as well extend the life of the Eastern House of Assembly, to another five years. When once these Councils have done three years, whatever happens the Government has a duty to ask them to go to the polls.

**The Minister of Local Government:** I agree with my hon. Friend that Councils should be allowed, under normal circumstances, to run their normal lives and there are no areas that are

specifically earmarked for the extension of the lives of Councils. The Local Government (Extension of Office) Law was brought to this House last year and there you find that it was not only in Calabar (I suppose that is the area the hon. Member has in mind), that the lives of Councils were extended. If you look at the Law we passed here last year you will find Eket, Abakaliki, Brass, Calabar, Degema, Obudu, Ogoni, Ogoja, Aba and Nsukka. I do not agree that all Councils will have their lives extended; it depends on circumstances. During the Federal Elections of last year the Divisional Officers were too busy to have time to conduct Local Government elections so the lives of certain Councils were extended. In such circumstances, certainly there is no harm in extending the lives of Councils.

**Mr J. A. Agba (Ogoja Division):** I would like to register a few points to the Minister of Local Government. Is it a laid down principle that a Member who contests a by-election and comes into this House, when the life of the House comes to an end and all Members go to the polls, that particular Member who contested the by-election is made to remain in the House?

**Mr G. C. Okeya (Owerri Division):** On a point of Order, Sir. Standing Order 33 (1) says:

“Debate upon any motion, Bill or amendment shall be relevant to such motion, Bill or amendment, and in the case of a substantive motion for the adjournment of the House the debate shall be relevant to the subject matter raised on the adjournment.”

I should think that the speech of my hon. Friend is irrelevant to the motion.

**Mr Speaker:** I do not see any irrelevancy in what he said.

**Mr Agba:** As I was saying, the Minister of Local Government will be quite right to say that because, particularly in Eket Division, Councils came into office within a very limited time, therefore their lives should be prolonged. If that special Member who contested a by-election to the House were allowed to remain longer in the House when the life of the House ended, a principle should be so made that all other things under the principle should be dominated by it. Our Minister should do

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well to submit a Bill to this House for approval that a Member contesting a by-election to a Council must always remain in the Council when its life ends. I want the Minister to know that we can understand why he extended the lives of certain Councils—Obudu Council included. It was not because the Councillors chose to remain in office. The purpose was mainly for the Federal elections. When he talks about extending the life of the Obudu Council I would like him to bear in mind this particular statement that I made. I shall repeat it here next time.

**Mr S. T. Akpan** (Eket Division): I would like to congratulate the Minister for making this correction. When the Bill was introduced in this House, I pointed out to the Minister that some of our Councils were only about six months old. Now, I think they have come to see the wisdom in restoring the right of the people to the people. I think that at that time they were conducting a special drive but on the whole there was no success. I think they are now beginning to see that it is not wise to penalise the people in the way they wanted to do. We from Eket Division are happy that our stand has now been vindicated.

**Mr O. O. Ita** (Eket Division): The Minister has actually now thought it fit to specify this act. At that time, we mentioned to him that the only Local Council or District Council involved was that of the urban area of Oron and that all the other District Councils had already held their elections. I would like to remind the Minister that that Urban District Council is now due to seek another mandate from the people and we do not want anything now to interrupt us in our election that is coming in March. We want all of them to be free from any hinderance in the future. We are sure to win all the elections in March.

**The Minister of Local Government:**

I do not think it necessary for me to speak again but there is only one impression gaining ground very fast in the Opposition Bench that perhaps we are trying to run away from the elections. Certainly, there is no doubt that if we are having the elections today we are going to win. We are not afraid at all.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time and committed to a Committee of the Whole House.*

*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

*Clause 1.*

**The Minister of Local Government:** I beg to move that in line 2, "1959" be left out and "1960" be inserted.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 1 as amended agreed to.*

*Clause 2 agreed to.*

*Bill to be reported.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported with an Amendment; as amended, read the Third time and passed.*

**ADJOURNMENT**

Resolved: That this House do now adjourn.  
(*The Minister of Finance, Dr S. E. Imoke*).

*Adjourned, accordingly, at half past eleven o'clock a.m.*

**WRITTEN ANSWER TO QUESTION**

*Tuesday, 16th February, 1960*

**Opening of Schools**

148. **Mr H. U. E. Edelduok** asked the Minister of Education, what rules govern the opening of new primary schools in areas where the existing schools cannot absorb all the children of school age.

**The Minister of Education:** School Managers are authorised to adjust the number of streams of primary schools within their managerial areas provided there is no overall

increase. If, that is to say, a Manager finds that a particular school requires an additional stream to absorb all the children requiring schooling in that town or village, he can increase the number of existing streams provided that he decreases by the same amount the number of the streams of another school in the same managerial area.

It is not proposed to permit new primary schools to open at the present time.

## APPENDIX

### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Answers received during Adjournment  
(9th January to 15th February, 1960)

#### Conditions of Service of Draughtsmen: Ministry of Works

155. **Mr J. A. Agba** asked the Premier, whether he is aware that there is some dissatisfaction in the Architectural Drawing Office of the Ministry of Works, which has led to the resignation of about three trained Draughtsmen between the end of January and the middle of February 1959; if so, what steps have been taken to remedy the situation and if desirable to recall the three Draughtsmen who have resigned.

**The Premier:** No, Sir. The Building Division is a very important arm of the Ministry of Works and only well-trained and efficient men who are prepared to work hard are needed there.

None of the three men who resigned was a "trained" officer. Two were undergoing training and did not do well. The third was a Technical Assistant. He also was undergoing training and although he was not doing badly resigned his appointment. It is not proposed to recall them.

#### Super-scale Posts in the Ministry of Health

158. **Mr W. Abengowe** asked the Minister of State charged with Establishments and Chieftaincies, how many super-scale posts are vacant in the Ministry of Health; what are the reasons for not filling the posts of Senior Health Officer and Specialist Epidemiologist which have been vacant for a long time.

**The Minister of State (Premier's Office):** The vacant super-scale posts in the Ministry of Health are as follows:—

- (a) Deputy Director of Medical Services (Supernumerary), Head 433, Sub-head 1 (1).
- (b) Senior Assistant Secretary, Head 433, Sub-head 1 (13).
- (c) Specialist Orthopaedic, Head 433, Sub-head 1 (154).
- (d) Specialist (Epidemiologist), Head 806, Sub-head 140 (1).

The post of Senior Health Officer has been filled by the promotion of Dr D. J. Amah since August 1959. On the other hand, the Public Service Commission does not propose to fill the post of Specialist Epidemiologist for the time being.



EASTERN HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 17th February, 1960

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

PRAYERS

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

REPORT FROM A SPECIAL COMMITTEE

Mr O. O. Ita (Eket Division): I beg to lay on the Table of this House a Report of the Standing Orders Committee which met in the Speaker's Chamber at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, 17th February, 1960.

Ordered: That the Report do lie upon the Table and to be printed.

AMENDMENTS TO STANDING ORDERS

Mr O. O. Ita (Eket Division): Under Standing Order 22 (12), I beg to move:

That the Report of the Standing Orders Committee laid upon the Table of the House be adopted.

Mr C. A. Abangwu (Nsukka Division): I beg to second.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved: That the Report of the Standing Orders Committee laid upon the Table of the House be adopted.

BILL PRESENTED

Broadcasting

Bill to make provision for Television and other Broadcasting Services by the Government of the Eastern Region of Nigeria and to establish a Corporation for that purpose, to make provision for the powers and duties of that Corporation and for Ministerial control, with the aid of an Advisory Board, of its activities, and for other purposes incidental to or connected with the purposes; presented by

the Minister of State (Information and Welfare), Mr B. C. Okwu; read the First time, to be read a Second time Tomorrow.

ORDER OF THE DAY

(1) The 1959-60 Eastern Region Supplementary Appropriation Bill—Second Reading

(First and only allotted day).

Order read for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question (16th February)—That the Bill be now read a Second time.

Mr S. G. Ikoku (Enyong Division): The Supplementary Estimates now before the House make rather pleasant reading, but before I go on, I would like briefly to raise what might be considered a constitutional point. The hon. Minister of Finance, while moving the Second Reading of the Bill yesterday, said that there was delay in passing the Bill because the House of Chiefs had to be set up. I hope that this is not projecting the view that the Region's Budget must of necessity be approved by the House of Chiefs.

The House of Chiefs as the Upper House, has no power whatsoever over any money Bill. I am sure the Lawyers here will agree with me.

I now get back to the Draft Supplementary Estimates itself. When we read the Supplementary Estimates, we should feel justifiably happy. But our happiness is dampened by the growing unemployment in the Region now. I must confess that this is the first time that I have read the Estimates of the Eastern Region and have managed to breathe comfortably. That earlier feeling of being in a financial "strait jacket" is no more. The picture presented by the Estimates is in general a pleasing one. The pattern of expenditure is in the main sound and reassuring. The only sadness arises not from our finances as such as from the general economic situation; and this is the gloom of growing unemployment.

I would like to handle the Estimates under three headings. May I draw your attention firstly to what I consider the pleasing features

[MR IKOKU]

of the Estimates; secondly, to the not so pleasing features and lastly, the matter of growing unemployment.

Firstly, the pleasing features. I do not think I am flattering the Minister of Finance when I say that at least I have been able to pick up five pleasing features in his Draft Estimates. The first is that the out-turn for the current financial year will be better than estimated. I got that fact from page 103 paragraph 2:

“Revised estimates of revenue are not yet completely available for the current financial year and will be presented with the 1960-61 Budget. There are clear indications, however, that the out-turn for the year will show an improvement over the original estimate.”

I must say that I was very happy to read that and it helps me to breathe comfortably. For some time now as you are aware, we have not had an easy time about our finances in the Region.

We are also given the very reassuring figure of a consolidated revenue as at 1st April, 1959 standing at £5,887,447, briefly £5.8 million, as against estimated £3.7 million—an increase of about £2,000,000, although I must add here that this increase, as the memorandum points out, is due firstly to accounting error which gives us £1,000,000 and secondly to under-recruitment. Anyway, the fact remains that we have £2,000,000 more in the kitty and that is something.

The second feature is that the Estimates show that improved conditions for our Civil Servants have been implemented by the Government; the Permanent Secretaries have been raised from Group 5 to Group 4 and motor basic allowances are now available for officers with £540 per annum or more and of course the famous 10 per cent award has been made available to all officers. I hope that these improved conditions for our Civil Servants will bring increased reassurance and increased devotion to duty. Those of us who are Members of the House must at least be happy that for the first time everybody seems to get a salary increase and nobody is pointing

an accusing finger at the legislators. And as it has always been said that we take the lion share, I would now like the Civil Servants to know that we are giving them their share and that we are not taking any share.

The third feature is that the 10 per cent interim award is made payable to the Voluntary Agencies; that is, to teachers in schools and colleges and to nurses in hospitals. I would like sincerely to congratulate the Government for being able to do this. They will remember that in September last year when we were here, the Minister responsible for Establishments read a statement which suggested that these awards would be confined to the Civil Servants and that any question of extending them would depend on the financial resources of the Government. We on this side saw that at once as a very polite way of saying that they were not sure of making this 10 per cent award applicable to Voluntary Agencies. I remember the debate quite clearly; we wanted an assurance from the Government and my hon. Friend the Attorney-General promptly came to the rescue of the Minister for Establishments. Anyway, this 10 per cent is now being paid to the Voluntary Agencies and I am sure that we are all happy that our budget will accommodate them. It is also being paid to Local Government staff and here again I would like to say what I said to the Civil Servants. I hope the Local Government staff will now feel that there is no discrimination against them and that the legislators are not taking the lion share of the cake.

The fifth pleasing feature is what is contained at page 106 paragraph 25 and it deals with £15,000 vote for the development of the Port Harcourt area. I agree entirely with the Government that the Port Harcourt area has become an important industrial area and the development of that area should be taken on hand. I agree.

I can see the reason for taking this business out of the hands of the Port Harcourt Town Planning Authority but I would like to suggest to the Minister concerned that the situation in and around Port Harcourt is such that something comparable to the L.E.D.B. should be set up for Port Harcourt area. A really worthwhile and knowledgeable Development Board should be set up for the Port Harcourt area. Of course

it should operate under the Ministry of Town Planning; there is no question of creating a monster for the Ministry.

Now, I turn to the not so pleasing aspects. Firstly, we are told that there is going to be a refund of some £23,000 of purchase tax on petrol. That is, we collected purchase tax on petrol when we should not have collected this tax. I am not quarrelling with the idea of making a refund, but who is going to get this money? Is it the big petrol seller, that is the big Company, or is it the private lorry and car owner who has already paid this tax? Immediately a tax was imposed it was passed on in full to the car and lorry owner who paid the tax; so that if the Government want to refund this money they have to pay it to the lorry and car owner. But the position is that it is impracticable to return this money to the car and lorry owner; and to hand it over to the big petrol seller means giving him double profit because he had passed on the tax to the consumer. I will advise the hon. the Minister of Finance, if my argument is right, to stop refunding this money. Leave this money in the treasury.

The second point is this question of Public Debt Charges. We are told that the sum of £32,500 is to be paid as interest on the Federal Loan (1959) of £588,000. This rate of interest works out at about 5.5 per cent for a year; but if we bear in mind that this loan was floated round about June 1959, the rate of interest comes to about 7½ per cent. I wonder why we should pay a rate of interest of 7½ per cent or even 5½ per cent to the Federal Government when we are a component unit of the Federation. I think that the rate of interest is definitely high, particularly if we bear in mind the rates at which loans are being granted on the international scene. I will refer to a specific instance—the loan of £34 million granted Egypt by the Soviet Union. That loan was granted at 3 per cent; and if at the international level loans could be granted at as low a rate as 3 per cent, I do not see why the Federal Government should charge us 5½ per cent or 7½ per cent as the case may be.

Thirdly, there is a sum of £73,740 which we must find now in order to liquidate the expenses of the dissolved Pharmaceutical Corporation. This is a very painful pill to swallow. This Corporation had been voted the sum of £50,000. Now, what happened to

this money? The Corporation purchased certain equipment and, I think, put up one or two buildings in Aba, which had to be sold off, I think, by auction. We do not know what the Corporation had done with this £50,000 and we are now being called upon to vote another £73,740 to clear the mess. I think that the whole affair is a shameful and staggering waste by a Region that can ill-afford that waste.

I am a bit nervous to note that our Development Programme has already begun to face difficulties. At page 105, paragraph 20, it is stated clearly that as a result of increased costs the new cost of the Programme has jumped by £1 million to £13,740,000. That is, in just about nine months. We considered this programme in this House in April or May last year and right now the cost has jumped by as much as a million pounds. I do not think that will be the correct way of implementing this plan. We must have an idea of what this plan will cost, and this cost should not be revised in such a staggering manner every six months, otherwise it will vitiate the whole plan.

Again, at page 103, paragraph 3, the hon. the Minister of Finance drew attention to inadequate funds. May I quote him in full:—

“Estimated total receipts into the Fund up to 31st March, 1962 are no longer adequate and it will be necessary for Government to consider what further sources of finance are likely to be available for the prosecution of the Development Programme. These will be reviewed when the 1960–61 Budget is presented.”

This shows that we are getting into some difficulty about finding the fund and I would like to remind the hon. the Minister of Finance that while we were debating this Programme I made it clear that the financial basis was rather shaky. I would like to know whether what he is drawing our attention to is a hint by the Minister that revenue sources for financing the Scheme have proved inadequate or that expectation of foreign investment—the foreign capital—has not been realised. We would like to know which it is. I do not think, however, that revenue sources had fallen short of expectation. I strongly suspect that it is the second, namely, that the expectation of foreign

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capital has not been realised, and if this is correct, I would like to tell the Minister of Finance that he has a very tough job on his hands because it shows two things: firstly, that we will find it difficult to succeed in getting foreign investors interested in our programmes or projects within this Development Plan; secondly, and this I would like the Minister to take very serious, it shows the danger of our reposing all our hope for foreign capital on one source.

I think the Government of this Region—and in fact all the Governments of the Federation—are making a very big mistake in believing that capital from foreign sources for investment or development in this country can only come from a particular foreign source. They are making a very serious mistake and as a result, they are crippling and cramping the economic development of this country. Each time they go overseas to look for capital, they go between London and New York. But there are other places that can give us the money. (*Some hon. Members: Come out plain with what you have to say.*) I have heard some hon. Friends say: come out with it. I must say quite frankly that if the Soviet Union is prepared to give us £34 million as they gave to Egypt at an interest of 3 per cent, that is the best bargain we can strike. (*Prolonged interruptions.*)

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order! I think we shall listen to one speech at a time.

**Mr Ikoku:** I am surprised that some of the Members of this House fidget about whenever such proposals are made. What this country needs is finance capital and we are going to pay interest on it and where we can get it at the lowest rate of interest possible, is where we should borrow. It is a simple business. (*The Premier: What about strings?*) There are no strings at all. I am sorry that the hon. Premier is talking about strings. The chances are that loans from Washington are loans with strings. We will soon get Independence and the Government is only trying to say nice things, in order to get the Independence. It is high time we told the people the truth. We want money at the lowest interest possible. (*The Minister of Commerce: Mr J. U. Nwodo: What about the Action Group alignment with the Western Block?*) I am told of the Action

Group alignment with the Western Block but I would like to remind the hon. Minister who made this remark that India believes in non-alignment but she has just got £130,000,000 from the Soviet Union. The story of alignment or non-alignment does not affect my case for borrowing money at the lowest rate of interest.

Lastly, may I turn to this question of unemployment. I am positive that the hon. the Minister of Finance and the hon. Premier should say something more on this problem when we meet for the Budget Session. I must say that I have followed with very great interest all the discussions which the hon. Premier had been having of late in connection with Agricultural and Industrial Projects in the Region. The one specific thing I would like to raise is this question of these fellows who besieged us yesterday—the coal miners. Before I go on, I would like to state the problem here. 2,900 coal miners were laid-off last year and now another 2,500 are to be laid-off, making a total of 5,400 coal miners and the mining population, as stated by the Coal Corporation itself, stood at 9,240 before the first lay-off of 2,900 people; and if you look at it, the labour force of 9,240 is now being cut down by as much as 5,400. It means a drop of 57.36 per cent; nearly 58 per cent, in the labour force is being cut off, in about six months. This is a very drastic thing to do, and I would like to make it clear that it is not just 5,400 people involved; it is 5,400 families. It is something like 25,000 to 30,000 people involved in this business.

Before I go on, I would like to make it clear that the problem is not one for our Government. It is not the problem of this House. It is primarily the problem of the Federal Government, but as you saw yesterday, we are the ones being called upon to bear the brunt. The gentleman Federal Minister of Transport, with his beautiful suit, is in Lagos quite comfortable and we have to face these miners who are actually fuming with rage.

Certain suggestions have been made for solving this problem. The miners themselves suggest an end of dieselisation in the Railway Corporation and in the Electricity Corporation. I do not think that line of action is suitable. The long-term solution lies in providing alternative employment for the miners. That is the solution instead of bringing in suggestion

that do not go to the root of the problem. For example, we are told of Oil Refinery, Oil Refinery in the East—if it is to be established at all—will be established at Port Harcourt and it would provide employment for semi-skilled workers. Miners at Nsude are not going to find job in an Oil Refinery Factory at Port Harcourt. The question of Oil Refinery, therefore, does not solve the problem of the miners—these 5,400 people. Our Government has forgone its £200,000 per annum royalty on coal with a view to reducing the cost of coal and therefore making it more marketable.

I think they have taken a very compassionate view of the whole problem but I must say that it will not solve the problem. The problem of our coal industry is not that coal costs too much; the problem is that the users of coal do not want it any more. The Railway Corporation does not want it, the Electricity Corporation does not want coal any more. Reducing the price of coal by even 50 per cent will not solve the problem. I think the hon. the Premier will proceed along the line he has indicated of discussing this matter with the Federal Government. This Government is the competent channel for discussing the problem. The hon. the Premier should go to Lagos and see the Federal Prime Minister and discuss the matter with him. He should tell him to send their representatives here to deal with the miners. I know hon. Members here would concentrate and devote time to solve this problem. You will remember that the miners carried placards yesterday saying that they did not vote you in to sack them. I am suggesting an interim solution to the problem. I suggest that interim arrangement be made for the miners to be put on half work in order to keep the labour force. The remaining half of their pay will be subsidised by the Federal Government. I suggest also that they be put on half shifts so that the Coal Corporation will not suffer financially as the Federal Government would subsidise their pay. The Federal Government have got the money, they will provide that money for two to three years. The sum of £450,000 a year that would be required to keep these men on half job for two to three years will not kill the Federal Government. The next thing I will suggest is to find alternative jobs for our miners. With these brief observations, I support the Bill.

**Mr E. U. Eronini** (Owerri Division): I rise to support the Supplementary Appropriation Bill.

The people of my constituency send their congratulations to the Minister of Education for the able way he is performing his duties. His detailed inspection of educational institutions manifests his experience and understanding of the complexities of education, be it Elementary, Teacher Training, Secondary, Post Secondary or even a University. But I wish to remind him that when he visited the Owerri Government School, he saw that the dormitories in which the future Ministers of this country were sleeping were not good enough.

I appeal to the Minister to release the results of Standard VI examination in January each year and to arrange for the examination to be taken in November each year. He should consider the possibility of making all Education Officers, Headmasters and Principals of Schools examiners as far as this examination is concerned.

I am grateful to the Minister of Education for the payment of interim awards to Voluntary Agency Teachers and Nurses but the Minister should not rub Peter to pay Paul. (*Several hon. Members: Who are they?*)

This Government should endeavour to abolish the Assumed Local Contribution up to Standard II with the hope of extending it up to Standard III.

I wish to draw the attention of this House to the fact that the Delimitation Committee now working is basing its finding on the General Census of 1953. The forthcoming Federal Census of 1961 should have been completed before the Delimitation Commission began to work. The Delimitation Commission should work on the figures of the Census to be held in 1961.

I wish to thank the Ministry of Agriculture for the agricultural show at Owerri at the end of last year. It was very successful and it should be continued by the Owerri and Umuahia Provinces which used to be known as the coveted Owerri Province.

I wish to remind the Minister of Health that social amenities should be given to Divisions on population basis. Areas which are thickly populated should be given priority.

[MR ERONINI]

I now come to the Ministry of Works. The work of this Ministry is so vital in view of the fact that it embraces water supplies, roads and bridges. Water is very essential and the effort by the Government to provide it in most areas is encouraging. It is regretted, any way, to note the snail pace at which this is progressing due, no doubt, to the method of approach. It is good to link organisations or should I say, entrepreneurs with our Corporations. As you know, all business entrepreneurs seek for security and firm patronage and can conveniently get same when they get their enterprises linked with the Government of the Region or Government sponsored Corporations such as the E.R.D.C. Under the circumstances, their services become partially Government and their bargaining power becomes strengthened. They secure the monopoly of Government sponsored works and services. They view with contempt any attempt by any company of the same objective going into competition. They take advantage of this monopoly and charge Government dearly for their services. They would not give their best services. They are generally slow in operation. Government should not give its jobs to organisations solely because they are linked with the Government or one of its Corporations. The Government should not give its contracts to any organisation seeking to secure the monopoly of Government jobs. Government services and contracts should always go to the open market and Government should cease being lured into complacency of being partners with industries that Government will in turn need their services. Many areas need water and Government or its Corporation, the E.R.D.C., should not join any company or firm to create or secure the monopoly I have spoken about. There should be competitive bargaining.

I would like to draw the attention of this House to the death yesterday of over seven persons on the Owerri-Port Harcourt road because of oil bean trees. This is due to the fact that the work of uprooting these oil bean trees along this road has been postponed. I would like to draw the attention of the Minister of Works to the fact that this is the only Regional road that leads to Port Harcourt.

I now refer to the bad handling of road construction in this Region, and in particular

the construction of the Awka-Owerri road. This road, as hon. Members are well aware, is poorly constructed and is not straight. There is much need for straight roads in this Region in order to lessen the occurrence of road accidents in this Region. There is no reason why the Government cannot construct a straight road from Port Harcourt to Enugu; nor can I find any reason why there cannot be constructed a good Trunk "A" road connecting the Eastern Region with the Northern Region. Some hon. Members may jump to the conclusion that the Government is helpless in this matter since the construction of Trunk "A" roads is a Federal responsibility. All that the Government need do is to put up this matter to the Federal Government and persuade the Federal Government to hasten action.

**Mr M. A. Idoko** (Nsukka Division): I want to congratulate the Minister of Works for his vigilant road policy and to draw his attention to some very important roads in the Region that have never been attended to.

The first is the road from Nsukka U.A.C. beach to Ankpa boundary. This road is only twenty-two miles distant and is the only road connecting Nsukka Division with Igala Division of the Northern Region. It is one of the busiest roads, second only to Trunk "A" road—the Ninth Mile Corner to the Northern Region now being tarred by the Federal Government. The road is also very useful to the people of this Region for it is the road to the famous "Gam-Gam" market in Igala Division where a good many people of this Region go to exchange trade with the people of the Northern Region. The second is the bridging of Iyiakolo and Eshi rivers. These rivers pass across Ogrugru-Nsukka road and Ogrugru is the only river port in Nsukka Division. A good deal of the palm oil from Nsukka Division is exported from Ogrugru through Anambra river to the River Niger. The bridges over these rivers cause the people of my Division great inconvenience every year. I am very glad the Provincial Commissioner for Enugu Province is taking the necessary steps to tar this Nsukka-Ogrugru road and I congratulate him on this.

I am also drawing the attention of the Minister of Works to water problem in Nsukka

Division. The people of the Division suffer greatly from scarcity of water. To cite instances, in Ukehe the home town of the Minister of Commerce (Chief J. U. Nwodo) people travel over sixteen miles to get water and worse still, in Enugu Ezike (the largest single town in this Region) some people travel well over twenty miles to get water. I shall be really very glad if the Minister of Works can tour Nsukka Division during this dry season to see for himself how the people of that Division suffer on account of water. The people of my Division are prepared to contribute money for water if the Government is willing to give them water. When the Government once made a policy of giving water boreholes to any people and required them to contribute, by instalment,  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the cost of such pipe borne water, the Nsukka County Council quickly responded in depositing its share of contribution not by instalment but *en bloc* for a number of boreholes which the Government then allocated to the Division. It is a sorry situation that few of these boreholes as they are, cannot meet the needs of even one-twentieth of the half a million people of Nsukka. My view is that Government policy in respect of water supply should be weighed in favour of need rather than any other consideration.

I want to express also the great appreciation of the people of my Division for the supply of electricity, the work which is now in hand. While expressing this gratitude . . . (*Interruptions*).

**Chief I. I. Morphy** (Ogoja Division):  
Point of Order—Standing Order 32 (5)—

“Members shall not make unseemly interruptions while any Member is speaking.”

**Mr Speaker:** I think I quite agree with the hon. Member. It seems to me that some Members are making things quite difficult for the Verbatim Reporters to do their work well.

**Mr Idoko:** . . . I must also remark that there had already been a marked destruction of valuable trees and cash crops by the people to whom the job of cutting the route is given. Though this does not come within the Portfolio of the Minister of Works, yet I am humbly asking the Minister to help the people affected in getting the adequate compensation from the Electricity Corporation of Nigeria for the destroyed crops.

**Mr J. A. Agba** (Ogoja Division): I wish to say a few words on the Ministry of Education. The hon. Leader of the Opposition said something in connection with interim award to Voluntary Agencies. I want to remind the hon. Minister of Education that in certain Voluntary Agency Schools this Interim Award was paid in November and December and just after the Elections we came to the New Year. Due to lack of understanding as to what to do in certain areas, the interim award has not been paid and the reason is that the Managers or Principals of certain secondary schools do not seem to know what to do and have always been asking whether this 10 per cent should be continued and, if so, for how long. I am asking the hon. Minister of Education to clarify this point to Managers and Principals so that if the 10 per cent is to be continued the teachers concerned may be paid forthwith without further delay.

The second point is that the Region, I think, is meantime in need of science students. The study of science is seriously required in secondary schools and I must say that the Ministry of Education is conscious of this. I should add that it is very necessary that the Ministry of Education should make enough money grant to secondary schools to build laboratory halls. I realise that vigorous attempts are being made to do this, but the grants should be in proportion to the size of the schools and particularly in backward areas due consideration should be given to enable Principals and Proprietors of secondary schools not only to build commodious laboratory halls but also to enable them to get sufficient equipment for the students who are interested in science. I will have to emphasise this when we come back for the Budget meeting. I would like the hon. Minister of Education to note this point.

The third point is that during last year, and I think the year before, the Minister was much concerned with the up-grading of certain posts of teachers who have put in so many years of meritorious service in the profession. I think this point is now off. The Ministry is employing delaying tactics. Time and again some of us have had the understanding that a certain Committee had been formed to study the question of up-grading the posts of some of this class of teachers—those who have taught for so long and have been Headmasters for quite a long time. I feel due consideration

[MR AGBA]

should be given to them in the super scale grade. I would also like to remind the hon. Minister that such thought was being urged before the elections and that apart from the elections, it is worth being given a full consideration. I think that real action should be taken to see to that. I cannot see why consideration should be given to promote civil servants and teachers are being left in the background even though they play a very important part in the community.

My next point is on the Ministry of Transport and I can see from the Supplementary Estimates that the Ministry of Transport is not contained therein which shows that there is enough money for that Ministry and that the money has been handled very well by the Ministry. I want to say that if the Ministry is of the opinion that it has got enough money to carry on its work and does not need any supplementary vote then it has defeated itself in many ways.

**Mr Speaker:** Is the hon. Member referring to the Ministry of Works?

**Mr Agba:** I am referring to both the Ministry of Works and the Ministry of Transport.

You will notice in the *Hansard* that my speeches in this House have always been coloured with the demand for the tarring of roads in Abakaliki and Ogoja Divisions. I must say that it is atrocious and really misleading, and I feel a bit ashamed when I remember that the people of Ogoja stood like one man and voted for the Government Party in the last Federal elections. This same Government is now playing hide and seek with that part of the Region. During election period the Government will make a lot of promises. While I am saying this I am attacking members of the N.C.N.C. from Ogoja; they are treacherous to their constituency.

**Mr Speaker:** That is not a very decent word.

**Mr Agba:** I am sorry. But I must say that I do not understand why the Government uses a sort of delaying tactics over this question of tarring roads in Ogoja. When last year

it was brought to this House, a system whereby the Minister of Works could effect the tarring of roads in Ogoja, he and I talked it over. The Minister said he was taking it up with the Federal Ministry of Transport and Works. He said they had come to a compromise as to how tarring could be started as quickly as possible. They started it by breaking down the old culverts and started building new ones. The rainy season came and the work was stopped. This year they have started the same thing and some sort of addition has also been made by clearing as much as about 50 or 60 yards on either side of the road, thus making it so wide that it would be difficult to do substantial work before the rains set in. If the work is not hastened up before the rainy season comes, I am afraid it will be quite impossible to continue the work. From my knowledge of geography the rainy season starts in April and if no special efforts are made to put the work in hand now it will be a miracle to get done when the rainy season steps in.

It is a pity that we come here year in and year out and talk over the same thing with no effect. In fact, I am very emphatic on this point, because it is really ridiculous that we should keep on talking on the same thing every year, and the Minister will make pleasant promises and nothing is done. I must say that the Minister is a bad agent for the Federal Ministry of Works.

I also want to sound a note of warning to the Minister of Local Government. In certain areas where council elections are being conducted, I would like to advise the Minister to have an eye on the Treasury of the Councils. It is not my place to specialise or to name certain Councils where, I am afraid, something is going wrong in the Treasury. Again, road labourers, in order to save the finances of certain Councils, in certain areas, are made to work for four or five days in a week. In one area, on the 15th of last month, about thirty-nine labourers out of fifty-one were laid off.

I would like to say to the Minister of Local Government that, in this House last year, an approval was given for allocations made in the Estimates for the payment of certain Council labourers for the financial year 1959-60. Why should these labourers be now laid off. The Minister of Local Government should find out what has become of the money.



Some of the excuses given have been that the Councils have undertaken certain capital works on their own when the roads are awfully bad. Why should these Councils undertake capital works at the expense of building good roads. There is a certain Minister who said that Ogoja roads should not be tarred because articles of food and other things would become scarce and lorries cannot go there often. I do not agree with that view. If you want to open a place the first thing is to open up the roads and link them with the headquarters. I am laying emphasis on this point of roads in Ogoja.

My last remark is on the Ministry of Finance. I would like to appeal to the Ministry of Finance to make Ogoja a motor licensing station. This point is worth considering. The man who is asking how many people have cars in Ogoja, is out of the way. We build for the future and not for the present alone.

I would like to say that Administrative Officers undertake on themselves to do the work of the Police and Court Messengers in arresting tax defaulters and collecting them into their cars and lorries and sending them for trial. I am saying this as a sort of safeguard for them, because when an Administrative Officer goes to arrest a habitual criminal, the person may not hesitate to beat him up and perhaps may cause him a serious injury; and not only that, the injured man will be sent to hospital for treatment but the work in the District will be impaired and disrepute brought on the area. I think it better for a man at the head of affairs to content himself with giving orders to his juniors to carry on certain jobs instead of going to do the odd jobs himself or act in place of the Attorney-General.

**Mr E. O. Eyo (Uyo Division):** I wish to join others who have congratulated the Minister of Finance on the excellent Supplementary Budget that he has presented to the House. I just want to seize this opportunity to attack Government's policy on the financing of the Government Housing Scheme for the lower income groups in the Civil Service in the Region. Some years past, this House was loudest in pleading the cause of our Civil Servants in the Region with regard to the question of exorbitant rents being paid by

them and Government came to their rescue by initiating this Housing Scheme. It was made quite clear that the scheme was meant primarily for Civil Servants within the Region. Now, I wish to ask the Minister of Finance: is it a fact that our Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries have helped themselves through this scheme? My information is that our Ministers have obtained £9,000 each; our Parliamentary Secretaries £6,000, over a period of 15 years at 8½ per cent interest in order to build houses for themselves in Enugu.

**Government Bench:** We will answer.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** The reply is: "We will answer". That is the only reply but I hope that they will answer effectively. When I was in the N.C.N.C. I was told that the political objective of the N.C.N.C. was to project a Socialist Commonwealth. I used to be told that in those days but I do not know whether the N.C.N.C. still believe in the Socialist Commonwealth.

**Mr Ikoku:** They now believe in the Commonwealth.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** If that is so, it is hardly the purport for Ministers to give themselves loans because I cannot imagine a Minister of State applying to anybody to obtain a loan. My view is that a Minister decides on a loan. I would have thought our Ministers, if my information is correct, would have done everything to prosecute this Housing Scheme and enable our Civil Servants—those who are entitled to it as of right—to own a house. What happens in the Western Region is that there, there are two Housing Schemes. One is undertaken by the Western Nigeria Housing Corporation and it is a very good scheme. A labourer in the Western Region—if he can find £50—all he has to do is to deposit £50 with the Western Nigeria Housing Corporation and the Housing Corporation will, on receipt of this £50, build this labourer a house worth £1,000 and the labourer is given 30 years to repay this sum. That is for the lower income group, i.e., the labourer and other junior civil servants. There are others in the higher income group who want to take advantage of this scheme. They are called upon to purchase a plot of land; they pay £400 and they obtain a lease for 999 years and the Housing Corporation erect a house worth

[Mr E. O. Eyo]

nothing less than £12,000 and the Civil Servant is allowed 30 years within which to pay. Besides this, there is another Government Housing Scheme, which is run purely as a Government Scheme and only for civil servants. But in our own case, we have only one Housing Scheme and we were told that it was the Government Housing Scheme for Civil Servants. When the Minister of Finance would reply, I hope he will be good enough to let us know whether it is true that rather than prosecute this Housing Scheme . . .

**An Opposition Member:** The Ministers are quarrelling!

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** I did not expect any quarrel so soon. I only wanted to bring out this and let them try to think it over; but, may I warn very seriously that if anybody in the Government Bench got it in a tricky way, whoever it may be, that such a thing is bad. Well, I hope they do not want trouble. But if it is true that Ministers are helping themselves with £9,000, there is going to be trouble.

The Attorney-General has indicated that they will take the challenge. But is it true that all of them have got £9,000, and is it true that the Government has approved £6,000 for Parliamentary Secretaries to build houses in Enugu or any where in the world? That is all we want to know. We want the Minister either to confirm or to deny it.

**Mr J. M. Ito (Ikot Ekpene Division):** While congratulating the Minister of Works, I want to make certain observations—i.e., in connection with water supplies in my own Division. I am made to understand that the scheme is being carried out somewhere else and that the stuffs that have been brought in my Division are all being cleared and taken to somewhere else. I do not know the reason. It amounts to robbing Peter to pay Paul. (*Interruptions*).

**Mr Speaker:** I think hon. Members will find it necessary to keep quiet because not everybody can speak loudly and if he speaks loudly perhaps it is not good for him to do so. So I would like everybody to be quiet as much as possible so that we can hear him. And please, hon. Member, kindly speak a bit more loudly.

**Mr Ito:** Thank you very much Mr Speaker. I think I will start all over again. While thanking the Minister of Works for what he has done somewhere else, I would like to bring to his notice that we have entirely been relegated to the back-ground in connection with the supply of pipe borne water. Last year I spoke on this subject very vehemently, and I learnt that the pipes that had been brought to my own Division have all been removed to Owerri. This is a disappointment. It has been said from time to time that amenities should be distributed in such a way as not to rob Peter to pay Paul. I think the matter of distribution of amenities should now be reviewed. Our people are in great need of water. They are suffering while they are paying taxes.

The other point I would like to raise is on loans. I read from a paper sometime ago, on the 2nd of February—and with your permission, may I read:

*“Loans distribution.*—The report showed that loans of more than £227,000 were given to Local Government Councils, educational institutions and other bodies in the Region by the Regional Government and that a balance of nearly £196,000 was outstanding on 31st March, 1959.

The largest loan—£30,000—was given to the Enugu Municipal Council. It was followed by Ogidi District Council £25,000, Aba Urban District Council £20,000, Njikoka District Council £14,500, Okobo-Oron District Council £14,000 and Eket District Council £10,000.”

I beg to say that we have been entirely neglected . . .

**Mr Speaker:** I hope the hon. Member does not want us to take into consideration that the newspaper publication is very accurate and reliable.

**Mr Ito:** The Urban District Council in my own Division has only been given £4,000 which is rather very poor and we can not get anywhere with it to improve our market. I reserve other statements until the Budget Session.

**Mr D. E. Akilo (Udi Division):** I thank the Minister of Education for his wise educational policy. We all are aware that education is the key-note to the progress of any nation and we must have more money for education. The announcement of the Minister some time

ago about banning the expansion of Teacher Training Colleges and Primary Schools is causing much unrest among the communities. I have certain suggestions to make. A community that has education as its prime aim should not have its interest killed. In some cases certain District Councils pay education rates along with their rates and taxes every year. If this ban is allowed to stand as it were, the interest of these people will be killed and the best way out of it is to ask the Minister of Education to think of lifting the ban only on the plan for building such institutions. The Council may have five years educational plan to build an institution and if the District Council is given the chance to build the houses in five years they will be able to complete the building. The college may not be allowed to run its normal course but the people should be allowed to build the houses, i.e., if the Minister can only approve the plan for the building that will give the people the courage and incentive. In case of a Primary School, if the Minister knows that such kind of community ought to have a school, I do not see the reason why the ordinary plan should not be approved—i.e., the plan for the building and not the actual approval to run the school. This will encourage the people to contribute more money for the building of Teacher Training Colleges and Primary Schools. But if these people are discouraged in that way it will quench their desire for education. That is all I want to say.

**Mr A. G. Umoh** (Enyong Division): I know that this is not the proper time for a long speech, but I have just a few points to make. The first point is about the U.P.E. scheme in the Region. It is gratifying to note that the Minister of Education this year has been able to increase the U.P.E. up to Standard II. But there is something else that is happening which is threatening the success of this scheme and that is the fact that the Minister is not willing to increase the number of streams in the lower classes. The children of school going age are so many that they cannot all get admission into the existing schools without additional streams. In many instances the Minister has been approached to allow extra streams in Classes I and II, but it has been found impossible to get the Minister's approval.

The U.P.E. was meant to help all children to get education. So many of them now cannot

get education because there are no facilities for them. I think the Minister of Education would be gaining more and more of the popularity which he has already gained if he should grant more streams in the infant classes. Already in certain areas the parents are faced with having to pay for the establishment of private schools. I do not see why the Eastern Regional Government should pride itself that it has started the U.P.E. scheme if some parents have to found private schools for their children. I hope the Minister will give serious thought to this.

The next point I have to make is that during the last election campaign the Commissioner for Uyo Province gave notices all around that sand and gravels should be collected as the Government was going to build cottage hospitals for my people. Very many areas thought that this was true and so started to collect sand and gravels. Since the last elections people have been asking us: when is this cottage hospital coming? I wish the Commissioner were there to answer but he is no more to be found. I should like to bring this to the notice of this House. I wish to know if Government will, in fact, build cottage hospitals for my people, and if not, then the Government should arrange for the removal of the sand and gravels. I hope the Premier will be in a position to answer whether the Commissioner was authorised to tell the people that they should bring sand and gravels for cottage hospitals.

There is just one more point I want to make and it is a very serious point. Early in the year my attention has been drawn to a speech made by the Premier in a ceremony in connection with his new office. It was reported that the Premier said he was satisfied that there was no more Christian in the Eastern House of Assembly. This has been interpreted in the rural areas as an attempt by the new Premier to ban religion. I want the Premier to note that this is the impression created and that he should take this opportunity to clear himself.

**Dr W. N. Onubogu** (Onitsha Division): I would like to speak on this Bill not necessarily to effect any correction out of the Government because I realise that the money is already spent. A lot of speakers speak as if they are here for the usual Budget Session where the money is yet to be voted. Therefore I stand up to say

[DR ONUBOGU]

exactly that my main concern today is this question of the poor miners that are now going to face impending retrenchment. This House ought to concern itself over the affairs of the miners. I do support what the Leader of the Opposition said, that we ought to do something to see what can be done to help them. I do not agree with the people who say that this is a matter for the Federal Government. Even if it is a matter for the Federal Government, they are the people of the Eastern Region and that is where it mostly concerns us. They belong to the Eastern Region; they pay their taxes here. We wear the shoe and we should know exactly where it is going to pinch. Since over two thousand of them were retrenched, high-way robbery has increased. Those who listened to the radio yesterday heard it said that there is impending danger if more are retrenched. They must live and they have not been earning a lot of money to have saved anything substantial. So, as soon as you lay them off they just must live and so must their children live. It therefore should be of great concern to us, and this Government should do something to urge the Federal Government to action. I do not agree with the Leader of the Opposition when he said that they cannot be employed in the Oil Refinery. They can be employed there. As soon as we can get the Federal Government to quicken its steps in establishing the Oil Refinery, a lot of them could be put in there. (*Mr E. O. Eyo: As what?*) As labourers; yes, what they want is unskilled labour.

It is true as I said that most of this money has been spent, but I like to call the attention of the Minister of Works to Head 439. Under that Head I see that an amount of £11,000 is earmarked or has already been spent either in reconditioning or for the improvement of V.I.P. Rest Houses. I feel that this amount is too much for such job. I think there are many places that ought to have Rest Houses but which have not. I realise also that there is one unfinished chalet in Aba which remains an eye-sore to this Region. When you go to Aba Rest House you will see one house half-finished. It has been standing there for four years, unfinished; you will see some blocks projecting, showing that another room will be added to the house. If anybody comes in there and asks why, they say, there is no money. Why not improve that and build Rest Houses in other

places. I am sure there is no Rest House in a place like Umuahia which is fast growing and there are other Rest Houses that have not got certain amenities—fans and things like that. Why spend £11,000 for only the improvement and structural repairs of V.I.P. Rest Houses. Things like this are what prompt me to stand up and say something; otherwise I was preparing all my speeches for the Budget Session.

**Mr A. J. Ekpe** (Opobo Division): I do not think it is a credit to the Government that it makes savings out of under-expenditure. From the memorandum on these Supplementary Estimates, we can see that there have been great under-expenditure under the Personal Emoluments sub-heads as a result of under-recruitment. This is a very serious matter because when this House approves an estimate and makes provision for certain development work, then because of under-recruitment it is not possible to carry out the development project, the Region suffers economically and socially. I therefore feel that whoever is responsible for recruitment should redouble his effort and see that the staff required for the various projects are recruited in time and save us this under-expenditure as a result of under-recruitment.

Another point is this question of miners and I think everybody is very much concerned. But that is not the only problem of unemployment facing the Region. There are these ex-Standard VI pupils who are also out looking for employment. I think in a country, or a Region which depends on extractive industry, as in the case of these coal miners, we must be prepared for unemployment as a result of what is called structural unemployment. This is due to changing pattern either of consumption or new introductions or for technical reasons. We must be prepared for this. The Federal Government ought to have foreseen that either the mines will be exhausted or that other sources of fuel and power will come along which will displace coal and there will be structural unemployment. This should have been foreseen by the economists in the Federal Government and the Federal Government should have been advised against it. It all appears now as a sudden thing to everybody. I am sure there were signposts of warnings all along when diesel was being introduced

into the Railway and into various other machineries. So I feel that the Regional Government must feel concerned about the fate of these miners and of these school-leavers, and along with what the Leader of the Opposition has suggested, I feel that the E.R.D.C.—and that is the Ministry of Agriculture—can also help in this matter by a vigorous policy of agriculture and also by introducing the sort of farming projects that are carried out in the Western Region of Nigeria. After all, some of these miners cannot fit into other industries and in the forthcoming jet age—as they call it—we may find that we may not need many labourers. Various devices and gadgets are being introduced which will replace unskilled labour and I feel that the only way in which we can help is to settle these people on the land. We cannot talk of alternative industries. What alternative industries can miners be put on to? We should ask the E.R.D.C. and the Ministry of Agriculture to begin to plan a Resettlement Scheme for some of these miners. They are land people and they would like to be settled on land where they can get themselves fixed.

Then, there is this commercial and industrial Television and Broadcasting. £16,000 is provided for this commercial Television. Whoever put the term “commercial” there is trying to give the impression that Television is a commercial enterprise. It is a commercial enterprise in a highly civilised country. It is not so in the Eastern Region, and it is not a priority in this Region. I think that Television is not what we need very much now. If we use this £16,000 to resettle these miners and provide employment for these Standard VI school leavers, and leave Television for a few people who are on top, I do not think it is very important in the economy of this Region. I want the Minister of Finance and the hon. Premier to understand that this point is very serious. Television is not an industry that can absorb many people. Television is a luxury for the people in the upper stratum of society.

Another point, Sir, is the value of Education. I am quite gratified with the progress so far made about the U.P.E. I really must say that it is what should have been done long ago. If this had been planned gradually, the previous Government would have been saved the ignominy which they earned during the

U.P.E. crisis. It is reasonable to try and make classes fee-free gradually but the Minister of Education made a statement which was published recently by the local papers that he was not sure that Standard III will be fee-free next year. Is it not too early to have made such a statement now? After the speech about the buoyant finances of the Region made by the hon. Minister of Finance, the Minister of Education attempted to disillusion the people by his statement. He should have reserved that till the Budget Session or perhaps till some time later in the year. We are expecting more from the Government. We expect more. We hope that this gradually progressive fee-free classes will continue as the years go ahead. We do not expect to have Standard II free this year and the next year they tell us that because there is no money the next class will have to pay fees. We want a steady progress. At this stage, I want to refer to some very old efficient Primary School Headmasters. I had thought that the Minister of Finance was going to put in something to pay them on extended scale. After all, some of these Headmasters have served the Region and have served the country very efficiently for a number of years but because of low academic qualifications, they are not put on extended scales. I feel they should be rewarded for the past services they have rendered the country. I am therefore making an appeal to the Government and to the Minister of Education that during the next Budget they should do something for these Headmasters.

Turning to the provision for Urban Water Supplies, this is all right, but it is surprising that there has been no additional provision for Rural Water Supplies. You will be surprised to see that in Obolo, with a population of about 14,000 people, they have not even borehole wells.

The problem was that sometime ago, campaign . . .

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order!

*Sitting suspended at 12 noon.*

*Sitting resumed at 12.30 p.m.*

**Mr Ekpe:** Speaking on the question of rural water supply, I want to impress upon the Minister the need for good water supply in the rural areas. Some rural areas have no good

[MR EKPE]

drinking water. I will mention the case of Obolo in Opobo Division. It is a case which requires a very serious and urgent attention. During the Federal elections it was impossible to get good drinking water. I asked the Premier whether he carried good drinking water from Enugu to the place. I did not hear what he said, but I guess he must have seen the situation himself.

I have something more to say under the Premier's Office. Under Head 421, Ancillary Charges, there is an additional provision to meet the cost of appointing Provincial Commissioners and creating Provincial Assemblies, which we did not know at the time the estimates were prepared last year. I think that this idea of having Provincial Commissioners should be shelved. (*Members of the Government Party: No! No!*). When these posts were created, no one thought that additional vote would be required. If it works in any other area, it does not work in the C.O.R. area. We regard Commissioners as party agents. In the last Federal elections their main work was to campaign; so I would like Government to reconsider this because Provincial Assemblies are utterly unnecessary.

**Mr N. O. Onwudiwe** (Okigwi Division): While supporting the Bill I have a few observations to make. I would like to point out what I suspect to be an obstacle to progress in Local Government Council areas. A lot of powers is given to Administrative Officers or Local Government Advisers, as we call them, and such powers are intoxicating some of them. The Local Government Councils having discussions to hold may require consultation and advice from the Minister of Local Government. Sometimes this necessitates delegation to the Ministry, but instead of going straight to the Minister to tell him what we want, we are told to go to the Local Government Advisers or Local Government Commissioners who sometimes refuse to understand the need for seeing the Minister and may misdirect what actually the Council intends to say. I would like to point out that in the Local Government Councils this state of affairs is causing much unrest, because some of the matters discussed in the District Councils cannot be pushed through to the Local Government Commissioners who are not made to listen to us, and as such, many matters are left unsettled. I consider this to be an obstacle and would

suggest that the Minister of Local Government should take upon himself to enquire of Local or District Councils what their needs are or these Councils could write to him straight and tell him what exactly they want, and if he considers it necessary he can arrange an interview. One will find it is needless going to a District Office for these things as the Office employs delaying tactics.

Another point is that in my Division, Okigwi, since the selection of Second-class Chiefs we have not been able to complete the election of Chiefs to the Eastern House of Chiefs. The trouble is that the people who are competing for the post of Second-class Chiefs are in dispute and their names have been forwarded to the Minister of Justice. It is not fair that while other Divisions have completed their own election of Chiefs we are still lagging behind. (*Hon. Members: Whose fault?*) Those who have gone through could not form a quorum.

I would like to thank the Minister of Education because I remember that when the schools opened this year many children did not try to come to school and the fact was that they said they heard the rumour that fees were to be increased and so most of them were absent from school and for many days they did not attend, until the Minister of Education made an announcement over the radio. That gave them a lot of encouragement and now we have a big number of school children in schools. We have also to thank him for his kindness in freeing Standard II from paying fees. This is also encouraging to the parents and guardians.

The other point is—although it is not the duty of the Eastern Regional Government to cater for these coal miners—it is necessary to suggest and try how to improve the situation because the people are threatening the lives of the people in the Eastern Region. Although the Leader of the Opposition suggested that they should be placed on half pay, I think if anything is to be done it should be done quickly otherwise, what they are planning to do would be disastrous.

The other point is—although somebody pointed out at the beginning that the result of the Standard VI examination has been delayed—I am suggesting that while we are thinking of these miners who are jobless today, we should think also of the school

leavers. You see, most of them have nothing to do and for over three years those who have passed their Standard VI are just lingering about without any jobs so that I would suggest that the Minister of Agriculture should provide money and improve agriculture because I think that is the only means through which these children would be absorbed.

**The Premier (Dr M. I. Okpara):** I just want to take up one or two points raised by some hon. Members.

Hon. Umoh said that I was reported to have said that there were no religious people in the Eastern House, and this signifies a move to heathenism and atheism; but, clearly, I must have been wrongly reported in a malicious section of the Press. I never said any such thing and I hope it is not all an invention of the hon. Member. To be against religion is not one of my faults nor that of my Government.

Another hon. Member, I think that was Mr Ekpe, wanted us to abandon the Provincial system of administration. I am afraid we are not going to do that; we are going right ahead with these Provincial Assemblies and I hope to report further progress to this House when we reassemble in March. It is surprising that a system that has been hailed even in the rural areas should be so castigated by the hon. Member. By that I mean, the system of Provincial Administration and Provincial Assembly. I hope that before we assemble in March that these Assemblies will have got on the way.

I now come to the vexatious question of the coal miners. I agree entirely that the proposed retrenchment of more than 50 per cent of the labour force of the Coal Corporation within the period of twelve months is more than the industry can stand and is also quite contrary to the agreement or understanding reached between the Coal Corporation and the Railway Corporation. Coal production ought to have been held at the agreed level of 700,000 tons per year. This, of course, is an idealistic way looking at it from the Coal Corporation point of view. But, the Railway Corporation, in order to save money and balance its own budget, has embarked on dieselisation. Only a couple of days ago, the Railway Corporation was said to

have lost £2,000,000 in one year. We may not all agree with the policy of dieselisation but we can all see the difficulties of the Railway Corporation. What is required now is a frank discussion with the Federal Government with a view to arriving at an amicable solution of a definitely thorny problem. My Government recognise the gravity of the situation and I have already held discussions with the Chairman of the Coal Corporation and the Federal Minister of Transport. I have also addressed a rather very serious letter to the Federal Prime Minister on this matter. And in addition, His Excellency the Governor, Sir Robert Stapledon has already addressed a similar letter to the Governor-General of the Federation. I propose to visit Lagos in the next ten days or so, as soon as this House adjourns, to impress on the Federal Prime Minister, the Federal Government, the urgency and explosiveness of the matter. The permanent solution must lie in higher agricultural production and production of more consumer goods. I have already, in another place, laid emphasis on this. We are vigorously pursuing the establishment of Iron and Steel Industry in the Eastern Region, utilising the coal. Experiments for the coking of our coal are going on now and the indications are that they may be successful. I agree entirely with the hon. the Leader of the Opposition that the whole problem of the coal crisis is primarily a Federal matter; but unfortunately, we are directly affected. I hope to be able to report to this House the results of my consultation with the Federal Prime Minister and the Federal Government when the House reassembles in March.

**The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke):** In rising to wind up the debate on the Second Reading of the Supplementary Appropriation Bill, I wish first of all to thank the Leader of the Opposition and several others who have praised the Ministry of Finance for the presentation of this Budget. I would like to deal with the point raised by the hon. the Leader of the Opposition concerning the Public Debt Charges. The rate of interest as quoted by the Leader of the Opposition is 5½ per cent for this year, and he went on to indicate that it was from June. I want to correct that impression that this rate is for the whole year and not only from June to the end of the year. Then he totalled up the whole thing and said it was an average of about 7½ per cent. I want to

[DR IMOKE]

explain also that this loan of about £580,000 was given in three tranches or stocks—i.e., there is one which is for 1959–64 at 5 per cent for £100,000. There is another which is for 1959–69 and that is £150,000 at 5½ per cent, and there is another for 1959–79 which is £338,840 at 6 per cent. It is true that these interests are high but there is nothing we can do about it. We are not free to go to the outside world and raise loans on our own. By the Constitution, we have to go through the Federal Government and I do not know whether the Federal Government will take into consideration the suggestion about going to Russia for money.

There is a very important issue which was raised by the hon. E. O. Eyo, Member for Uyo, which needs very detailed explanation, and I intend to do that. First of all, I am happy to say that hon. E. O. Eyo admitted that a similar Housing Scheme exists in the Western Region. The fact that it exists in two parts makes no difference. But the arrangements are the same. The arrangement in the Western Region is that the public, including Ministers Parliamentary Secretaries, etc., are entitled to get from the Housing Corporation, set up by the Western Region Government, a loan of not more than £12,000. The difference is that we in the East are only allowed a maximum of £9,000—a difference of £3,000. The other very important difference is that in the Western Region the Minister who has this loan of £12,000 has thirty years to pay back. In the East he has only fifteen years to pay back. So that the financial advantage is more in favour of this Government than the Western Government.

It is true that previously there existed a Staff Housing Scheme in this Region. Government voted £20,000 which you will all find in the Capital Development Programme for the African Staff Housing Scheme. Later on in the year the Government was approached by the Nigerian Building Society which operates in Lagos and which also wants to operate here, asking us to join in forming a company in this Region, and Government accepted and took shares of £150,000 in this Company. Government later decided that instead of putting in more money to the £20,000 already provided for the Staff Housing Scheme, the Staff Housing Scheme should now be merged with the

Nigerian Building Society that has been formed, first because Government has no capital to put into the Staff Housing Scheme after putting in about £150,000 into the Company. The condition of the Nigerian Building Society is this: If you have to build a house of £9,000 or £15,000 you cannot get more than £6,000 from the Building Society. Government felt that Ministers might wish to build houses costing more than £6,000 and Parliamentary Secretaries and so forth who are paid highly can afford to refund about £100 every month which is what the Building Society insists upon. The interest rate is 8½ per cent. For the African staff of this Region Government felt that this rate of interest was going to be a heavy burden especially when it is considered that it was previously at 3 per cent and so Government decided that African staff who want to take advantage of this Building Society could do so at an interest rate of 5 per cent but they should only build for themselves to live in and if they build with the hope of living in the house after it is completed, whether on Crown land or in rural areas, Government will meet up the balance in the interest payment—i.e., they will have to pay 5 per cent and Government will pay the balance of 3½ per cent.

For the politicians who are entitled to £9,000, the Society insisted that since by their regulations they are not allowed to give beyond £6,000, Government will have to advance the balance of £3,000. But Government also decided that the interest will remain at 8½ per cent as distinct from the officials who have to pay an interest at 5 per cent. So these are the conditions. And then apart from that, the Building Society insists that when you get this loan to put up a building you must have to mortgage the building to the Society. In other words, if you are not able to pay after the building has been put up, the building has some security; so there is no fear of Government money not being paid back by anybody who has borrowed.

The Building Society is a Company functioning for everybody in this Region; the only difference is that you are entitled as an ordinary public citizen to £6,000 maximum. We are entitled to £9,000 because it is quite easy for the money to be deducted monthly from our salaries and we stand a better position of refunding.



The other point raised by the Leader of the Opposition is about the increase in the capital expenditure. He referred to page 105 of the Memorandum on the Estimates, paragraph 20. He complained that the Development Programme has already been stepped up by £1 million. I really do not see why he should worry about this. It is clearly stated there that work on the programme has not progressed with full speed until quite recently due to increasing costs and the addition of a few more projects to the plan. When he made this reference, maybe he overlooked this point. The increase was not an increase on the existing programme. The programme has been reviewed and there are one or two other items added; that is why we got the increase. This review as I said before will be reported to the House at the Budget Session.

The question of return of the revenue collected from Petrol.—I am afraid this question is such a delicate one that I would not say it is possible to return this money to the people—the consumers, who paid this tax. But the fact remains that the big combines collected this tax and Government has discovered that they are going to be paying double if it is allowed to remain and so it is decided that this money be refunded to these big combines which collected the tax. It is quite impossible to return this money to the consumers.

I would like to leave the rest of the points raised in the debate on the Second Reading of the Supplementary Appropriation Bill to my colleagues to deal with in the appropriate Ministries concerned.

**The Minister of Commerce (Mr J. U. Nwodo):** (*Shouts of "£9,000 loan"*). I do not want to reply to the question of £9,000 loan; I think the Minister of Finance has replied adequately to that. The £9,000 loan can be given to any member of the public by the Building Society. It is just a question of applying for it and fulfilling the conditions that are required by the Building Society. It might be that the Minister of Finance did not bring it clearly to the House, that any member of the public can borrow from the Building Society. The £9,000 is not from the Government Fund. Any member of the public can borrow from the Building Society. It depends on whether the fellow can establish himself

before the Building Society as credit worthy. Once anybody can establish himself as being credit worthy that person could borrow from the Building Society.

I would like to reply to two points in respect of the Pharmaceutical Corporation. The Leader of the Opposition stated that the Pharmaceutical Corporation had a loan of £100,000; it was not £100,000 that the Pharmaceutical Corporation had but £50,000. With this meagre amount it was not possible to establish the Industry on a commercial basis. The difficulty into which this Corporation ran was explained to this hon. House and without any dissentient voice from both sides of the House the Law winding up the Pharmaceutical Corporation was passed. As regards the sum of £73,740 for which this House is now called upon to approve in the Supplementary Budget, I would like to state briefly that the expenses involved can be summarised as follows:—

	£
Operating expenses incurred on salaries, wages, rents and taxes, printing and stationery, training fees for technicians and travelling	16,425
Hydrofile Machinery ... ..	46,638
Steel frames for the Factory building ... ..	5,423
Total ... ..	£ 68,486

The interest on the overdraft with the Bank lifts the balance to the total of £73,740.

There are a number of buildings in Aba which had been taken over by the E.R.D.C. in repayment of the loan of £50,000 which the Pharmaceutical Corporation got from the former Finance Corporation.

I should add that against the debts owed by the Corporation are to be set aside a number of assets. Some of these assets are the hydrofile plant and the steel frames and structures. We are doing everything we can to sell them. If we are successful, most of the sum of £73,740 will be recovered and paid into revenue. I must, however, mention that some claims are still being examined by the liquidator and, should legal opinion confirm that some, or all, of the claims should be honoured, provision will have to be made for them in the future.

[MR NWODO]

Finally, I would like to submit that it is not necessary for the House to go into a detailed discussion on this subject because the final Report of the liquidator will be made and laid on the Table of this hon. House.

**The Minister of Education (Mr G. E. Okeke):** I had thought that the best time to talk "pra-pra-pra" in this House is the Budget Session. (*Several Opposition Members: Is that English or Ibo?*). I just want to be very brief and to reply to a few remarks made by some speakers. The hon. Member from Owerri, Mr Eronini, did mention the Government School, Owerri. It is true I visited the school and it is true that all is not well with the buildings; but it is a fact that this was inherited from the Local Authority in charge of the school before. It was primarily a Primary School, afterwards converted into a Middle School and later converted into a Secondary School. It is for him to note that since my last visit to this school, I have been studying the possibilities of considering some improvements in the school and it may be possible during the Budget Session for me to announce my programme for the school.

With regard to Standard VI Examination, I must say that the date was altered from October to near the end of the term by the expressed wish of the Board of Education which represents the widest interest on Education in this Region. The Board agreed to recommend to the Ministry that the Government First School Leaving Certificate Examinations be taken not earlier than about three weeks before the close of the school year. The reasons which led the Board to this decision were the truancy and lack of discipline which resulted when the Examinations were held in October. It was made clear that the number of Examiners was not inexhaustible to deal with over 65,000 candidates for this Examination and that if the Examination were postponed, there would be a corresponding delay in the publication of the results. The Board considered this inevitable and preferred the alternative. In 1959, the Examination was postponed two weeks beyond the planned date owing to the delay caused by the Printing Press in the United Kingdom. This led to the delay in publishing the result and I must say that there is no indication so far to improve on this delay, because as the years go

on, the number of candidates who take these Examinations increase and we have not got the staff to cope with them. However, I am considering to improve the conditions and if it is possible, there may be no delay.

I want to correct one impression that is gaining ground all over, that those who have not their results cannot enter into Secondary Schools. It is not true. If a student passes an entrance examination to any Secondary School, that is his passport into the Secondary School and not the Standard VI result. If he is to enter a Teacher Training Institution, he must pass his Standard VI. He loses his seat if he fails. That is the big difference between Secondary Schools and the Teacher Training Institutions.

The hon. Agba referred to the 10 per cent interim award and said that some Managers did not know what to do. I consider that those Managers who did not know what to do are not fit to be Managers. There have been circulars from my Ministry telling Managers exactly what to do. The 10 per cent interim award has been paid to all schools except those Managers did not submit their particulars in time. If there is any delay, the Managers should be asked to hurry up. The delay is not from our side.

As regards the question of extended scales, it is a fact that only recently I announced here that an Extended Scale Committee has been formed. This Committee has been working and the result of their work will soon be known. I am asking all concerned not to be impatient.

The hon. Akilo referred to my recent announcement regarding Teacher Training and Primary Schools (and he added Secondary Schools which I did not mention). It is for me to know whether the number of teachers coming out from year to year will cope with the number of children going to school every year. If the number is adequate, it will be unnecessary waste for Government to continue to open such schools. I have had discussions with all the main Voluntary Agencies in the Region including all the Educationists and it is agreed that the number of teachers produced every year will soon exceed the number required and it is for me to tighten that up, and that is what I am doing.

With reference to Primary Schools, at the end of the last school year, we had a total of 6,620 Primary Schools in the Region and that is a record figure. I must say too that my decision which I announced here during the last meeting of the House is that these schools should not extend sideways. They can extend upwards. By that I mean that there is no necessity to increase the number of seats in a school unless there is evidence that the classes are full. There is no reason why we should have two classes here and three classes there. It will save us a lot of money if we conserve the energy by grouping these classes together. I have given instructions to all Managers that they are at liberty to transfer students from within their own Managerial area. In other words, if one school is too full, the Manager can transfer some school children to the nearest school that is empty. Until this is done, we are not going to open more of these Primary Schools. I hope this is now clear to hon. Umoh who raised this point.

The hon. Ekpe did say that recently I announced that there would be no question of freeing Standard III from school fees next year. I think the best thing to do is to prepare the parents ahead of time. It is not for me to determine whether our finances will be brighter next year and therefore it is for me to state that the fact that we have freed Standard II this year does not mean that we shall free Standard III next year, unless our finances improve. That is what I said, and if the finances improve, we are going to call on the Minister of Finance to provide more money for the Scheme.

Mr Speaker, I think I will leave the rest till the Budget Session.

**The Minister of Works (Mr P. O. Ururuka):** I want to reply to certain points raised by some hon. Members. In the first place I would like to speak on hon. Eronini's reference to my Ministry. He is of the opinion that the water Company which has been formed with the E.R.D.C. is not useful; in other words he feels that if we want to undertake any project like the Rural Water Supply, the best thing is to give it to outside contractors. I wish to say that that is not a good economy because he should rather praise the Government for forming such a Company. The money thus got from the contractor is divided between the Government and the Company, therefore, the profit goes to the Region's interest instead of going

to the contractors only. In this way I think it is wise for the Regional Government to form such a Company.

He also spoke about the Owerri-Port Harcourt road. I wish to tell him that the Regional Government is quite aware of the importance of that road and is doing everything possible to improve the road. Already we are widening the road from Port Harcourt. If he had gone to Port Harcourt recently he would see that work has started in widening the road from that end. We are also trying to reconstruct bridges and I agree with him that many trees need be cut. During the last Budget Session, this question was raised and in my answer I said how I made approach to the Federal Government to take over that road as a Trunk A road because of developments just going around Port Harcourt. We are still pressing this point with the Federal Government to take over this road. If they do not take it over, we will continue to develop it as we are doing now. The next point he raised was the question of straight roads from Enugu to Port Harcourt and another one between Owerri and Onitsha but he never suggested what constitutes a straight road. (*Opposition Members: That is your job*). I want to know whether he implies that the existing roads should be closed so that new ones without any bend should be built.

I want to thank hon. Idoko from Nsukka for congratulating my Ministry. He pointed out the destruction of valuable trees and crops by the E.C.N. during the time of their construction. It was gratifying, he observed, that it is not the responsibility of the Regional Government. Since he has asked the agency to contact the E.C.N. about that, my Ministry will look into that. He also pointed out the scarcity of water supply in Nsukka area. It is not only at Nsukka that the shortage of water supply is noticed. I can assure him that we are looking very seriously into this problem of water supply. We have the project about Rural Water Supply but this project does not reach all areas needing water supply at one and the same time. The next project will, we hope, reach other such areas.

Hon. Agba referred to the road from Abakaliki to Ogoja. If the hon. Member is anticipating what the Government will do I can assure him that the dry season is not yet over and the question is still under consideration.

**Mr Agba:** Point of correction.

**Mr Speaker:** Please sit down. You are making it difficult for the hon. Minister to make his speech.

**Mr Ururuka:** He should be grateful to the Government for considering this road.

**The Minister of Local Government (Mr P. O. Nwoga):** Mr Speaker, I rise to support the Supplementary Appropriation Bill and in doing so I would like to reply to the points raised by some hon. Members in connection with Local Government. Before getting into this I would like to clear one impression which has been created here by the Chief Whip of the Opposition. I would like to say that we, as Ministers, will always welcome criticisms but we deprecate any attempt to portray us to the people of this Region and to the outside world in colours that we do not possess. The hon. E. O. Eyo has said here that Ministers have helped themselves with £9,000 and Parliamentary Secretaries with £6,000. Anybody in the Gallery hearing that will carry away that impression. The question is: how many Ministers or Parliamentary Secretaries have gone to borrow the money which is loaned and which is repaid with very high interest? Not one. No Minister, Parliamentary Secretary, or Provincial Commissioner has taken a mite. (*Interruptions*).

**The Speaker:** Order! Order! The hon. Minister is making a very sound reply and I think that hon. Members should listen to him.

**Mr Nwoga:** Hon. Members of the Opposition do not want to listen. They want to carry away the impression that Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries carry away £9,000 or £6,000. Nobody has taken any mite. If we are borrowing, it is from the Building Society in Lagos; it is those who know that they can repay who will borrow. Not everybody likes to borrow money.

If I may now come to the points raised by some hon. Members during the course of the debate, hon. J. A. Agba, Member for Ogoja Division, did criticise the system whereby some District Councils lay off their workers during the year. Some District Councils do lay off some of their workers if they discover that their money is exhausted but these workers are asked to resume when the District Councils have money. Since Councils spend

what they can afford on road maintenance, I do not see how I can object to the course they have adopted. The hon. Member for Ikot Ekpene again gave the impression that his area is being discriminated against in the question of loans. His statements seem to suggest that the Minister of Local Government chooses between Councils to give loans and which not to give. What is the position? I remember last year I passed a circular to all District Councils telling them what the Government can give as loan and I even went to the extent of telling them what projects they can apply for loan and the manner in which their application should be made. The hon. Member admitted that his Council received £4,000. It depends upon how that £4,000 has been received. What I am driving at is to show that there is no discrimination whatsoever in the granting of loans to District Councils.

Hon. N. O. Onwudiwe, Member for Okigwi Division, criticised the system whereby representation made to the Ministry of Local Government has to be vetted by the Divisional Officer or the Local Government Commissioner and he said that he would like the District Councils to communicate direct with the Ministry of Local Government instead of wasting time going through the Local Government Commissioner. I do not share the same views with the hon. Member. Local Government Commissioners are my local representatives and they have to advise me on the desirability, or otherwise of the requests made by Councils. For this reason, I have always thought it advisable that Councils making requests for interview should inform Local Government Commissioners of the nature of their difficulty.

With these few remarks, I support the Bill.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time and under Standing Order 77 (4) stood committed to the Committee of Supply.*

Committee: Tomorrow.

**(2) The Incorporation (Ministry of Finance) Bill**

*Order for Second Reading read.*

**The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke):** I beg to move: That the Bill be now read a Second time.

The purpose of this Bill is to get over certain difficulties that have been experienced in exercising Government's rights as a shareholder in public companies. The Articles of Association of most Companies permit shares to be held by individual or by Corporations, but a Government is neither an individual nor a Corporation and so cannot execute the common forms of deed by which stocks and shares are held or transferred.

The simple remedy is to constitute the Ministry of Finance a Corporation Sole and to provide it with a seal so that stocks and shares owned by Government may be registered in the name of the Ministry of Finance, Eastern Region of Nigeria and transfer deeds may be embossed with the common seal bearing the same title.

In addition to regularising our shareholdings, the use of the powers created under this Bill will greatly simplify the procedures respecting Government contracts and mortgages in connection with the African Staff Housing Scheme. More than this, all transactions that require the signification of a decision of Government especially those touching its financial relations with the public, will be facilitated and accelerated by the powers to be conveyed to the Ministry of Finance by this Bill.

Hon. Members will have heard over the wireless in the last day or two an announcement made by the N.B.C. Part of their bulletin reads as follows:

"A Bill for a law to constitute the Eastern Region Ministry of Finance into a Corporation has been published."

This announcement has unfortunately given a very false impression to members of the public of the purport of this Bill. As a matter of fact, many people understand it to mean that the Eastern Regional Ministry of Finance is being converted into a public corporation as an addition to existing corporations like the E.R.D.C. and Printing Corporation. Worse still there are some who have chosen to give it a vicious interpretation, namely, that the Ministry of Finance is being turned into a corporation because the Government is running out of funds and therefore, I, as the Minister of Finance, do not wish to be questioned in this House on matters concerning Regional finances since Corporation matters are not subject to detailed examination

in this House. I must make it abundantly clear that the N.B.C. bulletin has terribly distorted the Bill. It has omitted to say that the Eastern Region Ministry of Finance is being constituted into a corporation sole, which is merely a nominal arrangement to enable Government transact business with other companies and individuals. I must ask all hon. Members to erase the false impression from their minds and to help educate the public on the right lines to the effect that the Eastern Region Ministry of Finance is not being converted into a public Corporation.

The objects and reasons of this Bill are clearly stated in the Bill.

A similar legislation was enacted in the House of Representatives in March last year in respect of the Federal Ministry of Finance.

The Bill is straightforward and should receive the warm support of this House.

**The Minister of Education (Mr G. E. Okeke):** I beg to second.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time and committed to a Committee of the Whole House.*

*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

*Clauses 1 to 7 agreed to.*

*Clause 8.*

**The Minister of Justice and Attorney-General (Mr M. O. Ajegbo):** I beg to move to leave out the word "ensuring" in the 7th line of sub-clause 2 of clause 8 and substitute "enuring", and to leave out the word "ensure" in the 10th line and substitute "enure" therefor.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 8 as amended agreed to.*

*Clause 9.*

**The Minister of Justice and Attorney-General:** I beg to move to leave out the word "any" in line 4 of clause 9 and insert therefor the word "and".

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*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 9 as amended agreed to.*

*Bill to be reported.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported with Amendments: as amended  
read the Third time and passed.*

**ADJOURNMENT**

Resolved: That this House do now adjourn. (*The Minister of Finance, Dr S. E. Imoke*).

*Adjourned accordingly at ten minutes to two o'clock p.m.*

**WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**

*Wednesday, 17th February, 1960*

**Registrar of Orumba Customary Court**

109. **Mr M. C. Awgu** asked the Minister of Justice and Attorney-General, whether he is aware that the Registrar of Orumba Customary Court participates in trial of cases by asking questions on cases under trial and taking side in the giving of verdicts; if so, will the Minister take steps to put a stop to this undesirable practice; if not, will he cause investigations to be made.

**The Minister of Justice and Attorney-General:** I am not aware that the Registrar of Orumba Customary Court takes part in the trial of cases in the manner described by the hon. Member. The matter is being investigated and if the facts alleged by the hon.

Member are correct, effective steps will be taken to put a stop to what I agree is an undesirable practice.

**Customary Courts**

178. **Mr M. C. Awgu** asked the Minister of Justice and Attorney-General, is it a fact that litigants in the Customary Courts are not allowed to settle their cases out of court; if so, when was this policy introduced.

**The Minister of Justice and Attorney-General:** It is not a fact that litigants in the Customary Courts are not allowed to settle their cases out of court. The fact is that litigants are even encouraged to do so provided that those who settle the disputes for them do not constitute themselves into illegal courts.

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71 [Report from a Special Committee; 18 FEBRUARY 1960 [Bill presented; 1959-60 Supplement- 72  
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EASTERN HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 18th February, 1960

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

PRAYERS

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

REPORT FROM A SPECIAL  
COMMITTEE

The Chairman, Public Accounts Committee (Mr M. U. Etuk): I beg to lay on the Table of this hon. House a "Report of the Public Accounts Committee No. 2 of 1959" agreed upon by the Committee.

Ordered: That the Report do lie upon the Table and to be printed.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Town Planning Authority for Owerri  
Urban Area

168. Mr E. U. Eronini asked the Minister of Town Planning, if he will consider establishing a Town Planning Authority for Owerri Urban area and making financial provision for services in the area.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Town Planning (Mr D. O. Aligwekwe): I am directed to answer as follows: A Town Planning Authority for Owerri was established on 2nd December, 1959. The notice of appointment of members of the Authority was published in the *Eastern Region Gazette* as E.R.L.N. No. 385 of 1959.

The sum of £400 was paid as subvention to the Authority for 1959-60.

Customary Courts in Ogoja Province

176. Mr J. W. E. Anaba asked the Minister of Justice and Attorney-General, what has been the cause for not establishing Customary Courts in Ogoja Province whereas they have been established in some parts of the Region.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Justice (Mr L. O. Uzoigwe): I am directed to answer as follows: Detailed preliminary arrangements had to be made

before Customary Courts are established. These arrangements which are almost completed were responsible for delay in establishing Customary Courts not only in Ogoja Province but in other Provinces as well, and it is hoped that in a short time, Customary Courts will be established in all parts of the Region.

Chief Morphy: How long will it take to establish these Customary Courts?

Mr Uzoigwe: As soon as practicable.

BILL PRESENTED

Excess Votes

Bill to provide authority for expenditure in excess of the amounts appropriated and authorised for the services of the Eastern Region ending on the thirty-first day of March, one thousand nine hundred and sixty; presented by the Minister of Finance, Dr S. E. Imoke, read the First time, to be read a Second time Tomorrow.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(1) The 1959-60 Eastern Region Supplementary Appropriation Bill

Considered in Committee of Supply.

(FIRST ALLOTTED DAY)

(In the Committee)

Clauses 1-6 postponed.

FIRST SCHEDULE

HEAD 421.—PREMIER'S OFFICE

£20,940 for Head 421—Premier's Office—*agreed to.*

HEAD 422.—AUDIT

£1,860 for Head 422—Audit—*agreed to.*

HEAD 423.—ELECTORAL COMMISSION

Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £42,660 for Head 423—Electoral Commission—stand part of the Schedule.



**Mr S. G. Ikoku** (Enyong Division): You would notice while reading the Memorandum, that at page E 104 paragraph 6, we are told that the additional provision of £42,000 under Sub-head 5 is required partly, I emphasise, partly, to meet expenditure in respect of the newly created House of Chiefs. I wonder whether the so-called election of Chiefs to the Eastern House of Chiefs did really cost £42,000. In any case, the Minister of Finance has tried to cover himself by using the word "partly" and I would like to know what the other part was to cover this £42,000.

**Mr M. N. Onwuma** (Aba Division): He has just made one point which I consider very important because at this time the Delimitation Commission is going round the Region. Quite frankly, one is disappointed at the pace at which they are moving because they come at one time today and before two hours they have left the place and arrangements are rushed. This does not allow those who want to make real representations to the Delimitation Commission to do so.

Secondly, it would appear that the Electoral Commission is inclined to pay more respect to personalities instead of carving out constituencies which would be convenient for the people. Perhaps when the report is published we will have some occasion to make remarks on this issue.

**The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke):** I just want to give an explanation to the Leader of Opposition on the question raised about £42,000. This £42,000 was advanced from the Contingencies Fund at a time that we expected to hold elections to the House of Chiefs. As things turned out later, it was not necessary to hold these elections and only part of this amount—£3,000, I am advised, has been spent out of it but it is necessary to refund this £42,000 back into the Contingencies Fund. That is why we are asking for this vote in the Supplementary Appropriation Bill.

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### HEAD 424.—JUDICIAL

£7,600 for Head 424—Judicial, *agreed to.*

#### HEAD 425.—LEGISLATURE

£460 for Head 425—Legislature, *agreed to.*

#### HEAD 426.—PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £270 for Head 426—Public Service Commission, stand part of the Schedule.*

**Mr Ikoku:** I would like to raise just two points. I would like to take this opportunity to convey our appreciation and thanks to the new Chairman of the Public Service Commission and to thank him for the rather good work he did as Commissioner in the United Kingdom. I would like to draw attention to the statement he made at Owerri that he would see to it that the Public Service Commission was impartial in the discharge of its duties. We are very happy indeed for that statement and we hope that that would be vigorously pursued, because many people would agree that there is a feeling in the Region that certain areas are not getting their fair share in the Public Service of the Region. I won't like to make much fuss about this but when we come back I would produce evidence, documentary evidence, to this House to show that there is that feeling and there are even those who seem to pedal the view for their own political ends. I would like to say that we would be very happy indeed if the new Chairman of the Public Service Commission sticks to the public statement he has made; that is, that the Public Service Commission would be 100 per cent impartial in the discharge of its duties.

**The Minister of Justice and Attorney-General (Mr M. O. Ajegbo):** I am rather surprised that the Leader of Opposition has taken this opportunity to make a veiled attack on the present set-up of our Public Service Commission. The Public Service Commission, as we are aware, is the responsibility of the Premier and, unfortunately, he is not here this morning. One should have thought that my hon. Friend, the Leader of the Opposition, would have done this during the next Budget Session when he could make whatever attack he likes. Whatever feelings there are, I think that the Public Service Commission is above suspicion and some of us are not happy that there are people who use the floor of the House to attack them.

*Question put and agreed to.*

**HEAD 427.—MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE**

£21,690 for Head 427—Ministry of Agriculture—*agreed to.*

**HEAD 428.—MINISTRY OF COMMERCE**

£79,510 for Head 428—Ministry of Commerce—*agreed to.*

**HEAD 429.—MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**

£228,780 for Head 429—Ministry of Education—*agreed to.*

**HEAD 430.—MINISTRY OF FINANCE**

*Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £61,220 for Head 430—Ministry of Finance—stand part of the Schedule.*

**Mr S. G. Ikoku** (Enyong Division): What I intend to raise here is a small point, but I think it is quite important to those concerned. In the Internal Revenue Division of the Ministry of Finance, the staff are being called upon to work two extra hours everyday. A circular has just been issued to that effect. That means instead of 34-hour week they are going to do 46-hour week. I am further informed that this is not being regarded as overtime work—i.e., they are not going to be paid overtime for it. If the Civil Servant is being called upon to do any extra work to help the Region it should be general. This type of business smells very much of sweated labour, and I would like to know why this special arrangement is being made for a section of the Internal Revenue Division of the Ministry of Finance. What I would like the hon. Minister to do is to make it clear that the official working hours are 8 o'clock to 2 o'clock, and if workers are required after two o'clock they should be paid overtime. But instead, what they are trying to do in the Internal Revenue Division is to make workers do extra hours not on overtime. We would like to have an explanation for that.

**The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke):** I would like to answer the question raised by the Leader of the Opposition. I want to say that this circular mentioned has never come

to my notice and whether it exists or not, I do not know; but I shall find out. However, I think it is improper for the Leader of the Opposition to attack an internal arrangement made in the Department. Where there are arrears of work, particularly in the collection of taxes, it is quite necessary occasionally, to ask people to do a little bit of overtime. (*Opposition Bench: Pay them for it.*)

*Question put and agreed to.*

**HEAD 431.—PENSIONS AND GRATUITIES**

£10,000 for Head 431—Pensions and Gratuities—*agreed to.*

**HEAD 433.—MINISTRY OF HEALTH**

£117,340 for Head 433—Ministry of Health—*agreed to.*

**HEAD 434.—MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS**

*Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £26,260 for Head 434—Ministry of Internal Affairs—stand part of the Schedule.*

**Mr Ikoku:** You will notice that at Sub-head 55, there is the item "Grant to the Sahara Protest Team". I think this hon. House has already made its attitude clear on this Sahara business—this atomic bomb. I do not know what to call it, because it is not quite a bomb—it is an atomic device! We want to know what this grant is all about and to whom it was made and for what purpose. We did not set up any Protest Team in this House, and I do not know if the Government has set up any. But somehow public money is being used to support this Protest Team. What is it all about?

**Mr S. N. Alo** (Abakaliki Division): My people have petitioned to the Ministry of Internal Affairs about the evil done to our farm-land by the Prisons Department by cutting all the trees on our farm-land. We wish the Minister to help us by taking up the matter with the Federal Government and ask the Prisons Department to cease to cut fire-wood on our land because that will render our farm-land useless. Now that the price of coal has

become modest, I think it is wise for the Prisons Department to use coal instead of fire-wood.

**The Minister of State (Information and Welfare) (Mr B. C. Okwu):** The Leader of the Opposition wants to know why a modest sum of £300 has been provided to help the work of the Sahara Protest Team. I would like to explain, for his benefit, that the attitude of this Government to the French Atom Bomb Project in the Sahara has been already clearly stated. This money is provided here as a token grant to help this international body which is at the moment operating in Ghana to help stir up international public opinion against the inhuman device known as the atomic bomb.

The money provided in the Estimates is in our view sufficient. It is merely a token grant; not a penny of this amount has been spent but it is the view of the Government that when this International Team extends its activities to this country and if a request is made to the East Regional Government, it would help this Organisation from this provision. I would also like to explain that if this House were in control of the Federal Government, the Government of France would have realised in a more positive manner how much we detest the recent experiment carried out in the Sahara. I hope my hon. Friend is satisfied with the explanation I have given about the provision of this amount in the Estimates.

**Mr Ikoku:** I would like to thank the Minister of State responsible for Information for his explanation of this token grant to the Sahara Protest Team. The significance of this is that we have been bold enough to take a step which borders on Nigeria's Foreign Policy, and I am not here to question the validity of this grant; I support it 100 per cent. I am only making it clear that we will be called upon in the near future to take equally bold steps in other aspects in order to fight what the Minister has called "inhuman device", because I do not see any device more inhuman than colonialism. So while the Government is prepared to finance the protest against the Atom Bomb which the Minister called an inhuman device, it should be prepared to finance protest or action against colonialism. I am hoping that when the time comes for that, the Government will not seek refuge under

the Constitution. I hope that the hon. the Attorney-General will not be the first man to draw the attention of this House to the limitations of the Nigerian Constitution when the time comes for voting more money. The hon. Minister of State said £300; that is a small money, token money; yes, but sooner or later the Government will be called upon to vote a little bit more money for something more positive than mere protest and I hope the Attorney-General will not, on that occasion, seek refuge under the Nigerian Constitution.

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### HEAD 435.—MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

£2,270 for Head 435—Ministry of Justice—*agreed to.*

#### HEAD 436.—MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

£13,080 for Head 436—Ministry of Local Government—*agreed to.*

#### HEAD 437.—GRANTS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT BODIES

£97,000 for Head 437—Grants to Local Government Bodies—*agreed to.*

#### HEAD 438.—MINISTRY OF TOWN PLANNING

£19,350 for Head 438—Ministry of Town Planning—*agreed to.*

#### HEAD 439.—MINISTRY OF WORKS

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £75,070 for Head 439—Ministry of Works—stand part of the Schedule.*

**Mr J. O. Ihekwoaba (Orlu Division):** I only want to know from the Minister of Works what is holding up the work on Orlu-Amaraka road and two other roads in Orlu Division which were approved in the current Estimates. I do believe that the amount voted for these roads is about to lapse but no work has been done. We only notice some sign-boards being placed on these roads by the Ministry of Works. The people of this area feel that they are merely

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being deceived; so we want to know from the Minister when this work will begin and what is holding it up.

Another point is the tarring of the Awka-Orlu-Owerri road. Although I can see now that it is nearly completed, I believe there is not sufficient fund for the people to complete that road.

**Chief I. I. Morphy** (Ogoja Division): Hon. Agba has spoken about the Ogoja road and I want to emphasise the importance of that road. It is the road that brings food to everybody in this House and, in fact, to everybody in the Region; so that road should be given priority. It should not be treated in the way the Regional Government is doing. Every year, when we come here, they say they are considering the road. It is now time for them to get that road tarred. Now that we are in a new regime, I hope that they will try to get the road tarred.

**Mr V. A. Nwankwo** (Abakaliki Division): I want to make it known to the Minister of Works that each time there is an election going on his Ministry will have to make certain announcements and say that Affiong road will soon be reconstructed and that some thousands and thousands of pounds have been voted for the reconstruction of the road. But immediately after the election, that dies away. The road is an important one and we hope that the Government will do something this year to get the road reconstructed and tarred. We are appealing to the Government because this is the road that has a very big market to which lorry owners and traders from Port Harcourt, Onitsha, Aba, Calabar and some other parts of the Region go to buy yams, rice and every other thing. So we would like this road to be actually reconstructed and well made so that it will provide a very big trading centre for the Region.

**Mr S. O. Achara** (Okigwi Division): A month or two before the Federal election, the N.C.N.C. Campaign Team led by the former Premier made a categorical promise to the Isuochi people that work would soon start on the Rural Water Supply project in Isuochi. The various towns concerned had contributed their share of one-eighth of the cost of the

Scheme and deposited with the Government Treasury. The gentleman who was to operate the machine had received his training here and returned only to be told that work was not going to start and that he should go on transfer to Umuahia. I want the Minister of Works to say precisely and quite frankly and honestly, in this House, when he proposes to start work on this Rural Water Supply in Isuochi.

The next point is this: In 1955, the sum of £45,000 was earmarked for the tarring of the road Ihubi-Mballa. The present Minister of Health, when he was Minister of Transport, toured the Division and told the people, in a very massive reception, that work on that road would soon start. That was in 1956. After that in 1957, I raised the question here and the then Minister of Works further promised that work on that road would soon start. Since that time, it has been the question of "work will soon start; work will soon start". No work has started. What one finds is that as you go through the roads in the Eastern Region, instead of Government starting work on roads, all you see are big Ministry of Works signboards everywhere. I am not going to question why these signboards should be erected along all our major roads when no work is actually being done. I will leave it to the Government's sense of what is right and what is wrong to determine whether it is an attribute of good government to erect these signboards to raise the hopes of the people only to forget the work after the objects for which the signboards were erected had been achieved, e.g., the December 1959 Federal Elections.

Also the Government made a statement confirming previous promises on the tarring of the Okigwi-Isiukuwato-Ahaba road. In this connection, the usual signboard—which indicates action—is not there. (*Interruptions by Members of the Government—The signboard must have been removed by the Elephant. Let the Elephant go first of all*). I want to appeal very strongly—if only the whole hog of Parliamentary Secretaries and Provincial Commissioners would keep quiet and listen to me—to the Ministry of Works to think twice before making promises. It is not good to raise people's hopes and later on let them down. During the old Colonial Government, whenever a District Officer, Resident or Provincial Engineer in those days made a promise—and of

course it took time before they made one, but whenever they made one, they were always certain that the promise would be fulfilled. I have no doubt, however, that with the desired change which has come in God's own time—that promises made as from now, will be fulfilled in future. I want to appeal to the Government to make adequate provision for the implementation of the promises made. These promises were made last year and it is binding on this Government to implement them. This is what I want to say.

**Mr J. O. Okeh** (Ahoada Division): What I want to say is about Abua-Ahoada-Omoku road. The news of the Government taking over this road was received with much joy by the people of the area, but since then the only thing done was the taking over of labourers, etc., from the Local Government Council. But these labourers have not been able to do anything and the road is getting worse than it was when the Local Councils managed it. This is because of lack of supervision. The people are beginning to wonder whether the Government really meant what they said or whether it was a propaganda intended for the Federal Election. I therefore appeal to Government that arrangements should be made to take the work in hand as soon as possible.

Another point I want to make is that I would like the Minister of Works to make a statement on the view commonly held that a portion of the Port Harcourt-Owerri road has been abandoned in favour of a deviation and that that is the reason why all the oil bean trees have been left to stand there. Now the trees are still there and continue to grow and the opinion is held over there that the Government has abandoned that road for a shorter route. Therefore, I would like the Minister of Works to state whether this is correct or not.

**Mr S. T. Akpan** (Eket Division): I just want to bring up the case of Oron-Eket road. That road is one of the oldest roads in this Region and from time to time we have tried to get the Government to redeem its promise of tarring it. For six years now it has always been inserted in the Estimates and that is just all; nothing has been done. I wish to remind the Government that we are coming to the end of the financial year and there is every likelihood

that what we are going to see again is a reinsertion next year of the provision for the tarring of that road, and it will continue like that *ad infinitum*. I wish to bring to the notice of the Minister that since the provision for this present financial year has been made, nothing has yet been done and I will appeal to him to see that that road is tarred within this financial year.

There is another point which I want to make and it is that one of the bridges we have at Uya Oron along the road is becoming a death trap now and if work on that road is not begun immediately, I think that very shortly the Government will be experiencing heavy losses of life. The bridge is almost collapsing and unless work is started in time, the road will be impassable. I hope the Minister will remember that the people in Eket Division are law-abiding. They have been paying their taxes as every other group of people in this Region and they are therefore entitled to the amenities that should go to them. They should not be denied their right. We know what to do as politicians. It is no good tarring only the roads in some parts of the Region. In the whole of the old Calabar Province we have only two roads tarred. Our demand is for our right to be given to us. (*An hon. Member: Have you paid your tax?*) Yes, I have paid my tax. If your Government was reasonable they should know that we are entitled to our rights, but if they take other political aspects into consideration, it must be remembered that Government without the consent of the people is a sure definition of slavery. We are not slaves but taxpayers in this Region.

I therefore call upon the Minister of Works to see that the Oron-Eket road is tarred within this financial year.

**Mr N. Nweze** (Abakaliki Division): I rise to say something in connection with what an hon. Member from Bende said yesterday about Abakaliki-Ogoja road. He gave us the impression that nothing is being done on the Abakaliki-Ogoja road. To my own understanding, and according to what I have seen, we know that this road has been given to a contractor for tarring. What we are begging of the Minister of Works is to persuade this contractor by all means to get on with his work. It has taken a long time since this work

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was given out but the contractor is not working as quickly as he can. (*An hon. Member: Who is the contractor?*)

Now, I am going to add something to what has been said about development of roads in Abakaliki Division. Everybody in this Region knows that Abakaliki is one of the important places in this Region as far as food crops are concerned. Because of that, we have so many important markets in Abakaliki Division. Apart from other markets which have been mentioned here, we have also the Iboko market. We have also the Isi-Uzo market and these markets are important and should be connected by good roads. I am stressing that the Ezza market is very important. I am now going to say something about the promise which the hon. Member said was given during the election campaign. I was then a zonal leader of the Division and I must stress that I never made any such promise at all. The promise was given before the election that that road would be tarred and as long as the people had known that the road would be tarred, there was no need for me to make a second promise. What we are begging the Minister of Works to do is to see that the promise which has been given to the people about this road is fulfilled. Not only that the road is very useful for carrying foodstuffs all over the place but we have a very important forest reserve in the area.

I appeal not only to the Minister of Works but also to the Government to see that the market is improved. Many people from various towns in the Eastern Region come to the market and it is a pity that after trading, at the end of the day they have no stores to keep their goods. I would also appeal to the Minister of Works to see that the road leading to this market is tarred. I remember that when the former Minister of Works, the late Mbonu Ojike, visited the market he promised that the road would be tarred; but it is a pity that up till now nothing has been done on the road. I am therefore requesting the Minister of Works to see that this promise is fulfilled.

**Mr K. J. N. Okpokam** (Ikom Division): I wish to call the attention of the Minister of Works to a piece of information I received recently. The information is from a very reliable source. The Federal Ministry of

Works, I understand, is calling on the Head of the P.W.D. in Ogoja Province to return the heavy machinery loaned to that department for road construction. It is stated that this machinery will be sent over to the Cameroons on hire basis. I cannot understand why road construction in the Cameroons should be more important than road construction in the Eastern Region, and for that matter in Ogoja Province. I view this very seriously and I beg to ask the Minister of Works to take the matter up and see that the Federal Ministry of Works does not remove this machinery.

**Mr U. Enyi** (Afikpo Division): I have just one point to make, and that is, that I would like to know the cause of the suspension of work on the Agbani-Afikpo road. The work of resurfacing four miles of this road was given on contract to the "WE WE" Company. This Company did very little work on the road and has now finally abandoned the whole work. I am asking the Minister of Works to make a statement about this road.

**Mr A. J. Ekpe** (Opobo Division): I would like to remind the Premier that when the former Premier went to Opobo on the eve of the last Federal elections he promised to look into a certain land dispute and also to institute an inquiry into the Four Groups District Council because one N.C.N.C. man complained that he was over-assessed by the Tax Authority of the District Council. The latter promise has since been carried out but the former has still not been attended to. I am also appealing to the Minister of Works to look into what I raised yesterday about water supply for Opobo people. I hope that the Premier will, in consultation with his Cabinet colleagues, take steps to see that the other promises are carried out.

**Mr M. U. Etuk** (Uyo Division): One hon. Member made a remark a few minutes ago that we are not appreciative. I want to make it abundantly clear that we are appreciative. For instance, two years ago, the Government of the Eastern Region was kind enough to help my people to build the Doctor Creek Bailey Bridge, connecting Western Nsit and Iman District Councils and my people are very grateful. When the Local Government Commissioner visited the District Councils in my area my people made representations to him that unless the approaches

to this bridge were tarred the good work done would be rendered useless as erosion would set in. He promised to help us in this work but that was during the election campaign. Up till now, nothing has been done. I am appealing to the Minister of Works to do something now. I believe that the Government is for everybody, because some hon. Members are under the erroneous impression that a man has to support the Government Party in order to qualify for amenity. After all, we all pay tax and rates irrespective of our party affiliations.

I do not know what else we will do. These promises were made and in fact, estimates were made and we were told the money for the work had been voted and the roads would be tarred but, again and again, nothing happened. I appeal to the Minister of Works to see that now that money is available he should see that these roads are tarred—it is not more than £700—otherwise, all the good works done will be in vain.

**The Minister of Works (Mr P. O. Ururuka):** I think it is important to note how interested all the Members are in this Ministry, which is perhaps a very big and key Ministry. I have listened very carefully to all the points raised by hon. Members. It is their desire that all the projects on the matter of roads as well as water supply should be started but then I wish to point out to them that the Development Programme is supposed to start from 1958 to 1962. Now we are not in 1962 as yet, but I hope that before the end of this period much work will be accomplished. Before embarking on these schemes we have a lot of preparatory work to perform as survey, preparation of contract documents and a number of Engineers to be taken into consideration. Sometimes survey alone takes about six to seven months and where the road is a bad one, it may take about a year as so many details have to be found in order that the work might be executed economically. Otherwise, the work that might cost or may cost £4,000 a mile may even cost £12,000 a mile. Certainly, nobody will like Government to do things in that way. We must try to make an accurate estimate before starting.

**Mr M. N. Onwuma (Aba Division):** Point of order—Standing Order 8 (3):

“The Mace shall lie upon the Table during all sittings of the House save when the

House is in Committee when the Mace shall be removed from the Table.”

**Mr Speaker:** Yes, you are in order, although we shall soon get our Mace, this being for the meantime a representation of it.

**The Minister of Works:** I also wish to say that nobody has said that any project in this particular area has been taken away. All projects—roads and water supply—are still in the Development Programme and it is a question of when we are to start either on this or that. I wish to remind hon. Members that the Ministry of Works has not an unlimited number of staff to do all these things at once. Although some of these works are done by contractors, all of them actually take some time before completion. If one looks round the whole Region, it will be seen that in certain areas work has already been started in the Rural Water Scheme. This shows that there is nothing like deceit or mere propaganda or just to get the votes of the people. Many pipes have been laid, holes have been dug and in some places reservoirs have been constructed or are being constructed. This shows that the Government really means what it has intended.

**Mr Ikoku:** Why have signboards gone up where there is no work?

**Mr Ururuka:** In all the areas where we have work to do we put signboards and the intention is that the work must be started sometime or the other. What I said in general may apply in particular to individuals in their requests about their roads and water supplies.

I wish to point out to hon. Akpan who has said that we have only one or two roads in the old Calabar Province that we are doing very much for Calabar Province. For instance, if one goes to Abak—under the then old Calabar Province—one will see that at Ikot Ikoro the bridge there is costing about £42,000. There is a road we are tarring from Ikot Ekpene to Itu and if one goes there one will see that it is a difficult road. So also with the road from Umuahia to Ikot Ekpene.

We are also undertaking one of the most important roads in the Region—from Calabar

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to Arochuku. If one goes there one will see and appreciate the enormous work which has been done and also the money Government has spent for that. On the other hand, in the old Calabar Province and in Calabar, you have a road leading from Opobo Town to Oron—Aba road. All these are roads under Calabar Province. If you do not take notice of all these, then in my view you are being unfair to the Government.

I feel it is not absolutely necessary for me to go into details though I have an answer to all and the same questions raised by hon. Members. I beg to stop so far.

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Chairman:** Order! Order! Although I tried to evade the issue at the moment, yet I think it is my duty to thank the hon. Member for calling my attention to section 8 (3) of the Standing Orders. I apologise for that and I think it is a serious dereliction of duty on the part of the Serjeant-at-Arms.

£825,360 for First Schedule agreed to.

## SECOND SCHEDULE

### HEAD 801.—BUILDINGS

£820 for Head 801—Buildings—agreed to.

### HEAD 802.—ROAD AND BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION

£4,440 for Head 802—Road and Bridge Construction—agreed to.

### HEAD 803.—URBAN WATER SUPPLIES

£49,420 for Head 803—Urban Water Supplies—agreed to.

### HEAD 804.—INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

£500 for Head 804—Industrial and Commercial Development—agreed to.

### HEAD 805.—DEVELOPMENT GENERAL

£10 for Head 805—Development General—agreed to.

### HEAD 806.—COLONIAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELFARE SCHEMES

£5,570 for Head 806—Colonial Development and Welfare Schemes—agreed to.

### HEAD 808.—LOANS

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £16,000 for Head 808—Loans—stand part of the Schedule.*

**Mr Ikoku:** Mr Chairman, I am just searching for information and I think this hon. House would be grateful if given this information. What is this Water Development Company? I would like to know a bit more about this Company. I have seen their signboards in one or two places and I would like to know if this is not one of our Corporations. Somebody was suggesting that it is one of the "WE WE" Companies. I hope not, for I have seen their equipment and I think hon. Members will be better briefed, for they would like to know more about this Company. Who are those running it: the shareholders, etc.?

The second point I would like to raise is this loan of £20,000 to the Cinema Corporation. Frankly, I had thought that this Cinema Corporation would be wound up. I do not know that the thing is still functioning and, in fact, I am happy it is functioning because I have one or two friends there. But I would like to know what their programmes are, where they are heading to with this £20,000. I hope that the £27,000 being given to the E.R.D.C. for the Tourist Corporation will really go to improve the quality of accommodation offered by the Rest House. I would like to ask the Minister concerned whether he really thinks that this is a good proposition; if a good proposition, from whose point of view is it good, because a chalet these days because of an air conditioning plant in it is given out at £3 a night. I would like to know whether these things are really in order. It seems to me that the Tourist Corporation or the E.R.D.C. is thinking so much of the expatriate coming into this country. But there are many of us who use these Rest Houses, who are not expatriates and certainly cannot afford to pay £3 a night merely for sleeping accommodation.

If it were a private enterprise we would have had no right whatsoever to query, but we would like to know what is happening because



there is the danger that business men and professionals in this Region are being pushed out of the Rest Houses politely. If they say Nigerians are not wanted in the Rest House, then there will be an uproar in the country. But how many of us in this Region can really afford to pay £3 a night for accommodation in the Rest House?

**The Minister of Commerce (Mr J. U. Nwodo):** The question of the charges in chalets in Catering Rest Houses is purely a matter for the Tourist Corporation. As is well known, Members who have travelled in other parts of the country will realise that in the Northern Region where the Catering Rest Houses are not run as commercial venture, the charges there are even more than what the Tourist Corporation here is charging. In the Northern Region, you have not only got to pay for your accommodation, but also you have got to pay certain percentage of the charges in respect of gratuities and pensions for the staff of that particular department. That is exactly what happens in the North and everything there amounts to the neighbourhood of sixty shillings.

In Lagos, if one stays in the Mainland Hotel or some other hotel the fees payable are fantastic—nearly five guineas. (*Interruption: Not Mainland Hotel; that is private. What of Legco. Flat?*) In the Western Region the charges are almost the same. What I am driving at is that in comparison, the Tourist Corporation has been fair enough. Here there is accommodation for V.I.P.s and there is also accommodation for those who cannot afford to pay V.I.P. rates. If any member feels that he cannot pay the V.I.P. rates, there is also accommodation for which he can afford to pay. At the same time, it will be interesting to inform the House that the Premier has just announced that Members of the House who obtain accommodation in the Catering Rest House or hotels in the town will have some reimbursements from the Government, so that Members do not have to pay all the charges from their pockets. They are reimbursed nearly 50 per cent of whatever they pay in the rest house and I think hon. Members should be happy about that. Since the Premier has taken this generous move Members should be up and doing in paying their own share.

The other point raised by the Leader of the Opposition is about the Cinema Corporation.

I gave intimation to the House some time during the Budget Session last year that the Cinema Corporation was going into partnership with an Indian firm to run a cinema company. That company has now been established and registered and Government is making available a loan of £20,000 to this new company. That is exactly what it is.

As for the Water Resources Corporation, an Israeli Company is also in partnership with the E.R.D.C. for the purpose of developing rural water supply and this company has come to stay. They are already engaged in works in the various parts of the Region and all the Members who have had opportunities to visit them will know really that they are experts in the field of this rural water supply.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*£76,760 for Second Schedule agreed to.*

#### Postponed Clauses

*Clauses 1-6 agreed to.*

*Question: That the Preamble be the Preamble to the Bill—put and agreed to.*

*Bill to be reported.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported without Amendment. And pursuant to Standing Order 77 (19) the Minister of Finance moved: That the Bill be now read the Third time—and the Speaker put the Question thereupon to the House without amendment or debate.*

*Question agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read the Third time and passed.*

#### (2) Eastern Nigeria Broadcasting Bill

*Order for Second Reading read.*

**The Minister of State (Information and Welfare) (Mr B. C. Okwu):** I beg to move that the Bill be now read a Second time.

With your permission, Mr Speaker, I would like to trace briefly the history of the two projects which this Bill seeks to launch. As far back as 1957, while the former Premier, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe was in London attending the Constitutional Conference, he held discussions with representatives of some firms

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with a view to interesting them in the establishment of commercial radio relay and broadcasting stations in the Eastern Region. As a result of these discussions, various proposals were put forward for consideration by the Government.

In due course, general agreement was reached with a group of London Promoters whereby a company to be jointly and equally owned and financed by the Eastern Regional Government and the British subscribers would be formed to provide sound broadcasting and radio relay services in the Eastern Region. Heads of Agreement were initialled on 3rd July, 1959, by hon. G. E. Okeke, the Minister of Education and myself, on behalf of the Eastern Nigeria Government and two United Kingdom representatives on behalf of the London Promoters.

Hon. Members will remember that during the Queen's visit in February, 1956, Her Majesty's reception in the Eastern House of Assembly was televised to enable the teeming crowd in the precincts of the House, which could not gain admission into the House, to view the Royal engagement in the House from without. Hon. Members will also remember that during the Budget Session of the Eastern House of Assembly in 1957, the former Premier, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, informed the House that Government was making preliminary investigations abroad for the purpose of establishing a television service in the Eastern Region. Just as in the case of commercial radio relay services, various proposals were put forward by both British and American firms, for the consideration of this Government. The Government finally accepted a proposal put forward by a privately-owned American Television Company, K.V.O.S. (Canada) Limited to establish commercial television service in the Eastern Region.

In July 1959, I concluded on behalf of this Government, a preliminary agreement with K.V.O.S. (Canada) Limited to jointly own and finance a company to set up a television service in the country.

As far as the Region is concerned commercial radio relay services are intended to give adequate coverage to the whole Region. Eastern Region is ideally suited for commercial radio relay service since it has the highest

population density per square mile in West Africa and an exceedingly high coverage would be obtained by a relatively small plant, which is so attractive to the advertiser who buys "air-time" through its facilities. It will further be appreciated that the value of instructive and cultural programmes available to all cannot be too highly stressed, and these could be made possible by revenue obtained from advertising. It is proposed to establish the stations progressively, beginning with commercial relay and broadcasting stations in Enugu, Port Harcourt, Onitsha and Calabar and to extend gradually by means of V.H.F. carrier systems to link these centres to other towns such as Nsukka, Awka, Orlu, Owerri, Aba, Uyo, Abakaliki, Umuahia, Ikot Ekpene and Afikpo.

On the other hand, the proposed television network will progress in stages beginning with Enugu, Port Harcourt, Onitsha, Aba and Calabar. It must, however, be borne in mind that unlike Radio Relay, television services cannot be extended to those towns which apparently have no supply of electricity. But since sets operated by battery will not be available at least for many years to come, the Government is redoubling its efforts with the Electricity Corporation to instal electricity in areas earmarked under the Development Scheme so as to make possible a wider distribution of television services.

Perhaps some Members may be wondering why, considering our limited financial resources, we should embark on our own radio relay and broadcasting systems and television services in the Region when the Federal Government is already providing radio broadcasting and plans to provide television in the Region in future. I would like to explain briefly the position. In the first place I want it to be clearly understood that our ventures are profit-making. If the prospects for making profits were bleak, our U.K. partners would not be willing to invest in them. In addition they will offer employment and opportunities for training in all fields of radio and television technology to young Easterners. The N.B.C. is a Federal institution—financed and controlled by the Federal Government. This could not have been otherwise since he who pays the piper has a right to call the tune. While one cannot underrate the useful services the N.B.C. has

been rendering to the Region and the co-operation it has often given the Government, I must point out that there have been occasions when relations with the N.B.C. have not been as cordial as might have been expected. Episodes which followed in the wake of the introduction of the Finance Law, the Free Milk Scheme and the modification of the U.P.E. go to point out the necessity for the Government to have at its disposal those media with a reach and effectiveness by which the truth can be conveyed to the people who would otherwise be exposed to the danger of being fed from the one-sided and often highly polluted sources of dangerous and subversive elements who traffic in chaos and confusion in the society. Government is also conscious of the increasing popularity and potentialities of these particular media in the Region and has laid it down as a policy that the radio and television networks, would, apart from their commercial activities, be utilised in fostering our educational, community development and rural health programmes and keeping our people well-informed of Government activities.

I have no doubt that the N.B.C. and E.N.B.C., when it comes into being, will co-exist and co-operate. Perhaps in the course of time, after our independence, the need for separate existence will disappear and the two set-ups will be merged into one, subject to a satisfactory agreement being reached by all the interested parties.

Everything humanly possible was done to see that the two schemes got under way as we promised the Region. To this end, we applied to the Federal Government for the allocation of channels and wave-lengths necessary for the operation of television and broadcasting by the Regional Government, as we were required to do under the Constitution. Unfortunately, our attempts to be on the air, at the scheduled time, ended in a failure because the Federal Government Authorities would not grant our Television and Broadcasting Services the channels and the wave-lengths for which my Ministry applied. As hon. Members will remember, this attitude of the Federal Government led to a serious press controversy between myself and the former Action Group Federal Minister of Communications and Aviation, Chief S. L. Akintola. Finally, through kindly intervention of the

Federal Prime Minister, the green light, to go ahead, appeared with the Federal Government deciding to co-operate in granting our Television and Broadcasting Services the necessary channels and wave-lengths. However, arising from these initial difficulties we encountered with Chief S. L. Akintola, some of our previous arrangements for going into partnership, securing necessary equipment and personnel had to be altered and some others cancelled, much to the discomfiture of the Government and its foreign partners.

With these facts in mind, hon. Members will see clearly the need for the Bill now before them. First of all, this Bill arises from the provision of the Nigeria (Constitution) Order in Council, 1954, which stipulates that Regions are free to establish their television and broadcasting services. Secondly, the Bill makes it possible for the Eastern Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation to be formed. Thirdly, without the passage of this Bill through the Houses, work on the two services cannot begin in full swing. Clause 3 of the Bill seeks to establish a Corporation to be called the Eastern Nigeria Broadcasting Corporation which will provide television and broadcasting services on behalf of the Government of the Region. It is provided in clause 4 that the Corporation will consist of a Chairman and not more than six other members, all of whom will be appointed by the Minister charged with responsibility for broadcasting and television. Clause 5 provides that the term of office of a member will be for a period not exceeding three years. Clause 7 provides for powers to operate transmitting stations for television and sound broadcasting on behalf of the Regional Government. In clause 8 the Corporation will be in duty bound to ensure that the programmes broadcast by it or on its behalf do not fall below certain standards of accuracy, impartiality, objectivity and propriety. Clause 9 provides for sponsored programmes including advertisements and announcements but these must not interrupt programmes designated as being of special educational nature or of special interest to the public. Clause 12 makes provision for the broadcasting of announcements free of charge, at the request of the appropriate Regional Minister, during a period of emergency. Clause 15 deals with the provision of funds by the Regional Government for running its services. The Corporation will be required to keep proper

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accounts which will be audited as provided in clause 18.

In clauses 19 and 20, the Corporation is given special power of entry on land, after notice, so as to erect and maintain installations, for the purposes of the broadcasting services. The power is similar to that conferred on the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation.

**Chief I. I. Morphy** (Ogoja Division): Speaking on this Eastern Nigeria Broadcasting Bill, I want to say that it is not time yet for us to duplicate broadcasting, and also for us to bring in television into the Region because the teaming millions who pay tax in this Region are not really going to enjoy this television. They are not going to be able to buy television sets. So by bringing in television we are creating a class where people on top will enjoy certain amenities which the ordinary man cannot enjoy. How many people in Enugu here can buy television sets?

We talk about broadcasting. We have the Federal Broadcasting radio here that accurately carries what the Ministers do say and sometimes what we do say. We are wasting money that could have been used in developing the agricultural potentials of this Region. We could have used that money in tarring our roads. We could have used that money in helping those boys who are leaving schools and who are not able to find any jobs yet. The money could be used for the ordinary man than providing a broadcasting service.

Take the Board itself. You will find that the Ministers are providing for themselves. They will be the people who will be heard in the air. The Board will not have as much power as the Minister will have. The Ministers want to be heard in the air and seen in the television sets, and they are providing for themselves. The Minister has got too much power over the Corporation. It is merely a body to be set up to advise him on what should go into the air. The Minister has a controlling power. He has the right to say "yes" or "no" to the Board. He also has the right to say "no" to what the Corporation members have agreed on. They want to control religious broadcasting. It is dangerous for a Government to toy with religious matters. In clause 15 (2) you will find it there:

"The Minister shall neither be bound to accept, nor to act in accordance with, advice tendered him by the Board".

*Sitting suspended at 12 noon.*

*Sitting resumed at 12.30 p.m.*

**Chief Morphy:** All I was saying was that we do not need to have television now and that we do not need to duplicate broadcasting. That is all I was saying, and I think the money now used for this project should be better used for the poor miners who are thrown out of their jobs and for the poor farmers who are paying tax into the Regional finances.

**Mr M. U. Etuk** (Uyo Division): I am afraid I have an open mind about this Bill. It is unwise for any man who thinks of the progress of this Region to oppose this Bill. Television and broadcasting are desirable things for the modern age and the Eastern Region should not lag behind. But the sad point about it is that only a portion of the Eastern Region will enjoy it. Take for example, Uyo Province from where I come. We have no electricity; we have no really developed township. So that you cannot operate television there and the people of that Province will certainly be without it. I notice that when the Minister was introducing the Bill he included Uyo Province or Uyo township as one of the places the television and broadcasting appliances would be set up, but heaven knows how long or for how many years more before we shall be in a position to enjoy it. The point I would very much like to emphasise, in supporting this Bill, is censorship. It is not very well brought out in the Bill. Because of my experience with the Western civilised countries, television is rather a two-edged sword. If you do not have a proper control or censor board and allow everything to be shown in it, you may tend to create a class of children who will increase child delinquency. But if it is controlled and not everything allowed to go in, well, it is a good thing because you will certainly get in touch with many people and the children especially will be able to learn what they should not have learnt until they came up in life.

When the Minister was introducing the Bill, to my mind, he left out a very important section. He did not tell us the composition of this Company. I think we should know that; whether it is only one-sided business where perhaps the foreign firms get more than they should.

I do not want to waste the House's time on things which I know are real, so with these few remarks I am in line with the Government.

**Mr G. C. Okeya** (Owerri Division): We are particularly glad and proud that the East Regional Government, in spite of malicious criticisms and adverse comments and initial set-backs, is able today to bring before us this Broadcasting Bill.

The Ministries of Information, Welfare and Justice are to be congratulated for this masterpiece of a Bill. The Bill as regards the Establishment, Constitution and Function of the Corporation is error-proof; the Duties of the Corporation according to this Bill are first-class.

I was very much surprised when I heard my hon. Friend, Chief Morphy, trying to oppose the introduction of this Broadcasting Bill on the grounds that it is rather premature at this stage of our development and that it is a sheer waste of money on the part of the Regional Government to embark upon this project.

**Chief Morphy:** Point of Order. Standing Order 30(5):

"It shall be out of order to use offensive and insulting language about Members of the House."

An hon. Member called me *Onyeala*.

**The Speaker:** As far as this House is concerned, I think I take notice of Standing Order 2 and I did not hear any insulting language.

**Mr Okeya:** The third point of criticism by my hon. Friend of the Opposition is that the Minister has too much control of this Corporation. I am afraid the hon. Gentleman has not read between the lines and this is due to his ignorance of the clauses of this Bill. The Bill, as far as I have seen, is quite liberal; it has given 50/50 basis as far as negotiation or organisation or management of that Corporation is concerned.

The critics of the Government's introduction of this Bill at this time of our social advancement and growth seem to ignore, on purpose,

that we are in an atomic age, and the objectivity of true science in the 20th century is acceleration of social forces and betterment of mankind. Humanity is on the march, and I feel that what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander either in the Temperate Zone or in the Torrid Zone, either in the Artic Region or in the Antarctic Region. If France is able, at this stage, to make this atomic test in the Sahara Desert, I do not see why eight million people in the Eastern Region here cannot test the use of television or broadcasting. Such criticisms flow from the narrow brook of ignorance, fear and prejudice.

Broadcasting and television are educationally and socially advantageous to any community. It all depends on how people use it or give it a local bias to suit the people in their own environments.

Psychologically, Africans today need broadcasting and television more than any other race in the world. By nature, the Africans are telepathists and television is therefore useful in our social life or community. By telepathy, I mean the ability for one person to communicate with another person without signs. In case of television, one has the objects or signs before him but in telepathy there is no need for signs. Apart from this, broadcasting and television are really very necessary and useful and they are means of dissemination of knowledge, and teachers here bear me out. In teaching today, television and broadcasting are very useful in the classroom.

Because of the advantages of broadcasting and television we are very proud and glad that the Eastern Region Government has brought this Bill and we whole-heartedly support the Bill.

**Mr A. J. Ekpe** (Opobo Division): Broadcasting and television are in themselves good things. Television, I agree, is an important and useful visual aid to man's education. Television must not be an opportunity cost of Agricultural or development extensions. We must not have television in place of Free Universal Primary Education. We must not have television in preference to facilities for secondary schools. We must not have television in preference to basic industries to absorb the unemployed youths of this Region. The big question is: what

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percentage of the community of the Eastern Region would benefit and enjoy television services? How many of the eight million people of this Region will benefit and enjoy television services? The answer is that only a negligible few—only a few people at the top—will benefit and enjoy television. Take for instance, radio broadcasting. It has become a very important feature in our social life but how many radio sets have we in the Eastern Region? How many towns, how many villages, how many individuals, are there in the Eastern Region who have never seen a single set of radio in their lives? Many!

Finally, television, although it is a good thing in itself, yet at this stage of our development, it is too premature to introduce it. In respect of broadcasting, already we have the N.B.C. but people cannot take the full advantage of the services of the Broadcasting Corporation unless they have radio sets in their homes. How many people have these sets in their homes? In how many schools in the Region has this Government provided facilities for them to enjoy the services of the N.B.C.? I had thought that what the Government was going to do was to make some subventions available for schools to be able to buy radio sets so that they could get hold of any information the Government may wish to give. We want something objective, something useful, something beneficial. After all, no social services can be of real benefit to the people unless the greater number of people in the community enjoy them. For instance, I had said here yesterday that there are over 14,000 people in Obolo area who have no good drinking water. Television is going to be an opportunity cost of these people because they are going to forego good drinking water which sustains life simply because a few Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries and other top-notchers in Enugu or elsewhere are going to enjoy themselves by having television sets in their homes.

I am very sorry that a Government that is supposed to be socialist in outlook should think of introducing a service or services that benefit the few people who are on the top. Such a Government stands condemned in the eyes of the tax-payers of this Region because, certainly this television service is not going to be of any use to the people outside the

townships. As I had said earlier, television is in itself not a bad thing. It is a visual aid to education. It is very good indeed if we can afford it. I think this Region cannot afford it at this stage. Why not improve facilities for radio services in the schools, in the villages, in the compounds so that as many people as possible may enjoy the facilities of the N.B.C. services.

Out of my own conviction, I oppose the Bill.

**Mr C. A. Abangwu** (Nsukka Division): I rise to support the Bill. In doing so, I would like to refresh the minds of hon. Members back to 1956 when the issue of the introduction of television was first brought to this House. At that time, I was one of those who strongly opposed its introduction into the Region. I then held the view that our finances at the particular time were not very rosy.

The state of our finances then was not very rosy and there were some very urgent needs which should take priority over television in 1956. That of course, was some four years ago and I would like to say that in my view, things have changed a lot since that time.

The many places in the Region which in 1956 had no provision for the tarring of their roads and the provision of good water supply are now enjoying these things.

According to the hon. Minister of Finance, the state of our regional finances is now buoyant. If that is so, and the hon. Leader of the Opposition seems to support the view of the Minister here, this is a very very opportune moment for the introduction of television into the Eastern Region.

There are only very few suggestions I would like to proffer with respect to this matter. The introduction of broadcasting and television together is an innovation in this Region. Some weeks ago I listened with wrapped attention and interest to the speech attributed to the expatriate Chairman of this Broadcasting Corporation. In that speech, the Chairman said the Corporation will do all it can to train capable Nigerians to man the Corporation as quickly as possible. That was a very grand idea.

I think it was hon. Etuk who said earlier this morning that he would like to know what was the business arrangement in the get-up and the

running of this Broadcasting Corporation between the Regional Government and the foreign concern. I confess that I hold the same view with the hon. Member and add that this hon. House is entitled to know what interest we have at stake and what percentage of control this Government and the foreign body respectively can claim. Even if we cannot get that information now, we expect to have the full facts before us in the near future.

I would like to urge that we have since passed the age of colonial rule under whatever cloak. If that is so, Government must be categorically sure that in introducing television and broadcasting in combination with a foreign concern every opportunity must be taken to see that our broadcasting policy is not dictated from outside the Region.

The emphasis laid upon news items must be weighed heavily on Nigerian news and no undue publicity must be given to items of news from the United Kingdom or any other place for that matter. We should make sure that our regional broadcasting reflects adequately the status and the activities of a self-governing Region. I hope that the hon. Minister of Information will heed these points which I consider very important.

My next point is that I believe it was to the knowledge of Members that in 1959, there was an upheaval between our Regional Ministry of Information and the Federal Ministry of Communications and Aviation, on the question of television facilities. I now hope that every arrangements have been made and those difficulties smoothed over.

If that is so, I would like to know if the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation which is supplying news to the whole of the Federation is going to continue to do so, under the present arrangements. If so, are we not duplicating the system by introducing our own broadcasting? The point I am making is that we ought not to bargain for two broadcasts at the same time as this would be unnecessarily expensive. The N.B.C. ought to be made to know that there should not be any competition with any of the Regional Governments.

Another point which I would like to put across is that it seems to me that one of the causes of this misunderstanding between the East Regional Government and the Federal Government was that we had proposed a

regional set-up intended to operate outside the confines of the Eastern Region. We wanted to supply broadcasting and television to other areas outside the Eastern Region.

It appears that the existing law did not allow this: But if all the Governments of the Federation were working in unity and with a community of interest, each Region would have been at liberty to broadcast and televise to the other Regions and so export its way of life and activities to the other parts of the country. We want the Eastern Government to impress upon the Federal Government the necessity to amend the law limiting broadcasting and television to one Region only, so that there would be no restriction whatsoever.

Now, I come to the use and effects of television. I am one of those who believe that television is a strong medium of mass education. The arrangement which I understand is going on in the West and one which I would like to be introduced here is school broadcasts and school television. One of the most important uses of the television will be to educate our children.

I am sure that not many schools will be able to buy television sets. Government will therefore have to purchase from four to five thousand television sets to equip those most important elementary schools in the Region for a start, in order to derive the full effects of television scheme. In order that teachers may be able to utilise or operate the sets supplied them, they ought to be trained for it. If some Managers of Schools are unable to procure sets, Government will either buy them sets or supply same on loans to be repaid gradually.

The next point is the appointment of the Advisory Board. We have said that the Board will have at least six members. If you look at the policy statement on this question of broadcasting, is it true that the Corporation will consist of a Chairman and not more than six members? Is the membership of the Corporation different from the membership of the Board? If both are the same, I would urge that we should not have more than six members either on the Board or in the Corporation, and in choosing the members of the Board I humbly suggest that religious affiliations must be taken into consideration. There should be a balance in the appointment of the members so that when it comes to religious matters, religious interests can be protected.

[MR ABANGWU]

In conclusion, I would like to make one more point. If one looks at the imported films in this country one will often find that Africans are depicted in very mean colours. Now that television is coming into this Region, I am urging that the Board responsible for film censorship should make sure that no films depicting Africans in a mean way are allowed to circulate. Films that do not give an African his due status should be banned.

With these remarks, I beg to support the Bill.

**Mr J. A. Agba** (Ogoja Division): Before I say anything, I would like to make it clear that those who spoke in support of the installation of television in this Region seem to have misunderstood the issue at the moment. We are not arguing on whether television is useful to mankind or not. The question is whether this Region at the moment is ripe for the installation of television, and whether it is necessary to duplicate broadcasting.

I oppose the Bill from five points of view. They are:—

1. The first is that the urgent need of the Region is not television.
2. The enterprises so far undertaken by the Government are yet uncompleted.
3. The financial status of the Region is not so buoyant.
4. False imitation and competition.
5. Places proposed for installation of the television sets.

Let me come to the first point. The urgent need of the Region is not television but education. I say this because the Minister of Education a few days ago announced that there would be no free primary education in Standard III next year and someone took the Minister to task on the floor of this House yesterday for making this announcement so early. I think the reason for failing to extend free primary education to Standard III is because Government has no money for the scheme. We are preparing for independence, but we cannot have independence for illiterate people. I think education should take precedence over television and I do not think that television can be regarded as a complete substitute for education. It is quite true that television can be used as a means of education but I would like hon. Members opposite to answer the following question: Who is more important, the reader or the teacher?

My second point is that the enterprises so far undertaken are not yet completed. I am of the opinion that the Government of this Region is making things very difficult for itself by biting more than it can chew. During discussion on the Supplementary Appropriation Bill quite a lot of Members spoke on the lack of improvement on various matters in their areas. The importance of communication and transport cannot be over-emphasised. David Livingstone recognised this when he spoke of the importance of opening up places so that people can communicate with one another without difficulty. I am sorry to say that in this Region communication development is just in its infancy.

The T.V. is only meant to give the people who are on higher scale of salary unnecessary enjoyment and unwanted enjoyment for those who cannot afford the means to get a set. I know that this Government has long been on the arrangement for the installation of television sets in the Region and perhaps all our arguments will be of no avail but we have to say out what we feel is necessary and as a sort of advice to the Government. We must know what the Region needs. It is one thing to know whether something is important or not, and whether the people concerned can or will have the means for it. I think the most important thing to effect is what is very important for the whole people.

The third point is the financial status of the Region. It is all very good for us to come here and say that the finances of the Region are buoyant. This is in the air—but let us descend to realities. Are these things we say really true—are the finances really buoyant as to give each section of the Region a good portion of that buoyancy of the finances the Region claims to have?

I want to prove that it is not. People need houses in order to house their sets. How many of them have good houses to instal the sets? What of the Housing Scheme; how far has that been pushed through? How many houses—decent houses—have the Eastern Region Government prepared for the Civil Servants? Why do we not consider things that are really necessary? Is every section of the Region enjoying the Water Supply Scheme? If not, why?

The next point is false imitation and competition. It is all very good saying that the



Western Region has got this, Ghana and the rest have this; in our own case, have we got the means to do it? One wears one's coat and have one's coat cut according to one's size. Take a look round the House; it will be seen that certain individuals are not able to buy costly suits. I am not saying this to show that there are certain poor Members because everybody—the ordinary Member—is on the same scale of salary. They buy certain clothes that they are able to buy and not those costly ones that other Members of the House have been able to buy. If so, why do they not go to imitate those people who buy costly ones. If they try it they will soon get into such debts from which they will not come out and perhaps which will send them into prison, with the result that their seats become vacant. I would like the Government Members to consider that. Let us not go on imitating without considering our finances.

My last point is the places proposed for the Television Set. May I tell the Minister of Information that that point alone is sufficient for certain people from certain areas to oppose the Bill. The Minister has the audacity to leave out some areas of the Region as not worthy of having Television Set, if at all we do agree to having it. That is a downright discrimination, downright abuse. Certain areas are not included—a place like Ogoja. Ogoja has not even Telephone, no Electricity, no good water supply and yet to annoy us more, the Minister comes here with this bogus Bill to ask the House to pass it into law.

**Mr Speaker:** I hope the hon. Member will use Parliamentary language. He should realise this is a Parliament.

**Mr Agba:** Well, I am speaking of the Bill and not of the individual. For this very reason it is sufficient for us to oppose this Bill. It means that Ogoja people are not fit to have what is being introduced into the Region, not that we care very much for it.

**Dr W. N. Onubogu (Onitsha Division):** I would like to congratulate the Government for after all tackling what we thought originally was intended to catch votes; I congratulate the Government for now trying to implement it. I am all out to support any undertaking to improve and impart knowledge to the people of this Region, wherever and whenever possible.

It is an acknowledged fact that the T.V. system is a system for educating the people of the Region. But I must warn the Government to start now to make arrangements whereby electricity may be installed in other areas, because with the present proposition this T.V. is going to serve only five townships, that is Enugu, Aba, Port Harcourt, Calabar and Onitsha. I say so because even though these townships are well populated, there will be a lot of criticisms as to the question of service to other areas of the Region. So the Government will do well to make arrangements for electricity to be installed in other areas so as to make it possible to introduce T.V. sets in these areas. I am sure that Government could not have embarked on a thing that will not be profitable. If I understand the position correctly, I think it is going to be a commercial concern between the Government and a private firm. If so, why do hon. Members weep over the expense involved. It is going to be profit-making, I can assure you; so that anyone talking about "house" should know that electricity is installed even in thatched houses.

Another point is that Government should now start thinking about how to make the T.V. sets available to the people. The sets are very expensive indeed. I am sure not all could walk into a shop and buy a new set, even among hon. Members. Government should therefore introduce a scheme whereby these sets could be purchased and repaid on instalmental basis. It is done in the Western Region. Not all the schools in the townships could afford to pay for a T.V. set, not even civil servants. The cheapest and the smallest T.V. set costs not less than £60. It will indeed be a welcome proposition if Government will devise a means whereby T.V. sets could be purchased on instalmental basis, otherwise it will be a failure and not many people will benefit from it.

Finally, I would say that this is a scheme which I whole-heartedly endorse and support since its aim is to educate the people of the Region.

**Mr S. G. Ikoku (Enyong Division):** Mr Speaker, I would like to make it clear that after listening to all the speeches so far, I do not think there is much difference in our points of view in this House. The only difference I seem to notice is a difference of emphasis and

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I do not regard it as fundamental. There is a school of thought which believes that the expense involved in establishing a T.V. Broadcasting System in the Region is such that it is a bit too early to be undertaken. But they do not say that the establishment of a T.V. Broadcasting System is, *ipso facto*, a bad thing. There is a second school of thought which says you can go ahead with the scheme. I do not see any fundamental difference between the two schools of thought. It is true that T.V. sets cost a lot. I have amused myself with some exercise and have found that if 10,000 sets are distributed in this Region the Region will have to pay something like a million pounds. There are certain sets that cost as much as £300; the cheapest set is about 50 guineas. My point is that we must be prepared to drain up something like a million pounds in order to bring entertainment to something like 100,000 population and this 100,000 is only one and one-quarter per cent of the total population of the Region. I would not like to be misunderstood. I have given these figures merely to draw attention to the financial implication not only for the Government but for the Region. I must warn against too much of our income—whether it is Government income or private income—being spent on consumption at this stage of our development. If you spend too much money on consumption you are correspondingly spending less on production. Although it does not follow that whatever you save is automatically converted into investment. So if we establish a T.V. System in this Region, I would strongly advise that Government should take into its own hands the supply of the sets. First, if we take a T.V. System in the Region we are merely opening up a channel for the United Africa Company and similar Companies to raise millions of pounds from the people of this Region. We cannot afford to let this money get out of the Region now. Therefore, I would advise the Government to have a subsidiary company whose sole business would be to supply T.V. sets on hire purchase and keep the profits within the portals of this Region.

This T.V. system is a prestige project. Our Government said that they must establish T.V. The Western Government has established T.V. and we must establish T.V.! That is the

argument of politics. It is a prestige project and in any case, one of the greatest social scientists has admitted that there is something like conspicuous consumption. After all, there are some middle class people who buy pianos and put them in their sitting rooms but they never play the pianos and they want to give the impression that they are well-to-do and that they are cultured citizens. This is a sort of conspicuous consumption. The point I take rather serious, which I regret the scheme has not taken into account, is the need in Nigeria today—and the need will become increasingly greater tomorrow—of bringing information swiftly and accurately to our people. It is very important. We must inform our people swiftly and accurately. This is necessary for building public opinion and I hold the view that at this juncture of our national development, the moulding of public opinion, if in the right direction, is a very important factor for the all-round development of this country; it is an essential factor in building national consciousness. After all, progress is not merely finding the cash; it is also finding the way and having vision, having the courage and confidence in ourselves; and we need to have confidence in ourselves. We have been educated for several decades by the British and our mental system has been poisoned with all sorts of imperialist ingredients. Something has to be done to get rid of this colonialism from our mental make-up and any medium which can be used to reach the largest number of people should be utilised because this is important.

Another point I would like to raise for the attention of the Minister is this: that this House has not been sufficiently informed about the relationship existing between us and our foreign partners in this project. We would like to know what percentage of the shares the foreign partners are holding. Are they going to be the managing agents? If so, what are the terms? We would like to know all these things because if this T.V. system is allowed to fall into the hands of people who do not quite see the problems of Nigeria as we do, then the whole scheme has failed. I am not suggesting that those with whom we are going into partnership are necessarily agents of imperialism. I am not suggesting any such thing; but we must not forget that people generally project their views unconsciously. Those who are going to team up with us have

been brought up the imperialist way and they are likely to project this point of view. That is why I very much agree with the provision that the Minister, wherever he disagrees with the Board, must overrule. It is necessary to have a very strong control over the system in our own interests. If we cannot control the system, then please let us not proceed to create something which will be a new channel for further enslaving this country ideologically.

The composition of the Corporation leaves much to be desired. In clause 14 of the draft Bill, the Minister is to appoint members of the Advisory Board and in clause 14 (3) (b) I notice that three shall be persons with individual qualities particularly representatives of (i) the general public of the Region as a whole; (ii) a particular section or class of the people of the Region, and (iii) special interests. I wonder why we want to represent special interests here. Which are these interests we want to represent? We must be sure of what we are trying to represent. I hope when the time comes they will not say: U.A.C., special interest; Barclays Bank, special interest and so forth. We do not want this type of special interest to be represented on this Corporation. Somebody has just hinted about religious interests. I think they have already started playing with fire because if they begin to represent religious interest, I wonder where they are going to stop. The Roman Catholics will want representation, the Protestants will want representation and it will not even stop with Protestants; the Methodist, the Cherubim and Seraphim, the Apostolic Church—they will all want representation. I am not sure that it is a wise thing to have representation of special interests. After all, Members are in this House representing the Eastern Region. Nobody here can claim that he is representing special interest. He is representing his constituency and if the Minister of Information can make sure that the different points of view are represented on the Board, that is all he need do. Here I would like to emphasise that it is necessary on this Advisory Board to have representatives of the Government as well as of the Opposition and I want to make that very clear. The project in the Western Region has accommodated that fact and I think that will be the best way for Government to defend the view that an independent or impartial point of view is being pursued by this Company. A representative

of Government should be there; a representative of the Opposition should be there and once these two sections are serving on the Advisory Board nobody can really argue that the Corporation is pro-Government or pro-Opposition, except if the gentlemen of the two sections are not doing their work on the Advisory Board.

I turn to clause 4. The Corporation itself shall consist of the Chairman and not more than six members appointed by the Minister. Will our foreign partners be members of this Corporation? If so, how many of them? If not, can we still talk about partnership? The Corporation as I see it will be the highest body in the Company. How many of these members are going to be Nigerians representing the interests of the Eastern Region and how many are going to be representatives of the interests of our foreign partners? The Minister should give us a few more facts on this because it will help to keep our minds at rest.

I must pick up the Minister on one point, i.e., what I consider to be an unwarranted attack on the N.B.C. He did refer to them as people who traffic in chaos and confusion in the Region. Well, I do not think that is proper. If we want to set up our own broadcasting system, we are at liberty to do so. The N.B.C. should continue with their own and let us have some sort of healthy competition. That is why I disagree with my hon. Friend the Minister . . .

**The Minister of State (Information and Welfare):** I would like to draw the attention of the House to the fact that the Leader of the Opposition is unfair to me because I never said any such thing and here is a copy of my speech. I quote:

“It was for Government to have at its disposal those media with a reach and effectiveness through which correct information would always be passed to the people who would otherwise be exposed to the danger of being fed from the one-sided and often highly polluted sources of dangerous and subversive elements who traffic in chaos and confusion in the society.”

**Mr Ikoku:** I thank the Minister of Information but he will remember that his reference to the N.B.C. was precisely in that

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context when he spoke about people trafficking, etc. In any case, if he insists that he is being misrepresented then my point is proved because I do not see any need for quarrelling with the N.B.C. and as I said, I do not agree with my hon. Friend the Deputy Speaker, when he suggested that we could conveniently squeeze out the N.B.C. We do not want the N.B.C. to be squeezed out; they should continue broadcasting and it is our business at the receiving end to tune-in to the new thing and hear what they have to say; we tune-in to the N.B.C. and hear what they have to say and if it does happen that the N.B.C. is more accurate than the new thing then we make it a habit to listen to the N.B.C. but, if the news coverage of the new thing is more impressive and more educative, then we the receivers will make it a habit of listening to the new Corporation. And I think such competition will do the N.B.C. a lot of good and will also do the new Corporation a lot of good.

My final point is clause 8 of the Bill, sub-section 2 (b).

“... party political broadcast. Aiming at explaining the views and policies of the various political parties in accordance with the scheme of those broadcasts which apportion the facilities, and time allowed, to the representatives of the political parties ...”

I agree with that section up to where I quoted but when they begin to introduce this type of phrase and I quote:

“... amounts appearing to the Corporation equitably to represent their representative claims to the interest of the public of the Region ...”

I begin to suspect that this is really an attempt to give with one hand and take with the other. At election time, it is natural that the major political party should have more time than the minor one—time should be allotted to them proportionately to their strengths in the country. But where there is no election I do not see any reason why they should say the N.C.N.C. should have 7 hours broadcast, the Action Group should have 5, the D.P.N.C. should have 1 and so on. If they want to accommodate different points of view, they should give them equal time over the air; in fact, this is the procedure adopted by the

B.B.C. I am very sorry to hear the former Government Chief Whip say that he does not intend to follow the B.B.C., because the B.B.C. has established a reputation of being one of the most accurate Broadcasting Corporations in the World. So that if I took him serious it will only mean that he has made up his mind to go wrong with the new Broadcasting Corporation of the Eastern Region.

**Government Bench:** Is he a Minister ?

**Mr Ikoku:** No, he is not a Minister but he is a friend to the Minister.

**The Minister of State (Information and Welfare):** I would like to thank all the hon. Members who have criticised this Bill in a constructive manner. I want to assure them that all the constructive criticisms made will be borne in mind by the Minister. At no time does this Government not welcome criticisms which will help to ensure that its policies are properly framed. But I must say, with regret, that some hon. Members have spoken from mere prejudice and some have got the notion that they must always oppose everything coming from the Government. I do not think that a Bill of this kind which intends to provide services to the people of the Eastern Region should be an opportunity for Members not to make constructive suggestions in the interest of the Region rather than use the opportunity to attack the Government in this manner. I would also like to speak briefly on some of the points raised in the course of the speeches by Members. I do not intend to take them in the order in which they were made but first of all, I would like to take up the speech by the Leader of the Opposition. I would like him to realise that it has always been the policy of this Government to make ample accommodation for the Opposition. We do this not because we cannot afford to hold up ourselves but because we believe that the Eastern Region is an ideal place for true democracy. I agree with him that on the main, the criticisms or the differences indicated in the speeches only go to show that there is difference in emphasis, not in fundamentals. I do not accept his arithmetic when he went off the tangent by quoting 10,000 sets at a general price of £100 each and for 10,000 people. An ordinary school boy will see the absurdity of this arithmetic. In the first place, I do not think that it can be argued that when some one buys a set that set is meant for him and him alone. In the second

place he says that a set costs £100. I think he has in mind a most expensive type of set but I would like to explain that when I was in Europe on this venture, I had useful discussion with a number of continental firms in the United Kingdom on the possibility of supplying cheap sets. If the Government would undertake to dispose of a certain number, I am sure that when the time comes we will find that a set may be available at less than about 50 per cent of this price which he has quoted. I want to assure him that his suggestion about establishing a subsidiary Company has already been taken into full consideration by the Government. We are only asking the House to pass this Bill to enable us to go ahead. I do not intend at this stage to say all the details about this particular scheme, but I think it is mischievous for anybody to suggest that the East is not ripe for the provision of television and broadcasting, because every family must have a secondary school, a teacher training college and a university. One might as well suggest that before hon. Members take their advance to buy cars, we should first of all provide every house-wife with an electric cooker. When I spoke, I did say that the emphasis of this scheme is profit-making. In other words we have a group of United Kingdom promoters who are willing to provide 50 per cent of the capital. We are also providing 50 per cent of the capital and each of the groups will have the right to nominate 50 per cent of the directors. Of course, the Chairmanship of the Board will rotate from year to year. We will not allow our need for United Kingdom partnership to override the necessity for this Government to have a really powerful force in the control of this venture.

In the second place the Bill has provided ample control that the Minister is answerable to the Legislature. I want to assure my hon. Friend that the Corporation is not the same as the Board of Directors to run this service. We are having this Board to ensure that the provisions of this Bill which is being passed now are complied with by the agencies providing this service. You will see from the provisions of this Bill that it is intended to report to the Legislature from time to time both as to expenditure and the activities of the Corporation, so that if at any time this House feels that the projects are not being run in the best interests of the Region, Members can take up the matter in the House and they will be supplied with

all the necessary information. If they want any changes to be made, they will always be made in the normal way.

Again, people have not interested themselves in asking how much money is involved in providing television and broadcasting in the Eastern Region. People have thought about providing roads, schools and hospitals. I want to assure Members that the amount involved is not more than what would be required to provide three secondary schools; and we are not going alone but with a group of people. We cannot concentrate on roads and roads alone. It must be remembered that it is not on bread alone that man can live. I want to assure my hon. Friend the Leader of the Opposition that the Opposition will be represented on the Board to make sure that the policy of this Board is one which has the backing and support of all Members of this House, no matter to what party they belong.

I have noted the views expressed about political party broadcasts; but I think that at this stage it is not possible for me to say precisely what is going to happen when the time comes. We do hope that they will increase their following to justify more time in the air.

Chief Morphy, when he spoke, did say that we are embarking on a duplicating scheme. It was never the intention of the Government to displace the N.B.C. I remember that when I spoke I did point out that the N.B.C. belongs to the Federal Government. We are not contributing a mite in the maintenance of the Regional N.B.C. here. It is entirely a Federal institution and it is controlled by the Federal Government. There are members of the Regional Board who are themselves to represent the interest of the Region. But I would like to say that unlike the N.B.C. this is a broadcasting and television system where we have a financial stake and we are entitled to a measure of control. When I say "we" I mean not only the Government but also the Opposition. We cannot under the Law establishing the N.B.C. dictate to the N.B.C. what to do. I quoted three instances where we could not get information effectively passed on as we required. This was because we had no control over the N.B.C. I mentioned the time when the new Finance Law was introduced; I mentioned the period of the free milk scheme and also the modification of the U.P.E. The N.B.C. was badly trying

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to satisfy the requirements of Lagos and also trying to meet local needs. It is not my intention to underrate the services which the N.B.C. has rendered to the Region.

Those who complain about our not providing for T.V. to be enjoyed by some other sections than those mentioned here must remember that if we have a T.V. station here in Enugu we do not need to have another one at Abakaliki in order to be able to enjoy it. Any town within a particular station that has electricity will be able to enjoy T.V. For instance, if you have one at Aba, you do not need to have another one at Owerri, and so on. So, as I have stated, Government is doing its best to ensure that as many towns as possible are supplied with electricity within the Development Programme. That is the extent to which Government can go. Finally, the main benefit to this Region is the use of broadcasting and television for educational purposes. I was surprised to find an hon. Member who happens by profession to be a schoolmaster getting up here to oppose the introduction of television and broadcasting in the Eastern Region. This shows gross ignorance of the effectiveness of these two media in the field of teaching, and I want to say that we have a scheme on this and I do not intend to expose it at the moment. I hope that when the time comes those hon. Members who have opposed this scheme will have cause to be sorry for the disservice they have done to this House and the Eastern Region.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time and committed to a Committee of the Whole House.*

*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

*Clauses 1-7 agreed to.*

*Clause 8.*

**Mr Ikoku:** Clause 8 (2) (b)—page 8. I beg to move that we *insert* a full stop after "parties"; that is three lines to the bottom, and *delete* all the other words to the end of the section—up to "public of the Region".

**The Minister of State (Information and Welfare):** Mr Chairman, I want to give a guarantee to the Leader of the Opposition that

we will ensure that there will be no discrimination but it is necessary to make this provision in case it will be necessary to use it. I want to give the assurance that as far as this Government is concerned we are going to observe absolute impartiality in the allocation of time.

**Mr Ikoku:** The assurance is from a Minister and he is a Minister in the Government; I know that he will keep his word but after he has left his Ministry the Law will continue to operate and so why not make this assurance part of the Law?

**The Attorney-General and Minister of Justice (Mr M. O. Ajegbo):** The assurance I would like to give is that if and when we find it necessary we can always amend the Law.

*Amendment by leave withdrawn.*

*Clause 8 agreed to.*

*Clause 9.*

**The Attorney-General and Minister of Justice:** I beg to move that in line 1 of clause 9 the word "Clause" be *deleted* and the word "Section" be *inserted* so that "Clause 8" in that line reads "Section 8".

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Chief Morphy:** I beg to move in clause 9 (a) line 4, to *delete* the words "Provincial Commissioners" and *insert* "the Leader of the Opposition". My reason for moving this amendment is because Provincial Commissioners have no functions. Their only duty is to chairmen the Provincial Assemblies; so they cannot come up to say what they are not responsible for. The Leader of the Opposition who will be talking for the Opposition will be putting out the policy of the Opposition and as such it would be better that while Ministers come out with Government policy, the Leader of the Opposition will come out with the views of the Opposition.

**The Attorney-General and Minister of Justice:** We oppose this amendment. The whole paragraph is intended to cover acts of Government. The Leader of the Opposition is not a member of the Government. He is Leader of the Opposition and we, as Ministers, or any other members of the Government Bench are in a position to come out and explain the policy of the Government. We therefore resist any attack on them in

that vein. We have already made ample provision for the Leader of the Opposition or members of the Opposition to come out and explain their points of view. Here we are limiting the whole thing to members of the Government and perhaps hon. Morphy can tell us whether the Leader of the Opposition is now a member of the Government. *(Mr Ikoku: I would not like to be).*

**Chief Morphy:** The Provincial Commissioners are not responsible for any policy. The instrument appointing them says they should chairmen Provincial Assemblies. That is all.

**The Premier (Dr M. I. Okpara):** I think it is wrong for Chief Morphy to give the impression that Provincial Commissioners have no work to do. That is quite wrong. They have a lot of useful work to do, and in the very near future, we are going to devolve a good deal of the powers of the Ministers on to them. Thus, it may be necessary for them, from time to time, to explain some of the policies of the Government in their own respective areas on the air or in front of the T.V. screen. It would work hardship on the Government if this amendment were passed.

**The Attorney-General and Minister of Justice:** I think the hon. Member ought to withdraw. If you read the whole clause, the whole point is made clear:

“(a) Ministerial speeches, that is to say, speeches of the members of the Executive Council of the Eastern Region of Nigeria and the Council of Ministers and Provincial Commissioners in the Eastern Region which consist wholly of statements of fact, or which explain the policy and actions of the Government of which they are members.”

**The Chairman:** Does the hon. Member withdraw ?

**Chief Morphy:** No.

*Question put and negatived.*

**Chief Morphy:** I beg to move that in line 7, after the word “Government” the words “and Opposition Parties” should be added.

**The Chairman:** The hon. Member will agree with me that the second amendment does not arise.

*Clause 9 as amended agreed to.*

*And it being 2.15 p.m., the Chairman interrupted the Business and left the Chair to report Progress and ask leave to sit again.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

Committee report Progress: To sit again Tomorrow.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke):** I beg to move that this House do now adjourn till tomorrow at 9 a.m.

May I take this opportunity to remind Members that the Report of the Public Accounts Committee laid on the Table this morning is to be considered by the House at the Committee Stage of the Excess Votes Appropriation Bill tomorrow in accordance with Standing Order 79.

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

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Adjourned, accordingly, at twenty minutes past two o'clock p.m.*

Eastern House of Assembly Debates

119 [Business of the House; Eastern Nigeria Broadcasting Bill—Com.] 19 FEBRUARY 1960 [Eastern Nigeria Broadcasting Bill 120 —Com.]

EASTERN HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Friday, 19th February, 1960

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

PRAYERS

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Adjournment sine die

**The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke):** I beg to move, That this House at its rising Today do adjourn *sine die*.

**The Minister of State (Information and Welfare) (Mr B. C. Okwu):** I beg to second.

*Question put and agreed to.*

Resolved: That this House at its rising Today do adjourn *sine die*.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(1) The Eastern Nigeria Broadcasting Bill

*Considered in Committee (Progress 18th February).*

(In the Committee)

*Clauses 10–13 agreed to.*

*Clause 14.*

**Mr S. G. Ikoku (Enyong Division):** I would like to draw attention to clause 14, sub-clause 3, paragraph (d) sub-paragraphs (ii) and (iii) which read as follows:—

“(ii) a particular section or class of people of the Region, or

(iii) special interests.”

I beg to move that the two sub-paragraphs just quoted be *deleted*.

Hon. Members will notice that sub-paragraph (ii) wants representation on the Advisory Board for a particular section or class of people

of the Region and sub-paragraph (iii) wants representation for special interests. I regard these two sub-paragraphs as rather difficult to accommodate because one is bound to favour one section against the other or favour one special interest against the other.

**The Minister of State (Information and Welfare):** Government is prepared to accept the amendment.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 14 as amended agreed to.*

*Clauses 15–21 agreed to.*

SCHEDULE

*Clauses 1–5 agreed to.*

*Clause 6.*

**The Minister of State (Information and Welfare):** I beg to move, That clause 6 paragraph (1) be amended as follows:—

To *delete* all the words after “meet” in the first line to the end of the sentence and *insert* “not more than four times in a year except with the prior approval of the Minister.”

The object of the amendment is to make sure that the Board does not meet more than is necessary except with the prior approval of the Minister.

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Minister of State (Information and Welfare):** I beg to move the following amendment:—

At the end of the last line in clause 6, sub-clause (2), to *add* “subject to the approval of the Minister” after the word “determine.”

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 6 as amended agreed to.*

*Clauses 7–12 agreed to.*

*Schedule as amended agreed to.*

*Bill to be reported.*



(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported with amendments: as amended, read the Third time and passed.*

**(2) The 1958-59 Eastern Region Excess  
Votes Appropriation Bill**

*Order for Second Reading read.*

**The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke):**  
I beg to move, That the Bill be now read a  
Second time.

First of all, I should like to draw the attention of hon. Members to the new Standing Order 79 which was approved two days ago. That Standing Order provides that the Report of the Public Accounts Committee in respect of the financial year covered by the Excess Votes Appropriation Bill shall be presented to the House at the same time as the Bill is introduced and shall be considered by the House at the Committee Stage of the Bill.

I hope that copies of the Report of the Public Accounts Committee for the financial year, 1958-59 are in the hands of Members.

It is with some pride that I announce that except for expenditure under two Appendices, there was no over expenditure whatsoever on the forty-seven Heads of the 1958-59 Estimates. This state of affairs demonstrates that the Financial Instructions and other circulars emanating from my Ministry have, to a large extent, been heeded by the various Ministries and non-Ministerial Departments. This financial discipline has been achieved with the co-operation of the Public Accounts Committee, both past and present which have undertaken a most critical examination and questioning of the accounting officers of the Ministries that had defaulted. I can only hope that expenditure in this and subsequent years will continue to be incurred within the ambit of the votes and also within the limits imposed by the Appropriation Laws approved by this hon. House.

Coming now to the excess expenditure under Appendix F, Marine Renewals Fund, I want to say that the excess expenditure is still within the total balance in that Fund even though there is an excess on the amount

authorised to be spent in 1958-59. Two sea-going crafts were replaced and the debits from the Crown Agents were not received in time to enable the Ministry concerned obtain additional provision before the end of the financial year.

As regards the excess on the Scholarship Fund the picture is somewhat different, because the over-expenditure exceeded the balance in the Scholarship Fund. Control of expenditure under the old Scholarship Fund was a somewhat complex one because the officers who spent much of the money were in Britain and the United States, and difficulties of distance and time made it impracticable for adequate control to be enforced. Members will, however, see from a study of the Report of the Public Accounts Committee that the Ministry of Education has made satisfactory accounting arrangements which will ensure effective control in future.

Hon. Members will also be interested to know that the Scholarship Fund was abolished on the 31st of March, 1958 and that all expenditure on the scholarships are now borne on the main Estimates. In this connection I refer Members to Head 429 sub-heads 9 to 17 in the Approved Estimates.

As I said before, the financial discipline enforced by my Ministry and the Public Accounts Committee in 1958-59 has yielded good results. I have no fear, therefore, that Members will warmly support this Bill.

**The Minister of Education (Mr G. E. Okeke):** I beg to second.

**Mr A. J. Ekpe (Opobo Division):** I rise to support the Bill and in doing so I want to congratulate the Minister of Finance for the able way in which he has carried out his duties during the year under examination, and particularly I want to congratulate the Director of Audit and his staff for the very efficient way in which they have audited the accounts of the Region for the last year. But there are still certain things that should be put right. There are twenty-three cases of over-expenditure which have been reported by the Public Accounts Committee and we hope that the Minister of Finance will take adequate steps to correct this sort of thing. We have also twelve of

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these cases arising out of the difficulty in the existing system of revenue control. I hope that the Minister will make further effort to bring some improvement into the system of revenue control. This is very important for I remember that during the past year the Public Accounts Committee recommended that each Ministry, as far as possible, should have its own Accountant. This might help to reduce some irregularities in the revenue control.

I support the Bill.

**Mr Ikoku:** I would like to agree entirely with hon. Ekpe and to congratulate the Minister of Finance for the effort he has put up in tightening up financial matter. I would like also to congratulate the Public Accounts Committee for their very lucid report. I believe that the effectiveness of the Public Accounts Committee has impelled the Ministry of Finance to see that our finances are very well managed. The point that interests me most is this question of expenditure control. It is a very important aspect of efficient public finance. There are two or three points I would like to raise. Firstly, we are told that there is the case of over-expenditure arising from variations in cost of stock supplied by the Crown Agents. I think that the main reason for this is that there is usually a very long time lag between the placing of order and the actual delivery. I do not know why such time lag should exist. Mercantile Houses place orders through their London offices which could land in this country in about a few weeks. I want to know whether it is still necessary for us to continue with the Crown Agents when we have our own office in U.K. Why should there not be a section in the Commissioner's Office to handle all our indents in the U.K.? Our officers could act as our own commercial agents in U.K.

Secondly, I am beginning to see a sign of friction between the various Ministries and the Ministry of Works, in that the Ministry of Works would charge Ministries for work done in excess of votes allowed them. I think that if such a thing is allowed to continue it might cause a lot of bad blood, and I suggest that the Ministry of Finance itself should step into this matter and act as a clearing house

between Ministries on the one hand and the Ministry of Works on the other, wherever any excess expenditure is anticipated.

Finally, I would like to know whether it is altogether impossible for the Ministry of Finance to have accounting units of that Ministry in every other Ministry, thus making sure that expenditure control is most effective and is at all times under the Ministry of Finance. I do not see why three or four clerks with one Executive Officer of the Ministry of Finance could not be posted to every Ministry to be responsible to see that expenditure is in accordance with the votes, and where there is any excess expenditure to report promptly to the Ministry of Finance before such expenditure is incurred. I am told that that is the system in the United Kingdom Civil Service, and I do not see why it could not be carried out here. It does not in any way derogate or detract from the prestige of other Ministries. For example, if the Ministry of Town Planning wants to spend £3,000 extra, the Ministry of Finance could investigate and know the reason for such an expenditure. It is just a way of seeing that excess expenditure is reduced to a minimum; and it will enable the Ministry of Finance to put its finger on the pulse all the time.

**Mr M. U. Etuk (Uyo Division):** I support the Bill and confirm what the Minister of Finance has said. There is not, in actual fact, any excess under any voted head of expenditure, except those shown in Appendices F and K of the Estimates. As has been said, I am happy to remark that there are signs of control coming into effect, not like the previous two years when Ministries and Departments spent public money as they liked. As the hon. Ekpe said before, what I would like to see carried out is the tightening up of expenditure so that there will be no negligence at all in future.

**The Minister of Finance:** I think the only point that requires an answer is the point made by the hon. the Leader of the Opposition about the bottle-neck existing in our connection with the Crown Agents. I agree with him, but I would not agree with him that this has cost more money and that we would have to make our own arrangements to get our indents from the United Kingdom and

so forth. I am informed by the Eastern Nigeria Commissioner's Office in the United Kingdom that there would soon be set up a section which would be responsible for recruitment, but as far as cost indents and other provisions are concerned it would be an elaborate system and extremely costly. It will need a highly specialised skill and so we cannot afford to break away from the Crown Agents to introduce such a system. It will cost us quite a lot and it will be impracticable at the present time. It will be something that we will have to look into.

On the whole I would like to take this opportunity of thanking hon. Members for their speeches on the financial control exercised by the Ministry of Finance.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time and committed to a Committee of the Whole House.*

*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

*Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.*

SCHEDULE

APPENDIX F.—MARINE RENEWALS FUND

£4,236 for Appendix F—Marine Renewals Fund—*agreed to.*

APPENDIX K.—SCHOLARSHIP FUND

£25,779 for Appendix K—Scholarship Fund—*agreed to.*

*Schedule agreed to.*

*Preamble agreed to.*

*Bill to be reported.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

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

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved: That this House do now adjourn *sine die.* (The Minister of Finance, Dr S. E. Imoke).

*Adjourned accordingly at twenty minutes to ten o'clock a.m. pursuant to the Resolution of the House this day.*



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Com. Head 439 .. .. .	79	Urban Area .. .. .	71Q
<b>NWEZE, MR N.:</b>		<b>P</b>	
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<i>Commerce:</i>		<i>See under Speaker or Chairman, Rulings of.</i>	
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<b>O</b>		Broadcasting Bill: Com. .. .. .	117
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