



EASTERN NIGERIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

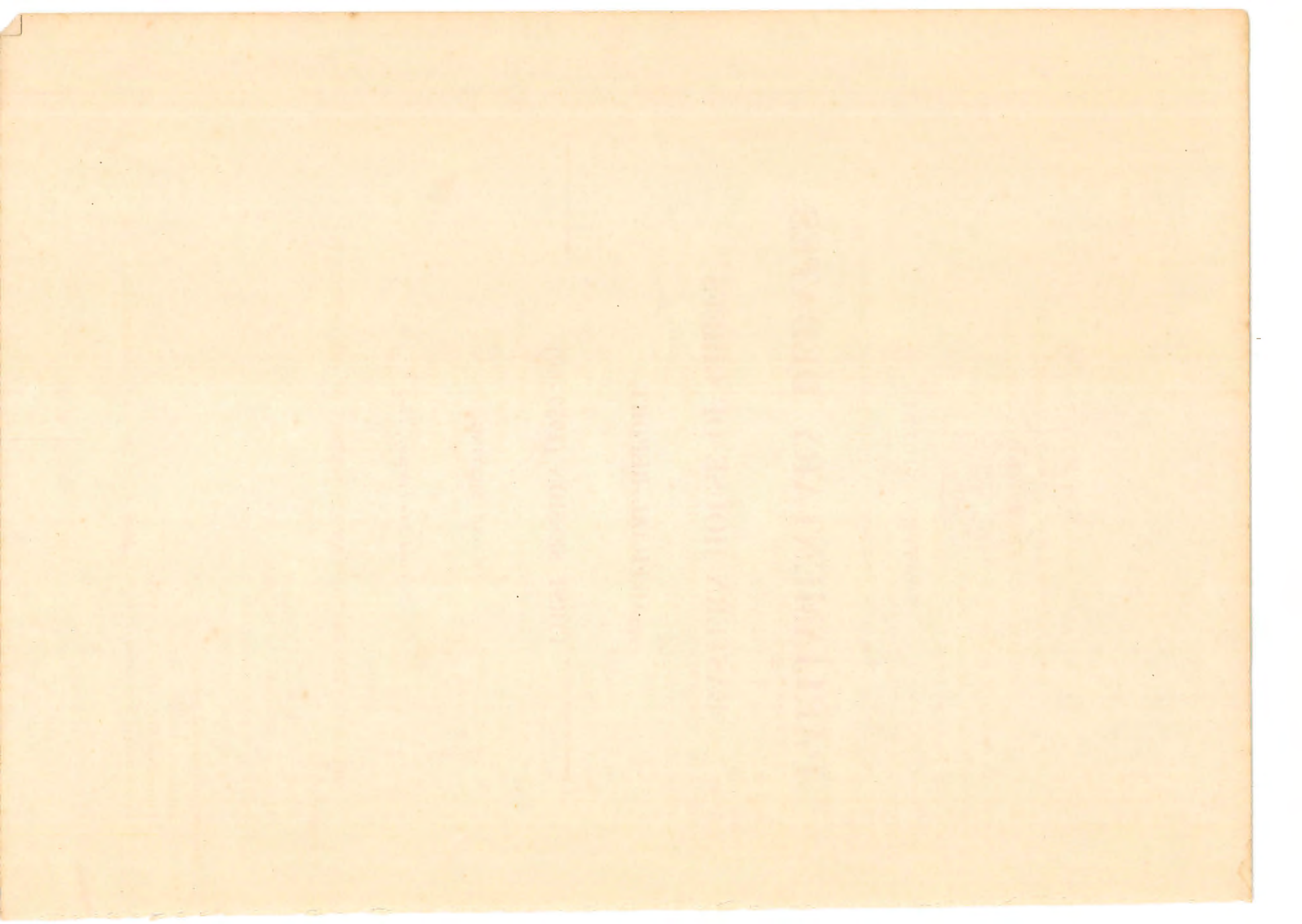
EASTERN HOUSE OF CHIEFS

OFFICIAL REPORT

FIRST SESSION (1959-60)

SECOND MEETING

25th and 26th February, 1960



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 MINISTERS 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 President: Chief the hon. Nyong Essien.
Deputy President: Chief James Okosi II, the Obi of Onitsha.
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 Chiefs Debates

1 [Oath of Allegiance; Papers] 25 FEBRUARY 1960 [Papers; Appointment and Selection of 2 Chiefs]

EASTERN HOUSE OF CHIEFS

Thursday, 25th February, 1960

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

PRAYERS

(Mr President *in the Chair*)

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

The following Members took and subscribed the Oath required by Law:—

Chief the hon. Jonas Akpaka Anigor.
Chief the hon. E. Ashirim-Unosi.
Chief the hon. Richard Amachree Ukwu.
Chief the hon. Joseph D. Agba.
Chief the hon. Otu Lawrence Odu.
Chief the hon. Sampson Maeba.
Chief the hon. Gordon Ascot Ikiabah.

PAPERS

Presented:

- (1) Draft Supplementary Estimates for the Eastern Region including the Memorandum, February, 1960. (*The Minister of Finance*).
- (2) Votes and Proceedings of the Joint Sitting of the Eastern House of Chiefs and Eastern House of Assembly, Friday, 8th January, 1960. (*The Minister of Finance*).

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

The President: 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) Report of the Accountant-General with Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March, 1959 (Official Document No. 2 of 1960).
- (2) Report of the Director of Audit on the Accounts of the Government of the

Eastern Region of Nigeria for the year ended 31st March, 1959, and the Accounts of Contingencies Funds for the year 1958-59, together with the Certificate of the Director of Audit thereon (Official Document No. 1 of 1960).

- (3) The Internal Revenue Division (Eastern Region) Annual Report, 1956-57 (Official Document No. 3 of 1960).
- (4) Address of Welcome presented to the Rt. 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) Public Accounts Committee Report No. 2 of 1959.
- (6) The Agriculture Division (Eastern Region) Annual Report, 1958-59 (Official Document No. 6 of 1960).
- (7) University of Nigeria Progress Report (Eastern Region) (Official Document No. 7 of 1960).
- (8) Eastern House of Assembly Debates. Official Report—Third Session, First Meeting—Volume I—31st March to 22nd April, 1959.
- (9) Eastern Region Library Board, Annual Report, 1959.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Appointment and Selection of Chiefs

The Minister of State (Establishment and Chieftaincy Matters) (Mr O. U. Affiah): As the Minister charged with responsibility for Chieftaincies, I feel I should offer my hearty congratulations to the distinguished Chiefs who now constitute this hon. House. It has been my privilege to be directly involved in their affairs, including, of course, all the intricate arrangements associated with their selection or election. I wish, Mr President, to place on record the happy fact that the Chiefs, particularly those belonging to the Eastern Chiefs Conference, gave me, at all times and in every respect, their untinted and unqualified co-operation, without which it would have been quite impossible for those concerned to fulfil

[MR AFFIAH]

their onerous and delicate tasks. I would also like to record my appreciation of the role played by the Administrative Officers who had, at very short notice and some personal sacrifice and discomfort, to perform the strenuous and involved task of selecting the Chiefs who were able to attend the last Joint Meeting at which Senators were elected for the Senate. It is to their great credit that these tasks were completed without any trouble.

It is not my intention, even if it were appropriate, to recall the complicated events of the past. But, Sir, I would like to remind hon. Members, what no doubt all of them have appreciated, that Government's role and attitude during that period of small difficulties clearly vindicated the high respect that our Government has for the Chiefs. I feel I should make this point because of the many subtle attempts by certain people to generate disaffection towards Government among the Chiefs, by trying to discredit the sincere efforts of Government to accord the Chiefs of the Eastern Region their rightful place in the scheme of things. As a result of disputes in certain areas, it has not been possible to have the full complement of the House. The number involved is quite small. In accordance with section 4 (c) of the Selection of Second-class Chiefs Regulations, inquiries are being conducted by the Administrative Officers and as their reports are received priority action is being taken by the Governor in Council to see that the Chiefs with the best claims are recognised without delay. I wish to assure the House that everything is being done to ensure that, when we reassemble for the Budget Session, there will not be a single vacant seat in this House.

Once again, I congratulate every one of you.

MESSAGES FROM THE EASTERN HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY TO THE EASTERN HOUSE OF CHIEFS

The Clerk of the House: The Eastern House of Assembly has passed a Bill entitled:

The 1959-60 Eastern Region Supplementary Appropriation Law, 1960,

and asks for the agreement of the Eastern House of Chiefs thereto.

The President: Second Reading, what day?

The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke): Today.

The Clerk of the House: The Eastern House of Assembly has passed a Bill entitled:

The Purchase Tax on Produce (Amendment) Law, 1960,

as amended, and asks for the agreement of the Eastern House of Chiefs thereto.

The President: Second Reading, what day?

The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke): Today.

The Clerk of the House: The Eastern House of Assembly has passed a Bill entitled:

The Funds and Accounts (Amendment) Law, 1960,

as amended, and asks for the agreement of the Eastern House of Chiefs thereto.

The President: Second Reading, what day?

The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke): Today.

The Clerk of the House: The Eastern House of Assembly has passed a Bill entitled:

The Eastern Regional Local Government (Extension of Office) (Amendment) Law, 1960,

as amended, and asks for the agreement of the Eastern House of Chiefs thereto.

The President: Second Reading, what day?

The Minister of Local Government (Mr P. O. Nwoga): Today.

The Clerk of the House: The Eastern House of Assembly has passed a Bill entitled:

The Incorporation (Ministry of Finance) Law, 1960,

as amended, and asks for the agreement of the Eastern House of Chiefs thereto.

The President: Second Reading, what day?

The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke): Today.

The Clerk of the House: The Eastern House of Assembly has passed a Bill entitled:

The Eastern Nigeria Broadcasting Law, 1960,

as amended, and asks for the agreement of the Eastern House of Chiefs thereto.

The President: Second Reading, what day?

The Minister of Internal Affairs (Mr I. U. Akpabio): Today.

The Clerk of the House: The Eastern House of Assembly has passed a Bill entitled:

The 1958-59 Eastern Region Excess Votes Appropriation Law, 1960,

and asks for the agreement of the Eastern House of Chiefs thereto.

The President: Second Reading, what day?

The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke): Today.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

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

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 this House 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 the use of savings occurring within the 1959-60 Approved Estimates.

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 could 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 10 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 10 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.

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 not subject to appropriation.

I wish to say that despite the additional provision now requested, the outturn for the

Eastern House of Chiefs Debates

7 [Supplementary Appropriation Bill: 25 FEBRUARY 1960 [Purchase Tax on Produce (Amdt.) 8
Second Reading] Bill: Second Reading]

[DR IMOKE]

year is still expected to show a surplus. I shall give the latest figures when I come to introduce the Budget for 1960-61.

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. Mr President, in this great year of Independence, this Government will do everything within its power and resources to forge ahead with our development programme.

In conclusion, I wish to draw the attention of the 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 have been passed by the House of Assembly and I trust this House will give them their warm support.

The Minister of Local Government (Mr P. O. Nwoga): I beg to second.

And under Standing Order 77—Appropriation and Supplementary Appropriation Bills—the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed Tomorrow.

**(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.

It is for the information of hon. Members that the Law that is now to be slightly amended was passed by the House of Assembly 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 Amendment 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 which I trust hon. Members will support.

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

Chief J. Mpi (Port Harcourt Province): I rise to support the Bill. I have gone through the Bill. The Bill is perfect in its making and I do not see anything evil in it nor do I think that this is the type of Bill that will make us waste our time.

So, I support the Bill whole-heartedly.

Chief J. N. Wachuku (Umuahia Province): Before supporting this Bill, I have a little observation to make; that is, before leaving my home I had a lot of traders complaining that the Acorn Shed at Port Harcourt is congested. They could not evacuate their kernels. If we really wish to help the traders, I am appealing to the Government to make necessary arrangements to make it possible to evacuate their palm kernels from home. They have stocks of kernels to produce but as the Acorn Shed is congested, there is little point in persuading them to bring these kernels.

Mr C. E. Amobi (Special Member): I rise to support the Bill and to add that in many places in the rural areas where produce is being produced, strong bridges and good roads are required so that transport facilities will be easy for the users.

Bill—

Chief Eket Inyang-Udo (Uyo Province): I rise to support the Bill. I am saying that the payment of Eastern Region Produce Purchase Tax is essential. Produce dealers are now complaining of not being able to sell their kernels. I therefore, through Mr President, ask the hon. Minister of Agriculture to see about it because in my own area there are so many tons of palm kernels that have not been evacuated. They are unable to sell them and some Licensed Buying Agents cut down the prices of produce without the Marketing Board knowing about it.

Mrs M. Ekpo (Special Member): I rise to support the Bill but before I give it my full support, I want to make it clear that the rural women are the people who make this payment. It is they who carry this produce from the rural areas to the E.R.D.C. centres where this palm produce is bought and evacuated and in support of an hon. Chief who spoke here, I must say that the roads in the rural areas are very bad. The men may not bother much about the bad roads because some of them have transport but the women have no cars to bring their produce to the centres. I therefore feel that this Government, now that Independence is approaching, will do a great deal of good if the hon. Minister of Agriculture could buy one or two big lorries that will ply through the rural areas and help these women transport their produce to the centres. I hope these observations will be carefully considered by Government—not just now, but in time to come, when the finances of the Region improve—because these women walk miles and miles from the hinterland in order to bring produce to the centres, and, believe me, the roads are very rough, and moreover women are not expected to ride bicycles for long distances like men.

Chief N. U. Ofem (Abakaliki Province): I rise to support the Bill but I have a few observations to make. In my area Abakaliki Province and Obubra Division—while we are talking about this Produce Purchase Tax—it is felt that the reason why in many instances we are denied amenities is because our produce is not harvested as they should. Our people have been crying for more mills and better roads but we are denied all those. Now most of us have always been confronted with the questions, after the Federal Election: “When shall our roads be tarred; when shall we have

more mills?” To these we are always at a loss of what to answer. If more mills are built and roads improved in this Division, I am sure that more produce will be got which will eventually swell the Produce Purchase Tax accruing to the Region. In the whole Division we have only two mills and this number is not sufficient at all.

I support the Bill but request the Government to consider developing our Divisions—Obubra and Abakaliki—more than they are at present.

Chief Zumoh Efeke V (Yenagoa Province): I rise to support the Bill and in doing so I have some observations and remarks to make. First of all, in our area, Yenagoa Province, the only Produce Buying Agency is the U.A.C. which has already monopolised the trade in the old Yenagoa Province. No chance is given to the people in the area to buy produce and that is, the present Produce Marketing Board is not given the chance of issuing loans to the native people to buy produce so that the whole market is in the hands of the U.A.C.

Secondly, the U.A.C. is also discouraging other companies and firms to go over to Brass Division or Yenagoa Province to trade, giving them some bad impressions that there is no trade in the areas. That is false. We have sufficient produce in the area. Some people may say that Brass Division is covered by water but I tell you that it is not so and we have a good quantity and quality of palm produce. Our land is very fertile, if not the most fertile land in the whole of the Eastern Region. I can give you an example. Cocoa planted in this area will take only four or five years to flourish and yield but in the Western Region where I had worked as an Agricultural Assistant for over fifteen years, cocoa takes usually five to seven years to yield when planted. In our area we have rain throughout the year. The experience which people report about Yenagoa Province is not correct at all. They have not travelled further into the heart of the Province and their experience is only limited to areas around the salt water. I am therefore begging the Government to allow some of our people to get grants or loans in order to develop produce trade in the area.

We also have cocoa in our area and some people have about thirty acres of land—even

[CHIEF EFEKE]

myself, I have about thirty acres of cocoa plantation—but there is no help from anywhere in the way of funds to develop the cocoa plantation and therefore I once again appeal to the Government to make some provision for that.

Thirdly, in Yenagoa Province, we have only two oil mills—one at Ayama and the other at Yenagoa. Government made a promise to build more mills but this has not been done and that is why some of our people continue to produce crude oil instead of Grade I oil. I am therefore calling upon the Government to assist the people to produce the best oil from that Division.

Chief Egbe Araghe Egbara (Obubra Division): In supporting the Bill I have to call to mind that the people of my area have been well informed that the E.R.D.C. intend to establish plantations for the growing of coffee, cocoa and palm trees. Already, so many local councils have written to the E.R.D.C. and promising that they would be willing to give out lands to them. In the area I have in mind, the northern part of Obubra, the people have no idea of how to grow and increase produce, thereby increasing the revenue of the Region. They keep on destroying palm produce instead of leaving them to exist. They fell palm trees and thereby killing produce of the area. So that when we learnt that the E.R.D.C. was coming to Obubra to establish plantations we were very pleased. This means they will come to educate the people on how to preserve their palm trees instead of destroying. If the Government can arrange to come forward now and help the people who already have their own plantations and educate them on how to grow crops, we will be very happy.

I beg to support the Bill.

Chief Ike Okoroafor (Bende Division): In supporting the Bill I appeal to the Ministers of Transport and Agriculture to help the people of Bende Division. I belong to Bende Division and without blowing my own trumpet I say that Bende Division is the Canaan of the Eastern Region. We have plenty of cocoa there; we have palm produce

but the geographical position makes it difficult for transport facilities to be made available. There are so many areas covered with mud and during certain time of the season the people encounter much difficulties in communication. Therefore, I appeal to the Minister of Transport to see that good roads are provided especially in the forested areas where we have plenty of cocoa. I also appeal to the Minister of Agriculture to see that farmers are encouraged to do more and more in order to produce food for the Region in particular and for the world in general. I also appeal to the Minister of Agriculture to do all in his power to see that lorries and cars are made available to transport produce from the Region.

Rev. and Chief Effiong Utit M.B.E. (Enyong Division): In supporting the Bill, I have to say that in Enyong Division of Uyo Province, the Government knows that we have plenty of palm produce and plenty of oil. We have no sufficient oil mills where this oil can be bulked and refined and so we have no good market for the oil. I plead with the Government to see that they build more oil mills in our area in order to enable the people to market good oil for consumption.

Chief Prince E. W. Dappa Pepple (The Amanyanabo of Bonny): In supporting the Bill I call the attention of the Government to the fact that we in the Rivers area have a sort of soil which is not very fertile for crops. But I have to say that there are certain areas which grow crops like coco-nut and palm trees. I would ask the Minister to see that such amenities, as sending experts to the area to advise farmers on how to grow crops, should be undertaken. It is true that in our area we have more creeks than roads and it is only reasonable to suggest to the Minister of Transport to see that free river transport is made available to the Rivers people. In providing such transport Government should see that it is extended to Bonny. At certain time of the season people find it very difficult to ply in canoes in the rivers because of storms and waves. So by providing good transport in the area the position will be made better.

Secondly, I will take this opportunity of thanking the Minister of Production for extending Copra Processing Mill to Bonny. We have coco-nut estate but the estate is not

progressing; we have made arrangement to contact the Minister to see in what way he could help us. The people of my area believe in co-operation and it is by co-operation that we get what we want from the Government.

The Minister of Agriculture (Mr P. N. Okeke): The number of hon. Members who have spoken on Agriculture shows the importance which Agriculture holds in this Region. I thank the hon. Members who have spoken on the difficulties of evacuation of produce, and that Government should intensify its efforts to provide adequate facilities for the evacuation of produce. This shows conclusively that Agriculture is the life-blood of this Region.

Before I go further, I would like to explain to hon. Members that the Ministry of Production has now been merged with the Ministry of Agriculture and all references to production should now be made to the Ministry of Agriculture. I happen to be a new man in the Ministry of Agriculture and the amount of interest shown by hon. Members shows that with the new Ministry of Agriculture and the new House of Chiefs, we can work together to raise the standard of agriculture in this Region. I shall confer with the Produce Inspection section of my Ministry in order to provide necessary facilities for people who do produce work to help them evacuate their produce.

An hon. Member has spoken on the monopoly of produce trade by U.A.C. I shall have to investigate this matter but with the information at my disposal, I am not very sure that the U.A.C. now monopolises produce trade. There is a Licensed Buying Agents Association and I understand that the majority of the members of this Association are Africans and that U.A.C. is just a member of that Association. With the reports at my disposal, I am informed that the U.A.C. no longer now monopolises the produce trade.

Several hon. Members have spoken about loans to cocoa and oil palm producers. There is a branch in my Ministry, the E.R.D.C., which gives out loans to farmers and efforts will be made to assist genuine farmers. In the past, some people have applied for these loans and used them for other purposes rather than for agriculture. I want to say that my Ministry will do everything to encourage genuine farmers.

An hon. Member from Bende spoke about cocoa. When I visited the school of Agriculture at Umudike, I was informed that a soil survey of this area has been taken and that the area is suitable for cocoa. I understand also that efforts are being made by my Ministry to encourage cocoa production in certain areas in Bende Division. We shall continue to encourage such policy of taking soil samples of different parts of the Region for cocoa production. It will be of interest to Members to know that recently Government has removed cocoa from the control of the Eastern Region Marketing Board. That has been done in order to encourage cocoa producers to produce cocoa and we expect that in a few years this Region shall be in a position to rival the cocoa growing areas of the Western Region. I assure hon. Members that after the Budget Session I shall go round the Region and see things for myself. I hope that when that time comes hon. Members of the House of Chiefs here who are keenly interested in cocoa production will co-operate with me in raising the standard of agriculture in 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 to 3 agreed to.

Bill to be reported.

(The President resumed the Chair)

Bill reported without Amendment, 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.

Section 15 of the Finance (Control and Management) Law authorised me to issue a

[DR IMOKE]

Provisional General Warrant to permit recurrent expenditure to be incurred at the beginning of a 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 the Capital Development Fund.

The position is, therefore, that while it is possible for me to sign a Provisional Warrant to permit expenditure to be incurred from the Consolidated Revenue Fund in advance of the annual appropriation, I have no authority under the Funds and Accounts Law to issue a 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 April, 1959, does not provide retrospective authority for the various accounts operated by the Accountant-General during the 1958-59 financial year.

The Bill before this House seeks to remove these defects and I am quite sure that hon. Members will agree that it should be passed.

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

Chief J. Mpi (Port Harcourt Province): In supporting the Bill, we have heard what the Minister of Finance told us here. After all, there is no harm in allowing such a power to him but it should not be a way of getting through to spend more than he is required to do. I think this will not be simply to get power from this House and then carry on spending money any how. I have nothing against the Bill and I support it.

Mr C. E. Amobi (Special Member): In supporting the Bill, I have to congratulate the hon. Minister of Finance on the way the finances of the Eastern Region are being handled more especially, this early part of the year. In the past, we have always heard of misappropriation of funds, but since the present Minister took over the finances of the

Eastern Region, people responsible for these misappropriations have been brought to a check. There are no more news of misappropriation of funds and the accounting system of the Eastern Region seems to be in more suitable order than before.

In supporting this Bill, I would like to say that efforts should be made to see that overspending is discouraged in all aspects of the Eastern Region's life. I therefore support the Bill.

Chief G. N. Agbasiere (Orlu Division): I rise to explain something about this Bill brought here. Hon. Members of the House of Chiefs know very well that this Bill has been passed by the hon. Members of the House of Assembly and the idea of bringing it to this House is to give hon. Members of the House of Chiefs an opportunity of finding out whether or not there are amendments. If there is no amendment then we shall pass the Bill.

As many of you are well aware, we are all new Members and it is gradually that we will learn the business of this House. With these few remarks, I beg to support 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)

Clauses 1 to 3 agreed to.

Bill to be reported.

(The President resumed the Chair)

Bill reported without Amendment, read the Third time and passed.

(4) The Eastern Region 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.

This is a simple and straightforward Bill, but for the benefit of the hon. Members I would like to give the background of the Law—The Eastern Region Local Government (Extension of Office) Law, 1959 which this Bill seeks to amend.

Some Local and District Councils in Aba, Calabar, Ogoja, Nsukka and other parts of the Region were due for elections early last year, but the Divisional Officers who were to conduct these elections were busily engaged with the registration and other matters connected with the Federal election and so the Ministry of Local Government had to bring a Bill to the House of Assembly for a law to extend the lives of the Councils due for election early in 1959. This law which was passed in the House of Assembly in 1959 is known as the Eastern Region Local Government (Extension of Office) Law, 1959.

The Councils affected by this law—that is Councils the elections to which could not be held and the lives of which had to be extended for the reasons I have already given—were listed in the schedule to the law.

It is a mistake in this schedule that the Bill before this hon. House seeks to amend. The Local Councils in Eket Division were by mistake included in the schedule when, in fact, they had had their elections. If the law is allowed to stand as it is, local councillors in Eket Division would be compelled to stand election again before the end of March this year. This would mean that they would have sat as councillors for only fifteen months instead of the usual three years.

It is only to amend this anomaly that this Bill is presented to this hon. House and this can be done by *deleting* all reference to Local Councils in Eket Division from the schedule.

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

The Parliamentary Secretary (Premier's Office) (Chief S. E. Onukogu): In rising to support the Bill which is non-contentious and self-explanatory, I am glad to say that I am satisfied with the explanations which the Minister of Local Government has made and I do not think that this sort of Bill requires much debate.

Chief N. U. Ofem (Abakaliki Province): The hon. Minister of Local Government has masterly explained the reasons for the extension of the lives of certain District Councils and I think that the reasons are very satisfactory.

I beg to support the Bill.

Chief Eket Inyang-Udo (Uyo Province): I rise to support this Bill but I have one very important remark to make. It is not a very good thing that the Chairman of a Council was given a vote of no confidence which was later withdrawn. That is exactly what happened last month although the Minister knows better. To make this amendment for the extension of the lives of some Councils is a very good thing and therefore I support the Bill because the Minister has the power and also because it has been passed in the Other House. Because of this, I will support the Bill, otherwise I would have asked the hon. House of Chiefs to reject it because this particular Council behaved very badly. I know it will displease some people but I have got a right to say it before the public. If a man does not behave well we should say so.

Chief Zumoh Efeke V (Yenagoa Province): I rise to support the Bill but I have some observations to make and that is concerning some Local Councils in Brass Division. If there is any Local Council whose life is to be extended I would support the last speaker. For instance, in my home town, Amassoma, the Local Council has not met for the last three years. The reason is that they receive no allowance. It is a very reasonable thing and something that the Government should think over. Those who are members of Local Councils do similar work like people in the District Councils. Those in the District Councils only go about for employment, scholarships and receiving bribes in respect of all these and all sorts of bad things. Instead of those in the District Councils alone to receive allowance, I would support that others in the Local Councils also should receive allowance.

Secondly, you know that the educational standard in the Eastern Region is higher than those in other Regions but I will have to point out that the standard is now falling because most of the councillors are teachers. They go about making local politics. They spend

[CHIEF EFEKE]

not less than one week in Council committees while their children are there suffering and nobody looks after them. That is one of the reasons why the standard of education in the Eastern Region is now falling. Sometime ago somebody said at Aba that teachers should be stopped from being councillors. They go there to find money by all means. As a matter of formality, I support the Bill.

Chief J. U. Okudare (Ogoja Province): This is a straightforward Bill and I have no hesitation in supporting it. The Minister of Local Government always knows about what is happening in the Local Government Councils.

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.

Bill to be reported.

(The President resumed the Chair)

Bill reported without Amendment, read the Third time and passed.

(5) 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 individuals 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 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.

A week ago, hon. Members heard over the wireless an announcement made by the N.B.C. Part of the bulletin read as follows:

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

This announcement gave a very false impression to members of the public of the purport of this Bill. As a matter of fact, many people understood it to mean that the Eastern Regional Ministry of Finance was being converted into a *public corporation* as an addition to existing corporations like the E.R.D.C. and Printing Corporation. I must make it abundantly clear that the N.B.C. bulletin terribly distorted the Bill. It omitted to say that the Eastern Region Ministry of Finance was being constituted into a *corporation sole*, which is merely a nominal arrangement to enable Government transact business with other companies and individuals. No doubt, you have erased such a false impression from your minds and will help to educate the public on the correct purpose of the Bill, namely, that the Eastern Region Ministry of Finance is not being converted into a public corporation, but it is simply being created a corporation sole.

The object 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.

This Bill is straightforward and should receive the warm support of this House as it did in the House of Assembly.

The Minister of Local Government (Mr P. O. Nwoga): I beg to second.

Chief J. Mpi (Port Harcourt Province): I do not want to say much about the Minister's effort to clear the misunderstanding in our minds about this Bill as we have heard a lot about the Corporation and all that it is going to do for this Region. I hope that the Minister will not go all out with our funds to invest them into this type of Corporation. However, we are new in the whole thing and at the same time, we do not want to sign our death warrant. We trust our Minister and the Government for that matter and hope the Government will lead us through without any trouble.

I now support the Bill.

Chief Eket Inyang-Udo (Uyo Province): I rise to support the Bill. In supporting this Bill, I know that the Government of the Eastern Region has much to do and I am sure that the Premier of this Region will surmount the ordeal. I know that we did have several Corporations. We had one Corporation which did not function. It is not the fault of the Government or the fault of the man who they put in-charge of it. I was a member of the Eastern Regional Marketing Board where many people in the Region have interest but as the Chairman of that Board, Mr L. P. Ojukwu, is a man who can manage money and who can *sit tight* on money—and I give him that credit. We have the hon. Minister of Finance here with us and I would like to warn him that the signing of contracts with foreign firms is to sign his death warrant. I would also like to warn our statesmen from the Eastern Region about the signing of contracts with foreign nations and that in the event of their doing so, they must have the best lawyers on their side. One of the Members of the House of Representatives told me that one of the contracts signed by the Federal Government was unsuccessful but when some of the Members wanted to speak, some said "don't speak; after all our Ministers have done the business." Though several Corporations succeeded and some failed, it is not the fault of

the Government. If Government sends someone to a country as its Ambassador, the Government is bound to have confidence in him but if by one way or the other the person lets down the Government, I do not consider it the fault of the Government. I am saying this because I see several contracts being signed by the E.R.D.C. I am warning the Government because no one can tell—it might happen tomorrow. The E.R.D.C. everyday signs contracts. Now supposing all these contracts are given to foreign firms when Nigeria is to become independent, where do we stand? I am glad that they have brought this up now and I hope that the Government of the Eastern Region will apply its seal and *sit tight* with the money. I am also warning the Government that in signing these contracts they must have control over the foreign firms. Rockefeller has put all his money into all the companies in America and he controls 51, 52 or 55 per cent so that he always has the veto power in the Company. I am glad that my Government made it impossible for people to get away with money.

Chief J. N. Wachuku (Umuahia Province): The explanation of the Minister is clear. There is no intention of forming a Corporation. The question of speaking about the E.R.D.C. does not arise. Since the Corporation takes care of itself, if you talk about the E.R.D.C. it appears as if the Minister of Finance intends to form a Corporation which is not the intention. He has explained its sphere plainly. It is for the benefit of the people of this Region. He said he was going to introduce a Housing Scheme for our people. I think he also said we should do away with some of the wrong information we received from some members of the general public.

I support the Bill.

Mrs Janet Mokelu (Special Member): In rising to support this Bill I feel that the Ministry of Finance is a sort of somebody's son who is grown up and wants his father to make him live on his own. So that in doing so, the son will progress more rapidly than he was doing under his father. I support this Bill, but would advise the Ministry of Finance to look before it leaps in signing agreements, contracts and so forth. It would do the country good if it progresses by this Bill being passed. But

[MRS MOKELU]

the only fear is that it should not think that it has stood on its own. We have to watch the progress so that it may not be like the other Corporations. If we see that there is no good progress, or that it will bring the name of the Eastern Region of Nigeria to the mud like some of the other Corporations, we should call it back.

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 9 agreed to.

Bill to be reported.

(The President resumed the Chair)

Bill reported without Amendment, read the Third time and passed.

(6) The Eastern Nigeria Broadcasting Bill

Order for Second Reading read.

The Minister of Internal Affairs (Mr I. U. Akpabio): I beg to move that the Bill be now read a Second time.

This Bill arises from the provision of the Nigeria (Constitution) Order in Council, 1954, 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 provides for the provision of funds by the Regional Government for running its services. It will be required to keep proper accounts which will be audited as provided in clause 18.

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

The Minister of Local Government (Mr P. O. Nwoga): I beg to second.

Chief Zumoh Efeke V (Yenagoa Province): I rise to support this Bill, and before I go further I have to pay tribute to the Minister and the Government who are responsible for bringing television and broadcasting into the Eastern Region.

Secondly, I should say that it is even late to bring television and broadcasting into the Region; but I know that there were many difficulties placed in our way by the Federal Government and the present Premier of the Western Region, Chief Akintola, because he wanted television to operate in the Western Region before our own. I support this Bill for many reasons. A letter posted at Enugu will take not less than two weeks before someone in Yenagoa will receive it. A telegram will take the same number of days, and if not

for the bush radios which we are having in our houses, people would not have got the opportunity to know that they should come here to attend the meeting of this House.

In supporting this Bill, I hope that the television and broadcasting should be extended to the rural areas; and Government should take note that the charges should be very, very small so that those in the rural areas—the low-class people—will get the little money to make use of the services. Another point is that as a Corporation, its workers within a short time will demand higher wages and immediately the wages are increased it is neither the Government nor the workers that will suffer—it is those in the rural areas. Therefore, in supporting the Bill, I am advising the Government to arrange the charges to be very moderate for us in the rural areas.

Chief Johnson Emeasiohum Ikeogu (Bende Division): In supporting this Bill, I have to say one thing. Everyone of us knows quite well that since radios came to different houses so many false rumours have died away. Therefore we have to thank our Government for having now to introduce its own radio and television. What we will beg our Government is that the services should be extended into the rural areas to have the people educated. When there were no radios some people would come out and say "Oh the people at Enugu have all died" and the rumour would gain ground. But today in the rural areas if you say it they will ask "Where did you hear it; from the radio?" If you say from the radio they will agree but if you say no, nobody will agree. Therefore, I think this Bill must have the consent of the whole House because I feel it is a Bill that will enlighten us and our children.

Prince Eugene William Dappa Pepple (the Amanyanabo of Bonny): In supporting this Bill, I have to thank the Minister because the Bill is a means by which it will be possible to get at the people of the Eastern Region and, apart from that, I have to say that it is very, very important and honourable for any Government to say one thing and do it. There has been a lot of talks about this television affair and we who love our Government will be very, very proud to see that our Government, whenever it says one thing, does it. It is a thing of pride to all of us that television has

become a reality in the Eastern Region. So I have to thank the Minister for presenting this Bill and I sincerely hope that the hon. Members in this House will support it and have it passed.

Chief Udo Ukpa (Eket Division): I rise to support the Bill. The Bill has been well explained by the Minister concerned and, in the first place, before I continue, I have got to thank the Premier and his Government for their effort. Really this Bill does not require much discussion. It has been well explained by the Minister concerned and I will further add that the rural areas should be given consideration. Also, as one hon. Member has already said, the charges should be moderate so that the man-in-the-street can be benefited.

Chief J. N. Wachuku (Umuahia Province): In supporting this Bill, I have one or two observations to make. First, the hon. Minister complained about misinformation; therefore, I am advising the Minister in charge of this portfolio to be very careful in selecting staff, that is, not to bring anybody who, when the Government says one thing, does another. Furthermore, I am asking that studios be erected at Umuahia and Aba to enable our people to know what is happening. These important places must have studios; without that, what are we here for? If you have one at Onitsha, Aba and Umuahia will each be looking for one too.

Mrs M. Ekpo (Special Member): In rising to support this Bill, I want to align myself with what the hon. Chief Wachuku has just said, that is, about staff. In political events in Nigeria today, some of the staff do play politics with interpretation when they are told to interpret. I know of a certain staff who was interpreting in Efik during the frantic period of the 1957 elections and I am very happy that for a few months now I have not heard him interpreting; though the interpreter who is interpreting the Efik version of the news now is not doing it very well. I am sure there are so many young men and women who can interpret the Efik version and who therefore can do the job better than someone who is a foreign interpreter in that place. Secondly, I have to thank the Minister in charge because during the last election some of the old men and women in the rural areas could not even move out from their radio sets.

[MRS EKPO]

This is an enlightenment, and so I am supporting this Bill. I do not want to make a long speech.

I am emphasising again that when the Board of this Broadcasting Institution will be created there should be no discrimination. Men and women should serve on that Board. Already if you look round the Eastern Region today you do not find many women serving in any of these Boards. At times you find one, at times you find none. So many of us women are paying tax in this Region and this tax is going to be used in paying this Corporation's staff. Therefore, I am asking that women should form a majority in the Broadcasting Corporation because if you listen to your radio and you hear a certain female voice coming to announce the news to you, you will certainly sit up to hear the news.

Mrs J. Mokelu (Special Member): In supporting this Bill, I feel it is a means whereby the whole of Nigeria will be brought together, and it is also a means whereby Nigerian culture will be spread to all people, and if the studios are erected in different centres and the people have the chance of going into the studios and of broadcasting certain culture from their areas it will help the whole of Nigeria, and if all these things are brought together we all will actually become one by this. And it is also a means whereby our news, the real Nigerian news, should not be censored before it goes to the public. In the past we had a lot of difficulties—you would want the people to hear a certain thing but they could not hear it because the broadcasting house was not there; but if we have our own broadcasting house it will be a means whereby our own news, and what we want our people to hear, will reach them. I hope that the cost will not be very high so that everybody will have the chance of having, and benefiting from, it.

Chief Ike Okoroafor (Bende Division): I support the Bill *in toto*, and would add that not only townships should be considered as broadcasting centres; rural areas should also be considered. The areas that the hon. Chief had mentioned are very distant and I am appealing to the Government that while they are thinking of putting up the radio and

broadcasting stations, rural areas should not be left out because some men and women leave their homes for the township in order to enjoy amenities. If broadcasting centres and studios are spread here and there, there will be some people left at home to do the farming. If you go to the rural areas you find that many areas are neglected and the land left uncultivated because people like to enjoy life in the township. So while the Government is trying to extend broadcasting and television into the rural areas, they should also encourage agriculture and other amenities.

Many Members rose.

Chief N. N. Anyika (Onitsha Province): Point of Order. Standing Order 30 (10) and (11). I do not know why two or three Members should stand up at the same time and wish to talk. I think it is the duty of the President to permit one to speak and for the Member to speak only when his name is called. It is not good for us to be going astray like this. Since the Lower House had passed this Bill and the Upper House will not criticise anything about this broadcasting, I move that the Second Reading be passed.

Chief Eket Inyang-Udo (Uyo Province): I come from the very difficult area known as "C.O.R." area where a lot of lies and stories have been going on. I think the Eastern Government should set up a separate broadcasting system which it will be able to control. As the hon. Mrs Ekpo said, the broadcasts in Efik language are very misleading. Many a time they do not broadcast the facts and perhaps they are making propaganda. So it is my view that every section should have radio and television facilities and should make any suggestions to the Government, through them. Many of these rural areas have no electricity, say, a place like Uyo, where they can extend the cable and set up a television station where people could go and see what the Government of the Eastern Region is doing. For example, when this House and the Other House are sitting, the people will be able to see for themselves what is happening. At present they do not know what is going on, and it so happens that when the Government says one thing, another person says another. I think if we have these radio and television facilities, our people will be able to see things for themselves

and this will inevitably kill some of the false stories being told the people in the rural areas.

I support the Bill.

Chief Egbe Araghe Egbara (Obubra Division): In supporting this Bill, I beg to say that in this year of Nigerian Independence, it will be a pity to see that some parts in Nigeria have not been heard of at all. In the N.B.C. you hear some of the languages of Nigeria but it will be a pity if in future, some of the languages of certain parts of Nigeria are not heard in the air. About two years ago my own Council addressed letters to the N.B.C. asking them to come over to Obubra and record some songs and dances for the people of Nigeria to enjoy. So if this Corporation is to be set up, I am praying that Government should not forget Obubra because it will be a great pity to see that the language of these people is not heard of during the Independence Celebrations.

With all these remarks, I beg to support the Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

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

The President: Before we go into Committee, hon. Members, the House will rise for recess for thirty minutes and on our return, the House will go into Committee.

Sitting suspended at 12 noon.

Sitting resumed at 12.30 p.m.

Bill immediately considered in Committee.

(In the Committee)

Clauses 1 to 10 agreed to.

Clause 11.

Chief Zumoh Efeke V (Yenagoa Province): About arrangement, I want the Corporation to appoint agents in the rural areas, mostly in my area. I am bringing this to the notice of the House now that agents should be appointed in a place like Yenagoa Province.

Secondly, I want to say something about the language used in broadcasting. Ijaw language comes third amongst the most widely used languages in Nigeria. The only thing is that Ijaw people are scattered in all parts of Nigeria, otherwise, if you put us together we are the third largest in the country after Hausa and Ibo.

The Chairman: Has the hon. Member any amendment to make?

Chief Efeke: No, Mr Chairman.

Clause 11 agreed to.

Clauses 12 to 21 agreed to.

Schedule agreed to.

Bill to be reported.

(The President resumed the Chair)

Bill reported without Amendment, read the Third time and passed.

(7) 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.

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 to 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.

[DR IMOKE]

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 debit notes 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, control of expenditure was a somewhat complex one but Members will 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.

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 hon. Members will warmly support this Bill.

The Minister of Internal Affairs (Mr I. U. Akpabio): I beg to second.

Chief J. Mpi (Port Harcourt Province): I really do not know what is meant by excess expenditure, whether this is embodied in the Supplementary Estimates or it is a separate thing altogether. If it is one and the same thing, I would say that the Eastern Regional Government is worthy of praise in the way it is controlling expenditure. I say that because I remember what was the financial position of this Region during the Eyo Ita Government and what is the financial position today. The financial position of the Region today is very sound and Government deserves every praise and encouragement. With these few remarks, I beg to support.

The Minister of Finance: I would like to explain fully to the last speaker and perhaps to other hon. Members who are misunderstanding this Bill. This Bill is quite different from the Supplementary Appropriation Bill which was read a Second time this morning. This Bill before us now refers to expenditure incurred in 1958-59 while the Supplementary Appropriation Bill refers to expenditure incurred in 1959-60. They are two different financial years. As you are all aware, this House and the House of Assembly go through the Appropriation Bill every year at the Budget Session and vote a certain amount of money that Government should spend. Occasionally, Government overspends and that happens when it is extremely necessary that certain services must be carried out and a warrant is given by the Governor for more money to be issued for expenditure. Some Departments or Ministries can overspend by error what is provided for them. I will cite one example—suppose Government places an indent overseas with the Crown Agents and this indent does not arrive until after the expiration of the year, Government has to pay for what it has ordered whether they arrive during or after the financial year. When Government pays after the financial year it means that it has incurred excess expenditure and the Public Accounts Committee has to get an explanation for this excess expenditure and the report of the Public Accounts Committee will be placed before the House. When the House is satisfied that the Public Accounts Committee has gone into this matter, the excess expenditure vote before the House is passed.

What I am asking you to do now is to support this Bill in that the House of Assembly has approved that the excess expenditure should be allowed and the Public Accounts Committee has reported on this excess vote.

Chief N. U. Ofem (Abakaliki Province): I rise to support this Bill. I think the excess expenditure vote can be likened to a request from a woman to her husband asking him to increase her monthly allowance because she has had to exceed the amount allocated because of the unexpected entertainment of strangers.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a Second time.

Question: That the Bill be committed deemed to have been negatived—Bill accordingly read the Third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The Minister of Local Government (Mr P. O. Nwoga): I beg to second.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

Writing Materials for Members of the House of Chiefs

Chief G. N. Agbasiere (Orlu Division): I am surprised to come to this House to notice that no pencils or pens are placed before hon. Chiefs for their use. You know that some of us came here without pens and pencils. I hope that these things will be provided next time.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at five minutes to one o'clock p.m.

Eastern House of Chiefs Debates

35 [Business of the House; 1959-60 26 FEBRUARY 1960 [1959-60 Supplementary Appro- 36
Supplementary Appropriation Bill: 2R] priation Bill: 2R]

EASTERN HOUSE OF CHIEFS

Friday, 26th February, 1960

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

PRAYERS

(Mr President *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 Commerce (Mr J. U. Nwodo): I beg to second.

Question put and agreed to.

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

ORDER OF THE DAY

**The 1959-60 Eastern Region Supplementary
Appropriation Bill—Second Reading**

(First and only Allotted Day)

*Order read for resuming adjourned Debate on
Question (25th February)—That the Bill be now
read a Second time.*

Chief J. Mpi (Port Harcourt Province):
I rise to support the Bill. In doing so, I
should first of all pay tribute to the Government
of the Eastern Region. At the same time I wish
to say that I am very happy to see how they
work as a team. I hope this will continue to be
so. I believe that every decent-minded person
in this House will agree with me that the
Government of the Eastern Region is second to
none in the way of spending the funds of
Government judiciously.

Though I say this, I have a little comment
to make. My comment is not a criticism in a
way, but only to remind the Government of
some of the things which we, the Chiefs,
would like to have as Members of this hon.
House. We do not want to be inferior to the
Chiefs of other Regions—we want to be equal
to Chiefs of other Regions. I remember that

when we were in London during the Constitu-
tional Conference the present Premier said that
they would see to it that their Chiefs were like
other Chiefs. I hope that now that he has
assumed the office of Premier this statement is
still fresh in his mind.

The other thing I want to mention is that we
are Chiefs, and as such, we must have some-
thing to show that we are Chiefs—there must
be a Staff of Office, so that we do not have to
carry any kind of sticks about. In the *Daily
Times* of January 28th you will see where
a Third-class Lokoja Chief was given a Staff
of Office—a Third-class Chief for that matter.
We want to be like others, and I hope that the
Government will not forget our Third-class
and Fourth-class Chiefs who were elected.
They should be recognised so that they will be
able to support us because we know that as
Chiefs, we owe much to our Government. I
say this because we do not want to be Chiefs
here and something else at home. We should
do something to show that we are Chiefs in
support of our Government. Our people
must go with the tide and not take to their own
way and we the Chiefs the other way. I know
what I am talking about. A word is enough
for the wise.

So far as the Supplementary Appropriation
Bill is concerned, it is in order. But the thing
I would like the Government to do to help us,
is to take over some of the roads from the rural
areas. So that we do not depend or centre our
services always in the Headquarters, especially
now that Independence is coming, otherwise
there will be nothing to make the people in the
rural areas know or feel that Independence is
coming.

With these few remarks, I support the Bill
with all pleasure.

Chief J. N. Wachuku (Umuahia Pro-
vince): It is my desire to support this Bill
but in doing so, I have certain observations to
make. First, you know the people from the
old Calabar Province formerly came to
Enugu through Aba and Onitsha, but at
present this is not the case. They now come
through Umuahia, Okigwi and Awgu, and in
most cases they find things very difficult on
their way. So I am appealing to the Minister
of Commerce to establish a Catering Rest
House at Umuahia so that the people passing
there will find somewhere to rest.

Another thing is the road abutting Okigwi, which is very dangerous, having a winding corner without a warning signboard anywhere. I am advising the Premier—the first citizen of the Government of this Region—not to travel by that road until it is set right.

Another observation which I want to make is the one which concerns the Local Government Councils. Before the introduction of Local Government all Native Administration Councils were indenting for their drugs through the Government, and this continued until about a year ago when the Ministry of Local Government refused allowing the Local Councils to further this method. They ordered that we had to go to Tender Board, call for tender, before the award of contract to someone else. The result is that we waste a lot of money in advertising and in payment of sitting fees to the members of the Board. So I feel that the Government should give option to all Local Councils that wish to indent through the Government Stores to do so without restriction as is the case at present. The Minister of Health is prepared to assist and I see no reason why the Minister of Local Government should not help. Therefore, I am appealing to him to do something in the matter.

Yesterday, the Minister in charge of Chieftaincies said something here about Second-class Chiefs. I remember this matter is still hanging in a certain Division where decision is still not taken. It is no good shifting the matter on and on. By next week the Government will be faced with a heavy responsibility concerning the Budget Session and it is necessary that immediate action should be taken. The Regulation has been made for the guidance of Government and I do not see any justification in delaying it. There is a team of lawyers if amendments are to be effected. I do not see why this matter should be further delayed. It is time that the Government should take a decision so that every Division should be represented here.

Another thing is this: You will observe that in this House, excepting the Special Members, we are composed of Clan Heads. But when you come to distinguish a certain class of men as different from others, I do not know how the Government arrived at that decision. For instance, Chief Ika Ika Oqua II, the Ntoe of Big Qua, is a natural ruler for

Old Calabar Province; Chief Francis Nwizu Ezerioha of Orsu Alamiri, Orlu, is a natural ruler; my hon. Friend, Chief N. U. Ofem, is a natural ruler. I have mentioned just a few. Also, Chief Ako Okwoli II, the Eze of Ukpabi-Nibo, Enugu, is a natural ruler. In view of this, I do not see any justification in labelling some few people natural rulers at the expense of others. With the exception of the Special Members, all of us here are Clan Heads; therefore if you are going to have natural rulers, in fact do so, if not, well stop it. You cannot convince me that the few people I mentioned are not natural rulers and so I hope you should review the whole issue, because once a man is a Clan Head, automatically he is a natural ruler.

Again, I have a word of congratulation to the Government for the appointment of Mr Achara as the Commissioner for Eastern Nigeria in the United Kingdom. It is a very good choice. Mr Achara is one of those gentlemen for whom I have very high regard.

For several years now, the debates of the Eastern House of Assembly which adjourned about five or six days ago have been among the best. The Government presented the various Bills in a very humble way. The Opposition was very constructive and, as such, the Government accepted some of its suggestions. I wish this spirit of give and take should continue. I think perhaps that it is due to the prayer of one of the hon. Members here. If you remember, the hon. Member, Chief Francis O. Joseph Allagoa, the Amanyanabo of Nembe, invoked the spirit of God as to the guidance of this House so that all men walking may see. I think the prayer of elders is now having effect. With these few remarks, I support the Bill.

The Parliamentary Secretary (Premier's Office) (Chief S. E. Onukogu): I rise to support the Bill which is non-controversial and I hope my hon. Colleagues will give it a blessing. I will begin with an expression of thanks to the Minister of Finance, his staff and to any other officials of the Government who are connected with the preparation of this Supplementary Appropriation Bill. I am also proud of the Members of this House. I say this because anybody who watched the debate yesterday will evidently testify that the Chiefs

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in this House, for the first time, started very well and will in the future, no doubt, maintain the rules of debate.

The last sitting was an inaugural one and for the joint sitting of both Houses and it was not possible then for hon. Members of the House of Chiefs to know one another. This time, the present House presents everyone of us with an opportunity of knowing one another very well. I think it is not out of place for me to thank the Eastern Regional Government, once more, for establishing the House of Chiefs in the Eastern Region and for recognising Chiefs in this Region. I would also like to extend my appreciation to my friends who were unfortunate to gain admission to this House, but who are loyal members of the Eastern Chiefs Conference. I am appealing to all Chiefs inside and outside this House to sink their differences and co-operate. What are our duties as Chiefs and fathers? Those of us who are politically minded but who are blessed to be Members of this House should now forget their political inclinations. We should all come here to co-operate with the Government in order to be of great value to the country as a whole.

I rise to make this little speech because I know that there are some of our able fighters who have not been privileged to come to this hon. House and who perhaps may think that they have been forgotten. I take this opportunity to appeal to our other hon. Members who do not know what is going on with regard to the Eastern Chiefs Conference, that the time has now come when we shall all unite in order to achieve our common goal. Unity is strength. I am grateful for the opportunity you have given me to express my views and I hope that all concerned in this House will appreciate all that Government has done for the Chiefs in this Region.

Chief Francis O. Joseph Allagoa (the Amanyanabo of Nembe): I rise to support the Supplementary Appropriation Bill. In doing so, however, I have one or two remarks to make. There is an adage which says: "That those in glass houses should not throw stones". I say this because a little while ago, one hon. Member made an unwarranted attack

on First-class Chiefs. I should like to take this opportunity to explain to that hon. Member that I am not a Chief but a King. I also regard Chief J. T. Princewill Amachree of Kalabari, Chief Douglas Jaja of Opobo, Chief Kanu Oji of Arochuku, as well as several other First-class Chiefs, as Kings and not Chiefs. I should therefore have thought that the hon. Member who was attacking the First-class Chiefs should have taken into consideration the real status of these First-class Chiefs in order to accord them their due respect. Give honour to whom honour is due. I hope that hon. Members will not take an undue advantage just because Government has been over-liberal in handling Chieftaincy matters.

We are a neglected area; it is true that we have no numerical strength but that is not the reason why we should be neglected. If you know what I suffered when coming to this House, you will be very sorry for me. I want this to be noted by Government. The Minister of Transport knows what I am speaking and other Ministers know what I am speaking. We in Nembe would like to be encouraged and we believe in "live and let live".

Chief Douglas Jaja (the Amanyanabo of Opobo): In supporting the Bill, I have a few observations to make. Firstly, I have to mention the dire need of my people of Opobo. In Opobo town, we have no water supply, while in the Bill urban water supply is mentioned. If you come to Opobo, you will really pity us. We can only get our water during the rainy season but during the dry season we suffer a lot. Every citizen of Opobo suffers much and cries for water. So I am appealing to Government to take this into consideration and give us water supply as others in the rural areas or townships have.

Secondly, in Opobo most of our people have applied for loans from the Government but Government has taken no heed to assist them; but here there is a Head where loans come in. I am appealing to Government not to forget our people when giving out these loans. Our Bar is closed and we have no source of income in our area. We were good traders as is known by Government but the women were suffering a lot. Most of our people are outside Opobo town finding their daily bread because of the closure of the Bar. So if loans are given to our people they can put them to good use and

will enable our people to come home and do some better jobs. Now our tax is falling because our people are scattered in Nigeria finding their daily bread, and loans are not given to our people in Opobo. No effort has been made by Government to reopen the Bar and then amenities are being denied us. So I am appealing very seriously to Government to look back and remember the good work of Opobo people in the past days and help them.

Thirdly, I pay tribute to Government, mostly the Minister of Finance, for having taken great care in compiling the Supplementary Appropriation Bill in the way that it will suit everybody. Nobody will quarrel over this Bill and I wish the Government to carry on this good work. No Nigerian will quarrel with the work of Government at present.

Chief J. U. Okudare (Ogoja Province): I beg to support this Supplementary Appropriation Bill. A Chief started earlier here to criticise Government on the question of Natural Rulers. It is not good now for us who are Chiefs to come here and criticise ourselves. I, myself, come from a royal family which started before the advent of the British. If you look up the records in Enugu here, you will see that. It was when warrant Chiefs were created that my grand father was deprived of his title. Personally, I hope on a future date to put up my case to Government to recognise me as a Natural Ruler and not as an appointed First-class Chief. So anybody who has a case with the Government should put up his case to Government and not to come here and criticise Government.

Chief M. I. Asinobi (Special Member): I stand up to support the Bill. But I want to bring to the notice of Government that Port Harcourt is suffering from lack of water. In Enugu and Aba there is water but when you come to Port Harcourt you will not find water and we in Port Harcourt pay higher tax. I appeal to Government to help us about this water problem in Port Harcourt.

Another thing is the Owerri road. From Aba to Umuahia you have good road and it is wide enough but from Port Harcourt to Owerri

the road is not wide at all. Two cars cannot pass through at the same time. I am appealing to Government to do something about this Owerri-Port Harcourt road.

Another road is that of Owerri to Okigwi and it is the worst of all the roads. If you pass through that road you must send your car for repair. So I am also appealing to Government to see about it.

Chief S. A. Essien (Annang Province): I rise to support this Bill. In supporting the Bill I would like to ask the Minister of Education to consider appointing more supervising teachers and more visiting teachers to supervise and visit our schools. The number of schools operating since the introduction of the U.P.E. has risen but the number of visiting and supervising teachers is very few.

Again, I would like to call upon the Minister of Works to consider tarring the road from Aba to Abak. This road is very important in Abak Division. Traders who use this road are making their profits from the use of this road. Most of them who live on the other side of the Qua Iboe River which divides Abak Division into two are selling their products to the Licensed Produce Buying Stations through this road; but the road is very narrow.

I would like also to ask him to consider the immediate repair to the existing roads. Since Abak Division is divided into two by the Qua Iboe River, our people need more bridges. We have been asking the Government for several years now for more bridges. I would also stress that we should be considered in the distribution of more amenities. We are happy to pay taxes and we know why we pay our taxes. We should be considered for these amenities.

With these few remarks, I support the Bill.

Chief Zumoh Efeke V (Yenagoa Province): I rise to support the Bill and in doing so, I wish to make some few remarks and very important observations and also some comments in good faith. I would also like to draw the attention of the Ministers who are responsible for the various Ministries to take note against the next Budget Session. For the present

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Supplementary Appropriation Bill, I need not criticise anything or say anything against the Government.

Before I make any remarks about the Supplementary Budget, I wish to call for unity among all classes of Chiefs in the Eastern Region and also in the Federation of Nigeria, to make constructive contributions to the cause of national independence and progress of Nigeria. As all eyes are on us at the present moment and our position is placed in a very important place, we must know where we stand. This House is like a new born baby. The dignity of our position need not be over-emphasised. We must know that very much is expected of us both in and outside this House. You will recall that we had been called all sorts of names and some people even went so far as to say that there are no Chiefs in the Eastern Region except in the North and West. We are on the eve of Independence and we, as representatives of our people, must be representatives in words, appearance, outlook and several major changes in our national outlook, patriotism and above all, common love, with the rest of the Chiefs in the Eastern Region. Let us strive to bring out the real meaning of nationalism.

In politics, some of us here are matured. As you know, when an Army Officer trains his subordinates in war, he knows that he should not stand aloof and watch when the fighting is going on. Our people are just like children or subordinates in the Army and we should not just watch them aloof. As Chiefs we must be prepared to give our contributions to the working and general progress of our Region. We are at liberty as you know, to reject Motions which come from the Lower House, just for our own quota for the general development of the Region. That will show the nation that the sun really rises from the East. In the House of Chiefs in the North and West, Chiefs simply go there to give their assent and approval to Bills and Motions; but we have got to show that we are Chiefs of the Federation of Nigeria in supporting carefully or disapproving of any Bill.

I am also advising Members of this House to avoid giving room to partisan politics in this House for the common progress of this Region.

Now, I come to my observations and remarks. I thank the Government and the Minister of Internal Affairs for the provision of £300 to fight against the French inhuman act. That will show the whole Federation that as far as this atom protest is concerned the strongest protest has come from the Eastern Region. I have myself been leading a campaign team in the Rivers area to educate the people against the French atomic bomb and I had discussions with Mr Arinze and Mr Okoye. But unfortunately, the bomb was blasted before I had the time to lead the delegation and now I have taken another move of educating the school children to hate France and everything French. That is the only weapon in our command as a dependent country to fight against an Independent country. As you can remember, Ghana has done a lot by deciding to freeze all French assets in that country but as a dependent country, we cannot do that now; therefore, we must fight with the weapons in our command. I support that item of the Estimates making the provision of £300.

Economic development must be widely planned. The whole population must be given the opportunity to rise to higher standards of material and cultural well-being. In 1953, Dr the Hon. Nnamdi Azikiwe visited Brass Division. That was in October and during the flood all the sugar cane in the area was left at the mercy of the flood. The Premier then made a promise of establishing a sugar cane industry in the area. But unfortunately, when American sugar cane experts came to Nigeria for survey, the Government did not direct their attention to Brass where sugar was found in good quantity. I am, therefore, drawing the attention of the Government to consider Yenagoa Province for development purposes when it comes to the question of sugar industry.

I come to the Ministry of Agriculture. I said a lot yesterday about this Ministry and I wish to remove the bad impression gaining ground in the Region that there is no land in Yenagoa Province. We have land and I am now drawing the attention of the Minister to visit that place and to come to my house and I will direct him. I shall even arrange an outboard engine to carry him to all nooks and corners of the Province to see things for himself. The Minister should not remain

here and take it for granted that we have no fertile land. Also the farmers in Yenagoa Province need Government assistance in way of loans to develop their cocoa plantations. For instance, myself who is speaking now, and who has about thirty acres of cocoa area, I made an application for loan and the Agricultural Officer came and inspected my farm. After the inspection, do you know what reply I had? It was—"Carry on development". Tell me how I can carry on development without funds! I feel that farmers in Yenagoa Province must be encouraged because we are having the best oil and land not only in the Eastern Region but also in the Western Region where I have worked for more than fifteen years with a thorough knowledge of the quality of the soil there.

The next is Urban and Rural Water Supplies. The Water Supply in the rural areas are very, very disgraceful. There is no good water supply or good drinking water in Brass Division. Everybody knows we have water in that area but whenever the Ministers visit us they come with water bottles from either Port Harcourt, Onitsha or elsewhere. Does it mean that if accidentally these water bottles break they will go back to Port Harcourt or Onitsha to get fresh water before continuing their tour? I think the Minister responsible for water should consider Yenagoa Province. The Minister of Health recommended that our water was bad. That is why our people die often—we lost at one short period a total of not less than 250 lives. I made an alarm to the Minister of Health and the Government should take note of these things.

For Amassoma, the Government has approved Urban Water Supply which will cost £18,000 but up till this time nothing has been done. If the Government will supply water to Port Harcourt at a cost of £400,000 I do not see any reason why a scheme for £18,000 should not be carried out for Amassoma, which is the largest town in the Yenagoa Province. Also I consider that the question of contributing locally eight per cent of the cost before work is started, does not arise.

Now I come to Banking and Saving. In the whole of Yenagoa Province there is not a single Bank and business men travel all the way from Yenagoa to Port Harcourt or Onitsha

—a journey of about five days or more—for banking. The Minister responsible for the A.C.B. should open up banks in places like Yenagoa, Amassoma, Nembe and so on.

I observe that Government is giving much more attention to urban areas, i.e., townships, forgetting the rural areas when it comes to the question of development and the establishment of industries. This results in people leaving the rural areas to come and enjoy themselves in the townships which attract them. This is because life in the rural areas is deplorable and the people are rather in hell. I am one of the people who live in the rural areas and we who wear the shoes know where they pinch us. I have been in the township for years and am now in the rural area and I know what it is now to live in the village and what it is to live in the township. We in the village are in hell and the people in the township are in heaven. I therefore appeal to the Government to consider providing more amenities for the rural areas.

Regarding Provincial Headquarters, we now have new "Babies"—Provinces—and when we get a new baby we always look after it well and do not just overlook it. But it is surprising to note that the Provincial Commissioner himself has no house to live in and even the Police and some other people. I am suggesting that in the Budget Session, the Government will make sufficient provision to house these Officers of the Region.

I now come to Education. There is only one secondary school in the whole of Yenagoa Province and I think it is a Class II or Class III school. Some critics may say that the Province is a very small one with a population of only 127,000 but that is false because a lot of the people ran away during the last Census and some were not counted. I assure the Government that during the next Census the population will grow and Government should not take for granted that the population of the Province is as small as that. I feel that the geographical consideration should be taken into account, and not just the population basis. Our Province is the remotest and the worst Province in the Region and I am sure the Minister concerned or the hon. Premier would like to come and see a lot more of the people of this area. I will take him to

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a place like Ikeri where he will see things for himself.

Still on the issue of Education, Amassoma people have built a college which cost over £11,000. It is a very mighty storey-building with twelve classrooms, one office, store and library and the people now need some funds from Government to put up the dormitory and they are prepared to contribute physically to erect these blocks. I should, therefore, be very grateful if the Minister of Education would make provision for this in the main Budget. The Supplementary Budget now before this House is already through and I do not want to oppose it. We have accepted it.

Chief I. Okoroafor (Bende Division): I rise to support the Bill. In doing so, I have some appeals to make. First to the Chiefs; if they will understand that this is a democratic Government they will not think of themselves. I think we should think of the people whom we are representing. Those who are First-class Chiefs are First-class Chiefs and those who are Second-class Chiefs are just the same. Let us forget about ourselves meanwhile. Let us think of the good of the country and of the good of the Region. I belong to Bende Division. The bitterest complaint in Bende Division is about roads especially in Owuwa-Anyanwu area, Bende Division and part of Bende south. We have no good roads there at all and I must criticise the bad work on the Umuahia to Akaniku road. It is better not done than what it is now. It is one of the worst roads you can imagine in the country. Anybody who has no idea about bad roads should come to Bende. It is not worthwhile for the people to have such roads—it is dangerous and not properly constructed. I am pleased that the Minister when he travelled along that road last year must have had an experience about the road, so that all I can say is that the Government should co-operate and help our people.

We are made to understand that some agreement has been signed in connection with the tarring of the roads from Umuahia via Bende to Arochuku and from Umuahia via Uzuakoli to Arochuku. We are now appealing to the Government to see that the work is started immediately. If you go to Aba, Port Harcourt, Calabar and Lagos, you will see

many children from Bende Division. Wherever they are, they try to show that they are money men and from a developed area but unfortunately when they want to go home they always find it difficult because of bad roads. This is a disgrace. I am therefore appealing to the Government to see about Bende roads.

Mr C. E. Amobi (Special Member): I rise to support the Supplementary Appropriation Bill. Unfortunately, it appears some Members of this House are deviating from the principles of parliamentary debate. It is painful to observe some Chiefs quarrelling amongst themselves forgetting what we have in hand; i.e., the Supplementary Appropriation Bill. I will sound a note of warning although I am a Special Member but incidentally, I happen to come from a ruling House in Ogidi in Onitsha Division. I will suggest that whatever happens the Chiefs have their Chiefs Conference and as Special Member, if I am invited or if I am invited with others we shall try to help them to work out all these anomalies. Well, coming to the Appropriation Bill, I have to thank the Government for all the efforts it is putting throughout the Region. I might say that in the whole Region my Province, i.e., Onitsha Province, is more affected. Even in the past people say Onitsha is developed but I must assure them that knowing the Region as I do, Onitsha Province or Onitsha Division is the least developed area even with its abundance in commercial and educational fields. But before I wind up, I must thank the Government more especially, the Minister of Works, for the special effort or the special interest he is taking to see that Water Supply is being extended in the rural areas—especially Awka and Onitsha Divisions. I thank him also for the effort he is making or the step recently taken not to allow unqualified contractors to handle a work which they are not qualified to do. I have to say this, because the Rural Water Supply System at Ogidi where I belong, incidentally, I am a native of Ogidi in Onitsha Division, was formally handed over to an unqualified contractor but due to vigilance on the part of the Government they were able to detect in time that the work was handed over to the wrong person and Government wisely took over the work and handed it over to the P.W.D. and I must congratulate the Minister of Works for his vigilance and I would suggest that

in future, I do not say that contracts would not be given to anybody—whatever happens—if contract is to be given, it must be given to an expert—be he a white or a black expert who knows the job so that Government's money will not be wasted for nothing. I have to thank the Government for the Water System that is being extended to Awka in Onitsha Province although the work is slow in progress. I hope that in due course Government will have to pursue the issue to see that all these water systems in the rural areas are being pursued so that before June at most, the people of the rural areas will have got their water system and will be able to enjoy the Independence celebrations. That too, will have to ease the situation of most boys and girls running to urban areas now because of lack of water. Everybody wants to be clean. If you buy a cloth and do not wash it the cloth is useless after two or three months and so when some boys and girls from the rural areas see their counterparts clean, they admire them and in many cases if you go to some rural areas you do not get anybody there—they have all gone to the urban areas. I think that if this question of water system is completed, I hope that most of our men and women will be attracted home and that will ease the situation. Before I wind up, I have to mention that in fact I heard that the Anambra road—that is from Okuzu to Nteje to Aguleri—Government had in the past said something about it even during the election campaign. They even promised that such roads would be tarred. I happened to read from a paper that Government has taken a decision. I would like the Minister responsible for the road to see to it that work on that particular road should be started as quickly as practicable. There is another important road in Onitsha Division. The point is that as a Special Member for a province, I should be able to tour Awka and Onitsha Divisions. There is another important road, i.e., the road leading from Afoigwe to Ogidi to Abatete, Abatete to Alor, Alor to Ora-Ukwu. That road connects Nnobi also and those who went on campaign tours will agree with me that that is one of the oldest roads we have in Onitsha Division but if efforts had been made all this time to see that these things were done, that would help to win the Government more people and more income. If you come to this particular road we have

about three bridges, one connecting Alor to Ora-Ukwu and the other one from Abatete to Alor and another one from Alor to Nnobi. These bridges and roads are very bad, but with modern machinery we have now, the hilly roads can be tackled when Government decides to do something about them.

Chief N. N. Anyika (Onitsha Province): I rise to support the Supplementary Appropriation Bill. This is not a Budget Session in which everybody can express his views. However, I wish to make a few observations. First, I have to congratulate the Premier and his Government for their wisdom in taking this step about Chiefs and Traditional Rulers. I am surprised that some of the Chiefs have come here to quarrel or make statements showing how they have powers in their Divisions. It is not what we have come here to do. When one is a new comer in anything it is wise to look or watch to see how things are moving. Whether a Second-class or a First-class Chief or a Traditional Ruler, in days gone by, one could not travel over ten miles to control a town. You could only control your own town. As I am a man from Ezinifite, I cannot go to any other town to control it. I can control only my own town. If one is a First-class Chief, one does not know what influence the other Chief could wield. However, I shall express my views during the Budget Session.

As a First-class Chief for Onitsha Province, I wish to say that there is no adequate water supply in that township. In fact, Chief Amobi has covered my points. I want the Government to look into this very seriously. At Onitsha it takes one not less than two hours to fetch water.

The Aguata Post Office which is a community effort cost the community over £5,000 to build. But the people have no money now to run it, and I am calling on the Government to come to their rescue and take over this Post Office. The Post Office is there—nobody to open it. It would appear that that area is forgotten entirely.

A certain bridge between Aguata and Orumba is in a bad state of repairs and it is costing the Aguata District Council much

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money. We are asking the Government to do something to improve the state of this bridge.

I have to thank the Government for what they have done in respect of borehole water supply in Awka Division, but I must remind them that there are many other towns in the Division without water. One has to travel five or six miles before one can get water to drink. Some of the Ministers know what I am saying. I hope that the Minister responsible and the Government will try to do something about it.

I do not intend to go into financial matters now until the time comes when I shall say something about other matters.

Chief Francis Nwizu Ezerioha (Orlu Division): I rise to support the Supplementary Appropriation Bill. Our Minister of Finance and others who helped to bring up this Bill have studied it better than we can do here. It does not require long debates. This is not the place and time to express our feelings. We shall do so when the time comes.

On the question of Traditional Rulers, I am sure that if we all had the capacity to rule our areas as some of us claim, we should not be agitating for the creation of the House of Chiefs since 12th February, 1952. Anyway, I will leave that point until the time comes.

As regards the Bill before us, it is evident from the countenance of everyone here that we have nothing to say about it than to support it.

Now, the matter which my hon. Friend has brought up here is one which ought to be raised in the Chiefs Conference. I observe that some people are using some words which I feel should not have come up at all. What we have to do is to thank the Government for instituting for us the House of Chiefs. We were clamouring for it. Now we have it. All we have to do is not to waste time. It is to say to our Government: we thank you and we are here to support you in any measure; then we pass the Bill

without amendment. It is like a bird that did not build a nest but kept flying about; when it was called into the nest of the other bird to rest, it said: "this nest is bad". But the question is: has it built a nest before? I do not want to waste time making a long speech. I know the Government worked very hard to make the Supplementary Appropriation Bill all right. Therefore, in the meantime, I have to thank the Government and wait for the Budget Session—the time for long speeches.

Chief Silas Ezenwa (Onitsha Division): I rise to support the Bill. In doing so, I would like the Minister of Health to look into the shortage of staff and drugs in maternity homes and in the Rural Health Centres in Onitsha Division. Why I say this is because I have got several reports that over three months ago there were no drugs in some of the Centres in our area, even A.P.C., and in some areas, since the opening of the Rural Health Centres, they have only one midwife managing the affairs, with the result that at times, in the midnight, if there is an emergency case, the midwife could not be able to come out because she had worked too much during the day time. In some places, two to three babies are left on one bed and some mothers are seen lying on the floor.

I am not going to say much about the question of who is a Natural Ruler or a First-class Chief. I feel we will take up this matter during the appointment and selection of Chiefs and then I think everyone of us will have enough time to submit his case.

Chief Johnson Osuji Njemanze, M.B.E. (Owerri Province): I rise to support the Bill very sincerely. I seize the opportunity to thank our Premier and his able Cabinet for the able manner in which the whole Bill was prepared. It is a great credit on their side.

Now, I have some comments to make. It is very, very shameful and disappointing that we, the Chiefs, instead of accepting the service rendered to us, instead of acknowledging the honour given to us by the ex-Premier, the present one and the Government of the Eastern Region, by granting us what nobody expected, to come here and start quarrelling about Traditional or no Traditional Rulers. At the

next meeting here, Mr President, I appeal to you, with the consent of the Premier, to allow the Clerk of the House to give Chiefs another lecture to make them understand what to ask and how to speak. I do not know, whether you are privileged to check any Chief or Chiefs by calling him or them to a Point of Order when speaking out of point. If this is within your province, then surely, much waste of time would be avoided if Members are called to order when they speak on matters which are immaterial to the point at issue.

The President: The speaker is in order.

Chief Njemanze: I appeal to the Minister of Works to try to find time to go to Okigwi and spend a day or two and see most of the roads. I think that the main road to Okigwi is the worst of all. Some attention should be paid to that road. I want the hon. Minister of Works to note that the Owerri-Okigwi road which now appears to be Owerri-Umuna road is yet to be tarred. We have been waiting for this road to be tarred but nothing has been done.

I am appealing to the Minister of Works to see to the tarring of Owerri-Okigwi road. This road carries more traffic than any other road I can think of. The other day I travelled from Owerri to Aba and the number of vehicles I met on the way is by far less than the number of vehicles that travel on the Owerri-Okigwi road. This goes to emphasise the importance of this road and I sincerely hope and trust that before very long the Minister of Works will hasten action to see that this road is tarred. I am also appealing to the Minister of Works to tour Owerri Division and if possible to confer with the District and Local Councils in that Division in order to see the nature of the roads there.

I am also calling the attention of the Minister of Education to what I might term "an undesirable development" in some schools in my Division. Here some teachers are in the habit of engaging in party politics and such a state of affairs can lead to serious consequences. I agree that everybody should as far as possible air his views politically but I cannot appreciate the wisdom of indoctrinating children with politics instead of teaching them

English and Arithmetic. I hope that the Minister concerned will look into this. I observe that the standard of teaching in Owerri Division has gone very low and that teachers take more interest in being councillors than being teachers. No teacher should be debarred from being a councillor provided, of course, that the teacher first resigns as a teacher, before becoming a councillor. What beats my imagination is that even though the allowance of councillors is only 10s per sitting some teachers are quite prepared to forgo everything in order to become councillors. I will leave the House to find out the answer.

I am very grateful to the Government for the arrangements it is making for introducing pipe-borne water supply in my Division. I must mention, however, that I am not pleased with what I saw when I came down to Enugu. Here I discovered that water supply used to be disconnected at certain periods of the day and night. I do not know why this is so. I certainly would not like such a condition to apply to my Division when the pipe-borne water supply fully comes into operation.

I now appeal to Members in this House to co-operate as one people. When we come to this House, we must forget our own personal considerations. We should not talk of ourselves. We come here to represent our people and not to indulge in personal attacks and counter-attacks. I am not happy to find that some hon. Members have been guilty of this behaviour a little while ago and I am taking this opportunity to appeal to them to desist from doing things which will not do them credit in the eyes of the public. It is our people whom we represent and we must cater for their interests first and foremost.

I am of the opinion that hon. Members should not use this House as a forum for supporting an Opposition Party or for criticising the Government. In the interest of all Chiefs, I think it would be wiser to maintain an attitude of benevolent neutrality and criticise the Government only when it is necessary.

I thank you very much for giving me this opportunity for airing my views.

Mrs Margaret Ekpo (Special Member): I rise to support the Supplementary Appropriation Bill presented to this House. Before I go further, I would like to congratulate the Minister of Health for introducing "house to house delivery" in Aba township which has helped to reduce the congestion in maternity homes in Aba.

Secondly, I want to bring to the notice of the Minister of Education the question of some voluntary agencies trying to suppress our U.P.E. scheme in some tricky ways. I am advising the Minister of Education to take this matter into consideration and make investigations into voluntary agency schools. When I come to this hon. House I would always speak the truth. The other day my little child was asked to pay 3s for fees. I wondered why a little child like that who has just started school should be asked to pay 3s while Government has introduced U.P.E. scheme. I am bringing it to the notice of this hon. House that some of these voluntary agencies are trying to make other people feel that the Eastern Region children are still paying school fees. That is why the Action Group people are using it against us. I would like the Minister of Education to investigate this matter and stop this collection of school fees by voluntary agency schools.

I also want to bring to the notice of the Government that in a big and growing township like Aba, there is no secondary school. The Catholic School there is to train teachers. Boys leave school there and there is no secondary school for them to enter. I am suggesting, if it will please the Minister of Education, to convert the Government school at Aba into a secondary school. This will help Aba Division, and it will reduce the hooliganism which is in the Division. These boys after finishing up with their Standard Six, have nowhere to continue their secondary education. So I want the Minister to look into this matter.

There is another thing I want to bring to the notice of this hon. House. Some time ago when I was here as a Special Member of the Eastern House of Assembly, 1953-54, the question of women police came up. We have got these women police now and in their beautiful uniform they are doing their very best. But I want Government to look into

the question of men police. These men go in for training at Ikeja for six months. I suggest that these men be trained for a year because they are very, very rude. They are not doing their work well at all. The police men overseas are very courteous and they are doing their work very well. Police men are meant to be very humble and courteous to the citizens but a few days ago when I went to the Ports Authority at Port Harcourt, the police man there was so rude to me, even though I am a woman, much less if I were a man. We are representing the interests of our people here and it is good to bring these things before this hon. House. We are spending money to train and pay these men, but they have no respect for anybody.

Then the Traffic police: these people are causing a lot of trouble in the Region and they are wasting their time on the roads. They are the cause of numerous accidents in this Region because they will not do their work honestly. I have had personal experience about these men; if a lorry is over-loaded the driver will put something into their pockets and they will allow the lorry to pass. I would suggest that women police be put on the roads. I know these women will not wait to be bribed before they discharge their duties well; they will always be serious with their job.

I thank you very much and with these few words, I support the Bill.

Sitting suspended at 10.45 a.m.

Sitting resumed at 11.10 a.m.

The Premier (Dr M. I. Okpara): I hope that the Paramount Rulers will take kindly to the remarks for absolute equality in the House as it is natural for all human beings to aspire to higher status. Second-class Chiefs will tend to aspire to First-class and so on.

May I refer hon. Members to the Constitution, section 31a, which created the House of Chiefs. The Constitution itself classified the Chiefs for membership of the House into

1. First-class Chiefs.
2. Special Members.
3. Second-class Chiefs.

The status of a Chief depends on his authority and influence in his area. It is the people and not the Government that make the Chief. What Government does is to recognise what is already existing.

There can be no absolute equality in the world. Even in the Soviet Union where equalitarianism has been carried to absurd limits, there are still differences in status. Statesmen and scientists are certainly on a higher status than the proletariat. In the Eastern House of Assembly, for instance, we have Ministers, Commissioners, Parliamentary Secretaries and Assemblymen in that order. We should give this present set-up a fair trial before thinking of radical amendments.

On the question of staffs, may I say that we have ordered for twenty silver staffs of office for the twenty First-class Chiefs of the Eastern Region. The Second-class Chiefs, and of course, the First-class Chiefs will receive instruments of appointment from His Excellency Sir Robert Stapledon. Dignity, however, does not always lie in visible signs of pomp and pageantry but in the ability to carry your people along with you.

I can do no better than end with the advice that the Chiefs should try to work together as a team and perhaps the Chiefs Conference should be your forum to iron out your differences.

The Minister of Commerce (Mr J. U. Nwodo): I would like just to reply to the points raised by two hon. Members. One is in respect of building a Catering Rest House at Umuahia. Chief Wachuku requested that a Rest House should be built in Umuahia. I want to say that already Government has made substantial provision for the improvement of the existing Rest Houses in all the Headquarters. Where there is no Rest House, one will be built soon. As for Catering Rest Houses, the matter is purely one for the Tourist Corporation of which I am in charge. Series of representations have been made to me for the necessity of building a Catering Rest House in Umuahia and I will certainly give this a serious consideration. The other points raised by Chief Efeke of Yenagoa Province is the establishment of Sugar Industry in that area. I agree that a team had visited this Region to survey the possibility

of establishing sugar industry in this country; yet I am told that consumption of sugar in this country is not high enough for the establishment of sugar industry as a viable proposition. There is a National Planning Board which constitutes a committee of the National Economic Council which handles matters of such, either in respect of this Region or any part of the Federation. This case has been referred to the National Planning Board and it will be premature for me to give indication of what their findings will be. I will, however, carry the views of this House and see if it will be possible to establish a sugar industry in this Region.

I support the Bill.

The Minister of State (Establishment and Chieftaincy Matters) (Mr O. U. Affiah): I just want to reply to some points made in respect of Chiefs in this Region. A Chief has said that Chiefs in this Region should not be inferior to Chiefs elsewhere in Nigeria. I want to assure him, on behalf of the Government, that it is the intention of the Government to make the status of our Chiefs not to be inferior in any way to those of their counterparts in any part of the Federation. You will agree that the Government of the Eastern Region has never stood for anything inferior. He also said that Third and Fourth-class Chiefs who were elected by the order of the Government should not be forgotten. My answer is that Government is at present dealing with the disputes arising from the selection of Second-class Chiefs. It is the duty of the Government to consider electing other classes of Chiefs. The same Chief went further to say that Chiefs should not take active part in politics. This was also confirmed by Chief Njemanze of Owerri who was even bolder in saying that Chiefs should not support the Opposition. I agree with them in what they have said. As a matter of fact, at the last meeting of the Chiefs of this Region which I attended, I made it categorically clear to all the Chiefs that they should not take part in active politics. I also made it clear to them that it is their duty to support the Government of the day irrespective of whatever Party forms that Government. Their policy should be that of non-partisanship in active politics.

Chief Wachuku of Umuahia Province also advised that immediate action should be taken

[MR AFFIAH]

so that every Division should be represented in the Eastern Region House of Chiefs. I said yesterday that Government is giving priority attention to all outstanding disputed cases in all the Divisions, where elections have not been held, so as to make it possible for these Divisions to be represented in the House. I went further to promise that during the Budget Session all the Divisions of the Region will be fully represented.

I am sure that Chiefs will agree with me that we are having certain difficulties and Government does not want to be very rash in taking decisions. We are considering the disputes and as I said yesterday, during the Budget Session we shall be able to name all the representatives of the various Divisions in the Region.

I am very happy that I have been saved the trouble of entering to settle the dispute arising recently between Chiefs here. I feel these matters ought to be settled by the Chiefs themselves and that we commoners should leave it to them.

The hon. Chief Efeke of Yenagoa Province said that much is expected of the Chiefs of this Region in and out of this House. I quite agree with him. Whereas it is the duty of the Government to make the status of the Chiefs very high, it is also expected of every Chief to live up to expectation. Chiefs have a lot of duties to perform in the House and in the Region. They are an integral part of the Regional Government. I appeal to them on behalf of the Government to see that in their respective areas, peace and tranquillity will reign and that they will temper justice with mercy and will also discharge their duties without fear or favour and with the fear of God.

Finally, I want to tell this House that in order to confirm what I said after we had adjourned yesterday, the Government of the Eastern Region settled some of the disputes arising out of the selection of Second-class Chiefs and before very long—perhaps by the next week—we shall have about three Members into this House. This matter was settled yesterday and this is just to show that the Government is not sleeping over these matters. It is the question of the reports reaching my Ministry and the problems are tackled straightaway without delay. Chief-taincy matters are given priority attention.

I support the Bill.

The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke): I rise to return thanks to all Members of this House who have showered praises on the Ministry of Finance and this Government for the Supplementary Appropriation Bill presented here. I want to say that I am very much impressed by the turn the debates in this House have taken. It makes me feel so very encouraged that Chiefs from this Region have now come to a position when they can realise the difficulty of this Government just like every other Government, and that it is extremely important that Government should, from year to year or from time to time, try as much as possible to increase its revenue so as to be able to carry out the amenities which every hon. Member who gets up to speak wants for his own area. I want to take this opportunity to appeal to hon. Chiefs here to realise that one of the first duties they owe to this Government is to go back to their people and explain to them the importance of revenue, the importance of tax collection. Make them realise that any good citizen who wants amenities for his area must be prepared to pay up his tax and rates as promptly and as regularly as possible. If all of us carry home this message and work towards this end, it would be much easier for us to get the amenities which we so emphasise in our speeches. Water supply, roads, schools, and so on—they cost quite a heavy lot and you will come to learn this from time to time as you go through your Estimates, both Supplementary and the main Appropriation Bill.

I do not need to go over what my colleagues have already said in reply to your speeches. But those of you who had no reply to the points they raised should not feel discouraged—maybe the Ministers responsible for their needs are not present here but hon. Chiefs should all rest assured that the rest of us have been taking notes of everything you said and we shall pass them on to the right sources as time goes on. You also have the opportunity at the Budget Session which meets shortly to repeat all these requests. The main thing, however, is that you should realise that Government needs revenue and everybody should help to see that revenue comes in.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a Second time.

Question: That the Bill be committed deemed to have been negatived—Bill accordingly read the Third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke): I rise to move that this House do now adjourn *sine die*. May I crave your indulgence to make two announcements. The hon. Premier has asked me to inform hon. Chiefs that there will be a show at the Girls' Holy Rosary Training College, Enugu, this evening at 8 p.m. It is an opera known as *The Mikado*. Those of us who have seen this performance before can only tell you that you need to see it if you really want to believe. As a matter of fact, when I saw it I could not believe my eyes and ears that our girls can perform such interesting activity. It will, therefore, be very interesting and a sort of relaxation after the strenuous debate we have had this morning for those hon. Chiefs who are not going home today to try

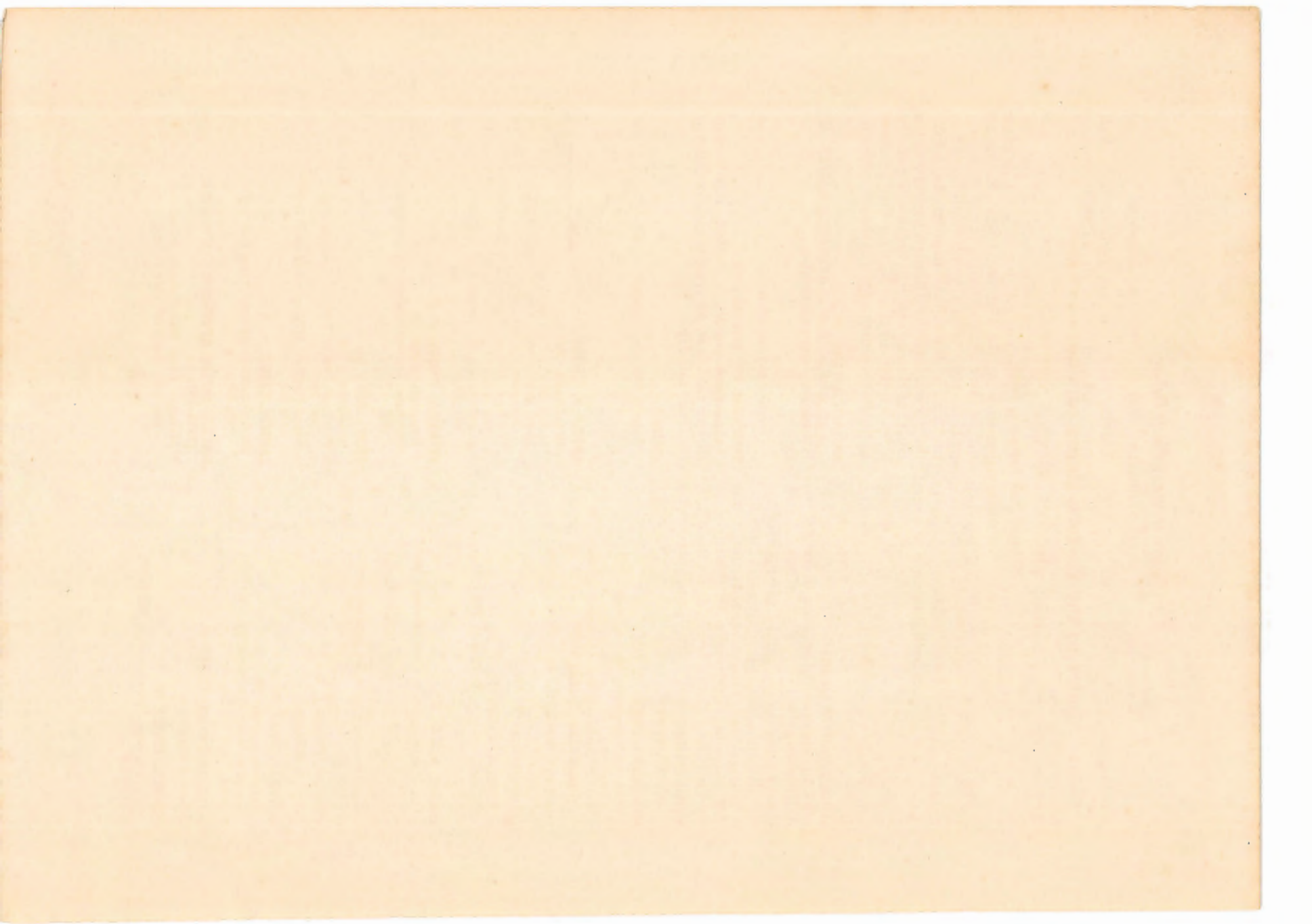
and be present at this performance, which starts at 8 p.m. at the Holy Rosary Training College, Uwani.

The second announcement is that the Budget Session of this House will take place on Tuesday, the 15th of March. Sitting on the first day of this Session is usually a ceremonious one. The Governor will appear in his regalia—his official uniform—to deliver the Speech from the Throne after inspecting a Guard of Honour and hon. Chiefs will probably like to appear in their best for that occasion. I would like them to appear in their own regalia.

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

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at thirty minutes past eleven o'clock a.m. pursuant to the Resolution of the House this day.



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FIRST SESSION, SECOND MEETING

25th and 26th February, 1960

ABBREVIATIONS

(Adj. Deb.) = Adjournment Debate
 1R = First Reading
 2R = Second Reading

3R = Third Reading
 Com. = Committee
 E.N. = Eastern Nigeria

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