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EASTERN NIGERIA



PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

EASTERN HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL REPORT

SECOND SESSION (1959 - 60)

SIXTH MEETING

9th to 12th March, 1959

PRICE: 1s 6D NET

EASTERN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT
MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

PREMIER—Dr the hon. Nnamdi Azikiwe.
MINISTER OF PRODUCTION—Dr the hon. M. I. Okpara.
MINISTER OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS—Hon. I. U. Akpabio.
MINISTER OF FINANCE—Dr the hon. S. E. Imoke.
MINISTER OF TOWN PLANNING—Hon. E. Emole.
MINISTER OF TRANSPORT—Hon. P. O. Ururuka.
MINISTER OF INFORMATION—Hon. B. C. Okwu.
MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT—Chief the hon. A. N. Onyiuke.
MINISTER OF STATE CHARGED WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR CUSTOMARY COURTS AND THE APPOINTMENT AND RECOGNITION OF CHIEFS—Hon. R. O. Iwuagwu.
MINISTER OF COMMERCE—Hon. J. U. Nwodo.
MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE—Hon. P. O. Nwoga.
MINISTER OF EDUCATION—Hon. G. E. Okeke.
MINISTER OF HEALTH—Hon. E. P. Okoya.
MINISTER OF WELFARE—Hon. E. A. Chime.
MINISTER OF WORKS—Hon. O. U. Affiah.
ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER OF JUSTICE—Hon. M. O. Ajegbo.

OFFICE OF THE PREMIER AND MINISTRIES OF GOVERNMENT

Premier's Office :—

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

Ministry of Production :—

Minister: Dr the hon. M. I. Okpara.
Parliamentary Secretary: (Vacant).

Ministry of Internal Affairs :—

Minister: Hon. I. U. Akpabio.
Minister of State: Hon. R. O. Iwuagwu.
Parliamentary Secretaries: Hon. J. H. E. Nwuke.
Hon. D. O. Aligwekwe.

Ministry of Finance :—

Minister: Dr the hon. S. E. Imoke.
Parliamentary Secretary: (Vacant).

Ministry of Town Planning :—

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

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

Ministry of Transport :—

Minister: Hon. P. O. Ururuka.

Parliamentary Secretary: Hon. D. O. Nnamani.

Ministry of Information :—

Minister: Hon. B. C. Okwu.

Parliamentary Secretary: Hon. S. O. Masi.

Ministry of Local Government :—

Minister: Chief the hon. A. N. Onyiuke.

Parliamentary Secretary: Hon. M. U. Obayi.

Ministry of Commerce :—

Minister: Hon. J. U. Nwodo.

Parliamentary Secretary: Hon. E. W. Udonkim.

Ministry of Agriculture :—

Minister: Hon. P. O. Nwoga.

Parliamentary Secretary: Hon. D. A. Nnaji.

Ministry of Education :—

Minister: Hon. G. E. Okeke.

Parliamentary Secretary: Hon. L. O. Uzoigwe.

Ministry of Health :—

Minister: Hon. E. P. Okoya.

Parliamentary Secretary: (Vacant).

Ministry of Welfare :—

Minister: Hon. E. A. Chime.

Parliamentary Secretary: Hon. C. A. Okafor.

Ministry of Works :—

Minister: Hon. O. U. Affiah.

Parliamentary Secretary: Hon. R. O. Anoke.

Ministry of Justice :—

Attorney-General: Hon. M. O. Ajegbo.

Parliamentary Secretary: (Vacant).

OFFICERS OF THE HOUSE

The Speaker: Hon. D. E. Okereke.

Deputy Speaker: Hon. C. A. Abangwu.

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

Clerk Assistant: Mr L. O. Okoro.

Editor, Official Report (*Hansard*): (Vacant).

Assistant Editor, Official Report (*Hansard*): Mr S. B. C. Melifonwu.

Serjeant-at-Arms: Mr B. O. Ajumogobia.

EASTERN HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Monday, 9th March, 1959

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

PRAYERS

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

Production of the Daily Official Report

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, the Assistant Editor of the *Hansard*, Mr Melifonwu, who alone at present is responsible for the production of Official Report, has on medical grounds, gone into hospital this morning to undergo surgical operation. He is expected to be there for two or three weeks. This means that during the present meeting and possibly during the next Budget Meeting no Daily Report would be produced. This is a pity but our difficulties over staff problem are growing and becoming insurmountable. For a long time now several attempts have been made to secure the services of an experienced expatriate Editor but these have failed. Recently the post was advertised locally but the response was very poor. Though attempts are still being made to secure an Editor locally for training, one has to offer very attractive salaries nowadays in order to secure the services of an Overseas trained parliamentary Editor.

PAPERS

Presented:

1. Draft Supplementary Estimates of the Eastern Region, including memorandum, March 1959. (*The Minister of Finance*).

2. The Voluntary Agencies Building Fund for the year, 1957-58. (*The Minister of Finance*).

3. The Report of the Standing Committee on Finance for the period 24th February to 4th December, 1958. (*The Minister of Finance*).

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, during the adjournment of the House some Papers were distributed to Members. These Papers are

deemed to have been laid upon the Table and will be entered in the Votes and Proceedings of today. They are :—

- (1) Annual Report, Social Welfare Department, 1957-58.
- (2) Annual Report, Agricultural Department, 1957-58.
- (3) Annual Report, Survey Department, 1957-58.
- (4) Annual Report, Land Department, 1957.
- (5) E.N.I.S. Annual Report, 1956-57.

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

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Motor Assembly Plant

237. **Mr I. U. Imeh** asked the Minister of Commerce, when will the motor assembly plant announced over a year ago by the Government be installed and put into operation; or has the project been abandoned.

The Minister of Commerce: As the hon. Member is aware, the hon. Premier of the Eastern Region during his tour of America in 1955 requested the Willys-Overland Export Corporation to investigate the desirability and practicability of establishing a plant in Nigeria for the assembly of Willys-Overland vehicles. On the strength of this, Willys-Overland Export Corporation sent two representatives to Nigeria to investigate the possibility and viability of this project.

Several discussions were held in Lagos between representatives of the Corporation, the Federal Government and the Eastern Regional Government. During these discussions representatives of the Corporation appeared to anticipate some difficulty on the part of the Federal Government and so stressed that success would depend on the Federal Government's willingness to cooperate by :—

- (a) Granting Pioneer certificate to the Industry.
- (b) Granting preferential duty rate for completely knocked down vehicles, and

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- (a) Granting Pioneer certificate to the Industry.
- (b) Granting preferential duty rate for completely knocked down vehicles, and

[MR NWODO]

- (c) Allocating adequate dollars for the importation of machinery and vehicle parts.

Owing to the Federal Government's dilatory tactics in reaching a decision on the above issues the American Firm became frustrated and withdrew.

**Non-Government Party Natural Rulers:
Place on Local Government Councils**

244. **Mr A. G. Umoh** asked the Minister of Local Government, why are Clan and Group Heads in Ibiono and Itu-Itam District Council areas in Enyong Division not allowed to take their seats in their respective District Councils even though they were popularly elected by their people many years ago; what steps is the Minister taking to counteract the impression which Government supporters are creating, that this is done to victimise the said Natural Rulers for not joining the Government party.

The Minister of Local Government: All Local Government Councils were informed of Government's intention that traditional rulers should be given representation on Councils. Those Councils who so wish may have traditional members not exceeding 20 per cent of the full Council. The initiative comes from the Council and my Ministry takes no action unless Councils submit recommendations. Frequently such recommendations require clarification as to titles and offices and the process of finalising them takes time. Moreover the injection of traditional members into a Council requires amendment to its instrument and by Law. I must publish a notice in the area concerned of my intention to amend the instrument. The notice operates for thirty days and I must then consider representations, if any.

The same process applies to the Ibiono and Itu-Itam District Councils. We are now awaiting the final recommendations of the Councils after a good deal of correspondence with the Local Government Commissioner and the two Councils. When those final recommendations are received, a Notice will be published in the areas concerned and,

subject to any objections, the recommendations will then be submitted to Executive Council for approval.

There is therefore no victimisation or discrimination. All Councils are treated alike. The appointment of traditional members has nothing to do with politics. It depends upon the existence of traditional offices and the desire of Councils to have those offices represented in their membership.

Mr Umoh: It is a fact, Mr Speaker, that the Ibiono and Itu-Itam District Councils did make specific recommendations last year.

Chief Onyiuke: The recommendations were not in order. They sent the names of the Councillors, which is not our policy. What we want is the office or title of the Chiefs or Natural Rulers. When we receive this, we give one month's notice of amendment of the Council's Instrument and if within this period no objections are received, we amend the Instrument accordingly and if received, must be first investigated and decided before the amendment takes place. I would, therefore, advise the hon. Questioner to go and teach his people the proper procedure.

Owerri-Port Harcourt Road

246. **Mr E. U. Eronini** asked the Minister of Transport, when he will consider it necessary to take a bold step to widen and straighten the Owerri-Port Harcourt Road and clear the huge oil-bean trees which have become a menace to transport.

The Minister of Transport: The Federal Government are being pressed to take over and reconstruct this road but whilst waiting for a favourable reply from the Federal Government my Ministry is not being idle. £16,732 was spent last financial year and a further £20,000 is now provided for improvements which will include the reconstruction of the bridges at Mile 8 and Mile 24, and the reconstruction of the immediate approaches to Port Harcourt. This work is now in hand.

Owerri-Okigwi Road

248. **Mr E. U. Eronini** asked the Minister of Transport, if he will take immediate steps to minimise the loss of life by accident on the

Regional section of the Owerri-Okigwi Road, which bears heavy traffic from Port Harcourt, Okigwi, Enugu, the North, Afikpo and other parts of Ogoja Province, by widening and straightening this road and removing the huge oil-bean trees which have now become death traps for passengers using transport lorries.

The Minister of Transport: I inspected this road on the 7th of November, 1958, soon after the last regrettable fatal accident and have called for a report as to what measures can be taken to improve this road pending reconstruction.

I have also ordered that trees along the road should be felled, and the cost be met from the maintenance vote and work is proceeding.

Awka-Orlu-Owerri Road

250. **Mr E. U. Eronini** asked the Minister of Transport, when will the Awka-Orlu-Owerri Road be widened and tarred, and will the Minister make a statement on the reasons for the delay in widening and tarring this road.

The Minister of Transport: The Awka-Orlu-Owerri Road is being reconstructed and tarred at the present moment. Thirty miles to all intents and purposes, have been completed, whilst a further short distance has received a first coating. The steel work of the Ulasi Bridge has been erected and work is proceeding on the decking. Neither the Government nor the Consulting Engineers in this road are at all satisfied with the rate of progress which has, however, improved in recent months. The contractors have stated they will complete the contract by July next year.

BILLS PRESENTED

(1) Supplementary Appropriation 1958-59

Bill to make Supplementary Provision for the services of the Eastern Region for the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1959; presented by the Minister of Finance, Dr S. E. Imoke, read the First time, to be read a Second time Today.

(2) Supplementary Appropriation 1957-58

Bill to make Supplementary Provision for the services of the Eastern Region for the year ending the 31st day of March, 1958; presented

by the Minister of Finance, Dr S. E. Imoke, read the First time; to be read a Second time Today.

(3) Supplementary Appropriation 1956-57

Bill to make Supplementary provision for the services of the Eastern Region for the year ending the 31st day of March, 1957; presented by the Minister of Finance, Dr S. E. Imoke, read the First time, to be read a Second time Today.

(4) Finance

Bill to provide for the control and management of Public Finance of the Eastern Region; presented by the Minister of Finance, Dr S. E. Imoke, read the First time; to be read a Second time Today.

(5) Widows and Orphans

Bill to make provision for pensions to be granted to widows and children of deceased Europeans public officers in the Eastern Region; presented by the Minister of Finance, Dr S. E. Imoke, read the First time, to be read a Second time Today.

(6) Contingencies Fund

Bill to set up a Contingencies Fund to meet urgent and unforeseen expenditure by Government of the Eastern Region; presented by the Minister of Finance, Dr S. E. Imoke, read the First time, to be read a Second time Today.

(7) Education

Bill to amend the Education Law, 1956, presented by the Minister of Education, Mr G. E. Okeke, read the First time, to be read a Second time Today.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hours of Sitting of the House

The Minister of Production (Dr M. I. Okpara): Mr Speaker, I beg to move the motion standing in my name :

That pursuant to Standing Order 71—Suspension of Standing Orders—paragraph (1) of Standing Order 4—Sittings of

[DR OKPARA]

the House—be suspended until further notice so that the hours of sitting of the House on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays shall be 10 a.m. to 2.30 p.m. each day.

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

Question proposed.

Mr E. O. Eyo (Uyo Division): Mr Speaker, we would like to suggest that in order to save time or the monotony of repeating this motion, Government should consider amendment to the Standing Order. Of course, we agree with the time—10 a.m. to 2.30 p.m. It is a waste of time for the Leader of the House to come before the House every time seeking to suspend the Standing Order. It is better to amend the Standing Order.

Question put and agreed to.

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

STANDING ORDERS OF THE EASTERN HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke): Mr Speaker, I rise to move the motion standing in my name :

That the Standing Orders of this House be amended as set out in the recommendations contained in the Report of the Standing Orders Committee dated 19th January, 1959, and laid upon the Table of this House on the 2nd February, 1959.

Hon. Members will recall that, at its meeting in December, 1958, certain amendments to Standing Orders were moved. The Hon. Premier moved amendments to Standing Orders Nos. 18 and 25, and I moved further amendments to Standing Orders Nos. 66 and 68, and all the amendments stood automatically referred to the Standing Orders Committee.

The Committee has now reported on our proposals and has recommended that they be accepted with certain slight amendments and additions. I do not think that I need go into the details of the proposed amendments or of the Committee's Report: the former were fully explained in the speeches by which the hon. Premier and I put the motions for amendments, and the latter are available to hon. Members in the Report itself, which was attached to the Votes and Proceedings for 2nd February, 1959. It remains only for this House to indicate whether it accepts the Committee's recommendations, and that is the purpose of the present motion.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

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

Question proposed.

Mr E. O. Eyo: Mr Speaker, I rise to say that the amendments proposed are acceptable to us but I would like to draw Government's attention to the danger in amending Standing Order 18 as sought by Government. I draw attention to page 4 of the Report, paragraph C "that the notice of Motion be referred to the Member who signed it if it seeks to debate any aspect of the activities of the Public Service Commission, or the Judicial Service Commission or any Statutory Corporation, or any matter not within the executive competence of the Regional Government, or as being in Mr Speaker's opinion inadmissible". I think we have rolled in rather too many matters in that amendment. I am not so much worried about the activities of the Public Service Commission or the Judicial Service Commission but I am worried about the Statutory Corporations in the Region. The amendment seeks to prevent Members of the House from tabling substantive motions to debate any aspect of the activities of our Statutory Corporations, and seeks to give Mr Speaker power to decide what in his opinion is inadmissible. No Member of this House should under any pretext be prevented from tabling a substantive motion to challenge any act of a public Corporation. An action of a public Corporation in the Region would be the result of Ministerial direction, and is it not dangerous to prevent a Member of this House from challenging such an act? I hate to have the feeling that this is an attempt to

deprive Members of this House of their rights as Members of Parliament. If there is any occasion where any Member of the House has any evidence or any ground to challenge an act of a public Corporation there should be nothing to stop him from tabling a substantive motion. It would be left to you, Mr Speaker to determine whether the subject matter of a motion is within the executive authority of the Regional Government. But it is a different thing in the case of an act of a public Corporation.

Having amended the laws establishing the public Corporations in the Region empowering

Ministers to give directions to the Boards of the Corporations without prior consultation with these Boards as hitherto, we have in effect placed all these Corporations directly under Ministerial control. Having done that I think it is very dangerous to forfeit our rights as Members of this House by accepting an amendment to Standing Orders which in effect would prevent a Member of the House from tabling a substantive motion to debate any act of a public Corporation in the Region. Ministers are answerable to Parliament for any direction they may give to these Corporations.

Question put. House divided

Ayes 60. Noes 17.

Division No. 1

10.40 a.m.

Ayes

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

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

Tellers for the Ayes

Mr K. Kiri
 Mr J. E. Eyo.

Noes

Mr S. O. Achara
Mr S. T. Akpan
Chief S. J. Amachree
Mr H. U. E. Edelduok
Rev. O. Efiang, C.B.E.
Mr A. J. Ekpe
Mr J. A. Etuhube
Mr M. U. Etuk
Mr E. O. Eyo

Mr S. G. Ikoku
Mr E. Ita
Mr O. O. Ita
Dr W. N. Onubogu
Mr V. K. Onyeri
Mr M. N. Yowika

Tellers for the Noes

Mr A. G. Umoh
Mr J. A. Agba.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(1) The 1958-59 Eastern Region
Supplementary Appropriation Bill

Order for Second Reading read.

The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke):
Mr Speaker, I rise to move, "That a Bill for a Law to make further Supplementary Provision for the service of the Eastern Region for the year ending on the Thirty-first day of March, one thousand nine hundred and fifty-nine be now read a Second time.

This is the second Bill for a supplementary appropriation that I have had the honour to move in this House under the provisions of the new Constitution, and I do not think that hon. Members will wish me to give another lengthy explanation, as I did in December, of the necessity for such Bills. It will suffice to say that it is now used to meet current additional requirements, and not as under the old Constitution to cover past over-expenditure; the present Bill, which hon. Members will be pleased to note is for the relatively small sum of £137,000, is submitted to the House as the Government's final application in respect of the current financial year.

Its purpose is more to tidy up the accounts rather than to seek authorisation for completely new expenditure—naturally it would be very difficult for the Government to spend a great deal of money between now and the close of the financial year in less than a month's time; as hon. Members will observe from the frequent use of the sign "+"—indicating that the sum has been advanced from the Contingencies Fund—practically all the monies now sought have in fact already been spent by way of advances from the Contingencies Fund and the

main purpose of the Bill is therefore to authorise the transfer from the votes of charges to the Contingencies Fund to restore it to its proper level.

It is essential, from the accounting point of view that the Fund should always contain its full authorised amount at the close of the financial year, and I hope that hon. Members will therefore agree that the Bill is non-contentious.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

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

Question proposed.

And under Standing Order 67, the debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed on Wednesday, 11th March, 1959.

(2) The 1957-58 Eastern Region
Supplementary Appropriation Bill

Order for Second Reading read.

The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke):
Mr Speaker, I rise to move that a Bill entitled "A Bill for a Law to make Supplementary Provision for the service of the Eastern Region of Nigeria for the year ending the 31st day of March, one thousand nine-hundred and fifty-eight" be now read a Second time.

Hon. Members are aware that it has hitherto been normal, when the Accounts for the financial year are closed and audited, to find that the expenditure appropriated by Law under certain individual Heads in the Estimates has been exceeded. The excess expenditure

arose from the fact that supplementary expenditure had been approved during the course of the financial year by the Standing Committee on Finance which acted on behalf of the Legislature when the House was not sitting in providing money necessarily required for the continued maintenance of Government services. I have already moved a Bill similar to this present one in respect of excesses incurred during the 1956-57 financial year.

Hon. Members will wish to know that all the excesses listed in the Schedule attached to the Bill referred to above, have been investigated in my Ministry and further examined by the Standing Committee on Finance which ultimately gave its covering approval. It is, I think, worthy of note that the total excess expenditure in the Bill amounts to only £593,633 as compared with £2,467,565 in the 1956-57 financial year. Hon. Members will also be interested to know that the Accounts for the expenditure Heads not referred to in the Schedule show a total under-expenditure of £1,355,178 and that therefore the Regional Accounts taken as a whole, show a net total under-expenditure of £761,545.

It is for information of hon. Members that the excess expenditure of Heads listed in the Bill was caused in the main by Election Expenses, by the purchase of the Eastern Region Development Corporation Office which now houses the Board of Internal Revenue, by a contribution towards the African Staff Housing Scheme Fund, by expenses in respect of the previous Constitutional Conference, by Grants to Local Government Bodies amounting to £273,316, by Revotes in respect of Community Development Grants, by a Grant to the Library Board towards the capital cost of building the Regional Library, and by the creation of three new Ministries, of Information, Town Planning and Production.

It will be appreciated that the amount of £593,633 which the Bill seeks to cover has already been spent with the full authority of the Finance Committee and this House is now invited to give its retrospective approval. The Bill is therefore one which calls for a formal approval only and is non-contentious.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

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

Question proposed.

And under Standing Order 67, the debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed on Wednesday, 11th March, 1959.

(3) The 1956-57 Eastern Region Supplementary Appropriation Bill

Order for Second Reading read.

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

Mr Speaker, Sir, I rise to move that the Bill entitled "A Law to make Supplementary Provision for the Service of the Eastern Region of the Federation of Nigeria for the year ending the thirty-first day of March, one thousand nine hundred and fifty-seven" be now read a Second time.

Hon. Members are, no doubt, aware that, when the accounts for the financial year are closed, it is generally found that the expenditure appropriated by law under certain individual Heads in the Estimates has been exceeded. These excesses arise from the fact that supplementary expenditure has been approved during the course of the financial year by the Standing Committee on Finance which, of course, acts on behalf of the Legislature.

Hon. Members will wish to know, Sir, that all the excess expenditure referred to in the Schedule attached to the Bill at present under consideration by this House, has been investigated before it received the approval of the Finance Committee. They will wish to know also that the accounts for the expenditure Heads not referred to in the schedule show under-expenditure of £1,829,110 and that, therefore, the Regional accounts taken as a whole show a nett excess expenditure of only £638,455. This nett excess is accounted for by the costs of the elections to the House of Assembly, the introduction of the Universal Primary Education, the increased educational grants-in-aid to enable the salaries of Voluntary Agency Teachers to be increased with effect from the 1st October, 1954, increased Grants made to Local Government Bodies to enable them pay revised rates of salaries and wages to their staff for the period 1st October, 1955 to 31st March, 1957, and by the re-organisation which were carried out in the latter half of 1956 in the Ministries of Agriculture, Internal Affairs, Local Government and Welfare.

[DR IMOKE]

It will be appreciated, Sir, that the net excess of £638,455 constitutes new money which has already been spent with the full authority of the Finance Committee and which is now being submitted to this House for a retrospective approval.

The Bill, Sir, is non-contentious and will have a merely formal effect, and I therefore move that it be now read a Second time.

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

Question proposed.

And under Standing Order 67, the debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed on Wednesday, 11th March, 1959.

(4) The Finance (Control and Management) Bill

Order for Second Reading read.

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

Mr Speaker, I rise to move that the Bill entitled "A Bill for a Law to provide for the Control and Management of the Public Finance of the Eastern Region and for matters connected therewith" be now read a Second time.

The financial provisions of the old Constitution were in many cases lax, and it was assumed that the conduct of much of Government's financial business would be regulated either by the provisions of Colonial Regulations, or by long standing tradition.

The provisions, and indeed the spirit, of the revised Constitution are much stricter and, apart from the fact that Colonial Regulations are no longer applicable to this Region, I am sure that hon. Members would agree that it would be desirable to carry out the spirit, and in some cases the provisions of the revised Constitution in legislation which will lay down quite clearly the powers and duties of those to whom hon. Members have entrusted the management of the Region's finances. Such is the purpose of this Bill, which is similar to those already presented to other legislative

Houses in Nigeria. The Bill is fully described in the "Objects and Reasons" and its provisions may be divided into five categories :—

Firstly, re-enactment of certain provisions already appearing in the Constitutional Orders in Council; secondly, a definition of powers and duties of the Minister of Finance and his advisers; thirdly, regulations concerning the investment of Government Funds; fourthly, a definition of the procedure for authorising expenditure; and lastly, certain miscellaneous provisions.

The provisions of Clauses 4, 5 and 6 (i) of the Bill are already contained in the Constitutional Orders in Council and they are all, I think, self-explanatory. Although the Legislative Authority already exists, we have considered it desirable to incorporate them in this Bill for the sake of completeness.

Clause 3 sets out the powers and duties of the Minister entrusted with general responsibility for the management of the Region's finances. I think hon. Members will agree that it is desirable that he should have statutory duties, that he should have the necessary legal powers to permit him to carry these duties out, and that the wording of this Clause makes a satisfactory provision in both of these respects.

The investment of such Government monies as are not required for immediate use is, of course, most desirable; we must not allow them to lie idle. But it is essential that such investments should be made only in accordance with very stringent rules. The House would not wish me or my staff to take any risk with these funds—neither I nor the Accountant-General is a gambler in our official capacities at least, and it is essential that we be legally debarred from investing Government monies in any but the most solid and trustworthy securities. The provisions of Clauses 9 to 12 are designed to ensure that the disposition of Government funds is carried out in a proper manner and that its effects are reflected, for all to see, in the annual accounts of the Government.

Clauses 13 to 15 amplify the provisions of the Constitution in respect of authorities for expenditure and they are quite simple. I

would, however, draw the attention of hon. Members to Clause 15, which enables the Government to issue funds, on a restricted basis and for a short period, prior to the passing of the Annual Appropriation Law. This provision is necessary in order to take account of the occasions when Government finds it impossible, as in 1958 and in the present year, to present the annual Appropriation Bill to the House in time for it to become law before the commencement of the financial year.

The miscellaneous provisions of the Bill are contained in Clauses 7, 8, 16 and 17. Clauses 7 and 8 are closely related—the former making provision for the repayment of erroneous receipts without the need to trouble this House with an Appropriation or Supplementary Appropriation Bill; and the latter emphasising, quite rightly, that such a procedure must not be applied in the case of lost funds, in respect of which any replacement may only be made through the normal procedure of Appropriation and the issue of a Warrant.

Clause 16 secures the position of such agents as the Crown Agents for Overseas Governments and Administrations, who may occasionally, through no fault of their own, have to make payments on behalf of this Government after the close of the financial year during which the payments were authorised; it would be unfair in such circumstances to lay any blame upon our duly appointed agents.

Finally, Clause 17 permits the establishment of Trading Accounts for such concerns as the Technical Institute and Trade Centre, the Pottery Factory and the Textile Centre at Aba.

Mr Speaker, this is a long Bill, and some of its provisions are of a highly technical nature; I hope, however, that I have been able to explain it to the satisfaction of hon. Members. I can assure them that for the greater part it is concerned only with regularising practices that have been in use for many years; and indeed it is for this reason that the effective date of the Bill has been inserted as 1st April, 1958—all these practices have been in use during the current financial year, and it is essential that we should have Legislative authority in respect of this period.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

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

Question proposed.

Mr S. G. Ikoku (Enyong Division): Mr Speaker, Sir, I rise to support the general purport of this Bill. In doing so, Sir, I like to point out that the Bill is a very necessary piece of legislation and as the hon. Minister has said, it would help to tighten up the financial control of the revenue and expenditure of the Region. We agree with the spirit of the Bill, but, we feel that certain amendments should be written into it in order to make it a little bit more perfect.

For ease of reference, I would like to treat the Clauses one by one, that is where we are suggesting certain amendments. The amendments of course will be brought forward at the Committee Stage. Clause 3 of the Bill, Sir, quite properly tries to vest the Minister with full power over the supervision of expenditure and accounting of Regional fund. But I think that sub-clause 3 of that clause is a bit unfair to the Minister.

It reads :

“The Permanent Secretary, or other officer of the Ministry of Finance, shall have such access to all documents and records as may be necessary for the exercise of the Minister’s powers under this section.”

As far as I can see, Sir, somebody in the Ministry of Finance will have to do all the work for the Minister but I feel that in view of that suggestion that Section 17 is rather too elaborate for the machinery we are trying to build. It will be necessary to give the Minister of Finance a little more latitude in his choice of officers to help him to keep this watch on the accounts of the Region. The Permanent Secretary would be quite ready to watch this with other officers of the Ministry of Finance but that means that the Minister’s hands are tied to the selection of somebody who is in the Ministry but the accounts he may be anxious to investigate may be so elaborate that the Minister might have need for an official expert or an accounting expert—somebody who may not be available in his Ministry; somebody who may not even be an officer in the Region. I would have thought it would help the Minister

[MR IKOKU]

more if we say that the Permanent Secretary or any other person appointed by the Minister shall have access to all the documents as may be necessary.

In any case, we will have to bring the amendment at the Committee Stage for the consideration of Government. In principle, I am out to establish that the Minister of Finance should not be restricted to officers in his Ministry for use in keeping an eye on the accounts of the Region. He should have a completely free hand to seek for somebody to help him in his Ministry. In fact, within or without the Region.

Another point I will like to speak on is in connection with Section 9. I very much applaud the energetic clear thinking, of what seems to be behind this Section 9. Our Consolidated Revenue Fund is clearly divided into Deposits and Investment and it is stated clearly that the disposition by the Minister of the Consolidated Revenue or such other public fund for any such purpose be directed by the Minister. The only little doubt I have there, Sir, is this little section on the disposition of such money which shall have no need for legislative authority. I agree, that it may be burdensome for the Minister of Finance to have to come to the House to seek legislative sanction before—I emphasize “before”—he gives instruction as to the disposition of funds either by way of deposits with a Bank or by way of investment; but I feel, Sir, that nothing should detract from the authority of this House to debate or seek clarification on any such deposits on them. It is the privilege of this House that we collect taxes—whatever it is—from the electorate and we are in duty bound to give account to them from time to time. Whether they accept the account we give them is another matter; but we must render some account and I hope that the purpose of Section 9 authorising the Minister to direct the investment of this fund without legislative authority does not imply that when dispositions have been made that this House shall have no authority to seek clarification on the dispositions. The point of principle there is that the legislature is responsible to the Region for all the public funds of the Region and these public funds include these deposits and these investments. We should be able to know how the surplus funds have been invested or have been deposited.

Turning to section 10, I very much like the idea of charging the Accountant-General with the general accountability of our investment, but I notice that his hands are being tied. Section 10 sub-section 1 reads:

“The Accountant-General shall maintain under the designation of Investments General a record of certain investments.”

I do not see any reason why he should be restricted to certain investments. He should keep record of all investments so far in the Region. I do not think there would be need to draw his attention to certain investments and compel him by law to keep away from keeping record of certain investments. The Accountant-General should be accountable to the Minister. The consequence there, Sir, is that there will be need for amendment to Clause 10 sub-clause 2 (c) which says that “such investment held in respect of public fund as the Minister shall designate in writing . . .” We are suggesting that there will be some amendment there. We will bring it up at the Committee Stage for consideration. The point is that if we have money at all and the man in authority in this House decides that that money should be invested, then the Accountant-General should be able to keep a record of all such moneys and not some.

Further, in this clause, I notice that there has been a complete omission of our deposits. Clause 10 talks mainly on investment. There is no mention of deposit. We would like the Accountant-General to keep record not only of the investments but also of the deposits made on behalf of the Region.

Turning to Clause 16, Sir, I think there is some oversight on the part of our legal mind because in the “Objects and Reasons” it is made clear that the appointment of Crown Agents as Government paying agent is the idea in mind, but in Clause 16 the word “agent” has been inadvertently omitted and we can take the words to mean Government agents, and so I think we should make the necessary amendment when we come to it.

Finally, Sir, Clause 17 Section 2. Well, if a Minister responsible to this House decides to open a trading account for his Ministry and sums of money are going to be transferred to and from this Ministry for trading purposes, I do not think we will be satisfied with only the balance—we would like to see the trading

account. It may be necessary from time to time for the Ministry or Ministries concerned to make their trading accounts available to this House by way of papers laid on the Table of this House.

Dr Imoke: I have to thank the Leader of the Opposition for the favourable remarks in his opening speech, and all I have to say is that I have taken note of his comments and we will consider them at the appropriate time.

Question put and agreed to.

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

Committee : Wednesday, 11th March, 1959.

Sitting suspended at 11.30 a.m.

Sitting resumed at 12 noon.

(5) The Widows' and Orphans' Pension (Eastern Region) Bill

Second Reading deferred until Thursday, 12th March, 1959

(6) The Contingencies Fund Bill

Order for Second Reading read.

The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke): Mr Speaker, I rise to move that the Bill entitled "A Bill for a Law to Establish a Contingencies Fund and for other purposes connected therewith" be now read a Second time.

Hon. Members are aware that the financial provisions of the revised Constitution prohibit expenditure from the Consolidated Revenue Fund without the authority of a Law passed by this House on the basis of which I issue an expenditure Warrant. The Constitution does, however, recognise that there are occasions when Government is called upon to meet urgent expenditure and it is quite impossible to seek the prior approval of the House; it therefore permits the creation of a Contingencies Fund from which moneys may be advanced to meet unforeseen and urgent expenditure, on the understanding that the advances are reimbursable at the earliest possible opportunity.

On the basis of this provision in the Constitution, the House established two Contingencies Funds in the 1958 Budget Session, and appropriated the sum of £175,000 through the 1958-59 Estimates for payment into these Funds. They were established by Resolution of this House, and this procedure was perfectly in order for the financial year 1958-59; but it is constitutionally necessary that these Resolutions shall be ratified by means of a Law in order to permit the Funds to operate after 31st March, 1959. That, Mr Speaker, is the purpose of the present Bill.

As I have indicated, it was originally intended to establish two funds—one for the purpose of meeting unforeseen expenditure of Regional Funds, and the other for similar purposes in connection with Colonial Development and Welfare expenditure. Although the general system has worked well during the current financial year, it has proved to be impracticable to maintain two completely separate Funds in this manner; moreover, hon. Members will be aware that the Colonial Development and Welfare Schemes are due to come to an end. Under present arrangements they will end on 31st March, 1960: representations have been made for this date to be extended, perhaps to 31st October, 1960, in order to ensure that all the schemes can be completed. At any rate a day will come when the schemes are finished and thereafter advances no longer necessary. For these reasons it is proposed that there shall in future be one Contingencies Fund only, from which advances for any purpose shall be met, and Clause 3 (2) provides for the payment into this Fund of the balances of the existing Regional Contingencies Fund and of the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund.

The Contingencies Fund is essentially a loan or revolving fund, the function of which is to advance urgently needed moneys for the services of Government in respect of a Head or Sub-head of the Estimates which is about to be overspent, on the understanding that supplementary provision will subsequently be made and the advance cleared before the end of the financial year. The remainder of the Bill lays down the general principles for the operation of the Fund on this basis. Hon. Members will note that in accordance with Clause 4 advances may be made only on the authority of a Warrant issued under my hand

[DR IMOKE]

and that, in accordance with Clause 5, proposals must be submitted to this House as soon as possible for the appropriation of the necessary moneys to permit the repayment of the advances.

Indeed, it is mainly for this purpose, as hon. Members will notice from the use of the symbols relating to Contingencies advances, that the House has been invited to consider at this present meeting a second Supplementary Appropriation Bill; the Government considers it essential to ensure that the Legislature is informed as soon as possible of the use made of the money contained in this Fund, and that all advances made during the financial year should be repaid before the financial year actually ends.

Clause 6 of the Bill provides for the making of rules for the operation of the Fund and requires that they shall be presented to this House for information. If this Bill becomes Law, I shall present the rules at the next meeting of this House. Hon. Members will, I think, agree that this Law is constitutionally essential, and that it is non-contentious.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

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

Question proposed.

Mr Ikoku: Mr Speaker, Sir, I agree entirely with the hon. Minister of Finance that the Bill is non-contentious. I will just ask two questions for purposes of elucidation on Clause 4. I would like to know, Sir, whether it would be proper for the Minister of Finance to draw on the Contingencies Funds any sum of money to be spent on an item not yet included in one of the many heads of expenditure in the Estimates of the Region. I do not know whether I am very clear there. It may be necessary to spend a little bit in excess on a particular item already in the Estimates of expenditure and we agree that the Minister should draw from the Contingencies Funds to meet this exigency. But I would like to know from the Minister whether an item not appearing in the Estimates of the Region could be a subject or a matter on which funds should be drawn from the Contingencies Fund.

The second question is as regards Clause 6. We are grateful that the rules operating this

fund will be presented to the House. I am only concerned about how the information would be presented to the House. Is it being suggested by the Minister that he would just lay these rules on the Table and that is the end of them, or is he calling for the expressed opinion of this House about the rules when he brings them here?

Mr J. A. Agba (Ogoja Division): Mr Speaker, Sir, while not disagreeing with what has already been expressed, I would like to say that this Bill, as far as I understand it, is a substitute for the Standing Committee on Finance. If this is so, I wonder why the Minister should have undertaken to bring this to the House without first of all drawing up the rules to enable us see how he is going to tighten up the expenditure; and until this is done I find it hard to express the merits and demerits of the Bill.

In referring to the Standing Committee on Finance we find that there was quite a lot of over-expenditure on different items. We made the Minister of Finance understand that we did not think that it was expedient to allow different Departments to incur any over-expenditure without due regard to the specific amount laid down in the expenditure of each item.

In certain Departments, vouchers were lost and the Ministry or the Department concerned could not even explain the reason for the loss. This loss was discovered in the hon. Premier's own office. (*Interruptions*). Unless these rules are presented to the House we find it difficult to say that the Bill as it is should be passed. I think, in my opinion, that if we allow this Bill to pass now through the House, with this way of spending the Region's money pointed out, we are really creating, so to speak, a chance of over-expenditure of more and more of the revenue of the Region.

With regard to the rules which the Minister said would be laid on the Table of the House, I think the Minister is in a better position to say how well that will help to tighten up the revenue of the Region.

Dr Imoke: Mr Speaker, Sir, the answer to the first question is "Yes". If there is any real item of expenditure—take for instance, the recent visit of the Prime Minister

of Ghana, there was no provision for expenditure for such a visit in the Estimates—the Government has every right to create a new Sub-head in the Estimates and to spend from this Contingency's Fund.

The answer to the second question is also in the affirmative. It is customary that Bills are brought into this House and passed into law but the Rules and Regulations are usually left to the Minister concerned to make with the approval of his Colleagues in the Executive Council. So, in this particular case, this Rule will be brought to the House only for information.

Question put and agreed to.

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

Committee: Wednesday, 11th March, 1959.

(7) The Education (Amendment) Bill

Order for Second Reading read.

The Minister of Education (Mr G. E. Okeke): Mr Speaker, I beg to move, That a Bill for a Law to amend the Education Law, 1956, be read a Second time.

A Register of Teachers is maintained by the Ministry of Education under section 41 of the Education Law, 1956, and no one may teach in any School in the Region unless he has first been registered. Section 41, subsection 5 of the Law reads:

“Any Teacher registered immediately before the coming into operation of this law under the provisions of any written Law shall be deemed to have been registered under the provisions of this Law.”

The intention of this particular subsection was to make it unnecessary for all those teachers who had registered under the old Education Ordinance to re-register afresh when the new Education Law came into force on the 1st January, 1957.

However, we have been advised that the wording of the section, as it stands at present, does not fulfill the intention behind it. The present subsection contains the words “immediately before” and therefore it has been held to mean that any teacher who was on the register and still teaching when the new Law came into force was automatically registered

under the new Law. Those who were not teaching when the new Law was introduced are not automatically on the new Register.

This ruling has caused much difficulty. Many teachers join the Civil Service or take other jobs, but when they reach retiring age revert to teaching. Others leave the teaching profession for shorter periods of a few years or only a few months. As the subsection stands at the moment, all these would have to re-register afresh on each occasion.

The amendment now proposed will ensure that all teachers who have at any time been registered as such under any of the old Education Ordinance are automatically on the Register established by the new Law.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

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

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a Second time 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.

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

Bill reported without amendment; read the Third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Production (Dr M. I. Okpara): Mr Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until tomorrow, 10th March, at 10 a.m. May I remind hon. Members that the Cinema Corporation will be showing some films in the premises of this hon. House at 7.30 p.m. today.

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

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

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

EASTERN HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 10th March, 1959

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

PRAYERS

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Owerri-Port Harcourt Road

247. Mr E. U. Eronini asked the Minister of Transport, if he is aware that Shell-B.P. have agreed to help financially if the Regional Government will take immediate steps to widen and straighten the Owerri-Port Harcourt Road so that it will be fit to bear heavy traffic.

The Minister of Transport: I am not aware. In recent discussions with a representative of this Firm I gained the contrary impression, but if my hon. Friend would enlighten me further as to this agreement, I will, of course take the matter up with the Company afresh.

Mr Eronini: In view of the fact that the Shell-B.P. uses heavy weight vehicles above the normal weights allowed to ply on such Class B roads with light surfacing, will the Minister put up a strong representation to that Company to help financially so that the road will be resurfaced to bear the heavy weight being brought upon it by Shell-B.P. heavy weight vehicles?

The Minister of Transport: I can assure you that I have taken up this matter before even your question.

Tarring of the Okigwi-Owerri Road

249. Mr E. U. Eronini asked the Minister of Transport, whether he will contract out the tarring of that portion of the Okigwi-Owerri Road which belongs to the Regional Government so as to bring it up to the same standard as the portion of the road which is the responsibility of the Federal Government.

The Minister of Transport: I wish to refer my hon. Friend to Project 16 of Appendix "Y" of the current year's Estimates. This is one of the projects that will be considered when the Capital Funds allocated to my

Ministry for 1959-60 are known. To bring a road to the same standard as Federal Trunk Roads "A" is another matter, and whilst our normal reconstructing and tarring cost works at about £3,000 per mile, the Federal Government Trunk Road reconstruction programme costs up to £13,000 per mile; there are of course wide variations depending on the terrain to be traversed. But it will be seen that there has to be a nice balance between standard of work and mileage to be tarred.

Trunk B Roads

251. Mr S. T. Akpan asked the Minister of Transport, how many Trunk B Roads have been reconstructed and bituminously surfaced in the Eastern Region for the period 1954-1958; what are their names and where are they located.

The Minister of Transport: During the period the Eastern Regional Government bituminously surfaced 339 miles of Trunk Roads B as follows:

Elele-Ahoada	12 miles
Aba-Opobo	63 miles
Port Harcourt-Ogoni-Kono ...	38 miles
Opi-Nsukka	6 miles
Ekwulobia-Amanze	8 miles
Owerri-Elele	33 miles
Nkisi Weir Pool Road	1 mile
Abakaliki-Afikpo	39 miles
Okigwi-Afikpo Road Station ...	43 miles
Ihiala-Orlu	14 miles
Awka-Orlu	26 miles
Umuahia-Ikot Ekpene	39 miles
Obubra-Ediba	7 miles
Obollo-Ehamufu	1 mile
Uyo-Nwaniba	9 miles

In addition 59 miles of the following roads which are not Trunk roads have been sealed:—

Enugu-Awgu	33 miles
Nnewi-Ekwulobia	14 miles
Okigwi-Afikpo Road Station (non-Trunk part)	2 miles
Township Roads... ..	10 miles

Also 97 miles of road have been reconstructed but not tarred as follows:—

Igwu Bridge-Bende-Umuahia ...	22 miles
Umuahia-Ahaba... ..	18 miles
Abakaliki-Obubra	15 miles
Ikom-Bendiga-Ayuk	14 miles
Bateriko-Wula	8 miles
Calabar-Arochuku	20 miles

and work is proceeding on many other roads in 1959.

Imports

252. **Mr E. U. Eronini** asked the Minister of Commerce, if he is aware that the Eastern Region imports more foodstuffs and beverages such as beer, stockfish, sugar, etc., from abroad than any other part of the Federation; if so, how does the Minister propose to reduce this out-flow of millions of pounds.

The Minister of Commerce: I am not aware that the Eastern Region imports more foodstuffs, beverages, etc., than other parts of the Federation. Every effort has been made to obtain figures showing the volume of foodstuff, etc., imported by other Regions and Lagos Colony. However, only figures in respect of the whole of Nigeria are available.

In regard to sugar and beer it has been possible to obtain figures for imports into the Eastern Region and these show that whilst in the Region only 1.11 lb. of sugar is consumed per head of the population, the rest of Nigeria consumes 3.72 lb. Similarly beer consumed in the Region amounts to .07 gallons per head whilst the rest of Nigeria consumes 0.18 gallons. These figures would appear to suggest that the hon. Member's facts are not entirely correct.

I am pressing the Federal Government to make arrangements whereby comparative figures for all consumer goods can be made available. I will keep the hon. Member informed as to progress.

Finally, I would like to point out that any reduction the hon. Member wishes to see made is not a matter for this Government, as under the present constitution, these powers rest with the Federal Government.

BILL PRESENTED

Eastern Region Development Corporation

Bill to amend the Eastern Region Development Corporation Law, 1954; presented by the Minister of Production, Dr M. I. Okpara, read the First time, to be read a Second time Tomorrow.

PRIVATE ARMY

Mr M. E. Ogon (Ikom Division): Mr Speaker, Sir, I rise to move the motion standing in my name:

"That this House deprecates the reported attempt of the Leader of the Democratic

Party of Nigeria and the Cameroons to import armed hooligans in uniform as his 'Private Army' into Port Harcourt for political ends, and calls upon Government to stamp out such an undesirable practice."

Sir, this is a very serious Motion and I would like to add that I move it with the best of intention to allow peace-loving people of the Eastern Region to go about their business and their politics without intimidation or incitement, without flouting the constituted authority and without lawlessness. I am not interested in their political beliefs. I do not move this Motion because they are a threat to my Party. I move this Motion in order to avoid any clash. (*Interruptions*). I do not want, Sir, to go back into the history of this Party, the D.P.N.C.! They are, as Members will remember, some offshoots of some disgruntled political "single chapter" in our Party. What I am interested, Sir, is that ever since this party was formed, they have been known by discussion, by persuasion and they have brought in more people by intimidation. One would have thought that in a Region like the Eastern Region where the N.C.N.C. has an overwhelming majority, it is the Opposition that would have feared. It is not a question of the minority being intimidated by the majority. With all the liberty and with all the freedom we give them in their campaign, we have never read of any Opposition campaign in the Region being disturbed. It is the other way round. Wherever the N.C.N.C. holds meeting, they are intimidated.

At Orlu, it has been impossible for an elected Member of this House to go about his constituency to hold meeting. I say so not because this Member is unpopular with the electorate but as he will tell the House himself, the hon. Member made an attempt to address a meeting of his constituency and by the time he arrived, the D.P.N.C. came with three lorry loads of hooligans—all armed. The meeting was disturbed and the hon. Member had to retreat.

I have here, Sir, a petition on which the whole Motion is based and with your permission I will read the relevant extract. This is a petition which has been copied to the Governor-General of the Federation.

Now the petition is signed by an important figure as the late Mayor of Port Harcourt.

[MR OGON]

I am sad about it. I just want to show that the petition had the backing of the people of the Municipality of Port Harcourt. It was addressed to the Senior Superintendent of Police, Rivers Province, extracts of which said:

"We are aware that democracy allows everybody freedom of speech and movement and nobody has ever denied the leader of D.P.N.C. this liberty. But we are not aware that the same democracy allows the terrorising of a community by an individual using an unauthorised, uniformed and properly armed army numbering several hundreds.

Unless the Police authorities will convince the community through us that Dr Mbadiwe has been licensed to recruit and keep a personal army, for the purpose of terrorising people to his political belief and personal hatred of Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe and East Regional Government, which he hated, we are forced to say that the Port Harcourt Police either failed in its duty to protect the community from invasion by allowing a trained disciplined, uniformed and adequately armed army of not less than 450 strong in addition to more than four lorry loads of opium dosed hooligans imported to demoralise the peace loving and God-fearing people of Port Harcourt.

Let the Port Harcourt Police Authority deny or accept that:

- (1) Dr K. O. Mbadiwe entered Port Harcourt on the 16th November, 1958 with 7 lorry loads of people in addition to several buses and vans;
- (2) that Dr K. O. Mbadiwe entered Port Harcourt with an unauthorised army which was uniformed and well armed with all kinds of weapons;
- (3) that Dr Mbadiwe was prevailed upon to ununiform his army some three miles before entering Port Harcourt and that he entered Port Harcourt with war songs."

The point I am making, Sir, is that nobody is afraid of Dr Mbadiwe. We bring this motion because the Eastern Region has not amended

that section of their criminal code, in such a way that anybody who is armed can attend political meetings. In the West, carrying of clogs is forbidden. We thought it was unnecessary here because we believe in the good nature of human being. We bring this motion not because we do not trust that the Police will do their work adequately but we want to avoid unnecessary clashes. This is the year of Federal Election and it is the intention of this side of the House that every shade of political opinion should be given an opportunity to campaign freely with the electorate. It has been our sad experience, Sir, that in Western Nigeria political opponents are terrorised. It is not because we cannot do it here but because we have a good-natured leader. (*Interruptions*).

I know, Sir, that my friends are not serious in what they are saying. Dr Onubogu was sacked from this Bench for inefficiency. (*Laughter*). My hon. Friend Achara was sacked for disloyalty and inordinate ambition. Hon. Onyeri was removed by the grace of the people of Port Harcourt. Secondly, Sir, all things being considered, it is known that ever since the Premier of the Region toured Orlu Division, 22 hooligans have been arrested by the Police and all of them are members of the D.P.N.C. Also, 18 of them have been convicted. Surely, we shall never allow a minority to humiliate the Government Party in the course of their official business. The object of this Motion is to ask the Government to amend the Criminal Code in such a way that we can round-up all the hooligans including those here. (*Noise and interruptions*).

The Minister of State Charged with the Responsibility for Customary Courts and the Appointment and Recognition of Chiefs (Mr R. O. Iwuagwu): Mr Speaker, on a point of order. No. 27 (5) of the Standing Orders reads that "Members shall not make unseemly interruptions while any Member is speaking".

Mr E. O. Eyo (Uyo Division): Mr Speaker, Sir, I do not think the Minister has read Standing Order 27 (5) correctly.

The Premier (Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe): Mr Speaker, I am afraid the Opposition Chief Whip is misleading the House. No. 27 (5) of the Standing Orders says that "Members shall not make unseemly interruptions while any Member is speaking".

Mr Speaker: I must thank the Minister of State Charged with responsibility for Chiefs and Customary Courts for drawing my attention to the relevant Standing Order. I think I must say that the interruptions were unseemly and deprived the Member concerned of the chance of being heard. Besides, the interruptions disturb the verbatim reporters. The stenographers can not get their work done, and I ask hon. Members to lessen their interruptions at least to give the speaker a chance of being heard.

Mr Ogon: Mr Speaker, I thank you so much. I am such a capable speaker that I am never detracted by unseemly interruptions.

I was saying that sometime ago the D.P.N.C. did bring some hooligans to Port Harcourt.

I am now urging the Government to avoid clashes. It is in the interest of the Opposition, that the Government should bring a law to protect them. If they do not bring any law now to stop armed hooliganism, we on this side of the House shall be held responsible for further troubles. There is no mistake about that. It is only in the Eastern Region that we have not got Native Authority Police. (*Interruptions*).

Mr Speaker: May I remind hon. Members that this is a debate. I would like them to speak direct to me.

Mr Ogon: The last point I would like to make is that private armies are a challenge to democracy anywhere in the world. Sir, I do not want an independent Nigeria to have such things as the S.S. or L.K.B.D. found in Russia. We would like everybody in this country to freely put across his ideas to the people. You can form a political party; nobody quarrels with you, but we do not think that armed violence or private army is necessary for a reformed nation. It is in this spirit, Sir, that I have brought this motion. This motion seeks protection for both the majority and minority against armed hooliganism.

The outside world shall judge our performance as an independent nation on our ability convene meetings without clashes. Some of us have been very sad with the repeated clashes going on in the Western Region: the

reign of terrorism in the Mid-West, the victimisation of political opponents, the Native Authority Police that are being used by political parties and the report that the Judiciary is being influenced by politicians. We want this Region to be a clear example of what true and independent democracy should be.

It is in that spirit, Sir, that I beg to move.

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

Question proposed.

The Premier: Mr Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to make a statement on behalf of this Government on the subject of "Private Armies". This Government believes in democracy and is opposed completely, wholeheartedly, and root and branch to the importation of Fascist practices into this Region. It is opposed not only to the assembling of armed hooligans in support of any political party whatever, but is also equally opposed to the wearing of uniforms by supporters of any political party whatever.

Mr Speaker, I go further and say what a disappointment it is to me that it should be necessary for Government to introduce a Bill on this subject to stop the development of Private Armies or the wearing of uniform at political meetings. But the facts of the things that are happening in this Region are there and are indisputable and this Government has no option but to take steps to prevent these happenings. I therefore wish to announce that at the Budget Session of this hon. House, a Public Order Bill will be introduced for precisely this purpose of stopping Private Armies, the carrying of arms and the wearing of uniforms at political meetings.

Lest any hon. Members should think that this is not necessary, permit me, Mr Speaker, to read extracts from a report of happenings in Port Harcourt last November. The report is by the Senior Administrative Officer in charge, and it may be presumed to be objective and factual and with no bias in favour of one political party or another. It reads:

"Early on the morning of the 16th November, the Police were informed that Dr Mbadiwe was bringing with him from Aba

[THE PREMIER]

several lorry loads of his "Demoguard". Police were posted... at the Municipal boundary... with instructions that no men in uniform were to enter the Municipality as it was considered that this, if allowed, would constitute a provocative act. Dr Mbadiwe... had with him 36 vehicles, private cars, mini-buses, lorries and lay passenger buses... Lined up on the road, to where they had been removed by the police, were about 200 men in uniform (red, white and yellow shorts, small steel helmets like inverted plates and red, white and yellow poles about 5 feet long. Dr Mbadiwe was informed that he would not be permitted to bring uniformed supporters into Port Harcourt; there was no law to prevent his bringing cheer leaders or even a crowd of supporters with him so long as they behaved, but no "Private Armies" would be allowed..."

After describing how the police were forced to remove their sticks from them, the report goes on:

"On the way, all of them removed their shirts and singlets, as their uniforms had been removed, and a bare-bodied 'army' marched on to the field and took up its position around the enclosure. Dr Mbadiwe and his lieutenants then spoke (it was too far away to hear what they said) and a small crowd gathered. The 'Demoguards' cheered in unison and presumably to order. Most of the rest of the crowd heckled."

Towards the end of the meeting a party, largely made up of children... appeared on the field with sticks torn from trees and started to dance around the crowd. The Police removed the sticks, but the dancing was permitted to continue on the grounds that peaceful heckling must be expected by politicians who hold meetings in places where they are unpopular and where they have imported their own cheer leaders. The meeting ended with both sides singing scurrilous songs in Ibo.

At the end of the meeting as the 'Demoguards' got in their buses, a few hooligans (chiefly small boys) started to throw stones at them and they therefore emerged, some of them with sticks they had managed to

hide in the buses. These were disarmed, the stone throwers were dispersed, and, with the assistance of Dr Mbadiwe, the 'Demoguards' re-entered their vehicles and the whole party was led out of Port Harcourt by the Police."

Mr Speaker, I consider that the Police management of the situation was excellent and that the serious disturbances which might have broken out owing to the arrival of armed "Demoguards" in Port Harcourt were prevented through good handling. At the same time, it was necessary to use 220 police to ensure that the situation was under control and all of these men were on duty for nearly 12 hours.

I ask this hon. House: Is it right that any political party should be allowed to use a Private Army necessitating the use of 220 police to prevent disturbances? What if such a Private Army had been taken to other parts of the country where such numbers of police were not available? Does this mean that whenever an unpopular political leader or political party travels around this Region with a Private Army of 350 disciplined men, the Police will have to spend all their time protecting him and his men from the enraged populace?

No, Sir, it is a monstrous perversion of political freedom. I have no doubt that every Member of this hon. House, and this includes even the Members of the Opposition, who, if they are honest, will agree that such things should not be permitted, and that a Public Order Bill to prevent Private Armies and the wearing of uniforms is overdue. It will be introduced at the next Session.

Mr Speaker, I beg to support the Motion.

Mr S. O. Achara (Okigwi Division): Mr Speaker, this motion is fantastic, concocted and most irresponsible. On the 24th of September last year when the members of the then N.C.N.C. Reform Committee arrived at Aba, N.C.N.C. hooligans were as pre-arranged posted at the Rex Cinema at Aba to disturb our meeting. For over 30 minutes (and I know the A.S.P., I know a number of inspectors and the other lower ranks will bear me witness), it was not possible to hold the meeting at the Rex Cinema theatre at Aba. N.C.N.C. hooligans were posted round the Cinema

theatre, throwing pieces of stones and empty bottles on us in the hall. That was on the 24th of September, Mr Speaker. On the 25th of September last year at the Roxy Hall, Port Harcourt—I am very sorry that the Government Chief Whip in a most trivial attempt brought in the personality who passed away a few weeks ago; I do not want, because he is dead, to make open the part he played in the arrangement of hooligans, in the buying of palm wine and small bottles of . . . (*Interruptions*).

Mr Speaker: I should be pleased if the hon. Member would kindly desist from saying things that do not bear on the motion.

Mr Achara: Mr Speaker, it was the Government Chief Whip who introduced it and I am bound to reply to what he said. I did not at any stage during my speech suggest anything. I only say it . . .

The Premier. Point of Order—Standing Order 25 (13)—

“A Member who has spoken to a question may again be heard to offer explanation of some material part of his speech which has been misunderstood; but he must not introduce new matter.”

Mr Speaker: I should offer him an opportunity when the hon. Member finishes.

Mr Achara: As I was saying, Mr Speaker, for over 30 minutes N.C.N.C. hired hooligans continued throwing into the Roxy Hall empty bottles, pieces of stones on the 25th of September, 1958 at Port Harcourt.

Again at Enugu, on the 28th of September last year when the D.P.N.C. delegation visited Enugu, the same thing happened. Mr Speaker, I know they will deny this but I happened to know even one of the State Ministers took part in bringing hooligans. It was in the house of one Minister that the arrangement to go and import hooligans from neighbouring towns was made. Mr Speaker, it will interest you to know what happened. Over 400 hired hooligans were posted around the Rex Cinema theatre at Aba and almost equal number each at Port Harcourt and Enugu by the N.C.N.C.

A barrister for that matter and an N.C.N.C. Member in the House of Representatives mounted the bonnet of his car and with these hired hooligans continued singing most provocative songs. That was at a place near the Rex Cinema here in Enugu and the Police had to question him after the incident.

Mr Ogon: Mr Speaker, Sir, on point of Order—Standing Order No. 25 (7) “No Member shall impute improper motives to any other Member”. We have said that this is an improper motive and we are asking that the hon. Member should withdraw.

Mr Speaker: I do not seem to agree with hon. Ogon.

Mr Achara: Mr Speaker, Sir, as I was saying, this lawyer had to be questioned by the Police and this was a good example of the disorderly behaviour by the N.C.N.C. members throughout the Region during our five weeks tour. I am telling you, Sir, that it is planned by the N.C.N.C. to make it impossible for any other Party to spring up in the Eastern Region. They said that Dr Mbadiwe had a way of charming people and if he was allowed to talk to the people he would convert many of them to join his party.

The Minister of Production (Dr M. I. Okpara): Mr Speaker, I submit that what the hon. Member is saying is irrelevant to the question on floor.

Mr Speaker: I think that what the hon. Member is saying is fairly relevant to the question on floor.

Mr Achara: Mr Speaker, Sir, I want to state categorically here that there is nothing like a private army in the D.P.N.C. What is worrying them is the rapidly growing strength of that Party and you will like to know, Sir, that this Party is strongest in the Premier's own constituency. Wait for the election day.

Mr Speaker, the members of the D.P.N.C. are responsible and are unlike the Zikist National Vanguard which have people without visible means of livelihood.

Mr Speaker: I wish to draw the attention of the hon. Member again to Standing Order 25 (5) and to refrain from using insulting language against anybody.

Mr Achara: Mr Speaker, I do not intend to use any insulting language. The only thing is that I am making a statement of fact that Mr Adewale Fashanu, Chairman of the Eastern Nigeria Printing Corporation on £2,000, Political Secretary of the Premier of the Eastern Region, is the President-General of the Zikist National Vanguard.

The Minister of Commerce (Mr J. U. Nwodo): Mr Speaker, on point of Order. Standing Order 34

"Mr Speaker in the House and the Chairman in any committee shall be responsible for the observance of the rules of order in the House and committee respectively and their decision upon any point of order shall not be open to appeal and shall not be reviewed by the House except upon a substantive Motion made after notice."

Mr E. O. Eyo (Uyo Division): On point of Order, Mr Speaker. You have not made any such ruling.

Mr Speaker: I am sure the hon. Member will not use insulting language.

Mr Achara: As I was telling you, it was the N.C.N.C., the Government Party, that introduced hooliganism into the public life of this Region and I am calling the National President of the N.C.N.C. as my witness. It was that Party that introduced hooliganism in this Region because of their strong opposition to honest criticism. That was the whole motive behind the organisation of the Private Army, with Scorpion as the symbol of what is known as the "Zikist National Vanguard". The Government Party is fearing its shadow.

Government Bench: Where did you get this information?

Mr Achara: You know as the former Secretary of the Eastern Working Committee, I should know all these facts.

Mr E. O. Eyo: Inside stuff! Inside stuff!

Mr Achara: As I was saying, Sir, the D.P.N.C. is out to stamp out hooliganism in this Region. We want to create an atmosphere whereby Members of the Government Party and Opposition Parties can campaign in peace.

The Minister of Agriculture (Mr P. O. Nwoga): Mr Speaker, on point of Order. He is not speaking from his seat.

Mr Achara: I am speaking from my seat.

Mr Speaker: I am afraid the hon. Member is rather defending the D.P.N.C. instead of putting forward arguments for or against the motion.

Mr Achara: The argument I was developing before the Minister of Agriculture quoted an irrelevant portion of the Standing Orders was that . . .

The Minister of Agriculture: It is Standing Order 3 (2).

Mr Achara: I am speaking from my seat or do you want me to come there?

Mr Speaker, as I was saying, we oppose hooliganism, we do not support it; we do not support any act of hooliganism. As I said before, there is nothing like armed hooliganism in the D.P.N.C. All Members of our Party are responsible men and women having decent means of livelihood.

Mr Speaker: May I remind the hon. Member that he has only five minutes more to speak.

Government Bench: He has made no points practically.

Mr Achara: Mr Speaker, I am not bothered about the portion of Collins Intelligence Report read by the Premier. How it came about I do not know. I know one thing that the N.C.N.C. is a party known for its bias, and I know that that Motion was inspired and so I am not interested. I can only say as an eye-witness that that Report was a garbled account of what happened that day. It was not what happened at a meeting on the 25th September last year to which I drew your attention. (*Interruptions*). I completely refuse to agree with the concocted and fantastic statement embodied in this Motion and there is nothing like a private army in our Party. Dr Mbadiwe is too good a gentleman. (*Interruptions*). You know that he is a leader of outstanding ability and integrity. So, Mr

Speaker, I consider that this Motion is irresponsible and if the mover had coached it in a way that is of general application to all, it could have received my support.

Mr J. O. Ihekwoaba (Orlu Division): Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to support the Motion. I feel that any responsible member of the Democratic Party in this House should have supported this Motion. This Motion seeks the protection of the D.P.N.C. My reason is that I remember what happened when some hon. Members of this House who are members of the D.P.N.C. went to Port Harcourt and I think that throughout their life, they will never organise such incitement again. If this Motion is passed, I think it is in the interest of the members of that party. They suffered in Orlu during the last Government campaign. Most of them were arrested. If the D.P.N.C. could hire 36 lorries and vans loaded with hooligans what of the hands that made them. If we are going to retaliate, we are not going to hire any lorry nor ammunition. We are going to produce them.

As our own property, we are not going to borrow them, nor shall we go to hire. The Orlu Community has decided to chase the D.P.N.C. out of Orlu Division. We have decided that even if they come with guns and matchets, we will use something more verminous to fight them, because they are giving Orlu a bad name in the whole world. Most of them do not come from Orlu Division. They are mostly hired hooligans from elsewhere.

We are not prepared to tolerate any longer such nonsense from any quarter in Orlu Division nor from outside people. The hon. the mover of this Motion has said that some hon. Members from Orlu Division are being chased and hooted when they go to their constituencies to lecture. I am not aware of this. I have been lecturing in my constituency and there has been no trouble.

I have known the arrangement we have made to prevent hooliganism; so on any attempt that anybody makes in that Division to bring in hooligans we have already taken our stand. The D.P.N.C. should not make any attempt again to come to Orlu to cause trouble. Where they do it again they are in danger.

The Government Chief Whip has said that some of the Members of this House who come from Orlu do not go to their constituencies to

speak to them about the D.P.N.C. As far as I know this party has no stand in that Division because any attempt which they will make will destroy them.

Mr V. K. Onyeri (Port Harcourt Division): Mr Speaker, in fact, I will say that the Mover of this Motion is actually a friend of mine, and as the Government Chief Whip, I take it that he moved this Motion just in keeping with the instructions given to him from the Executive Council, and this is the reason why, if you notice, Mr Speaker, you would have observed that immediately he finished his speech the Government Deputy Whip got up to second and no other personality than the Premier got up to speak. The line up for the Government speakers here is very interesting. Throughout the political rigmarole in the Eastern Region since a year ago, I have not said anything against the ruling Government Party; not because I do not know what to say, but as brothers we should be our brothers' keepers instead of being a wolf to one another.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture (Mr D. A. Nnaji): Point of Order. The hon. Member referred to the Executive Council of this Region as having instructed a Member of this House to put up the Motion. No Member shall impute improper motive on any other Member; he is imputing improper motive.

Mr Speaker: I am afraid, hon. Members, the Executive Council is a vague body—a large body and not an individual.

Mr Onyeri: Mr Speaker, I was saying that throughout the political rigmarole in the Eastern Region, which started in 1953, I was a supporter of the Government Party. Now, it appears that certain people in the Government have not actually learnt by their past mistakes. By this Motion I will show you that when people shout wolf, wolf, that they are the people who are the real wolves. I shall prove to you with facts and figures that the N.C.N.C. members are guilty of the crimes they accuse others. Sir, by the report of the Commission appointed by the Secretary of State—that is the Minority Commission—at page 45, headed "Public Order", you will note the following remarks which I quote with your kind permission:

[MR ONYERI]

"In this Region" (meaning the Eastern Region) "there is a difference in that there exists an organised body known as the Zikist National Vanguard. We were told by members of the NCNC party that this was the militant wing of the party; it was described, during our stay in Nigeria, by two Federal Ministers who belonged to the N.C.N.C. party—and who could not therefore be accused of unfriendly bias—as Zik's Private Army. The Secretary of the Calabar branch of this organisation appeared before us in evidence on another matter and in the course of his evidence revealed that the last election had been known in his organisation as "Operation Scorpion" and that the scorpion had been chosen as the emblem of his organisation because of its sting. We heard evidence of members of this organisation, sometimes dressed as cowboys, arriving by Land Rover with the clear intention of intimidating political opponents. The President General of the movement is Mr Adewale Fashanu, who is Dr Azikiwe's Political Secretary and also Chairman of the Eastern Region Printing Corporation; in spite of references before us to both the organisations he controls, he did not come forward to give evidence."

Mr Speaker, it will interest you to note that this accusation was made against a political party, but neither the President of the N.C.N.C. nor the Z.N.V. has refuted it up to date. The same N.C.N.C. party complains about organised Army in another political party. I was at one time Treasurer-General of this organisation known as the Z.N.V. and because of my performances in that party, I was elected Deputy President-General in charge of the Eastern Region; and an elected member of the National Executive Committee of the N.C.N.C. As I speak here, Mr Speaker, I am speaking as an authority in regard to the relationship between Zikist National Vanguard and the N.C.N.C.

Mr Speaker, I assert positively that the N.C.N.C. is the only political party in Nigeria that has organised a Private Army. If they try to refute this, I warn that I have documents with me to substantiate it. That is why I now caution them not to talk; I want all of them to keep quiet. (*Laughter*).

Some hon. Members: Release it !

Mr Speaker: Order, order.

Mr Onyeri: If I release these documents many shall be weeping Jeremiahs !

The reason why the whole youths of this country embrace the D.P.N.C. is clear. You will remember, Sir, that three times in Nigeria's political history the leadership of the N.C.N.C. was given the opportunity which could have led him to be the Prime Minister of the Federation and rule this country as he liked. But on these three occasions the youths of this country were let down. The youths were let down during the Workers General Strike of 1945 when the Zikist Movement was proscribed because at the eleventh hour Dr Azikiwe deserted the members in the field of action on an issue he previously assented to.

An hon. Member: He had nothing to do with it.

Mr Onyeri: He had.

Mr Speaker: Order, order.

It seems to me that this debate is being used as a pretext for something else. I would like the hon. Member to remember that what he is saying is not strictly relevant to the wording of the motion.

Mr Onyeri: I thank you very much, Mr Speaker. What I am telling you is that we the youths of Nigeria have all along been giving opportunities to a certain individual to lead the nation, but he has on every occasion failed to live up to expectation. Today, it appears that any time people would like to air their own views politically contrary to his there would be introduced inspired measures to gag them. We cannot allow this state of affairs to continue in this Region and this is one of the reasons why the youths are deserting the N.C.N.C. to embrace the D.P.N.C. in full. I ask the Leader of the N.C.N.C. to change and take a look on the other leaders and their followers instead of his old fashioned way of concocting stories of assassination. Now, he has charged the Leader of the D.P.N.C. of organising a Private Army when in fact he is the one guilty of his accusation.

Mr Speaker: Order, order. I am afraid the hon. Member is being irrelevant in his debate.

Mr Onyeri: I am sorry, Mr Speaker, I do not intend to be irrelevant.

Mr Speaker: I would rather like Members to behave honourably in this Chamber. Highest behaviour and highest confidence are required from Members when they enter this Chamber.

Sitting suspended 11.30 a.m.

Sitting resumed 12 noon.

Mr Onyeri: Mr Speaker, I have so many facts at my disposal but unfortunately the time is so short for me to deal with all of them. Those who shout about the Private Army of the D.P.N.C. are the people who actually organise the Zikist National Vanguard. £5,500 was withdrawn from a Bank to finance this Private Army.

What is troubling the Eastern Region today is the popularity of Dr K. O. Mbadiwe. I must say this: that there are two ideologies at war in the Eastern Region today: one is political Zikism and the other is political KOism and political KOism has knocked out Zikism.

Mr Speaker: I am happy that the hon. Member has stopped his speech as it appears he is departing from the debate.

I have an indication that there are many Members who are interested in this debate and, if hon. Members will agree with me, we limit the time to 10 minutes each.

Hon. Members: Aye.

The Minister of Information (Mr B. C. Okwu): Mr Speaker, in supporting this motion I wish to draw the attention of the House to the underlying principle and purpose of it, and that is that the motion had been moved as a clear evidence on the part of this Government to make the Eastern Region safe for everybody, no matter his political shade of opinion. I would like to say that, left to some of us, there would be no need for this motion because all you have to do is to take a look

around and observe the gentlemen who compose the Opposition and how they spoke to the Motion. Most of them, Sir, are fallen angels or rejected from the N.C.N.C., the Government Party. (*Interruptions*).

If only they will be good enough to listen to the points I am going to make, perhaps they will do them a world of good.

Mr Speaker, what I want to say is that the contributions or statements which have been made to the Motion by members of the Opposition should be judged in the context of their past relationship with the Government party and their present position. So, normally it could be expected that people can get up and say all sorts of untruths in order to impress the outside world. Coming back to the motion I want to say this, that if any of the gentlemen in the Opposition thinks that Government need take no action on this motion, he should be bold enough to say so, and I want to assure him that we are competent and capable of running the affairs of the Region and will not, repeat, will not, be intimidated by the Opposition. I think we can safely claim that our performance in the past will more than prove that there is no Government in this Federation of Nigeria that has been as ultra democratic as the Government of the Eastern Region. We have evolved a tradition of political ethics which we of the N.C.N.C. are very proud of.

Mr Speaker, whatever happens I think the outside world will be able to judge our good intentions from this Motion which happens to come from such an august personality as the Government Chief Whip. If the Opposition want to benefit from the intentions of this Motion all that they have to do is to support it, but if they think that it is not necessary to make the position safe for themselves and ourselves, let them get up and oppose this Motion. If they oppose this Motion I have to repeat what I said earlier, that we are competent to make members of the Opposition behave within the law. As you very well know, hooliganism was introduced into our Regional politics through the activities of the fallen angels of the N.C.N.C. by which the Action Group gained entrance into this Region. I am sure, Sir, those who have been trying to make much noise about the evil intentions of the Government cannot deny

[MR OKWU]

that Private Armies and hooliganism were unknown in this Region before the advent of the Action Group and the D.P.N.C.

The history of hooliganism and Private Army in this Region apart, and despite the ridiculous Opposition theories that we have had in this House, there has been no occasion when a violent clash involving the death of anyone occurred between any two political parties in this Region. Let us not forget that it is through this political venom, otherwise known as the Action Group, that a number of lives have been lost in this country. You have not forgotten the Kano riot in which so many Easterners and Northerners lost their lives. This riot was caused by an Action Group Minister who rushed up to the North and after igniting the flame of violence ran home while so many Northerners and Easterners lost their lives. We must not forget, Sir, that as far back as October last year there was a very big riot in Maiduguri and Bauchi and that this riot was caused by the same political party, the Action Group. We have not forgotten the Oyo riot in which so many lost their lives. I want to inform the Opposition Party that we are not unaware that some of them are running round the Region, using threat and threatening to evoke juju, and organising secret societies in order to coerce our people to join their political parties.

Mr Speaker, people have been told that unless they joined the Action Group they would be murdered or their land would be seized. Mr Speaker, here is a last chance for the Opposition to demonstrate that they will always behave in accordance with the law. Mr Speaker, let the Members of the Opposition be thankful to Dr Azikiwe. I want to say this publicly that if Dr Azikiwe were not in the Government of this Region, members of the Opposition know only too well that we have people on this side who would not hesitate to give blow for blow.

Sir, I want to make some reference to what Mr V. K. Onyeri said in connection with the Zikist National Vanguard.

Mr Speaker: Would the hon. Member wind up in two minutes time.

Mr Okwu: Sir, here is someone who is an hon. Member and being an hon. Member he is supposed to be responsible and being responsible he is supposed to be able to judge for himself what is right and what is wrong. Here is an hon. Member who held a high position in the old Zikist National Vanguard before he was thrown out of the N.C.N.C.; he did not tell the world that the Zikist National Vanguard was a vicious organisation. Now that he has joined the D.P.N.C. he tells the world that the Zikist National Vanguard is an organisation of hooligans. Only a fool can believe his stories.

Finally, I challenge hon. Onyeri to deny that his so-called £5,000 was not drawn from the said bank by members of the Vanguard individually after signing the usual undertaking to repay on specific terms.

Mr Speaker, if hon. Onyeri says that somebody was instrumental in getting this money out of the bank, let him deny that since the matter is in court he is at liberty to bring evidence to substantiate his allegation before the court.

We are watching the trend of events and we are watching with great interest the outcome of this Motion. Left to me, I should have said that the Government Party should not vote on it; only the Opposition should vote. Let them say "yes" or "no" and that will determine the tenor of political activities in this Region for the future.

Dr W. N. Onubogu (Onitsha Division): Mr Speaker, I only want to remind the House about the saying that "those who live in glass houses must not throw stones." This saying has proved more than true today. I am saying this because this question of hooliganism in the political play-ground of Nigeria was introduced in Lagos. I think the hon. Premier is in a better position to tell us how it started. (*Government Bench: You are the witness*). It was in the good old days of the Nigerian Youth Movement that it started. Then it was passed on to the Zikist National Vanguard and others. Hiring hooligans is an approved political tactic of the N.C.N.C.

I am saying, Sir, that this world is ruled on the principle of survival of the fittest and self-defence. It applies to both animal and

man. A lot of people have asked me: "Who pushed you into the gutter?". I said it was the N.C.N.C. If I was pushed into the gutter it was when I went for ordinary political campaign at Port Harcourt. Sir, I am only going to warn that we have already known the conclusion of this Motion. The Premier has told us what will happen. I personally do not want any hooliganism. But, Mr Speaker, after our campaign in Port Harcourt unprotected by the Police, surely, if we are to go back again I must be ready to defend myself with any weapon I can get hold of. That is natural. Why I was surprised was that the Premier in his speech made no reference to the meeting of the 25th September when we were ruff-handled and stoned. That is a shame. In fact, it is a slur on the Police of this country. With due deference, we know exactly what happened. I was told, but I am glad to say, Sir, that none of the stones aimed at me touched me. I bet you, if you take a stone now and throw at me it will definitely not touch me.

I also understood that a small bottle of . . .

Government Supporters: Whisky?

Dr Onubogu: No! Small bottle of stout was aimed at me but rather it hit one of the members of the N.C.N.C. on the eye. He was admitted into the hospital. This is a statement of fact which could be proved tomorrow morning.

Government Bench: But you were in the gutter.

Dr Onubogu: But it did not touch me. My driver was also stoned.

Some hon. Members: Superman!

Dr Onubogu: Mr Speaker, when they are quiet, I will continue. I am saying, Sir, that they should present the Bill when we come back to this House; it will be welcomed to me. I know many people at Onitsha who will even forfeit the uniforms they used on the day they welcomed the Premier when he came back from the United Kingdom after the London Conference.

Opposition Bench: Special uniform!

Government Bench: It is no special uniform, it is a social uniform.

Dr Onubogu: I am glad that that uniform will now disappear if the Premier will be quite honest about it. If that one does not disappear, how can any uniform made by other political parties disappear. I also know that some riders in the "Z.N.V." have steel helmets. These will also disappear.

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member has only two minutes more.

Dr Onubogu: So, Mr Speaker, I am saying that it is not only a two-edged sword but also that the principle of self-preservation must continue. I am saying also that this will give, or boost the spirits of our "Demoguards". Watch them grow. It is a flood that is gathering strength. The test time is at hand, so there is no need talking a lot. The last speaker said that he only wanted to protect us. We do not want any protection whatsoever. We can look after ourselves.

The Minister of Production (Dr M. I. Okpara): Mr Speaker, I wish to thank Dr the hon. Onubogu for admitting the substance of this Motion. He is the only man who has spoken from the Opposition Bench, who has admitted clearly that, in point of fact, there were armed hooligans and that there was a Private Army, but he has told us that the reason for that was because on an earlier occasion they had been attacked.

I wish to proceed with my remarks by referring to the funfair that has been made by the Minorities Commission Report. It is true, Sir, that in the North, in the West and in the East there were references to the armed bands. I shall refer, Sir, to page 16 of the Report referring to the Western Region. I quote:

"As an example of the kind of difficulty that would arise if the police were controlled entirely by a Regional Government based on a political party, we may refer to various bodies described to us in a variety of ways, as "hooligans", "thugs" and strong armed parties. In the Western Region, these are not uniformed and organised bodies; in fact there is regional legislation banning the wearing of uniforms and barges. But we heard on a number of occasions of the arrival of cars, usually Land Rovers or Jeeps bearing the Action Group Party symbol of a palm tree from which men with sticks emerged

[DR OKPARA]

with the intention of influencing a meeting or an individual by at least the threat of physical force."

And, Sir, on page 46 of the same Report we have . . . (*Interruption*).

Mr Speaker, I hope that you will observe that some minutes of my time have been wasted by the Opposition Members.

Mr Speaker: Order! Order!

Dr Okpara: On page 46, paragraph 30 of the Minorities Commission Report the Commissioners state:

"It is not surprising that the existence of such an organisation as this, which can hardly be argued to be outside the knowledge and control of the leaders of the Government, should cause fear among the critics of the Government; indeed, that appears to be its intention. Nor is it surprising that it should provoke a reaction on the other side. The COR State Movement has also formed a militant branch, which has taken the lion as its emblem; there can be little doubt that among the Ibos of Calabar, who in that area are in their turn a minority, there is a reasonable fear of what might happen to them if a COR State were to be formed."

This only goes to show, Sir, what might be a phase in the political life of this country; but the substance of this Motion goes specifically to a particular incidence—the incidence that took place at Port Harcourt. It is not just having armed hooligans but a Private Army which has been admitted by one of the Opposition Members. All that I have read are allegations but here is a concrete case which has been admitted by Members of the Opposition and we, as a Government, cannot tolerate this state of affairs. Several speakers have talked at length about the Zikist National Vanguard particularly those who were responsible for the inauguration of this body. Even people who paid money, who ought to be in a position to tell us what happened there, have come to this hon. House . . . (*Interruption*). I want to state categorically here, Sir, that the Zikist National Vanguard is not a Private Army of anybody.

Opposition Members: It is.

Dr Okpara: It is not a Private Army of the Leader of the N.C.N.C. or of anybody in the N.C.N.C. References that appear in the Minorities Commission Report were to the Leader of the D.P.N.C. at a time when he had lost his bearing within the N.C.N.C. fold.

Dr Mbadiwe could not be expected to be objective in his report of the happenings within the N.C.N.C. The Zikist National Vanguard . . . (*Interruptions*).

Mr Speaker: I think hon. Members will suffer me to say that the kind of interruptions here are unparliamentary.

Dr Okpara: Furthermore, Sir, the Zikist National Vanguard to my knowledge has never been used to molest anyone; in any case, they had never appeared in such number as 350. There is no evidence that that has ever happened, and my witness is the hon. Onyeri, one of the leaders of the Zikist National Vanguard. It is surprising, Sir, that all these years, well over five years, hon. Onyeri did not find anything wrong with the Zikist National Vanguard until he was fired and thrown out.

I wish to state also that Mr Adewale Fashanu . . . (*Interruptions*).

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members must sympathise with the reporters; they are finding it difficult to take down what hon. Members are saying and I think you should feel it is important that what you say must be reproduced. If you want it to be reproduced, please behave.

Dr Okpara: I wish to say that Mr Adewale Fashanu, who is the leader of the Zikist National Vanguard, has never been the Political Secretary of Dr the hon. Nnamdi Azikiwe, whether outside the House or since he became a Member of this hon. House. If he has made that claim, it is a claim he alone makes; there is no record where he was appointed as such; Mr Onyeri is also the witness to this.

Mr Speaker: The hon. Minister has only two minutes more.

Dr Okpara: The second point I wish to make, Sir, is that the report on which this motion is based is an official report from a Senior District Officer, Mr A. G. Saville. So there is no bias one way or the other—it is a

factual report of what happened. I am saying that this Government will not tolerate the existence of this Private Army. As has been said here, it is in the interest of the Opposition that there should be no Private Army whatsoever. We have the Police whose duty is the keeping of the peace and the Police certainly do not want to share this responsibility with any Private Army. But if Members of the Opposition wish to continue with Private Army they do know exactly what is coming to them—in the event of a fight, I am sure that the Opposition will be eliminated; but we want Opposition in the Eastern Region. Hon. Achara has charged that we do not want Opposition in the Eastern Region. It is untrue that we do not want Opposition in the Eastern Region. We were the first in the whole Federation of Nigeria to recognise the existence of an Opposition and even to pay for it—a thing that has never happened in the West from 1952 to 1955. When our present leader was the Leader of the Opposition in the West, he was not recognised. Then he left and Mr T. O. S. Benson took over; he was not recognised. After Mr Benson, Mr Osadebay took over; he was not recognised. Then, finally, the late Adelabu took over and it was a long fight drawn out over a period of 3 years before the Western Government most reluctantly recognised him. In the end, he stood a series of criminal charges, 14 of them, and on each charge he was acquitted and discharged. Hon. Members who come here to talk so much about not allowing the Opposition to exist do not believe in it as evidenced in the activities of their Party in the West. Eventually, this man, Adelabu, who stood 14 criminal charges, mysteriously died. In order to protect the Opposition, the Government had to bring in the Peace Preservation Bill in the Eastern Region.

We know how the Local Government Police is being used in the West to harass our people. Is it not ridiculous that we as a Government should be here, having no Private Army, and our supporters are being molested in another Region? A handful of people molest our people! We are warning, please, in the interest of peace and harmony in the Eastern Region, that there should be an end to this state of affairs because if it continues, the Opposition will live to regret it.

Finally, Sir, I commend this Motion to this hon. House. We, as the party in power, will

do the right thing whether Members of the Opposition like it or not. It is in the interest of good government that a ban should be placed on Private Armies in this Region, no matter from where they emanate.

Mr S. G. Ikoku (Enyong Division): Mr Speaker, Sir, in winding up for the Opposition, I would like to say that as is uncommon, a good idea has been mutilated in the wording of the Motion. I believe the hon. the Government Chief Whip, when he said he was moving his motion, appealed to the Government that steps should be taken to get rid of armed hooligans in uniform as appendages of political parties in this Region. The unfortunate thing, Sir, is that the motion does not seek to ask this House to call upon Government to take steps against armed hooliganism in politics in the Eastern Region. The motion is so framed as to charge the Leader of the D.P.N.C. as a culprit who should be dragged to the bar of this House and condemned. I say, Sir, that it is a good idea that the hon. the Government Chief Whip had in mind, but the idea has been mutilated in the way in which it has been represented in this motion. I must go on to say, Sir, quite categorically and I hope the Government Bench will believe that I am saying this quite sincerely, that we are opposed absolutely to the use of armed hooliganism and we will call upon our law officers to take a very serious view of such behaviour. Whatsoever the officers of the law can do by way of inflicting heavy punishment on those who indulge in such hobby will be received with appreciation by the public of the Eastern Region. So we are making it clear that we, as the Opposition, are opposed to the use of these armed hooligans in politics.

If the existing Criminal Code makes it impossible for those hooligans to be apprehended, by all means, the Criminal Code should be amended. By this, the law officers and the police generally should be charged to deal with this situation.

The hon. the Premier has said that he would be introducing a Bill; well, we are not opposed to the introduction of any Bill, but I would have thought it would have been tighter to seek the right type of amendment to the relevant section of the Criminal Code. But that is merely a matter of taste. If he wants to go by way of amendment to the Criminal Code we will support, if by way of a fresh Bill, we will support it.

[MR IKOKU]

In the course of the debate, Sir, there has been a lot of exaggeration. The hon. the Chief Whip said that three lorry loads of hooligans swooped Port Harcourt. Then he went further to say that there were 450 armed hooligans who were brought to Port Harcourt, but the official report says 350. It is a pity that there have been so much wild allegations in this matter. We would have preferred something much more concrete and to the point. I would like to add, Sir, that we have a saying in our dialect that "the rain that is molesting the slave is also molesting the man who is dragging the slave".

Hon. Members: Say it in your dialect!

Mr Ikoku: That is the position. These people brought here the judgement exhibit; they started it and now that the thing has grown into a thunderstorm they want to stop it. They started the rain and now that it begins raining, they are seeking shelter.

Mr Speaker, Sir, during the 1957 election, an armed band of N.C.N.C. supporters surrounded the *El Casino Hotel* in Aba because they were informed that the hon. E. O. Eyo was there. They were out to cause trouble. The Police came to the scene and could not keep the crowd under control for a very long time. Was there any official administrative report to the Premier's Office? Why didn't the hon. Chief Whip table a motion at that time?

Mr Ogon: Not necessary.

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member has only two minutes to go.

Mr Ikoku: During the same election campaign, this same Zikist National Vanguard in eight lorries went to hon. E. O. Eyo's village; they surrounded the place.

It has been said that the Action Group started a lot of hooliganism in the Western Region, killing people and the rest of it, but Mr Speaker, I am glad that the hon. Leader of the Opposition there did draw attention indirectly and unwittingly to the impartiality of the Judiciary in the Western Region. The point I am driving at is this: before the same Judiciary, all these acts of hooliganism appeared and all who were found guilty were N.C.N.C. supporters.

In conclusion, Sir, it could be very helpful to this Region to know who had been responsible and who had merely taken defensive action in this question of armed hooliganism. I will challenge the Government in introducing this legislation this month or in amending it, to institute a public inquiry into the disturbances in the Region. Mr Speaker, they will never accept the inquiry. If they feel they are clean let them institute an inquiry. Now they want to know the truth but they say it is a waste of money, a waste of Government revenue, etc., to institute this inquiry.

Mr Speaker, I must wind up by saying that we want this thing to be stamped out. This has been originated by the N.C.N.C. and we will support any amendment to the existing law to bring such a thing into being.

Mr E. O. Eyo rose in his place and claimed to move: That the Question be now put; but Mr Speaker withheld his assent and declined to put that Question.

Debate resumed.

Dr A. N. Obonna (Owerri Division): Mr Speaker, Sir, I rise to speak on this Motion, and before doing so, I want to clarify few statements made by some speakers. In the first place, the argument adduced by the members of the Opposition with the possible exception of the Leader of the Opposition is this: that you have been called a thief and you say thou art a thief also. That is no argument.

The point is that there is a specific case as brought up by the Motion of the Government Chief Whip. Instead of denying or confirming it, the Opposition have got up to say that: that which you say we are doing you are doing it also.

I had expected the Members of the Opposition to be grateful to the Government because if such a practice were allowed to continue in this Region I know very well what would have been their fate if they dared to go to the rural areas. If the Opposition should accept the challenge let them ask the Government Chief Whip to withdraw the Motion.

The fact of the whole case is that those people who have fallen from the N.C.N.C. and have gone to other parties go there to form

private armies because they were not allowed to do so in the N.C.N.C. An example of this is the Awo Brigade in the Western Region.

With regard to the Zikist National Vanguard, the leaders of the N.C.N.C. are not behind them. If they are behind them it would not have been necessary to brief people like us to champion their cause.

What I am trying to point out is that these people who go to form private armies in other parties were not allowed, when they were in the N.C.N.C., to display their hooliganism; in fact they were sacked. The Government is therefore bringing a law to kill this practice.

When the N.C.N.C. leaders visited my place, certain ruffians were detailed to carry silly placards and cause confusion. I know what my people wanted to do to them, but to avoid confusion I had to report to the police. I warn the Opposition that if what happened in Port Harcourt should happen in my Division the story would be a different one. Since the beginning of this House the Opposition has not found it necessary to bring up a Motion to ban hooliganism in the Region. In fact they should be thankful for the generosity of the Government in bringing up this motion. The law applies to everybody irrespective of his party leaning, and I see no reason why the Opposition should not welcome it.

The D.P.N.C. should not be too happy about its apparent success in Orlu and other places. The people are hungry and when they have enjoyed their money to the full, they will come back to their senses. As far as we are concerned the D.P.N.C. is dead. The people are only anxious to take their money. The election is coming and I can predict the result.

Finally, Mr Speaker, I support this motion and I would welcome the statement that a Bill will be introduced here to ban the practice, so as to show to the outside world that this Government is a peace-loving Government.

Mr Speaker, I support the motion.

Mr E. O. Eyo again rose in his place and claimed to move: That the Question be now put; but Mr Speaker withheld his assent and declined then to put that Question.

Debate resumed.

Chief G. N. Agbasiere (Orlu Division): Mr Speaker, before I say anything, I will ask this question:

Are there any hooligans in this hon. House? Mr Speaker, if the answer is yes, who are they? Mr Speaker, if the answer is no, why are the Opposition Members against this motion?

Mr Speaker, Dr Mbadiwe himself is from Orlu Division. I am one of the Chiefs in Orlu and I am in one of the Divisional Councils in Orlu Division. I have seen these hooligans and I know that Dr K. O. Mbadiwe and his people brought the hooligans into Orlu. Let me tell you, the D.P.N.C. wants to stop the Government. The first one was in 1958 and the second is this year. These people are spoiling Orlu. In Orlu they have an army of hooligans. Whenever they hear that Government supporters are coming they go and hire lorries. I would want them to be warned to be careful and stop spoiling Orlu Division.

Mr Speaker, last month when I was at Urualla with the Premier and the Ministers these people brought lorries of women and young people to disturb the Government entourage. They did not allow the Premier to speak at all. I was present when all these happened.

Mr Speaker, I am not going to repeat other Members who have spoken. I beg both the Opposition and the Government to agree to this Motion. If anyone refuses to accept this Motion, he will be responsible if any violence occurs in this Region.

Rev. O. Efiog, C.B.E.: (Calabar Division): Mr Speaker, Sir, I want to say that the intention of this Motion is very desirable and excellent. As the Leader of the Opposition has already said, it is very desirable to change the wording of this Motion. That is what we are quarrelling about but I do not want to speak at length by recasting the wording of the Motion. What is right is to allow us to vote with free conscience: that this House deprecates the use of arms for political ends in any part of this Region and calls upon the Government to give effect by legislation with a view to stopping this undesirable practice. Mr Speaker, that is my contention.

Mr D. S. A. Agim (Orlu Division): Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to speak in support of this Motion. In doing so, I wish to make some passing remarks on what I may call serious breach of faith on the part of some erstwhile officers of the N.C.N.C. who have gone over to the Opposition side. If the contents of our political ethics in this Region are no more than what some members have been showing in this House, I think some gentlemen should have to reconsider their stand. Hooliganism is an ill wind that blows nobody good; that is why I am surprised at any opposition to this Motion. Well, the Opposition argue that the wordings of the Motion make it apply exclusively to the D.P.N.C. Laws are made from experience. Somebody has quoted the Zikist National Vanguard and the Youth Association which are arms of the N.C.N.C. as a sort of "shock troops" but the yardstick with which to measure the responsibility or otherwise of an organisation is reference to its performances. I will challenge the Opposition to say, during the eight or nine years of the existence of the Youth Organisation and about sixteen or eighteen months existence of the Zikist National Vanguard, how many of the members have been taken to a court of Law and found guilty of breach of the peace. (*Government Party: None!*). These organisations were used in the past as the youth wing of the National Front. They were not used as armies. When we say that they are a militant part of the N.C.N.C., we mean that they are used for something like public rallies going about making announcements in the streets. That is why we call the youthful side the militant side. But all the time both organisations have been level-headed. They have been conducting themselves according to the law of the country. They have not been known to have caused any breach of the peace anywhere.

I support this Motion even with its particular reference to the D.P.N.C. Their performances make this Motion necessary. I am speaking from experience as a Member from Orlu Division. Sometime last year, during the official tour of the Premier and his Ministers, of parts of the Region, it fell to the lot of Orlu people to play host to the Premier. The Orlu Divisional Council, I was made to understand, was intimidated by show of force to change its decision to pass a vote of confidence in the Government. The Chairman

and his people were forced to change a well-worded Address of Welcome which passed through the formality of the Council for presentation to the Premier and a new one was made on the spot. Is this not terrorism? I speak from personal experience. During the last tour of the Premier, lorry loads of these hooligans were drawn from outside the Division. They were waiting for the Premier to leave Awka Division and they followed from that direction where they had been lying in wait. When the Premier started to address the Council at Uruala they started wild disturbances and, of course, the Police took care of them. They went to the Press to say that all along from Uruala to Orlu the roads were lined with women carrying the D.P.N.C. placards. This shows that this is a party of falsehood and that is why I want to give a new interpretation of the D.P.N.C. It is "Deceivers of the People of Nigeria and the Cameroons". (*Interruptions*).

Mr Speaker: Order! Order!

Mr Agim: I was touring parts of my constituency, particularly my own native clan. I went to a certain village and gave the Chiefs the information that I would be coming on a certain day to give them an account of my stewardship and to discuss the village affairs with the people. If there were difficulties they could have presented them so that I could bring them before this House. Before my arrival on the appointed day, two bus loads of these hooligans had been transported from Ndizuogu to Umuobom to wait for me. But behold, none of them came from that Umuobom village. There would have been a breach between these hooligans and the villages had I not intervened.

Mr Speaker: The hon. Member has only two minutes more.

Mr Agim: If you look at the composition of those "Demo-Guards" you will agree that it is baffling that a person of the political status of Dr Mbadiwe could go to mingle with such people. They are all lazy loafers and touts for drivers. I feel that we are too responsible to encourage disturbances. We are supposed to be above that type of hooliganism. If we encourage villagers and hooligans to acts of irresponsibility the Police will not leave them free. Those people then are made to suffer while we sit back in our places to enjoy ourselves.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, I support the Government Chief Whip's Motion.

Mr Ogon: Mr Speaker, Sir, I want to start by making two personal explanations. One, Sir, I mentioned the name of the late Mayor of Port Harcourt only as a signatory to the petition and not to any other context. I would like to make that clear.

Secondly, I will not change one comma of this Motion. After listening to what the members of the Opposition have said, I am convinced that the Motion is adequately cast. I would also like to refute the suggestion by hon. Onyeri that I am moving this Motion on the instruction of the Executive Council. That is not true. All along, I have been waiting for any member of the Opposition to refute the allegation that on 16th November, there were armed hooligans imported by the D.P.N.C. Nobody has so far refuted that allegation. As a matter of fact, hon. Onubogu confirmed that that was so. I do not see any reason why I should change the wordings of this Motion because nobody has so far refuted the allegation.

Again, Sir, all that we have heard about the *Cassino* and about E. O. Eyo being kicked out of *Cassino* is an allegation. There is no evidence to show that it is true. There is no evidence to show that the gentlemen who were taken to court were members of the N.C.N.C. As a matter of fact, Sir, I think it is the national reaction of the electorate to an unpopular man.

The other point I want to raise is this: it is very unfair on the Senior Executive Officer as a civil servant for us to deny the report. That is an intelligent report by somebody. That report has not been refuted by any member of the Opposition. Again, Sir, there is no comparison between what is happening in the Western Region and what is happening in the East. In the West, about the Oyo riot, an independent Commission of Inquiry was set up by the Western Nigeria Government headed by a Senior Crown Counsel. He found the Government guilty of organising hooliganism.

The next point I want to raise is this question of a thousand pounds. It is common knowledge that the Port Harcourt electorate wanted to "chop" that from hon. Onyeri and he

had to beg the Vanguard to come to his rescue. I happen to be a member of the Vanguard. All that happened was that Onyeri as President General of the Vanguard brought the issue of raising a private loan from the Bank as an individual to enable him to finance his campaign. This loan, Sir, was taken as an individual.

Another point, Sir, about the Zikist National Vanguard is that a certain Party (and this question cannot be denied) in Lagos wanted to organise their own gang. It is a fact they actually offered money to the Zikist National Vanguard to help them.

Mr E. O. Eyo: Point of order. May I draw your attention, Mr Speaker, to Standing Order 25 (9) about the conduct of a Member of the House.

He suggested that a member of the House offered money. I am asking the hon. Member to withdraw that suggestion.

Mr Speaker: According to this Standing Order, I will ask hon. Ogon to withdraw.

Mr Ogon: I withdraw but I will ask you Mr Speaker, to take note that about 2 minutes of my time have been taken.

Dr Mbadiwe tried to use the Zikist National Vanguard to organise the coup on the leadership of the N.C.N.C. but he failed, and so this gentleman bears that party a grudge. I am not going to say much about the allegation of who is a better leader or who is not. As a matter of fact, I started this Motion by saying that as far as we are concerned on this side of the House, the D.P.N.C. is not only a treacherous Party but also a nuisance to the people of this Region that must be removed. I am not interested in what history will say of everyone of us, but this much we have to say that everybody knows that Dr Azikiwe raised Dr Mbadiwe from the rank of failure. It is true that Dr Azikiwe turned Dr Mbadiwe from nothing to somebody. It is also true that 95 per cent of the Members of this House were also raised by Dr Azikiwe. He was only interested to show the light to them and myself.

Finally, Sir, I will say that we cannot allow anybody, be he the Leader of the Action Group or the D.P.N.C. . . .

Some Opposition Members: Or the N.C.N.C.

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[*Private Army*]

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[*Private Army*]

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Mr Ogon: . . . to organise armed hooliganism. It is our desire that this Region should be peacefully governed and free to accommodate everybody. It is in that context,

Sir, that we welcome the Government's announcement of its plan to introduce a Public Order Bill. We want the Bill to be such a stringent one so as to usher in liberal democracy.

Question put.

House divided.

Ayes 57. Noes 16.

Division No. 2

1.25 p.m.

Ayes

Mr C. A. Abangwu
Mr W. Abengowe
Mr O. U. Affiah
Chief G. N. Agbasiere
Mr D. S. A. Agim
Mr D. E. Akilo
Mr H. U. Akpabio
Mr I. U. Akpabio
Mr D. O. Aligwekwe
Mr S. N. Alo
Mr P. U. Amaefunah
Mr N. L. P. Apreala
Mr J. W. E. Anaba
Mr R. O. Anoke
Mr M. C. Awgu
Dr N. Azikiwe
Mr E. Chidolue
Mr A. O. Chikwendu
Mr E. A. Chime
Mr U. Enyi
Mr E. U. Eronini
Mr J. O. Ihekwoaba
Mr I. U. Imeh
Dr S. E. Imoke
Mr J. M. Ito
Mr R. O. Iwuagwu
Mr S. E. K. Iwueke
Mr D. O. Nnamani

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

Tellers for the Ayes:

Mr K. Kiri
Mr J. E. Eyo

Noes

Mr S. O. Achara
Mr J. A. Agba
Mr S. T. Akpan
Chief S. J. Amachree
Mr H. U. E. Edelduok
Rev. O. Efiang, C.B.E.
Mr J. A. Etuhube

Mr M. U. Etuk
Mr E. O. Eyo
Mr S. G. Ikoku
Mr O. O. Ita
Dr W. N. Onubogu
Mr V. K. Onyeri
Mr M. N. Yowika

Tellers for the Noes:

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

THE "EASTERN OUTLOOK"

Mr Abengowe: I beg leave to move the motion standing in my name:

"That this House appreciates the meritorious service of the *Eastern Outlook* in enlightening the people of the Eastern Region, and urges the Government to direct the Eastern Nigeria Information Service to transform the *Outlook* into a daily newspaper as soon as practicable."

The *Eastern Outlook* was first published in May, 1951, by the then Public Relations Department of the Eastern Region. This followed a decision by the Eastern House of Assembly that: "In view of the general lack of sources of public information about the Region and the country as a whole at a time of intense development, Government should establish a weekly newspaper to be run as nearly as possible along commercial lines".

At that time, the Eastern Region also contained what is now known as the Southern Cameroons territory, and so the newspaper was christened the *Eastern Outlook and Cameroons Star*. It may interest you, Mr Speaker, to know that when the Southern Cameroons was constitutionally excised from the Eastern Region in 1953, the adventitious appendage, "*Cameroons Star*" was similarly excised from the newspaper, leaving only "*Eastern Outlook*" by which name it is still known today. This modification in nomenclature was a result of a ruling by the then "*Outlook*" editorial board of which the late Mazi Mbonu Ojike was Chairman.

At the time of the launching of the *Outlook* in 1951, the Eastern Region covered an area of 34,000 square miles and contained over eight million people. There were only five small poorly financed four-page newspapers published daily and circulated in the large towns.

Mr J. A. Agba (Ogoja Division): Point of order: Standing Order 25 (1): "A Member shall not read his speech..."

Mr Speaker: I think the Standing Order is very well known and I do not think the hon. Member is reading his speech.

Mr Abengowe: The problem, Sir, was to establish a well-produced newspaper which could be widely distributed not only in the townships, but also throughout the villages and hamlets of the Region, as well as reach other parts of Nigeria and abroad. The aim was to supplement rather than to supplant the local newspapers.

When the paper was launched, its initial circulation in May, 1951 stood at 5,000 per week. It was sold at 2d a copy.

1952 saw the introduction of a new Constitution with an elected legislature with partial Ministerial Government and only a handful of expatriate members. Although the *Outlook* was the child of an earlier nominated Government, the new Government saw no reason to discontinue the publication of the paper or to change its editorial policy.

Another Constitutional change in 1954 brought to power in Eastern Nigeria a strong N.C.N.C. nationalist Government with the party's leader, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, as the Premier.

Yet, this new Government of nationalists continued to accept the *Eastern Outlook* as a vital medium for the spreading of information about the Region, its Government and its people and institutions, even though the paper was established by the then Lieutenant Governor, Commander J. G. Pyke-Nott.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to emphasise this point about the foundation of the *Eastern Outlook* because certain uninformed persons have got it in their heads that the paper was founded by Dr Azikiwe to publicise his Government. This is completely false because in 1951, Dr Azikiwe was still in Lagos as a member of the old Legislative Council and was preparing to contest election in the Federal Capital for a seat in the Western House of Assembly—a feat which he achieved despite the dust-to-dawn machinations of hate-ridden politicians peddling tribal sentiments. The fact, Mr Speaker, is that the *Outlook* was founded by the Eastern Government under the leadership of the Lieutenant Governor, Commander Pyke-Nott. It was the Lieutenant Governor who in May, 1951 appointed

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the *Outlook's* first editorial board to which His Excellency gave the following directives concerning policy.

With your permission, Sir, I shall quote excerpts from this enunciation of policy by the Lieutenant Governor:

"Policy of the Eastern Outlook.

"To the Members of the Editorial Board.

"The responsibility for the policy and management of the newspaper is vested in the Editorial Board which will be appointed by the Regional Executive Council.

"2. The paper will be published every Thursday at Enugu and printed at the Government Press. The price will be 2d per copy.

"3. The primary intention is to provide a newspaper for all the people living in the Eastern Region and Eastern Nigerians living elsewhere. Special attention will be paid not only to those who live in the towns but to those who live in rural areas."

Paragraph 8 of the Policy statement is to the effect that the *Outlook* (and here I quote)

"will be guided by the principle of offering to the readers of the Newspaper the truth in simple and straightforward English. Constructive and well-informed criticism on all matters will be welcomed in the Newspaper . . .

"9. In carrying out this policy the Board will bear in mind that the Newspaper is being produced by Government Servants and with Public Funds. Although it is clear from the foregoing, the newspaper will not merely be an expression of Government opinion and policy, that policy will always be clearly and adequately presented."

Mr Speaker, Sir, these are excerpts from a policy statement on the *Eastern Outlook* made in May, 1951, nearly eight years ago, by the Lieutenant-Governor.

The applicability of that policy has not been appreciably affected by constitutional changes in Nigeria nor by the statutory change in the

status and functions of the Eastern Nigeria Information Service which publishes the newspaper.

Indeed, the *Outlook* has lived up to expectations in that it has steered its news, views and general contents along the course charted for it by the Lieutenant-Governor in 1951.

It has been circulated far and wide, not only in the Townships of the Region, but also in the rural areas, in other parts of Nigeria and overseas including Ghana, Sierra Leone, Liberia, the Gambia, Fernando Po, French Gabon, the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland, France, Switzerland, the Federal German Republic, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, the United States of America, Canada, South Africa, Australia, India, Ceylon, and so on.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I stated earlier that when the Newspaper was launched in May, 1951, its initial circulation was 5,000 a week. Today, its weekly circulation is limited to 15,000. I say "Limited" because it could sell much more were it not for certain production difficulties, since the E.N.I.S. does not have a printing press of its own.

Revenue from sales of the *Outlook* and from advertising amounted to some £12,000 in the 1957-58 financial year.

That, Sir, is most commendable especially when it is considered that the newspaper is published weekly and therefore finds it impossible to accommodate all the advertisements available to it.

The *Outlook*, Sir, has ably publicised the Eastern Region both locally and to the outside world. As a matter of fact, some overseas agencies and many people in Nigeria regard it as the best produced newspaper in the country from the point of view of layout, news, feature treatment and editorial comments.

The newspaper, Sir, has succeeded in publicising effectively the activities of the Government and important events in the Region.

It has a column for women, one for school children, another for Efiik-Ibibio, social news, public opinion, news of development, pictorial

features, and so on. I understand that an Ibo column is soon to be added, and later Ijaw and Ekoi language columns.

It often publicises the views and statements of the Opposition when these become available to it. Only as recently as last month, on the 12th of February, to be exact, the *Outlook* published the full text of a speech by the Leader of the Opposition, my Friend the hon. S. G. Ikoku, in the Eastern House of Assembly on the occasion of Dr Kwame Nkrumah and his Ghana delegation's visit to our Legislature. This was in addition to a front page report the previous week of the Opposition Leader's statement on the same occasion.

Mr Speaker, Sir, I cite these instances to show that the *Eastern Outlook* is non-discriminatory in its treatment of matters for publication, no matter whether such matters come from the Government, the Opposition or from members of the public, provided that such matters are publishable in accordance with the laws and ethics of the profession of journalism.

Sir, I would not be doing justice to my conscience if I failed to mention that but for the *Outlook*, the people of this Region would have been deceived and misled by the many distortions and inaccuracies which have been habitually published by certain newspapers with an axe to grind against this nationalist Government. Indeed, the *Outlook* has been the bulwark for the dissemination of the truth about this Government and the people of the Eastern Region as a whole.

That is why, in the first part of my motion, I am asking this hon. House to record its commendation for the efforts of the *Eastern Outlook*.

In this connection, the contributions of a former E.N.I.S. Director, Mr Arthur Ridley, now in Uganda should be spotlighted, for he laid the foundations of the newspaper. The present E.N.I.S. Chairman, the *Outlook's* Editorial Adviser and other members of the editorial board and the general staff deserve much commendation for their efficiency and dexterity. They have demonstrated that the African is capable of managing his own affairs.

Now Sir, why has it become necessary that the *Eastern Outlook* should be converted into a daily publication?

First of all, Sir, the people of this Region demand it. Several articles from members of the public have been published suggesting that the newspaper be issued daily. And since this Government is the Government of the people for the people and by the people, there can be no reason why the people's wish in this and other respects should not be carried out—as we have all along been doing.

And, Sir, the speed with which the Government is launching very effective programmes for the benefit of the people has out-paced the accommodating capacity of this weekly 8-page *Eastern Outlook*. The newspaper cannot now catch up on all the doings of the Government with a view to keeping the Region and the outside world properly informed. Very often, Ministerial statements and other important Government pronouncements and decisions are either published late or crowded out entirely. Surely, Sir, this state of affairs cannot be in the interest of the Region.

What the Region requires today is a daily Government-sponsored newspaper which can put forward the Government's case, carry Government publicity as well as publicise events in the Region generally.

The *Outlook* as a weekly publication, has circumstantially satisfied these basic requirements. Were it not so, the people would not be wasting their money every week to pay 2d per copy for 15,000 copies, which makes it the newspaper with the largest audited net sale in the Region and the third largest weekly in Nigeria.

Talking from the revenue side, Sir, it would be noted that the *Eastern Outlook* has been unable to publish all the advertisements which come to it, because it lacks the space. If it is published daily, a lot of these left-out advertisements would be accommodated and revenue losses to it and to the Region in that regard will be minimised.

Sir, you may be aware that certain organisations antagonistic to this Government have recently sprung up some daily newspaper in this Region and elsewhere. The stock-in-trade of these new arrivals in the field of Nigerian journalism seems to be to villify, calumniate and slander the Government of Eastern Nigeria by the daily publication of

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fabricated news, false articles, malicious editorial comments and distorted photographic illustrations. Surely, Sir, no Government worth its good name can afford to stand idly by while its policies and programmes are being regularly misrepresented by a malicious and conspiratorial group of newspapers. It therefore seems to me, Sir, that the time has come for the Regional Government to expand its sponsored organ and direct that it be converted into a daily so that it can, among its other functions and professional assignments as a public organ present the Government case to the people.

Failure to do this, Sir, would be to expose the people of this Region to the grave danger of journalistic irradiation from political cranks and professional hirelings who throw falsehood like atom bombs on the good people of the East.

Sir, some people may be tempted to ask why the Government should sponsor a newspaper at all.

I have already given many answers to justify such a venture. I should like, however, to add that the West Regional Government publishes a newspaper called the *Western News*. The Federal Government publishes the *Children's Own Paper*, and *Federal Nigeria*. And recently we have heard that the North Regional Government had decided to take over completely the *Nigerian Citizen* and the *Gaskiya Tafi Kwabo*.

Sir, let us go further afield in the search for precedents.

In Ghana, the Government sponsors the publication of the daily *Guinea Times* and the weekly, *New Ghana*. The Indian Government puts out the *India News*. In the United Kingdom Her Majesty's Government publishes *Commonwealth Today* among several others. In Tanganyika, the Government there publishes three newspapers: the *Mwangaza Daily*, the *Baragum* (a weekly) and the *Mambo Leo*, a monthly. In Malaya, the Government publishes four newspapers: the *Panduan Ra'ayat* in Malay language; the *Janabahari* in Tamil language; the *Farmers News* and the *Struggle News* both in Chinese and English. In Cyprus,

the Government publishes the *Cyprus News*. The American Government publishes the *American Outlook*—and so on.

Sir, I can cite instances in almost every country of the world to show that Governments publish newspapers designed to keep the people accurately informed of official policies, programmes and activities.

Finally, Sir, I should like to request that if this Motion is passed (as I trust it will), Government should direct that a full-fledged *Eastern Outlook* establishment be created as soon as practicable, that is in a few months from now. Such an establishment should have its own separate editorial, technical and other staff with its own printing machines. The practice of printing the *Outlook* in the Government Press further strains the already overworked machines and staff of that Department to the detriment of efficiency and productivity of both the *Eastern Outlook* and the Government Press. Also, it will be expecting too much from the E.N.I.S. Information Officer to do his normal job as well as edit the *Outlook*. There should be a separate editor for the daily newspaper who should have nothing to do with information duties at the E.N.I.S. office.

Sir, these projects of expansion and progress do cost money, both of a capital and recurrent nature. I trust that the Government will find the fund for this all-important project, because an uninformed or misinformed population is the most fertile breeding ground for serious misunderstanding between the Government and the governed.

Sir, I beg to move.

Mr Ogon: Sir, I beg to second.

Question proposed.

The Minister of Information (Mr B. C. Okwu): Mr Speaker, speaking on behalf of the Government Bench, I would like to state that the Government is favourably disposed towards this Motion. If the Motion receives the sanction of the House, Government will consider converting the *Outlook* into a daily newspaper. Sir, the Mover of the Motion has in the most able speech covered the various fields or the various aspects of the principle which moved him in tabling this

Motion. I would like to state that any Government could be hampered or misrepresented by hostility of the press. The people by right are entitled to get accurate information of all the aspects of Government activities. A number of things have happened in the Region which have convinced me that at this stage of our progress it is necessary for the people of the Eastern Region to have a medium by which they can get accurate information of the activities of Government, especially when these activities are often liable to be misrepresented by agents of misrepresentation.

Again, Sir, it is a fact that in the Eastern Region there has been great advance in the field of education and as a consequence, the reading population of the Eastern Region has grown tremendously. This, by implication, means that with this growth there must be made available enough reading materials for the growing population to read. It is also a fact that at the moment, both in quantity and quality, enough of reading materials are not just available. There is another way of looking at the matter: in the course of the life of the present Government, there have been incidents which will convince any unbiased person that the need for converting the *Outlook* into a daily newspaper is urgent. I have in mind, for example, the last year's U.P.E. crisis in the Eastern Region.

It will be recalled that the first alarm was sounded by a section of the Press, and the alarm spread like wild fire and the consequences are now history. I have also in mind the time when the Government introduced the new Tax Law, which in itself was a laudable legislation but it was misunderstood and misrepresented by some of the trouble makers of the Press and the Opposition rascals who made much politics out of it. As a result our people did not appreciate at the initial stage the soundness of the new Tax Law.

There is also the fact that during the "Demo" revolt, as I may call it, a lot of lies was told to the people and these lies were disseminated quickly on account of the hostilities of some media of information in the country. If Government had at its own disposal an effective media of information it would have been possible to counteract these misrepresentations before they got out of control.

There was also a period when one local newspaper came out in banner headline that the East was facing financial crisis—that was nearly a year ago—and the world was told that the East was on the brink of bankruptcy, which was not true. Now, the honest people who were not in a position to have the other side of the story thought that the East was really facing serious financial crisis.

Further, it must also be borne in mind that the present national newspapers or leading newspapers of this country, even if they were all favourably disposed towards us, could not be relied upon as very effective media for disseminating information since all are established very far away from the Region, with the result that by the time the papers arrive at the remote corners of the Region, they are somewhat stale.

I have touched all these aspects to enable Members to look at the question from a broader angle. I want to assure Members of the House that the Government disposition towards the motion is based on the fact that Government realises its responsibility in attending to these aspects of the need of the nation. I want also to give assurance that when this comes to pass, we will not only give the Region services, both in quantity and quality to justify the request which the Government has received from the House, but also to show that Government did not embark upon the project in a half-hearted manner.

Sir, I do not want to go into greater details. All I can say is that we welcome this motion and assure the hon. Member that as soon as possible Government will go into every detail of the problem and take early action to implement same and hope that after the implementation, all sides of the House will have cause to praise the Government for its wisdom.

Sir, I beg to support.

Mr Speaker: I have to say that Members have only 10 minutes to speak on this Motion.

Chief I. I. Morphy (Ogoja Division): Mr Speaker, Sir, I rise to oppose this Motion, which reads:

"That this House appreciates the meritorious services of the *Eastern Outlook* in

[CHIEF MORPHY]

enlightening the people of the Eastern Region, and urges the Government to direct the Eastern Nigeria Information Service and to transform the *Outlook* into a daily newspaper as soon as practicable."

The mover of the Motion tells us that the aim of this newspaper is not merely to publicise Government Policy but to publicise the Region and the Opposition. But this has not been the case with the *Outlook* of which I have a copy here. What I do know of the *Outlook* is that it is a second *Pilot*. It is a second *West African Pilot*. (*Interruptions*). It publicises the activities of the Premier and his Party. It tells us how many people have resigned from the Action Group to join the N.C.N.C. and how many people ask Chief Morphy to resign from the Action Group. Is this the aim of the paper? Is that the aim of a Government newspaper? Because of that, we will not like the Government to transform this paper into a daily newspaper. If it is converted into a daily newspaper it will only be to provide jobs in the field for the N.C.N.C. propagandists. I was saying that if Government converted the *Outlook* into a daily newspaper it would only mean Government having to employ more people to go into the field to carry on the N.C.N.C. propaganda. We have one of these Secretaries in Ogoja and this man organises N.C.N.C. meetings. He goes all out propagating N.C.N.C. If Government converts the *Outlook* into a daily newspaper, what they will do is to get more of these people to advertise the N.C.N.C. and not the Government policy and the Opposition. For that reason we do not want this paper to be a daily newspaper. It is also said that it has done meritorious service to the Region. It has not done anything.

Mr E. O. Eyo: On point of Order. May I draw your attention, Mr Speaker, to the provision of Standing Order 31—Time limit of Speeches.

Mr Speaker: What do you want there.

Mr E. O. Eyo: It is provided that a Member shall be entitled to address the House or a Committee of the House for thirty minutes.

Mr Speaker: That was done by agreement.

Dr Okpara: Point of Order. Standing Order 34. The decision of the Chair is final. Besides, it is the Speaker who recognises that it is 30 minutes, one hour and so on.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, it appears that it is not the general agreement that we should limit our speeches to ten minutes and I am prepared to allow the length of speeches as allowed by the Standing Order.

Chief Morphy: I was saying that we will not allow the *Outlook* to be converted into a daily newspaper. The N.C.N.C. has very many newspapers in which they can propagate their party politics—they have the *Sentinel*, they have the *Pilot*, they have the *Spokesman* and many other newspapers. We will not want Government to use public funds to propagate their own party politics and as such we will not like that this paper be converted into a daily newspaper. The *Outlook* tells us how Dr Udoma was to become the Attorney-General in the Northern Region; how the Opposition has been treated by the people this way or that way. They tell us about the burial ceremonies of fathers of Ministers and also they go out to publicise only such things that are in the interest of the N.C.N.C. Because of these we are opposed to converting it into a daily newspaper. The *Eastern Nigeria Today* is also a Government paper and this paper that is published in London also tells us about how many women in Uyo have resigned from the N.C.N.C., how the people in Onitsha are dancing and how they receive the Premier. We of this side are opposed to this Motion.

Dr Okpara: Sir, I beg to move: That the Question be now put.

Mr Ikoku: We regard this as an abuse of parliamentary privilege.

Question: That the Question be now put—put.

House divided: Ayes 55. Noes 16.

Division No. 3

Ayes

2.20 p.m.

Mr C. A. Abangwu
 Mr W. Abengowe
 Mr O. U. Affiah
 Chief G. N. Agbasiere
 Mr D. S. A. Agim
 Mr D. E. Akilo
 Mr H. U. Akpabio
 Mr I. U. Akpabio
 Mr D. O. Aligwekwe
 Mr P. U. Amaefunah
 Mr N. L. P. Apreala
 Mr J. W. E. Anaba
 Mr R. O. Anoke
 Mr M. C. Awgu
 Dr N. Azikiwe
 Mr E. Chidolue
 Mr A. O. Chikwendu
 Mr E. A. Chime
 Mr U. Enyi
 Mr E. U. Eronini
 Mr J. O. Ihekwoaba
 Mr I. U. Imeh
 Dr S. E. Imoke
 Mr J. M. Ito
 Mr R. O. Iwuagwu
 Mr S. E. K. Iwueke
 Mr D. O. Nnamani

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

Tellers for the Ayes:

Mr K. Kiri
 Mr J. E. Eyo

Noes

Mr S. O. Achara
 Mr J. A. Agba
 Mr S. T. Akpan
 Chief S. J. Amachree
 Mr H. U. E. Edelduok
 Rev. O. Efiang, C.B.E.
 Mr J. A. Etuhube

Mr M. U. Etuk
 Mr E. O. Eyo
 Mr S. G. Ikoku
 Mr O. O. Ita
 Dr W. N. Onubogu
 Mr V. K. Onyeri
 Mr M. N. Yowika

Tellers for the Noes:

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

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Original Question put accordingly.

House divided. Ayes 56. Noes 17.

Division No. 4

Ayes

2.25 p. m.

Mr C. A. Abangwu
Mr W. Abengowe
Mr O. U. Affiah
Chief G. N. Agbasiere
Mr D. S. A. Agim
Mr D. E. Akilo
Mr H. U. Akpabio
Mr I. U. Akpabio
Mr D. O. Aligwekwe
Mr P. U. Amaefunah
Mr N. L. P. Apreala
Mr J. W. E. Anaba
Mr R. O. Anoke
Mr M. C. Awgu
Dr N. Azikiwe
Mr E. Chidolue
Mr A. O. Chikwendu
Mr E. A. Chime
Mr U. Enyi
Mr E. U. Eronini
Mr J. O. Ihekwoaba
Mr I. U. Imeh
Dr S. E. Imoke
Mr J. M. Ito
Mr R. O. Iwuagwu
Mr S. E. K. Iwueke
Mr D. O. Nnamani

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

Tellers for the Ayes:

Mr K. Kiri
Mr J. E. Eyo

Noes

Mr S. O. Achara
Mr J. A. Agba
Mr S. T. Akpan
Chief S. J. Amachree
Mr H. U. E. Edelduok
Rev. O. Efiog, C.B.E.
Mr J. A. Etuhube

Mr M. U. Etuk
Mr E. O. Eyo
Mr S. G. Ikoku
Mr E. Ita
Mr O. O. Ita
Dr W. N. Onubogu
Mr V. K. Onyeri
Mr M. N. Yowika

Tellers for the Noes:

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

ADJOURNMENT

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

House adjourned at twenty-seven minutes to 3 o'clock p.m.

EASTERN HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 11th March, 1959

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

PRAYERS

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Customary Courts

263. Mr U. Enyi asked the Minister of State in Charge of Customary Courts, what is holding up the introduction of customary courts in Afikpo and Abakaliki Divisions; and how soon will the Minister introduce the courts in these two Divisions.

The Minister of State charged with responsibility for Customary Courts and the Appointment and Recognition of Chiefs: Customary Courts will be introduced into these Divisions as soon as possible after the planning arrangements which are in hand have been completed.

Expenses in respect of Mr S. O. Achara's Illness

264. Mr W. Abengowe asked the Minister of Finance, how much money did this Government spend in respect of the following items on Mr S. O. Achara, a former Parliamentary Secretary when he was sick :—

- (a) Transport to and from the United Kingdom.
- (b) Medical Charges.
- (c) Lodging and Maintenance in the United Kingdom.
- (d) Air Travel Insurance Policy.
- (e) Allowances.

The Minister of Finance: Government spent £692 (to the nearest pound) on Mr S. O. Achara's illness; this figure is made up as follows :—

	£	s
Transport expenses ...	442	0
Medical expenses ...	191	0
Other expenses in the United Kingdom ...	59	0
Air Travel Insurance ...	0	8
Allowances... ..	—	

Board of Internal Revenue

265. Mr M. N. Yowika asked the Minister of Finance, why the staff of the Board of Internal Revenue has been so badly curtailed in Ogoni Division from 40 to 6; does the Minister realise that this will cause a serious delay in tax collection this year; will he consider increasing the staff so as to remedy the situation.

The Minister of Finance: The permanent establishment of the Ogoni Tax Office is 6: this is in line with the establishment of other Tax Offices in Divisions of similar size. In addition the Tax Office was authorised to engage temporary staff to meet the big load of clerical work which arises in connection with the writing up of assessment ledgers and tax tickets; the maximum number of staff so employed was 34. At present there are employed, in addition to 4 officers on the permanent establishment, 8 temporary Clerical Assistants. An appropriate number of temporary clerical staff will again be employed next year during the period when the maximum amount of clerical work requires to be done.

Customary Courts Members—Salaries

275. Mr D. E. Akilo asked the Minister of State in Charge of Customary Courts, who is responsible for the payment of the salaries of the members of the Customary, and County Appeal, Courts.

The Minister of State charged with Responsibility for Customary Courts and the Appointment and Recognition of Chiefs: The Local Government Councils are responsible for the sitting fees of the members of District and County Courts. Although the jurisdictions of the County Courts cover several District Council areas, a single Council will be responsible for the act of paying. This is because Government makes up the deficit—and collects the profit, if any—of the County Courts. So no District Council either gains or loses financially.

ADJOURNMENT—DEFINITE MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Mr E. O. Eyo (Uyo Division): Mr Speaker, I rise under Standing Order 13 to ask for leave to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing what I consider to be a definite matter of urgent public importance.

The Minister of Commerce (Mr J. U. Nwodo): Mr Speaker, on point of Order: Standing Order 13 (2):—

“The matter for discussion shall, if possible, be referred to Mr Speaker before the commencement of the day’s sitting, and Mr Speaker shall refuse to allow the claim unless he is satisfied that the matter is definite and urgent.”

We want to know whether the request of the Mover to adjourn the business of the House has been allowed by Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker: Standing Order 13 (2) has been satisfied by the hon. Member.

Mr Nwodo: On point of Order: Standing Order 13 (3). If that request has been allowed by Mr Speaker, the request also ought to be supported by twenty-five Members of this House. We want to know whether the request to move the adjournment of the House has been supported by twenty-five Members of this House.

Mr E. O. Eyo: I was rising, Sir, under Standing Order 13 to ask for leave of the House when the Minister of Commerce interrupted me. It is after I have asked for leave of the House that the matter will be put to the House.

Mr Speaker: I think the hon. Minister will remember that under that Standing Order he is stating his reasons for asking the leave of the house.

Mr E. O. Eyo: It may be of interest to the Minister . . .

Mr Nwodo: Mr Speaker, the Standing Order is very clear and explicit on this particular matter. If the claim is allowed by the Speaker and the leave of the House is given, at least 25 Members must rise in support of the request.

Mr E. O. Eyo: Standing Order 34.

Mr Speaker: Mr Eyo has not been allowed by Mr Speaker and the leave of the House has not been given, but before that the House must know what he is about. Under the circumstances, I am compelled to suspend sitting for 30 minutes.

Sitting suspended at 10.25 a.m.

Sitting resumed at 10.55 a.m.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, I have discussed this matter with the Member concerned and I discover that this matter should have been put to me in writing. Of course, the matter was referred to me before the commencement of the sitting this morning, but I discover that it must have been in writing and the hon. Member showed me a letter written to the Clerk of the House. So, hon. Members, the matter is this: The leave of the Speaker must be given and then the Speaker refers the matter to the House to see whether this House gives its leave or not; besides, on my part, if I may waive the question of writing, there is nothing to me, as Speaker, in writing. But I am prepared to waive that for the moment and I presume that the hon. Member’s claim is that a Motion, which is Motion No. 54, which he has put up for discussion, is the matter of his claim; and therefore if I waive the question of writing as I have said, I must also be prepared to agree that the matter is of definite urgent public importance. That is my own part; but then does that limit the part of the House?

And I must presume that what the hon. Member was saying was that this House hereby expresses its deep concern over the failure of the African Continental Bank Ltd. to honour its obligations to the Eastern Regional Government and therefore urges the Government:

(a) to set up an independent Commission of Inquiry into the circumstances surrounding its failure to honour its obligations to the Eastern Regional Government;

(b) to cease to use the Bank as a depository of public funds pending the report of the Commission of Inquiry;

(c) to introduce a Bill at the next sitting of the House to nationalise the African Continental Bank Ltd.

Mr E. O. Eyo: That is not my claim. My claim, Sir, which I indicated to you, was to inform the House of the fact that the African Continental Bank Ltd. being Government bankers have failed to honour their obligations to the Eastern Regional Government.

Mr Speaker: I think the Standing Order is quite clear, and as a lawyer I am dedicated

to law and I must stick to my obligation to carry out the law. I feel inclined to the side of the Opposition, but then I must stick to the law if I am to do my work faithfully and honestly. Before me now, hon. Members, is a letter addressed to the Clerk of the Eastern House of Assembly. It is only a letter to the Clerk of the House of Assembly, not to me as Speaker.

Mr E. O. Eyo: Mr Speaker, may I draw your attention to Standing Order 13 (2):

“The matter for discussion shall, if possible, be referred to Mr Speaker before the commencement of the day’s sitting, and Mr Speaker shall refuse to allow the claim unless he is satisfied that the matter is definite and urgent”.

This morning, Sir, I did come to your office and I discussed with you the matter of urgent public importance that I intended to bring to the notice of the House. You were satisfied that the matter is definite and urgent hence you allowed my claim.

Mr Speaker: As I said before, I thought there was a letter in writing but I now see that there is nothing in writing to me as the Speaker. So I cannot appreciate the matter fully unless the hon. Member can convince me by any Standing Order to see with him.

Mr E. Eyo: Mr Speaker, I am relying on Standing Order 13 (2). There is nothing in this Standing Order to say that I must present something to you in writing.

The Standing Order says:

“The matter for discussion shall, if possible, be referred to Mr Speaker before the commencement of the day’s sitting, and Mr Speaker shall refuse to allow the claim unless he is satisfied that the matter is definite and urgent.”

and you made your ruling accordingly when the Minister of Commerce rose on a point of Order. My submission is that having ruled in my favour earlier, I do not see how you can reverse that ruling now.

Mr Speaker: Yes, Mr Eyo, I ruled in your favour and I am still ruling in your favour; but having ruled in your favour to commence,

the next thing is for you to bring to me in writing your request and I will submit it to the House. That you have not done.

Mr E. O. Eyo rose—

Mr Speaker: Excuse me, Mr Eyo, it would be good to be accurate in this matter, especially in a constitutional debate like this; and if you will allow me I will refer to Mr Fellowes, a well known authority on Parliamentary Procedure. In his explanatory notes he has made it perfectly clear, and he is an authority I think I can safely rely upon. He says that the matter must be put into writing; and it is on that I am relying. If the hon. Member has a greater authority I am prepared to take it.

Mr S. G. Ikoku (Enyong Division): It is a pity that this debate has taken so much time.

Mr Speaker, I must say, Sir, that it is not the intention of the Opposition to be disrespectful to the Speaker. We do not want to do it. I like to make clear, Sir, with due deference that Mr Fellowes, a known and credited authority in Parliamentary Procedure, has in his notes drawn attention to the fact that the matter should be submitted in writing. I like to submit that that does not by any stroke of imagination contravene or supersede the Standing Order of this hon. House. The hon. the Leader of the House has drawn attention to Standing Order 13 (2). That is very clear. Standing Order 77 (2) says that where our Standing Orders are silent then the procedure in Westminster will prevail. On this matter, Sir, with due deference to you, our Standing Order is not out. It is absolutely clear. The relevant Standing Order says:

“The matter for discussion shall if possible, be referred to Mr Speaker before the commencement of the day’s sitting, and Mr Speaker shall refuse to allow the claim unless he is satisfied that the matter is definite and urgent.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, the hon. the Opposition Chief Whip did consult you before the commencement of today’s meeting. You agreed that this matter was definite and urgent and you referred him to seek permission of the House and he proceeded to seek leave when the Leader of the House interrupted on point of order. I drew attention to Standing Order

[MR IKOKU]

13 (3) as to who will question the decision whether the House will give its leave or not. There are two stages of this matter.

You have to decide whether you are granting authority on the matter raised which is covered by Standing Order 13 (2). The second stage is obtaining leave of the House which is covered by Standing Order 13 (3). It is open to this House to reject Mr Eyo's application and that is the end of the matter. But, Mr Speaker, you have done your part by first allowing this matter. You have agreed that the permission of the House should be sought. Mr Eyo is now seeking the permission of the House but the House will not allow him to talk. All the House should do now, Mr Speaker, with due deference to you, is to accept or refuse Mr Eyo's request for leave, and in doing that the House must rely absolutely on Standing Order 13 (3). I would like to say this Mr Speaker and Mr Eyo has drawn attention to that: It will be very bad at this early stage to give the impression that simply because people get up in this House and shout, then you change your mind. (*Interruptions*).

Mr M. E. Ogon (Ikom Division): On a point of Order—Standing Order 25 (7). This is imputing an improper motive.

Mr Speaker: I think I should resent that statement made by the hon. the Leader of Opposition because I think I am too experienced and too impervious to be influenced either from within or without as Speaker of this House. I would like the hon. Member to withdraw. I am not here to be influenced by anybody. I am to be influenced by justice.

Mr Ikoku: Mr Speaker, Sir, you will agree with me . . .

Several hon. Members: Withdraw! Withdraw!

Mr Ikoku: Mr Speaker, when I made my statement I never said you have done such a thing. Refer to the tape recorder.

Mr Ogon: Standing Order 25 (7). I am saying that it is imputation of improper motive to the Speaker. Mr Speaker has asked the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw and I am requesting him to do so, and to debate

further is simply challenging the Speaker's authority.

Mr Ikoku: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am appealing to you that this matter comes under Standing Order 13 of the House. So far, you are aware that the Premier has written to me and copied you giving his leave. He has given his own opinion. Now, we would not like to give the nation the impression that the Leader of the Government Party is favourably disposed to something and when he goes away his lieutenants reject it. In any case that does not really concern you. What concerns you is the Standing Order on Adjournment Debate which is covered by Standing Order 13. So far you have piloted the affair with regard to Standing Order 13 (2). You have decided in your own estimation of the gravity of the situation that this matter is definite and urgent. You have decided not to carry this baby; you have decided to pass the baby on to this House. It is left to this House to grant the leave or not. Mr Speaker, Sir, because of the dignity of your position, I am appealing to you, in view of the stand you have already taken publicly in this House and in view of the correctness of your move by our Standing Order, to allow the House to grant or reject the leave. You have no hands in this business.

Mr Speaker: I quite appreciate your point, but the question still remains—what is this matter? It must be a definite matter of urgent public importance. What is it about? Hon. Eyo approached me this morning and I presumed that he already had in writing what he was going to present to me in the House. So I said all right, please carry on. I have now come to the House and must have something in writing which I must propose to the House; but this matter is not forthcoming. There must be some subject matter which I must call upon the hon. Member to bring to me here at the Table, and which I must read out to the House and ask if it granted leave.

Mr E. O. Eyo: Mr Speaker, the position is quite clear. I am relying on Standing Order 13. It is up to you to give your ruling.

Mr M. E. Ogon (Ikom Division): Mr Speaker, we do not think that you will allow yourself to be persuaded. There is considerable doubt as to the manner of giving

notice of the matter for discussion. There is considerable time and our Standing Order 77 is quite clear. Sir, the Leader of the Opposition did imply that he had written the Premier and that the Premier had given leave. I have to say, Sir, that this is most unfair to the Premier.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Member, I think the duty of a Speaker is like that of a Judge. His duty is not to take sides either with the minority or the majority. Justice has to be done. I have granted the request to speak, and now I demand the matter in writing. In the absence of that writing I think I must rule Mr Eyo out of order without prejudice to his Motion.

Sitting suspended 11.30 a.m.

Sitting resumed 12 noon.

Mr Speaker: Hon. Members, it is very much regretted that the Members of the Opposition are not here. But I would like to remind you that politics is a game. You have got to be a sportsman: if you lose you repeat. It is a pity that they are not here. I would like to say that they have not in any way satisfied the provisions of Standing Order 13.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(1) The 1958-59 Eastern Region Supplementary Appropriation Bill

(FIRST AND ONLY ALLOTTED DAY)

Order read for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question (9th March)—That the Bill be now read a Second time.

Question again proposed.

Mr E. U. Eronini (Owerri Division): Mr Speaker, Sir, there are only one or two points which I want to bring up under the heading of Basic Allowance to hon. Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries; these basic allowances are tax free. But when Members use their cars or receive advance to buy cars, the instalments on the advance are paid out of their salaries and they are taxed on their full salaries. Also they are not given any relief on the cars they use. It is necessary that the House should consider what will be the relief to hon.

Members on the cars they use as they are not getting basic allowance. Civil Servants receive basic allowance and this basic allowance is not taxed, but hon. Members are taxed on their cars. Companies who own cars for the use of their employees write off these cars from time to time as expenditure so that when Members are given advance to buy cars and they begin to pay back these advances it should be written off from their salaries as money they did not get. After six years the value of a car is almost nothing. We feel, Sir, that we must have some tax relief to cover the cost of these cars from time to time.

The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke): Mr Speaker, Sir, if I understand the hon. Member properly, it appears he is assuming that Ministers have tax relief on the instalments they pay back monthly on the advances they get to purchase their cars. That is not so. They receive basic allowance and the reason why they are given this basic is that they use their cars to perform their duties which are very strenuous and to cover long distances. They have to visit their Divisions, Councils, etc., to explain the work of Government. Equivalent to basic, hon. Members have what we call "Consolidated Transport Allowance" and if he is suggesting that this Consolidated Allowance should not be taxed, that is quite a different thing. I am not sure that at the moment they are being taxed but if he is suggesting that they should not be taxed, the question will be examined further. I am quite sure the hon. Member will be unable to substantiate what he is asking for or that it is the practice in any other part of the Federation. I do not think there is any Region that exempts Member's instalments on advance from taxation.

Mr R. O. Ukuta, M.B.E. (Nsukka Division): Mr Speaker, all the Members of this House are taxed under the "Pay As You Earn" system. When I receive my pension I am also taxed under the Pay As You Earn system. I want to know if there is any earthly reason why certain Administrative Officers should try to bring different amounts and add them together and tax one again on the aggregate amount. Mr Minister of Finance, this is defeating the purpose of Pay As You Earn. I only want that point to be made clear because if I am receiving two salaries from Government this question should arise. I wonder why what you

[MR UKUTA]

get at Enugu and what you get from other departments entirely should be added, after you have paid tax on the total income you earn they tax you to pay more. Mr Speaker, this is the annoying point.

Dr Imoke: Mr Speaker, in answering the last speaker, I would like to explain that, if I remember correctly, this question was raised before on the floor of this House and the explanation to it was simply this: If your various incomes are taxed separately what the Government derives from this separate taxation will be less than what it will get if the incomes are added together and taxed, simply because as you go up the scale of the schedule the tax increases and if these incomes are separated it means they are taxed on the lower scale which will not yield as much as if they were put together and taxed on the higher scale; and Government certainly would not like any side to be cheated in the question of taxation.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a Second time and, under Standing Order 66 (4) stood committed to the Committee of Supply.

Bill immediately considered in the Committee of Supply.

(In the Committee)

Clauses 1 to 4 postponed.

SCHEDULE

Head 421.—Premier's Office

Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £10 for Head 421—Premier's Office—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 424.—Commissioner in the United Kingdom

Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £1,470 for Head 424—Commissioner in the United Kingdom—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 426.—House of Assembly

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £3,140 for Head 426.—House of Assembly—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 427.—Judicial

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £900 for Head 427.—Judicial—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 428.—Public Service Commission

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £500 for Head 428—Public Service Commission—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 429.—Ministry of Agriculture

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £5,650 for Head 429—Ministry of Agriculture—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 430.—Agriculture

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £5,660 for Head 430.—Agriculture—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 435.—Ministry of Education

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £2,260 for Head 435—Ministry of Education—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 436.—Education

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £3,660 for Head 436—Education—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill—

Head 437.—Ministry of Finance

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £780 for Head 437—Ministry of Finance—stand part of the Schedule

Question put and agreed to.

Head 438.—Accountant-General

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £71,400 for Head 438—Accountant-General—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 439.—Board of Internal Revenue

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £14,000 for Head 439—Board of Internal Revenue—stand part of the Schedule.

Mr P. A. Onwe (Abakaliki Division): I am concerned with the disparity between the salaries of Executive Officers in the Ministry of Finance as compared with other Departments and Ministries with their entry point as £390 per annum. In the Treasury it is £444 per annum. In some Departments Executive Officers are started with a salary of £540 per annum. There is a wide range of difference in what I am complaining about. Executive Officers in the Public Works Department do almost the same work as Executive Officers in the Ministry of Finance or in the Board of Internal Revenue. What I want the hon. Minister of Finance to note is that it is no good to have these disparities.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 440.—Pensions and Gratuities

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £4,000 for Head 440—Pensions and Gratuities—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 442.—Ministry of Health

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £130 for Head 442—Ministry of Health—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 443.—Medical Services

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £3,550 for Head 443—Medical Services—stand part of the Schedule.

The Minister of Health (Mr E. P. Okoya): Mr Chairman, I beg to move to reduce Head 443, Medical Services, by £50. This reduction relates to Sub-head 1, Item 64 in the Supplementary Estimates which was provided to permit the upgrading of the Senior Dental Surgeon from Group 7 to Group 6. It was originally intended that this upgrading should take effect from 1st January, 1959, in which case financial provision of £50 would have been required. The Government has now decided that the post should be upgraded only with effect from 1st April, 1959 and financial provision during the current year is therefore no longer necessary.

Mr Chairman, I beg to move.

Question proposed: That Head 443, Medical Services, be reduced by £50.

Question put and agreed to.

Question proposed: That a reduced sum of £3,500 for Head 443—Medical Services—be inserted in the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 444.—Ministry of Information

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £850 for Head 444—Ministry of Information—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 445.—Ministry of Internal Affairs

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £2,130 for Head 445—Ministry of Internal Affairs—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 448.—Legal

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £820 for Head 448—Legal—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 449.—Ministry of Local Government

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £630 for Head 449—Ministry of Local Government—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 452.—Produce Inspection Service

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £140 for Head 452—Produce Inspection Service—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 453.—Ministry of Town Planning

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £1,960 for Head 453—Ministry of Town Planning—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 456.—Ministry of Transport

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £970 for Head 456—Ministry of Transport—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 459.—Ministry of Welfare

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £1,100 for Head 459—Ministry of Welfare—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 460.—Community Development

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £10,560 for Head 460—Community Development—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 462.—Ministry of Works

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £640 for Head 462—Ministry of Works—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 464.—Public Works Extraordinary

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £4,500 for Head 464—Public Works Extraordinary—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Question: That a reduced sum of £140,460 be inserted in the Schedule put and agreed to.

Postponed Clauses

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2.

The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke): Mr Chairman, I rise to move to delete in page C 20 line 5 of Clause 2 the words "five hundred and ten" and substitute therefor the words "four hundred and sixty" and to leave out "£140,510" and insert therefor "£140,460" in the marginal note to the Clause.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 2 as amended agreed to.

Clause 3 agreed to.

Clause 4.

The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke): Mr Chairman, I rise to move to delete in page C 20 line 2 of Clause 4 the words "five hundred and ten" and substitute therefor the words "four hundred and sixty" and to leave out "£140,510" and insert therefor "£140,460" in the marginal note to the Clause.

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 4 as amended agreed to.

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

Bill to be reported.

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

Bill reported with Amendments. And pursuant to Standing Order 66 (17) the Minister of Finance moved: That the Bill as amended be now read the Third time and passed—and Mr Speaker put the Question thereupon to the House without amendment or debate.

Question agreed to.

Bill accordingly read the Third time and passed.

**(2) The 1957-58 Eastern Region
Supplementary Appropriation Bill**

(FIRST AND ONLY ALLOTTED DAY)

Order read for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question (9th March)—That the Bill be now read a Second time.

Question again proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a Second time and under Standing Order 66 (4) stood committed to the Committee of Supply.

Bill immediately considered in the Committee of Supply.

(In the Committee)

Clauses 1 to 2 postponed.

SCHEDULE

Head 420.—The Governor

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £3,356 for Head 420—The Governor—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 421.—Public Service Commission

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £936 for Head 421—Public Service Commission—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 423.—Premier's Office

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £31,986 for Head 423—Premier's Office—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 428.—Agriculture

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £6,395 for Head 428—Agriculture—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 433.—Co-operative Societies

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £1,096 for Head 433—Co-operative Societies—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 440.—Ministry of Finance

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £46,789 for Head 440—Ministry of Finance—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 441.—Accountant-General

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £14,988 for Head 441—Accountant General—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 451.—Printing and Stationery

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £14,623 for Head 451—Printing and Stationery—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 454.—Judicial

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £2,691 for Head 454—Judicial—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

**Head 456.—Ministry of Local
Government**

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £15,664 for Head 456—Ministry of Local Government—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

**Head 458.—Grants to Local
Government Bodies**

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £273,316 for Head 458—Grants to Local Government Bodies—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

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Head 463.—Community Development

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £72,220 for Head 463—Community Development—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 467.—Public Works Extraordinary

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £68,967 for Head 467—Public Works Extraordinary—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 469.—Public Works.—Recurrent Maintenance Works

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £4,053 for Head 469—Public Works Recurrent—Maintenance Works—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 471.—Ministry of Information

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £11,809 for Head 471—Ministry of Information—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 472.—Ministry of Town Planning

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £20,179 for Head 472—Ministry of Town Planning—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 473.—Ministry of Production

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £4,595 for Head 473—Ministry of Production—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Postponed Clauses

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

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

Bill to be reported.

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

Bill reported without Amendment. And pursuant to Standing Order 66 (17) the Minister of Finance moved: That the Bill be now read the Third time and passed—and Mr Speaker put the Question thereupon to the House without amendment or debate.

Question agreed to.

Bill accordingly read the Third time and passed.

(3) The 1956-57 Eastern Region Supplementary Appropriation Bill

(FIRST AND ONLY ALLOTTED DAY)

Order read for resuming adjourned Debate on Question (9th March)—That the Bill be now read a Second time.

Question again proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill accordingly read a Second time and under Standing Order 66 (4) stood committed to the Committee of Supply.

Bill immediately considered in the Committee of Supply.

(In the Committee)

Clauses 1 and 2 postponed.

SCHEDULE

Head 420.—The Governor

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £2,327 for Head 420—The Governor—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 421.—Public Service Commission

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £8,838 for Head 421—Public Service Commission—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 423.—Premier's Office

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £109,768 for Head 423—Premier's Office—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 425.—Eastern Nigeria Information Service

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £9,296 for Head 425—Eastern Nigeria Information Service—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 429.—Printing and Stationery

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £15,621 for Head 429—Printing and Stationery—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 437.—Public Works Extraordinary

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £31,454 for Head 437—Public Works Extraordinary—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 441.—Ministry of Education

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £572 for Head 441—Ministry of Education—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 442.—Education

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £1,983,030 for Head 442—Education—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 443.—Ministry of Finance

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £1,618 for Head 443—Ministry of Finance—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 456.—Grants to Local Government Bodies

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £146,520 for Head 456—Grants to Local Government Bodies—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 465.—Ministry of Transport

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £5,920 for Head 465—Ministry of Transport—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 470.—Community Development

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £2,493 for Head 470—Community Development—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 472.—Ministry of Agriculture

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £13,216 for Head 472—Ministry of Agriculture—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 473.—Ministry of Commerce

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £7,861 for Head 473—Ministry of Commerce—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 474.—Ministry of Internal Affairs

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £4,577 for Head 474—Ministry of Internal Affairs—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 475.—Ministry of Local Government

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £99,145 for Head 475—Ministry of Local Government—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Head 476.—Ministry of Welfare

Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £25,309 for Head 476—Ministry of Welfare—stand part of the Schedule.

Question put and agreed to.

Postponed Clauses

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

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

Bill to be reported.

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

Bill reported without Amendment. And pursuant to Standing Order 66 (17) the Minister of Finance moved: That the Bill be now read the Third time and passed—And Mr Speaker put the Question thereupon to the House without amendment or debate.

Question agreed to.

Bill accordingly read the Third time and passed.

(4) The Finance (Control and Management) Bill

Order for Committee read.

(In the Committee)

Clause 1.

The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke): Mr Chairman, I rise to move in page C 11, line 2 of Clause 1 to leave out "1958" and insert therefor "1959".

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Clause 1 as amended agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 16 agreed to.

Clause 17.

Dr Imoke: Hon. Ikoku suggested that provision should be made to lay on the Table of the House the accounts of any Trading Accounts established under the provisions of this section.

This is, in fact, in line with the policy which Government has already begun to follow in appropriate cases. If I may refer again to the Report of the Accountant-General for the year ended 31st March, 1958, hon. Members will find at page 62, Statement No. 17 which is a table or summary of the Public Works Department Workshop Account, which is in the nature of a Trading Account, which is, in fact, a Trading Account of exactly the type with which this clause deals.

We agree that it would be better if not merely some but all the Trading Accounts were laid before the House. The best way to achieve this, however, is through the machinery of the Audit Law, 1955. The Audit Law, No. 38 of 1955, is published in the Laws of the Eastern Region of Nigeria, 1956, pages A 11 to A 14, and the relevant section is section 10, which is to be found on page A 14. This Section is in the following terms:—

“Annual Accounts. 10. (1) Within a period of six months or such longer period as the House of Assembly may, by resolution, appoint after the close of each financial year, the Accountant-General shall sign and present to the Director of Audit accounts showing fully the financial position of the Government of the Eastern Region of Nigeria on the last day of such financial year.

(2) Such accounts shall include—

- (a) an abstract account of receipts and payments;
- (b) a statement of assets and liabilities;
- (c) Statements of revenue and expenditure by sub-heads; and
- (d) such other statements as the Minister may from time to time require.

(3) The Director of Audit shall transmit to the Minister copies of the accounts, signed and presented by the Accountant-General in

pursuance of the provisions of paragraphs (a) and (b) of subsection (2) of this section, together with his Certificate and a Report upon his examination and audit of all accounts relating to the public moneys, stamps, securities, stores and other Government property of any kind whatsoever.

(4) The Minister shall lay the documents referred to in subsection (2) of this section without alteration thereto on the table of the Eastern House of Assembly at its next following meeting after the receipt by him of such documents.

(5) The Director of Audit may at any time transmit a special report to the Minister on any matter incidental to the exercise of his powers and the performance of his duties under this Law and the Minister shall lay such report on the table of the Eastern House of Assembly in like manner."

It will be noted from subsection (2), paragraph (d) that the statements to be prepared by the Accountant-General include "such other statements as the Minister may from time to time require." I now give an undertaking to this House that I will prescribe for the purposes of this subsection all the Trading Accounts which have been, or may be, established under the Control and Management Law. Further it will be observed that if an Account has once been prescribed, the provisions of subsections (3) and (4) automatically become applicable—that is, the accounts must be examined by the Director of Audit and laid on the Table of the House by the Minister of Finance. I feel that this completely meets the point which the hon. Gentleman has very properly brought forward.

Clause 17 agreed to.

Bill to be reported..

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

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

(5) The Contingencies Fund Bill

Order for Committee read.

(In the Committee)

Clauses 1 to 6 agreed to.

Bill to be reported.

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

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

(6) The Eastern Region Development Corporation (Amendment) Bill

Order for Second reading read.

The Minister of Agriculture (Mr P. O. Nwoga): Mr Speaker, I rise to move the Second reading of the Bill for a Law to amend the Eastern Region Development Corporation Law, 1954.

Once again, this is an extremely simple Bill which merely seeks to amplify section 6 of the original Law which dealt with the appointment of Chairman, Deputy Chairman and members of the Corporation.

Section 6 gave the Minister power to appoint, which also includes the power to terminate all members of the Corporation. The Bill which I now present to you gives in more detail some of the factors which the Minister may bear in mind in the revocation of the Instrument of appointment of any member.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

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

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

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

Bill immediately considered in Committee.

Eastern House of Assembly Debates

107 [E.R. Development Corporation
(Amdt.) Bill: Com. and 3R]

11 MARCH 1959

[Adjournment]

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(In the Committee)

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

Bill to be reported.

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported without Amendment; read the
Third time and passed.*

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved: That this House do now adjourn.
(*The Minister of Commerce, Mr J. U. Nwodo.*)

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

EASTERN HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

(1) LOCAL GOVERNMENT LOANS
FUND

Thursday, 12th March, 1959

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

PRAYERS

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

(1) Hours of Sitting of the House

The Minister of Commerce (Mr J. U. Nwodo): Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to move the first motion standing in my name:

That the resolution of this House relating to the hours of sitting and bearing date the 9th March, 1959, be revoked.

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

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved: That the Resolution of this House relating to the Hours of Sitting and bearing date the 9th March, 1959, be revoked.

(2) Adjournment sine die

The Minister of Commerce (Chief J. U. Nwodo): Mr Speaker, I beg to move:

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

I think this is consequential to the Motion which I have just moved.

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

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

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

The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke): Mr Speaker, I rise to move the Motion standing in my name:

That the sum of £25,013 expended by the Accountant-General from the Local Government Loans Fund during the financial year 1956-57 is hereby declared to have been duly and necessarily applied and expended for the purposes of the said Fund, and is hereby approved and authorised in addition to the sum authorised to be expended from the said Fund by Resolution of this House dated the 28th day of March, 1956.

I have already moved the Second Reading of two Supplementary Appropriation Bills for the excess expenditure incurred during the 1956-57 and 1957-58 financial years on the amounts appropriated through the annual Appropriation Laws and set out under Heads of the Approved Estimates. Hon. Members will recall that, during the Budget Session they are normally invited to pass resolutions authorising expenditure from the various Funds shown in the *Appendices* to the Approved Estimates; during 1956-57 and 1957-58 the expenditure from certain of these Funds was, with the approval of the Standing Committee on Finance, greater than the amount authorised in the original resolution of the House, in just the same way as expenditure under certain Heads of the main Estimates exceeded the amount originally appropriated.

The purpose of the present motion, and of the two others which I shall subsequently move, is to secure the retrospective authority of the House for this expenditure, which was incurred in every case because progress on projects for which the Funds were created was greater than had been expected when the original estimate was prepared. In the case of the Local Government Loans Fund, to which the present motion relates, the excess arose from the payment in 1956-57 of loans approved in 1955-56 but not actually paid out. I must emphasise that the excess expenditure does not bring the total expenditure from the Fund up to a level exceeding the amount appropriated by this House to the Fund, and it can therefore not be maintained that it was incurred contrary to the intentions of the House.

[DR IMOKE]

The excesses have been examined by my Ministry and by the Standing Committee on Finance on behalf of the House, and both are satisfied that the additional money was well spent; this Motion is therefore in the nature of a formal endorsement of the Committee's approval so far as the 1956-57 excess is concerned.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

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

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved: That the sum of £25,013 expended by the Accountant-General from the Local Government Loans Fund during the financial year 1956-57 is hereby declared to have been duly and necessarily applied and expended for the purposes of the said Fund, and is hereby approved and authorised in addition to the sum authorised to be expended from the said Fund by Resolution of this House dated the 28th day of March, 1956.

(2) WATER SUPPLIES RENEWALS FUND

The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke): Mr Speaker, I rise to move the Motion standing in my name:

That the sum of £5,632 expended by the Director of Public Works, Eastern Region, from the Water Supplies Renewals Fund during the financial year 1957-58 is hereby declared to have been duly and necessarily applied and expended for the purposes of the said Fund, and is hereby approved and authorised in addition to the sum authorised to be expended from the said Fund by Resolution of this House dated the 10th day of April, 1957.

This Motion, too, relates to additional expenditure from a Fund during the 1957-58 financial year (in this case, the Water Supplies Renewals Fund), and the reasons for it are the same as those for the previous Motion already accepted by the House.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

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

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved: That the sum of £5,632 expended by the Director of Public Works, Eastern Region, from the Water Supplies Renewals Fund during the financial year 1957-58 is hereby declared to have been duly and necessarily applied and expended for the purposes of the said Fund, and is hereby approved and authorised in addition to the sum authorised to be expended from the said Fund by Resolution of this House dated the 10th day of April, 1957.

(3) INVESTIGATIONS INTO THE CO-OPERATIVE MARKETING OF OIL PALM PRODUCE

The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke): Mr Speaker, I rise to move the motion standing name:

That the sum of £2,677 expended by the Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Eastern Region, upon the investigations into the Co-operative Marketing of Oil Palm Produce during the financial year 1957-58 is hereby declared to have been duly and necessarily applied and expended for that purpose, and is hereby approved and authorised in addition to the sum authorised to be expended under Appendix "F" to the Estimates of the Eastern Region for the said financial year by Resolution of this House dated the 10th day of April, 1957.

In speaking to the preceding Motions I have explained in full the reasons for seeking the authority of this House for the additional expenditure incurred from the Funds set out in the Appendices to the Approved Estimates. The present Motion refers to similar additional expenditure in respect of the 1957-58 financial year from Appendix "F" to the Approved Estimates of that year, which deals with investigations into the Co-operative Marketing of Oil Palm Produce; all expenditure on these investigations is reimbursed by the Marketing Board. I am sure that hon. Members will accept this Motion, as they did the others.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

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

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved: That the sum of £2,677 expended by the Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Eastern Region, upon the investigations into the Co-operative Marketing of Oil Palm Produce during the financial year 1957-58 is hereby declared to have been duly and necessarily applied and expended for that purpose, and is hereby approved and authorised in addition to the sum authorised to be expended under Appendix "F" to the Estimates of the Eastern Region for the said financial year by Resolution of this House dated the 10th day of April, 1957.

ORDER OF THE DAY

The Widows' and Orphans' Pension (Eastern Region) Bill

Order for Second reading read.

The Minister of Finance (Dr S. E. Imoke): Mr Speaker, I rise to move the Second Reading of the Widows' and Orphans' Pension (Eastern Region) Bill.

The object of this Bill is to make provision for pensions to be granted to Widows and children of deceased European public officers transferred to the public service of the Eastern Region under the provisions of section 185 of the Nigeria (Constitution) Order in Council, 1954, or who were appointed to posts in the public service of the Eastern Region after the 1st of October, 1954.

The broad effect of the legislation is to allow European public officers of the Eastern Region to contribute to the existing Widows and Orphans Pension scheme and to obtain benefits therefrom for their dependants in the same manner as all European officers in the Nigerian public service were able to do before the 1st of October, 1954.

The Eastern Region has not yet introduced its own scheme and until that is done it is important that the officers should be enabled

to continue with the existing scheme. Similar legislation was enacted by the Northern and Western Regions in 1955 and 1957 respectively.

The law is made retrospective to 1st October, 1954, that is, the date that the Nigerian public service became regionalised.

Clause 2 of the Bill provides that officers affected shall continue to be or become contributors under the Ordinance. Clause 3 applies the provisions of the Ordinance to every officer to whom clause 2 refers. Clause 4 provides that the Government of the Eastern Region shall supply to the Government of the Federation and to the Crown Agents all such information and assistance as may be necessary in the administration of the Ordinance. Clause 5 makes provision for contributions to be deducted by the Government of the Eastern Region.

Sir, I beg to move.

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

Question proposed.

Question put and agreed to.

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

Bill immediately considered in Committee.

(In the Committee)

Clauses 1 to 6 *agreed to.*

Bill to be reported.

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

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

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Commerce (Mr J. U. Nwodo): Mr Speaker, I beg to move:

That this House do now adjourn *sine die.*

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

Question proposed.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

Press Conference by the Leader of the Opposition

The Minister of Information (Mr B. C. Okwu): Mr Speaker, there are two issues of great importance which I would like to raise for the information of this hon. House.

It is to be noted, Sir, that the Leader of the Opposition yesterday held a Press Conference at which he made some allegations against the Government and it is my intention this morning to verify the points raised in that Press Conference. In the first place, Sir, it is my view that Mr S. G. Ikoku, the Action Group Leader of the Opposition in the Eastern House of Assembly, perhaps did not realise how far he had over-reached himself when he told a press conference in Enugu yesterday that the withdrawal of the buying agency licence of Messrs L. N. Obioha Ltd., had ceased to be of Regional interest but is now of national importance. Mr Ikoku was reported to have quoted passages from the Report of the Resumed Constitutional Conference minutes to buttress his arguments.

I want to make it clear that the attitude of the East Regional Government, as publicly enunciated by the Premier of the East, Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe, remains the same and it is not intended to engage in further controversy with any one over the issue in the near future. It will therefore be for Mr S. G. Ikoku and his client to take any action they consider appropriate in order to achieve their objective in their own way.

Nevertheless, I want to draw the attention of all concerned to an issue of great importance raised in Mr Ikoku's statement. Mr Ikoku quoted out of its context a portion of the Colonial Secretary's alleged statement on the issue of Mr Obioha's buying agency. I quote:

"Mr Lennox Boyd states that he was concerned only with the charge which he had heard made that pressure, other than of a political nature, had been brought to bear by discrimination on the part of the Government in the field of loans and contracts.

In view of the seriousness of the charge, he felt that it would be desirable for it to be answered in full since he naturally needed to

be satisfied before handing over responsibilities for Nigeria that there were good prospects for just and stable Government after independence."

The important point to which I want to draw attention is that it is forbidden to publish Conference proceedings. This is a serious breach which is bound to have far reaching consequences unless appropriate action is taken against Mr S. G. Ikoku.

It is significant, however, that Mr Ikoku did not consider it desirable to quote from the same source the relevant portion of Dr Azikiwe's speech which pledged to restore Mr L. N. Obioha's buying agency "forthwith". Yes, did not even lucifer quote from the scriptures!

It will be remembered that Mr Ikoku sometime ago challenged Dr Azikiwe to authorise the publication of his speech at the Conference on the creation of the Mid-West State. He claimed that Dr Azikiwe opposed its creation and that the claim could be substantiated if Dr Azikiwe's speech was published. He did not, however, tell the people of Nigeria that Dr Azikiwe submitted a memorandum to the Conference asking the Conference to agree that the proceedings of the Conference should be published in order to enable Nigerians and the outside world to know who said certain things. The Action Group and other delegations opposed the idea. Mr Ikoku knows very well that if the proceedings of the Conference were published, it would mean the political end of himself and his crowd. Mr S. G. Ikoku, has established a new Action Group national record in falsehood and deserves to be condemned nationally.

We appreciate that the Western pattern of parliamentary democracy is new to this part of the world. We are very willing—in fact, we have shown great evidence that we want to give parliamentary democracy as practised in the West a fair trial. But it must also be borne in mind that we have problems which are native with us. We have also our own ideas of value. This Government, the Government of the Eastern Region, has one idol which it worships and that is the people. It is only the people of the Eastern Region who can make and unmake this Government, and we will

always be guided in our actions by the consideration of the interests of the people of the Eastern Region.

We appreciate, Sir, that there may be some people who do not like our faces. This is to be expected. There is no institution or any Government that has always enjoyed the full blessing of everybody.

You will remember, Sir, yesterday there was a drama in this House and this morning the Leader of the Opposition came out with a statement which is a complete distortion of the events as they happened yesterday in this House. We have not forgotten that the late Speaker of the Eastern House of Assembly was openly challenged and abused on the floor of this hon. House by the self-same Opposition. This time, with your permission, Sir, this is the statement which Mr Ikoku issued to the Press this morning and it is for this House to consider whether this does not constitute an abuse of Parliamentary privilege:

"On Monday 9th March, the N.C.N.C. Parliamentary Party in the Eastern House of Assembly decided to kill an Opposition Motion standing in the name of the Opposition Chief Whip, Hon. E. O. Eyo, to the effect that the House 'expresses its deep concern over the failure of the African Continental Bank Limited to honour its obligations to the Eastern Regional Government'. This Motion was not put down on the Order Paper of the House for private Members' Day, Tuesday, 10th March.

The Leader of Opposition addressed a letter to the Premier, Dr Azikiwe, on 9th March, requesting that the Motion be listed for 10th March or for 11th March. If this failed, then the Opposition would be compelled to move adjournment of the House in order to debate a matter of urgent public importance. The Premier replied on 10th March stating that the Leader of Opposition could move adjournment of the House if he so desired".

This, Mr Speaker, is a complete falsification of the contents of Dr Azikiwe's letter to Mr Ikoku. I am surprised that Mr Ikoku did not think it fair enough to produce perhaps in full the contents of Dr Azikiwe's letter to him. However, he went further:

"On Wednesday, 11th March, hon. E. O. Eyo approached the Speaker before the House sat and obtained his permission to move adjournment of the House. When hon. E. O. Eyo began to ask for leave to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, the Government Party raised objections. The Speaker ruled that Mr Eyo should proceed to seek leave of the House. The Government Party continued to raise objections and vehemently challenged the ruling of the Speaker. Thereupon, the Speaker adjourned the House for 30 minutes.

"When the House resumed sitting, the Speaker reversed his earlier ruling and held that hon. E. O. Eyo could not proceed to ask leave to move adjournment of the House. Whereupon, the Opposition walked out in protest."

He also explained the definite matter of urgent public importance for which Mr Eyo had sought leave of the House and ended by saying:—

"The Opposition calls upon the Premier, Dr Azikiwe, to summon an emergency meeting of the Eastern House of Assembly before 20th March to debate the most unsatisfactory position of the A.C.B. Limited as depository of the public funds of the Eastern Region. If the Premier rejects this request, the Opposition will have no alternative but to release all evidence at its disposal to the nation."

I have read this to the House, and I think the House, is the most competent body to judge how far Mr Ikoku has been fair to your good self, Mr Speaker, and to this House. I want also to point out that assuming that even a person of the calibre of the Premier, Dr Azikiwe, had given leave in writing to the Opposition to raise the matter on the authority of the provisions in Standing Orders which allowed any member to move adjournment of the House to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, the ultimate decision as provided in the Standing Orders rests with the House. It cannot be imagined for one moment that Dr Azikiwe, and one person at that, constitutes this hon. House. Every Member of this House will bear me out that you had again and again indicated that you were in favour of Mr Eyo

[MR OKWU]

asking leave of this House. At one stage, you asked the Opposition to show you in writing a resume of the subject which they said they wanted to raise on the floor of the House. What did Mr Eyo and the Leader of the Opposition do? What they did was to submit to you a bogus letter addressed to the Clerk of the House. You gave them another chance and asked them to write down the subject which they wanted to put to the House. They would not do that; rather they knew what the attitude of the House was going to be and decided to draw public attention to themselves by staging a "walk out". This should be condemned in this House. Members of the Opposition draw £800 per annum each for being Members of the House. The Eastern Region demands each and everyone of us to come and fulfil our obligation to the Region for having been elected to this House. I do not expect that if they are men they want me to believe that they should not have had the knack to stay and fight the issue on the floor of the House. I want to say, Sir, that we will not, repeat will not, allow the Opposition to intimidate us. We have a sacred obligation to the people of the Eastern Region and God helping us, we shall see to it that we do not fail.

Now, Sir, there is a portion to which my attention has been drawn about the practice in the House of Commons as enunciated by *Erskine May*. Sir, with your permission, may I read the relevant portion :—

"ERSKINE MAY'S PARLIAMENTARY PRACTICE: 16TH EDITION, PAGE 366

Chapter XVII

8. Motions for the Adjournment of the House under S. O. No. 9

"A motion for the adjournment of the House, moved as a substantive motion, i.e., independently and not in the course of discussion upon another question (*see p. 408*), is peculiarly adaptable to the purpose of obstructing the pre-arranged programme of business of the sitting, as its employment in the past shows. Its unrestricted use is now reserved for the Government (*see p. 305*). Its use by unofficial Members is limited by S.O. No. 9 in point of time to the period between questions and the commencement of

public business, and in subject matter to the raising of what is accepted by the Speaker as a definite matter of urgent public importance. A motion for the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance may only be made on one of the first four days of the week (not on Friday or Saturday) (*b*), when all the questions to Members have been disposed of, and before the commencement of public business. The Member who desires to make such motion rises in his place and asks leave to move the adjournment of the House. *A notice in writing of the definite matter of urgent public importance which he proposes to discuss must be supplied to the Speaker. . . .*"

But this was not done and I do not need to waste your time by reading the whole lot. The important point has been made and I wish that my hon. Friends of the Opposition should take time to read the relevant portion. In conclusion, Sir, we have extended to the Opposition our right-hand of fellowship and it is for the Opposition to justify that they desire the gestures of co-operation which we have extended to them. I think this might be the last time the Government could allow the Opposition to behave just the way it has done.

Thank you very much.

Mr M. E. Ogon (Ikom Division): Mr Speaker, I rise to support what the Minister of Information has just said. I feel, Sir, that this grave public statement of the Leader of the Opposition infringes Standing Order No. 34. It is a challenge on your authority, and at the next meeting of the House we, the floor Members on this side, shall insist that this attitude of the Leader of the Opposition be referred to the Committee of Privileges under Standing Order 57, for determination. We think, Sir, that that is the most proper thing to do. Standing Order 57 allows that where there is a case of gross concern or abuse of the power of the House we shall refer it to our Committee of Privileges.

The next point we would like to be put forward to the Executive Council is that if any attempt is made to summon this House at the request of the Opposition to discuss the A.C.B., we on the floor of this side of the House will not give it a quorum. We are not ready to come here to waste the time and money of the Region

in discussing frivolous motions. After all, not one of them there can point a finger at anybody on this side of the House.

Surely, Sir, we are not going to allow the Opposition to intimidate us, and for members of the public who do not understand the position, it would appear as if the Opposition walked out on an issue. Members of the Opposition will remember yesterday, that time and time again, you told them that you agreed that the matter presented to you was the issue of the A.C.B. I beg to submit, Sir, that Mr Eyo lied to you. He got up and said that that was not the issue he wanted to raise. You asked him to present in writing the issue he wanted to raise, but he *did not* present it in writing; so that there was no issue before you to put to the House and you ruled it out. We want it to go on record that Mr Eyo lied to you, lied to the House, and lied to the whole country.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture (Mr D. A. Nnaji): Mr Speaker, you should not be surprised, Sir, that the two hon. Members, the Leader of the Opposition and the Opposition Chief Whip,

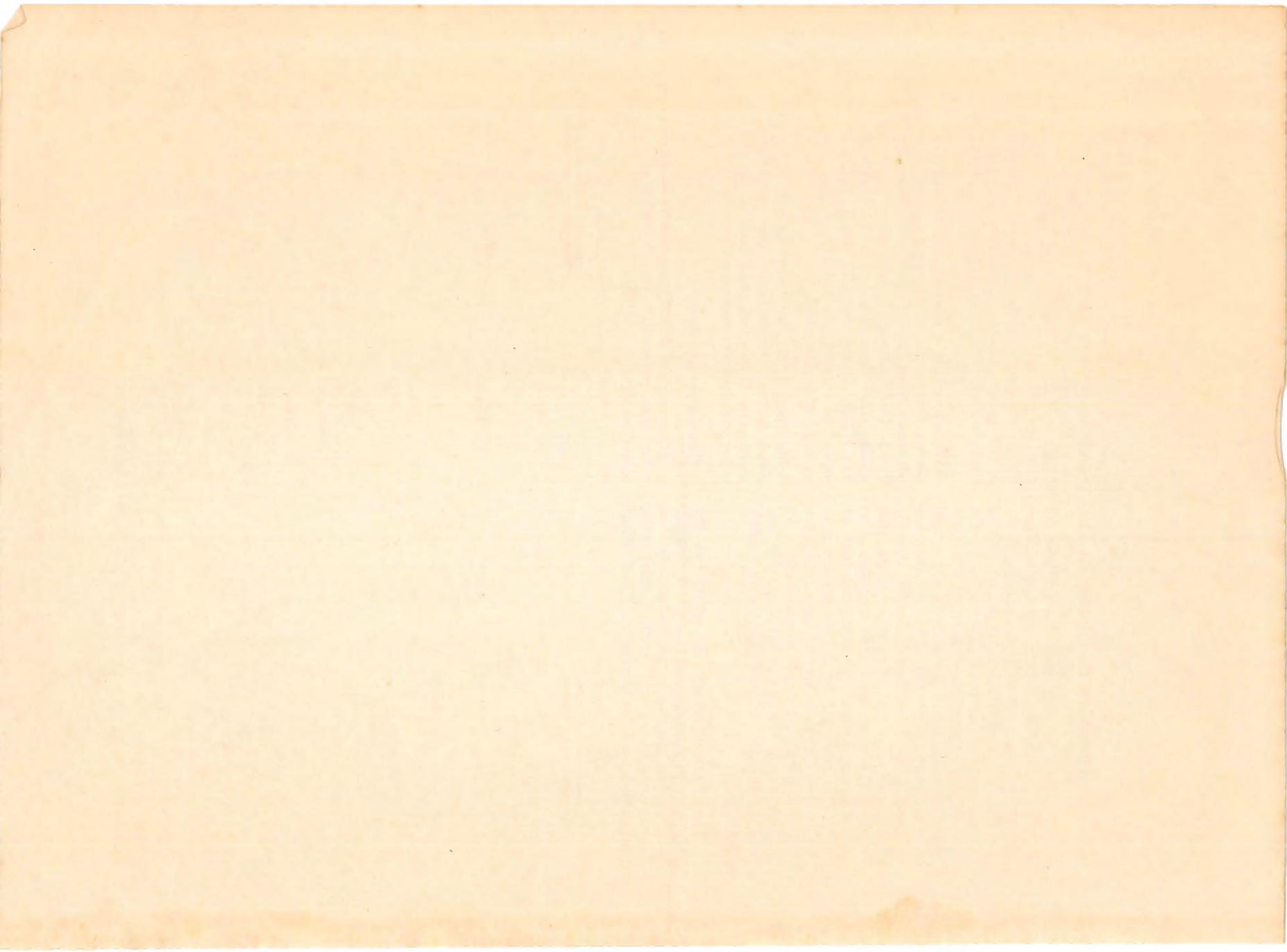
have dragged this House into mud. They know exactly that even if this Government were defeated through the act of the Opposition, they would neither be the Premier nor a Minister of State. They will never be qualified to sit on this side of the House as such. So, Sir, it should not surprise you, as a new Speaker of this House, to have this experience. This has been the experience of the previous Speaker.

We are making it clear to you, Sir, that the Government will no longer tolerate any nonsense from the Opposition. Who are they? For instance, I saw some of them waiting down there to collect their allowances. Rev. Okon Efiang stood at the Pay Office instead of coming into the House. He was waiting for his allowance.

Mr Speaker, Sir, we from this side of the House support, that in future, those privileges given to the Opposition will be considered and either withdrawn or minimised.

Question put and agreed to.

Adjourned, sine die, at eight minutes to eleven o'clock a.m. pursuant to the Resolution of the House this day.



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9th to 12th March, 1959

ABBREVIATIONS

(Adj. Deb.) = Adjournment Debate

1R = First Reading

2R = Second Reading

3R = Third Reading

Com. = Committee

E.R. = Eastern Region

Q = Question

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