

# Eastern House of Assembly

Tuesday, 20th March, 1956

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

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

Prayers

## ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

### Board of Control for the Allocation of Market Stalls

9. **Mr R. O. Iwuagwu** asked the Minister of Internal Affairs, whether he does not consider it advisable to set up a Special Board of Control independent of the Urban or Local Councils for the allocation and control of market stalls in the Region in view of the fact that nearly all disputes leading to the dissolution of Urban Councils hinged directly or indirectly upon the allocation of Market Stalls.

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** I am aware of the need of improved methods of allocation and control of market stalls in some urban districts and I am obliged to the honourable Member for his suggestion. The matter is under examination and the decision of the Regional Government will be made known during the present meeting of this House.

### Senior Service Posts Vacant in the Region

47. **Mr D. A. Nnaji** asked the Premier, how many Senior Service Posts are vacant in the Region and in what departments are such posts vacant.

**Mr A. G. Umoh (Parliamentary Secretary):** The honourable the Premier is advised that there are 207 "Senior Service" posts vacant in the Region. Vacancies exist in all departments save in the Co-operative Department. The Commissioner in the United Kingdom's Office, Fisheries Department, Social Welfare Department and the Department of Trade. Details of vacancies in each Department will be furnished for inclusion in the Daily Report.

**Mr D. A. Nnaji:** Is it not a fact that these vacancies exist because African Junior Staff are not being promoted.

**Mr A. G. Umoh (Parliamentary Secretary):** It is not

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** This is not a supplementary. I hate the high-handed way in which the Minister of Development is dismissing questions as if small boys are asking them. He is making no effort to co-operate.

**The Minister of Development:** What do you mean, no effort to co-operate? What do you want?

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order! If any Member is not satisfied with the answers given by the Front Bench, he can put a motion to that effect any time he likes.

#### Pipe-Borne Water Supply in Umuneke, Udi Division

90. **Mr E. A. Chime** asked the Minister of Development, if he is aware of the efforts of the people of Umuneke, comprising eight towns in Udi Division, to construct pipes for the supply of water in their area; if so, what assistance does Government propose to give them.

**The Minister of Development:** No, Sir, I am not aware of this praiseworthy effort on the part of the people of Umuneke. I would be most interested to know what the pipes are being made from. Perhaps the honourable Member would be so kind as to tell me at a convenient moment.

**Mr E. A. Chime:** Is the Minister of Development prepared to go there and see what has been done?

**The Minister of Development:** I do not actually know what the question is. Is it whether I will be prepared or when I will be prepared.

**Mr Speaker:** The question is whether you will be prepared and, if so, when.

**The Minister of Development:** As soon as he is ready.

#### Planning of Oron Township

91. **Mr S. T. Akpan** asked the Minister of Development, how soon will the planning of Oron Township begin.

**The Minister of Development:** Town Planning is the responsibility of my colleague, the Minister of Land to whom the honourable Member is advised to direct his question.

#### Rural Water Scheme, Ahoada Division

92. **Mr J. H. E. Nwuke** asked the Minister of Development, whether he has received a resolution from the Ahoada County Council for the implementation of the Rural Water scheme for the Division; if so, what is Government doing about this resolution.

**The Minister of Development:** I received the resolution and replied to the County Council Secretary saying that the Rural Water Supplies scheme had not been approved. That was in early January. Late in February, the Secretary of State did approve the scheme. A two-day visit to Ahoada is being arranged in connection with the Rural Water Supplies scheme. It must be borne in mind however that shortage of staff is still our greatest problem.

**Mr R. O. Ukuta, M.B.E.:** Can the Minister tell us in this House that his journey to the United Kingdom is a failure?

**The Minister of Development:** My journey to the United Kingdom is not a failure. I was not there to recruit staff. I was there on leave to which I was entitled. During my leave I took 15 days of my leave to tour areas and manufacturing firms who deal with pumps and pipes for water supply. I also visited engineering concerns and made enquiries about recruitment of Engineers. It must be understood that that was not my primary concern when I went there.

### Survey Department

102. **Mr E. A. Chime** asked the Minister of Agriculture, how many Senior Service posts are vacant in the Survey Department; what are the reasons for not filling them.

**The Minister of Agriculture:** The following Senior posts are vacant in the Survey Department: one Senior Surveyor, and two Surveyors.

2. The post of Senior Surveyor is a Federal office allocated to this Region and by virtue of section 182 (2) of the Constitutional Instruments, the post can be filled only by the Governor-General.

3. I am informed by the Public Service Commission that for the two vacancies of Surveyors, there are not available locally suitable candidates for appointment or promotion to this post, the necessary qualifications for which are:—

Either (i) (a) A degree (preferably with Honours) in Engineering or Mathematics or Physical Science or Geography,

and

(b) The Intermediate Examination of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors in the Land Surveying Section, or exemption therefrom, or such equivalent as may from time to time be acceptable by the Secretary of State.

or (ii) The full Professional Associateship of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors in the Land Surveying Section.

**Mr E. A. Chime:** Is the Minister aware that there are Africans now acting as Surveyors in that Department and that their contemporaries in the West and North have been promoted to those posts? If so, will the Minister take steps to see that the Africans are promoted?

**The Minister of Agriculture:** I am aware that certain officers in the West in similar circumstances have been promoted but, as I have indicated in the answer, this is a matter for the Public Service Commission and I will make the feelings of the honourable Member known to that body.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** I would like to ask the Minister of Land whether it is the policy of his Department to require as one of the conditions for employment as Surveyor the possession of a licence to practise in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa as disclosed in my speech yesterday.

**The Minister of Agriculture:** The qualifications for appointment to the post of Surveyor are those indicated by me earlier when I was answering this question. As for the statement made by the honourable Member the other day about qualifications of Surveyors practising in Australia and other places, the position as I understand it is this; that anybody who applies for the post and is qualified to practise in those countries could be considered here. That qualification does not make it exclusive that only such persons qualify for the post. Persons who qualify in this country and elsewhere could also be considered. This is made clear in the *Gazette* quoted by the honourable Member.

**Mr M. E. Ogon:** Can the honourable the Minister of Agriculture tell the House if the present Director satisfied the qualifications specified in this post in order to get his job.

**The Minister of Agriculture:** That will be enquired into; the answer is not ready.

### Church of Scotland Mission, Abakaliki

105. **Mr S. N. Aio** asked the Minister of Agriculture whether the Church of Scotland Mission, Abakaliki has been granted a lease on Crown Land at Abakaliki to build schools; if not, why.

**The Minister of Agriculture:** No, Sir, because no application has been received.

#### Public Collection Ordinance in relation to Ngwa College

115. **Mr N. W. Abengowe** asked the Minister of Internal Affairs, whether it is true that an organisation in Ngwa Clan in Aba Division known as Ngwa Educational and Cultural Assembly or by any such other name, obtained a permit at any time under the Public Collections Ordinance to collect money in Ngwa Clan towards the running of an Ngwa College : if so, have the accounts of the collection and expenditure been submitted to the Government by the organisation according to the provisions of the Public Collections Ordinance; if not, what steps does Government propose to take to safeguard the interests of the people.

**Mr F. M. A. Saronwiyo (Parliamentary Secretary):** Yes, Sir. An organisation in the Ngwa Clan in Aba Division, known as the Ngwa Educational and Cultural Assembly, did in fact obtain a permit under the Public Collections (Regulation) Ordinance to collect money to promote education and to raise the general cultural level of the Ngwa Clan. The Ngwa Educational and Cultural Assembly is the proprietor of the Ngwa High School which is under the management of the Church Missionary Society. The Permit is number 27 of 1955, and was issued by the Ministry of Internal Affairs on the 21st March, 1955. The Permit expired on 31st December, 1955, and no application for renewal has yet been received.

2. No accounts regarding the collection and expenditure of the amounts received by the N.E.C.A. have yet been received by the Ministry of Internal Affairs but they have been called for under the provisions of Regulation 12 of the Ordinance. A reply is still awaited but the honourable Member may rest assured that all necessary steps have been taken to ensure that the interests of the people are being safeguarded. The accounts will be carefully scrutinised when received and any necessary action will be taken as the result of such scrutiny.

#### Planning Schemes in Calabar Division

160. **Mr F. E. Ikpeme** asked the Minister of Agriculture what reasons justify the abandonment of the Calabar-Mamfe Road Experimental Settlement and Kwa Falls Settlement Planning Scheme ?

**The Minister of Agriculture:** The Calabar-Mamfe Road Area Planning Authority was established to operate the scheme commonly known as the B.C.C. Scheme, the main object of which was "to make available for settlement on approved lines, an area to accommodate some 203 farming families upon an economy to be based mainly on cultivated oil palms." A start was made in 1947. By October, 1950, when the Scheme was drastically revised owing to shortage of funds, there were only 126 settlers. In February, 1953, the number had dwindled to ninety-four, and in March, 1954, no more than sixty-eight were still occupying their holdings. Of these sixty-eight the large majority had found work in the oil palm and rubber estates that were developing in the area and were not occupied in true farming. As a resettlement project the scheme was obviously a failure since it was clear that the settlers preferred paid work to the agricultural life planned for them.

**Mr F. E. Ikpeme :** Was the opinion of the people of Calabar and its environs invited in this abandonment; if so, through what medium; if not, why.

**The Minister of Agriculture:** It was not necessary to consult the opinion of anybody. The plan was meant to serve a specific purpose and when that purpose failed it was necessary to abandon it.

#### Acquisition of Land in the Region

162. **Chief M. W. Ubani** asked the Minister of Agriculture whether it is a fact that the Government is proposing to acquire land in Obosi in Onitsha Division; under what condition is the land to be acquired and what is the acreage and for what purpose; is the land intended to be acquired within the area in dispute between Obosi and Onitsha.

**The Minister of Agriculture:** The Government does not intend to acquire land in Obosi in Onitsha Division. The other parts of the question do not therefore arise.

**BUSINESS MOTION**

**The Premier :** Sir, I rise to move—That all proceedings on Government Business at today's sitting be *exempted* from the provisions of Standing Order 4—Sittings of the House.

**The Minister of Health :** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**MOTION**

**Chief M. W. Ubani (Aba Division) :** Mr Speaker, I beg to move the motion standing in my name which reads as follows :—

That this House considers that steps should be taken to enact an amending legislation deleting subsection (5) of section 160 of the Eastern Region Local Government Law, 1955 (No. 26 of 1955) and substituting therefor a new subsection which provides that where a County Council issues a precept to more than one District Council the sum required from a District Council shall bear to the total sum required the same proportion as the tax collected in the previous financial year within the area of the authority of such District Council bears to the total tax collected in the said year within the area of the authority of all the District Councils to which such precept is issued.

I wish to stress that this motion is not intended to be controversial. Its intention is to bring to the notice of the Government a section of the Law which appears to be difficult to work, and if worked, to be oppressive to the people under the jurisdiction of the Rural District Councils of the Eastern Region.

Section 160, subsection (5) of the Eastern Region Local Government Law reads: "Where a County Council issues a precept to more than one District Council under the provisions of this section, the sum required from a District Council shall bear to the total sum required by the County Council the same proportion as the number of persons resident in the area of the District Council bears to the number of persons resident in the area of the County council."

This means that when issuing a precept to a Rural District Council the County Council will take into account the total number of the population in the area of jurisdiction of the Rural District Council. The population includes men, women and children, and this population is taken from the census figures of the Region. I remember that during the census honourable Members of this House, particularly Members from Aba Division, went all out to give an undertaking to the people, in order to allay their fears, that there will not be any time when calculation for the payment of tax will bring about the application of the population figures shown on the census. It was on the strength of the assurances we gave that the people submitted to census. If this section is not amended all the assurances we gave the people will have been abortive.

If Rural District Councils are assessed on the basis of the populations in their areas, it means that they will take either of the following three courses: raise the amount of tax to be paid by the adult males; or call upon all the inhabitants of the area to contribute to satisfy the precept; or dip their hands into their reserves or savings. Whichever course they follow is bound to impose hardship on the council. Surely this was not the intention of the Local Government Law, nor was it the motive for all the fight we put in to secure reforms of the local Government system in the Eastern Region.

On the other hand, if this motion receives the blessing of this House, and the Government introduces legislation to amend the law in the terms of the motion, the precepts issued on District Councils will be calculated on the basis of the number of taxable adult males who paid tax the preceding year. This method will not impose hardship on District Councils, since it will not lead them to dip their hands into their reserves, or force them to call upon all adult males to pay over and above their capacity.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

## The Newspaper (Amendment) Law, 1956

*Order for Second Reading read.*

**The Premier:** Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the Bill for a law to amend the Newspaper Law, 1955, be now read a Second time. The object of this Bill is to make various minor amendments to the Newspaper Law. None of these amendments, save that in clause 5 of the Bill, make any great change in its substance. They do, however, make for greater clarity in the section relating to annual registration of newspapers, proprietors and newsagents, the requirement that each copy of the newspaper and supplement shall contain certain information as to the printer, publisher and the number of copies printed for circulation. Clause 5 cancels the registration fees formerly required of any newspaper.

Honourable Members will remember that the fee required was £50. With this cancellation, this brings our Newspaper legislation to the same level of that of the United Kingdom. I am confident that the House will welcome the proposal to abolish the registration fee which will have the effect of preventing the small man, with the desire to do so, from publishing a newspaper for purely local circulation. Honourable Members will agree with me that nothing but good can result in how many newspapers published in the Region according to the demand of the people: provided they comply with the other provisions of the law. Only in this way can we hope to create a well and informed public opinion. Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Health:** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E. (Enyong Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I would not have said a word if the honourable mover of this motion inserted just one sentence he had omitted.

When the Bill we are now seeking to amend came before this House not very long ago, the Opposition warned that the fee which the Premier now seeks to abolish was excessive and nobody heeded. Then after the passage of some months, we suddenly discover that we want to bring our Newspaper Law in line with the United Kingdom Procedure.

Mr Speaker, nothing can be gained by this back door method of listening to the Opposition. It makes for better co-operation to give and take honourably and at once in the open. It is no use Government defeating a motion by the Opposition and a few months bringing it in, and without a compliment.

**The Premier:** Thank you Mr Speaker. I just wish to clarify one thing. I must say that the honourable Member is not correct. The original fee was £100. I had a conference with representatives of Newspaper proprietors, etc. and they agreed that £100 was rather high and suggested £50 and the Government side suggested £50. They asked that it should be abolished altogether, so we gave assurance that after six months trial if we found that it was necessary to do so we would abolish same. When the original Bill was placed before the House, the Opposition rose and opposed this £50 altogether. We resisted it for the same reasons which we gave to the Newspaper proprietors. No assurance could be given to you because you were not interested. We gave the assurance to the Newspaper proprietors that after six months it would be reconsidered.

My point is to assure the Opposition that there are no back door tactics. We are not trying to bring back here what you have suggested. Representatives of newspaper proprietors made a suggestion; we gave assurance that after six months it will be reviewed. They then approached the Government again that it should be reviewed and we thought that it should be reviewed and that is what we have done.

[*Newspaper (Amendment)*  
*Law, 1955 Com. and 3R*]

20th March, 1956

[*Publications (Amendment)*  
*Law, 1956 2R, Com. and 3R*]

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*

*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

*Clause 1.*

**The Premier:** Mr Speaker, I beg to move in clause 1 to leave out "and shall come into operation on a day to be fixed by the Governor by notice in the *Regional Gazette*".

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clauses 2-3 agreed to.*

*First Schedule agreed to.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported with an amendment: Read the Third time and passed.*

### **The Publications (Amendment) Law, 1956**

*Order for Second Reading read.*

**The Premier:** Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the Bill for a Law to amend the Publications Law, 1955 be now read a second time. This Bill has only one object and that is the definition of Minister in this Law shall be changed from the Premier to the Minister for the time being charged under Section 119 of the Nigeria Constitution Order in Council 1954 with responsibility for Information Services. This will do away with the necessity for amending the law should it be considered expedient to be handed over to some other Ministry.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Health:** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*

*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

*Clause 1.*

**The Premier:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to leave out in clause 1 the words "and shall come into operation on a date to be fixed by the Governor by notice in the *Regional Gazette*".

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clauses 2-3 agreed to.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported with an amendment: Read the Third time and passed.*

**The Eastern Nigeria Information Service (Amendment) Law, 1956***Order for Second Reading read.*

**The Premier:** Mr Speaker, I rise to move that the Bill for a Law to amend the Eastern Nigeria Information Service Law, 1955, be now read a second time. I do not propose to take up much of the time of the House on it, but this does not mean to say that I do not consider that the Bill is an important one. In fact, it is most important for the Eastern Region. The object of this Bill is to widen the scope and functions of the Eastern Nigeria Information Service. The functions of the Corporation are prescribed in section 12 of the principal law, and I am sure that all will agree with me that it is right and proper that one of the functions of the Corporation should be to promote and encourage studies in the fields of journalism and sound and television broadcasting. Clause 2 of the Bill empowers the Corporation to do this.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Health:** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr A. Ikoku (Enyong Division):** Mr Speaker, in principle there is nothing in our mind really wrong with this amendment; but we do sincerely hope that we shall keep our perspective clear and observe a sense of proportion. In the Eastern Region at the moment we are struggling to escape from bare poverty, and I think that water supply, roads and the like should have higher priority than television. How many of us, and what percentage of that number of eight million can afford television sets? I think, Sir, that while there is nothing harmful in a section like this being inserted in the Ordinance, we must not make it an excuse for throwing away thousands of pounds that could be put to much better and more urgent needs in the Region in the pursuit of what we might call regional luxuries.

**The Premier:** Mr Speaker, I am afraid my honourable Friend has misconceived the object of this Bill. The aim is not to establish television or even to enable the Information Service to establish it. The object is just to promote, encourage and stimulate interest in it. Our attention was called by the Colonial Office experts that no Information Service could exist without being able to encourage and stimulate television. As a matter of fact, the proper corporation which will handle television is the Cinema Corporation not this one. I appreciate what my honourable Friend says about the importance of television educationally, and I can assure him that that is the aim here.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*

*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

*Clause 1.*

**The Premier:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move in clause 1 to leave out "and shall come into operation on a date to be fixed by the Governor by notice in the *Regional Gazette*".

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clauses 1 to 4 agreed to.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported with an amendment; Read the Third time and passed.*



[*Library Board (Amendment) Law, 1956—2R., Com., and 3 R*]

20th March, 1956

[*Magistrates Courts (Amendment) Law, 1956—2R*]

### The Eastern Region Library Board (Amendment) Law, 1956

*Order for Second Reading read.*

**The Minister of Welfare:** Mr Speaker, I beg to move that a Bill for a Law to amend the Eastern Region Library Board Law, 1955, be read a second time. It is desirable, Sir, that the responsibility referred to under the Eastern Region Library Board, 1955, should be in the hands of the Minister who is responsible for libraries in the Region rather than specifying the Minister of Welfare. The Bill is the result of that consideration. Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Agriculture:** Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*

*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

Clause 1.

**The Minister of Welfare:** Mr Speaker, I beg to move to delete in clause 1 the words "and shall come into operation on a date to be fixed by the Governor by notice in the *Regional Gazette*".

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 2 agreed to.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported with an amendment; Read the Third time and passed.*

### The Magistrates Courts (Amendment) Law, 1956

*Order for Second Reading read.*

**The Premier:** Mr Speaker, I rise to move the second reading of the Bill for a Law to amend the Magistrates Courts Law, 1955. The most important object of this Bill contained in clause 2 is the reduction in the post-call experience required of persons who wish to become Magistrates from five to three years. Since the Court assumed its functions on the 3rd January this year it has been reported that it is very difficult to obtain recruits for the Magistracy when only persons who have had five years' post-call experience are eligible for appointment. There are ten vacancies for Magistrates and only three persons qualified as the Law now stands, have applied. If the Magistracy is to be brought up to strength speedily as needed, as indeed it must be, if the work of the Magistrates' Courts is not to fall seriously into arrears, then there must be a reduction in the qualifications required of recruits. The Western Region which started off with a minimum of five year post-call qualification for Magistrates was obliged to reduce the qualification to three years, and in the Northern Region and Lagos where the Magistrates' Court Laws do not prescribe the period of qualification of recruits for the Magistracy, persons with two years' post-call experience have been appointed.

The second object of the Bill is to correct a drafting error in Section 21 of the principal Law, which had the effect of preventing Magistrates from taking preliminary enquiries. The amendment proposed by clause 3 of the Bill will enable Magistrates as well as Chief Magistrates to take such enquiries. This is most essential.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Health:** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr O. O. Ita (Eket Division):** Mr Speaker, I would like to express an opinion in this matter of the Magistrates' Court Ordinance. According to the reason given by the honourable Premier it would appear that it is because many people who have qualified to apply under the existing Law have not come forward, that is why it is necessary to reduce the number of years. I would say this, Sir, that in England a man has to practise for at least ten years before he can be appointed as a Magistrate but in Nigeria it is five years. I think I have indicated here previously that the actual reason for the people not coming forward to apply to go to the Bench is due to the uncertainty of the conditions of the Magistrates in the Region. If the honourable the Premier finds it necessary to recruit Magistrates from Nigeria, I am perfectly certain that it will not be easy to recruit because of directives in the office of the Civil Service Commission which retard the progress of employing Nigerians to the bench; there are certain forces operating in this Region. That is, some people would like to delay a lot of things and blame it on us in order to get their relations who are stranded somewhere into the country.

If the honourable Premier is not supporting what I am saying now he can only fix conditions which will be attractive to the magistrates. Then he will have many young men coming forward to serve the Region. But it is really ridiculous in the existing conditions, to be just posted as a Magistrate to a Division where even the District Officers or the Superintendent of Police and all sorts of people will have to come to query what you are doing. The legal practitioner in the Eastern Region with his dignity to keep will not go and submit to the strange order. Besides that, Sir, the Magistrates have to do a large amount of work of the Judiciary. Even what the Judges decide in the Upper Courts have got to be examined first by the Magistrates. Yet the Magistrate has got to sit down and earn increments like any other Junior Civil Servant, and he is such a responsible person that what he decides at the beginning does not have to go back to be improved upon in order to qualify a Magistrate to be appointed a Judge. Provided he is appointed as a Magistrate he is qualified, apart from a number of years, to be a Judge. Why then submit him to all those stages or grades of promotion? I would have thought that what the honourable the Premier was going to bring to this House would be the conditions that would just be acceptable to all Magistrates. I am sure from my own observations that the Magistrates themselves are not satisfied; that is, those who are actually working at the moment.

Besides, Sir, there is one thing the honourable the Premier does not take into consideration. Most of the men who will be practising before the Magistrates who will be Barristers of three years standing will probably be some who have been practising for ten years or more, and it is odd for them to come before these young Magistrates, to encounter some psychological reaction. The young Magistrate himself is afraid of the older man with his grey hair. Probably, this man has known all the law; and in any case he has known all his procedure. When the former Magistrate will be saying, "I don't really agree with you; besides, Sir, what I say is authoritative" the poor man will be frightened. I am submitting that it is necessary to reinvestigate the whole question and bring an amendment that will fix a salary attractive to Magistrates. I am not against any amendment of the Law at all; it should be amended in such a way that the Magistrates themselves will be satisfied. That is my argument.

**D. A. Nnaji (Udi Division):** I rise to support the motion. But I wish to associate myself with the expressions of the previous speaker, the honourable O. O. Ita. I wish to say here, that no amount of reduction in the period of practice of any Barrister at Law will attract him to the Bench if his conditions of service are not attractive. I would suggest that as we have created a precedent by fixing a salary of the High Court Judge and the Chief Registrar, it would be good if the salaries of Magistrates are also fixed; so that they are sure of what they are going to earn. I know that many people would not like to come even if you say 'one year'. The man who has just arrived from England, if you tell him to become a Magistrate immediately he has completed one year's practice here will not like it, because the conditions of service are not good; they are not attractive enough.

Again, Sir, if I were on the Opposition Side of this House I would have opposed this thing, asking the Government to stick to a five years' period because we must remember that there are over seventy lawyers, most of them free I understand, who have practised for over twenty years. The only thing that is wrong is that the conditions are not made attractive. So I suggest that Magistrates should have fixed salaries instead of going even by promotion, so that anybody going to be appointed would know what he was going to draw. Any experienced Lawyer getting over £2,000 per annum, would not agree to become a Magistrate at £1,000. That is the whole position. Let the Premier and the Executive Council consider this and fix the salaries of Magistrates, Grade I, so much per annum; Grade II, so much per annum, Grade III so much per annum and Chief Magistrate, so much per annum, and so on and so forth. Unless and until this is done it will be difficult to recruit local Magistrates here, and it will be a waste to continue importing them.

Referring to the Public Service Commission, I know some people will prefer to bring expatriates; and I know also that people in this area sometimes prefer a white colour sitting on the Bench to a black colour. But I am happy to say that according to the dispensation of justice in the Magistrates Courts around this Region, people have now begun to feel that, what justice the white man can mete to the litigants the black man can also do. I would like the Public Service Commission in the Eastern Region to be warned exactly on what we desire; that is, African Magistrates, if we are going to man our Judiciary and other Departments when we are free.

**Mr G. E. Okeke (Onitsha Division):** Mr Speaker, the time is coming when Nigerians must benefit enough from the service of their own country and if we are to begin it, I think we should begin it from this House. No Magistrates I know, with all the qualifications, would like to be paid an attractive salary knowing as he does that perhaps two Criminal Detectives will give him what would have been his salary for one year.

I think that only the best Magistrates are good enough for the Eastern Region. To lower the standard to three years with a view to attracting perhaps letter-writers to the Bench is not good enough for the Eastern Region. I would seriously ask the Government to take our points very seriously and reconsider the step. Any Barrister with three years experience is better than a pocket-lawyer that we have among ourselves. I am not quarrelling with their qualifications, or whatever they are, but nobody becomes a Lawyer until he is fifty or sixty. Others go to copy from the Members of the Bench and just rush through their text over the next night, and that is why you get "Adjournment, Adjournment" all the days because he is not prepared. I feel that attractive posts are the only thing for the Eastern Region and I support those who say we should give them attractive terms.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*

*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

*Clause 1.*

**The Premier:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move in Clause 1 to leave out the words "and shall come into operation on a date to be fixed by the Governor by notice in the *Regional Gazette*".

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clauses 2 and 3 agreed to.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported with an Amendment; Read the Third time and passed.*

*Sitting suspended at 11 30 a.m.*

*Sitting resumed at 12 noon.*

### **The High Court (Amendment) Law, 1956**

*Order for Second Reading read.*

**The Premier:** Mr Speaker, I rise to move the second reading of a Bill for a Law to amend the High Court (Amendment) Law, 1955. This Bill has two objects. The first of these is dealt with in Clause 2 of the Bill which replaces section 4 of the Principal Law which deals with the Constitution of the High Court. Paragraph (a) of subsection (i) of the Nigeria Constitution Order in Council 1954 provides that the number of Judges in a Region shall be prescribed by the relevant High Court Law. Section 4 of the Law as it stands at present does not prescribe the number of Judges. Clause 2 of the Bill permits the Governor to direct how many Judges there shall be. It would have been possible to specify the number of Judges but this method of leaving it to the Governor to direct how many Judges there shall be has the advantage that there will be no need to amend the Law should it be proved necessary to increase or decrease the number of Judges because of fluctuations in the amount of work done by the Court.

The second object of the Bill is to write into the Law what salary shall be paid to the Chief Registrar of the Court and make them a charge on the revenue of the Region and not subject to debate in the House when considering the estimates. This puts the Chief Registrar in the same position as the Chief Justice and Judges whose salaries are mentioned in section 5 (A) of the High Court (Amendment) Law, 1955. Clause 3 of the Bill will achieve this object by the insertion of a new section 66A in the principal Law.

I feel sure that the alterations proposed by this Bill will have the support of all Members of this House and that they improve the principal Law.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Health:** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*

*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

Clause 1.

**The Premier:** Sir, I beg to move to leave out the words in Clause 1 "and shall come into operation on a date to be appointed by the Governor in the *Regional Gazette*."

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clauses 2 and 3 agreed to.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported with an Amendment; Read the Third time and passed.*

**The Eastern Region Moneylenders Ordinance (Amendment) Law, 1956**

*Order for Second Reading read.*

**The Premier:** Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the Bill for a Law to amend the Moneylenders Ordinance be now read a second time. The Moneylenders Ordinance has effect by virtue of the Nigeria Constitution Order in Council, 1954, in relation to the Eastern Region, as if it were a law enacted by the Eastern House of Assembly. This is so since moneylending does not appear in either the Exclusive or Concurrent Legislative Lists. This House can therefore pass any legislation on this subject or any amending legislation in respect of the Moneylenders Ordinance.

The object of this Bill is to enable the fee prescribed for a moneylender's licence to be increased from £1 to £5 and to vary this fee when need arises without the necessity for amending the Law on each occasion. I am sure that honourable Members will agree that it is reasonable that a moneylender's licence should cost more than the present prescribed fee of £1 and that a fee of £5 is more appropriate. Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Health:** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr V. A. Nwankwo (Abakaliki Division):** Sir, I am not opposing the amendment to this Law but I would like to make a few comments on it. So far, this Government has undertaken to increase the licence fee, but I would also ask the Government that the interest be also increased, because if moneylenders have to pay high licence fees they must also have a return. I think they must have to go back to their borrowers to help them pay off their licences. I would be very grateful if this Government will place on the Order Paper when the House next meets a Bill seeking to amend the rate of interest.

I would also draw the attention of the Government to amend section 30 of the Ordinance because if they go into details it will be a very crude way of demanding a debt from a borrower. There is much limitation as to the time limit of twelve months, while the amount borrowed was still outstanding.

In some cases a borrower may be in a very good financial position when he comes to the lender to borrow money but unfortunately due to certain unforeseen circumstances he will be unable to fulfil his promise in the time stipulated for payment. Then in that case if a moneylender is really not a wicked man and he is Christian-minded he is not going to suppress or bring much burden upon his borrower and see that his house is "dis-furnished" or that he is sent to prison under *Ca sa*. The Law says that if a man gives any undertaking within twelve months after which the debt has been agreed to it means that after twelve months the amount will be irrecoverable. In that case the lender will have to act because it means that if after twelve months the borrower is unable to pay or has not acquitted himself during that period he will have to pounce upon the borrower. I am asking the Government to look into this Ordinance very well and amend it. I would be very grateful if something is done.

**Mr A. J. Ekpe:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I am not a vested interest. But, I happen to come from an area where I have seen victims of moneylenders being seriously 'pounced upon' to use the language of the last speaker. In fact, I want to draw the attention of the Government to the horror with which the moneylenders exact from their victims the interest which accrues to them as a result of the money lending business. It may, perhaps, be of interest to the Premier, or the Minister responsible for this subject, to realise that by increasing money lending licence fee without a corresponding increase in the rate of interest charged, the poor victim of the money lender will be really made to suffer more. The Minister, I am sure, does not know that these money lenders do not charge the interest sanctioned by law. They certainly charge more and they are going to use this as a pretext to get the people completely "dis-furnished".

Money lending in my division is a business that is really increasing; because it is where you have a lot of poverty that you have money lenders flourishing. In my area, Sir, many people who are unable to pay their taxes and their rates go to these moneylenders to get money for paying taxes and rates, and often times they pawn their palm plantations and their farmland to these moneylenders; in order to get the money and pay back the interests which accrue. So I would like Government to consider a corresponding increase in the rate and to find out how much interest these people actually charge, because the interest is very excessive indeed.

That is the point I wanted to make. I do agree that the fee should be increased, but certainly it is going to mean a terrible suffering for the victims of these moneylenders.

**Mr B. C. Okwu (Awgu Division):** I disagree with the last speaker who suggested that since the fees have been increased, Government should come forward with the proposal to increase the rates of interest too. If you do that, it boils down to the fact that it is not the moneylenders who will pay this, but the poor people who go to the moneylenders to borrow money.

The only aspect in which I am interested, and in which I agree completely with the last speaker, is that Government must do something now to protect the needy from the tyranny of moneylenders. If there is a Law which establishes the right of such persons as moneylenders to exist, it follows that it is but lawful for people to go and borrow. Of course the banks are there too and they have more money to give to people; but they do not go beyond the limits of the provisions of the Law. In the case of moneylenders, there are always signed two agreements, one based on what the Law allows, and the other one which provides that in case the man who borrows the money fails to pay at the agreed time, it can be interpreted that—the moneylender—can put forward the claim that the lender lent twice the amount actually borrowed. One who is uncharitable—a Shylock amongst the moneylenders—can, when that period expires, claim that he actually lent twice what he actually lent notwithstanding the readiness of the victim to pay.

I wish Government would take into serious consideration the need for a provision to safeguard the people from the tyranny of moneylenders. I agree that it is only one in need that goes to moneylenders to borrow money, but all the same it does not justify any moneylender going beyond what the law allows, and I feel very sincerely that unless Government does something about it, you will find that many innocent people will lose all their fortunes because the moneylenders will want to play the part of Shylock.

**Mr R. O. Ukuta, M.B.E. (Nsukka Division):** Mr Speaker, I only want Government to investigate this moneylenders' principle and see that they do the business properly because I understand that before they could lend money, if the borrower is to take £10 they sign agreement for £20. Unless there is any moneylender who could prove to this House that my statement is wrong, Government should investigate properly this kind of business.

**Mr O. O. Ita:** Mr Speaker, from my personal experience of the practice of these people, the usual thing they do is: if a person wants to borrow, say £10, an interest is calculated at the rate as it is given in the book, according to Law. It will be fixed as the actual amount borrowed; that is, the principal plus interest and the time is fixed for that money to be paid and when a person is suing, he is suing on what should have been the interest, plus the principal, and then another interest on top. That is just the usual practice according to my experience in the Courts.

I think, actually the Moneylenders Ordinance has taken a great deal into consideration to protect the interest of the borrowers; but unfortunately the borrowers usually fight shy of coming to the courts in order to fight the issue. Many a time when borrowers know that they have no money to pay the debt, they go behind and make another settlement. Very often, in Court, you have the actual document on which this thing was written. You have the amount stated; that is, the actual amount loaned, plus interest, plus whatever might have been put on top in order to settle it and then the thing is increased. What might have been £20 can rise to

[*Moneylenders Ordinance (Amendment) Law, 1956—Com. and 3R*]

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[*University of Nigeria (Amendment) Law, 1956—2R*]

£120 and even more. I have known one that was £100, and by the time we were in Court, it was £450. That is how they keep on doing it behind, but it is not the fault of the Law; it is the fault of the borrower who is always afraid. Actually it is because of this practice that Section 30 which was referred to was brought into being.

Well, that very particular section, states that if a person has actually borrowed money from a moneylender, a person who has the inclination to get money all the time—he will not be able to delay bringing the matter to Court until after twelve months. Then, after twelve months and he has not brought the matter to Court, the Law will say “No, it is not true; there was no money lending, if there were a true moneylending you would have come to Court before this time”. That provision is not to prevent a moneylender from getting his money, if he had brought it to Court before twelve months. If you delay until after twelve months before going to sue, the Law actually comes to the conclusion that it is very rare to see a Christian moneylender who has to have patience for twelve months before coming to Court. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred they will always go to Court immediately—in fact as soon as they get their documents signed, they register immediately. It will not take even three months before they come to Court to get the matter settled.

Usually they come to Court and say “The matter is settled out of Court”—when they have collected all the interest they really require. The Court hardly knows how much interest has been actually put in there; because as soon as they bring the matter to Court, there will be some sort of an attempt for settlement. We do not know actually what has gone behind the Court. I think it is a matter which should be investigated, but I think the system of banking will help more than trying to deal with this money lending business.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*

*Bill immediately considered in Committee:*

(In the Committee)

*Clause 1.*

**The Premier:** I beg to move in Clause 1 to leave out the words “and shall come into operation forthwith”.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 2 agreed to.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported with an Amendment; Read the Third time and passed.*

### **The University of Nigeria (Amendment) Law, 1956**

*Order for Second Reading read.*

**The Minister of Education:** Sir, I rise to move that this Bill for a Law to amend the University of Nigeria Law, 1955 be read a second time.

Recently, the Premier and I, on a visit to the United Kingdom, United States of America and U.N.E.S.C.O. headquarters in Paris, held discussions with the authorities on higher education. As a result of these discussions, it is considered that certain amendments to Law No. 23 of 1955 could, with advantage, be made. These are included in the Bill which I now have the honour to present.

Clause 2 of the Bill which amends Section 6 of the Law, removes from the list of visitors the Premier of the Region. This leaves only the Governor and the Minister of Education. The reason for this change is that the duties of the Premier are very onerous and I considered

that he would have very great difficulty in devoting to his duties as visitor sufficient time to undertake them effectively. This clause also deletes subsection 2 of the same section as it is unnecessary.

Clause 3 which amends Section 15 of the Law makes it permissive instead of mandatory to establish faculties and institutes. It is considered that it might not be desirable to establish all faculties and institutes at precisely the same time, and this amendment to the Law will allow the establishment of the most important in the first instance. This amendment also necessitates the redrafting of Statute 5 and Statute 6 of the Schedule of the Law and this is done by clauses 6 and 7 of the Bill.

Clause 4 which amends subsection 2 of section 20 of the Law gives greater power to the Council of the University in the appointment of the Chancellor. It is considered by the Government appropriate that the Council should have such an increased voice in the head of the University.

Clause 5 removes from Statute 1 the definition of voluntary agency which is unnecessary.

Clause 8 which amends paragraph E(1) of Statute 7 has the effect of permitting the Council of the University to make appointments to vacancies in the academic staff and the offices of the Librarian or Director of Extra-Mural subjects, when the Senate of the University has been consulted and the syndicate wishes to recommend an appointment which is not acceptable to the Council. It also deletes paragraph C(2) as a consequence to the amendment to paragraph C(1).

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Development:** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr J. H. E. Nwuke (Ahoada Division):** Sir, I rise to support the Bill.

I would like to suggest that the Government establish a faculty of Pharmacy alongside with the Institute of Pharmacy in the University of Nigeria. The study of pharmacy is very important and it is based upon the knowledge of the following subjects: Pharmacognosy—which is a science of crude drugs, their geography and origin. Pharmaceutical Chemistry—which is more or less an applied chemistry and the standardisation of Pharmaceutical substances and preparations in their chemical form. Physiology—which deals with the organs of the tissue. Pharmacology—which is the study of the reactions of the drugs in different parts of the body and Therapeutic, which is a knowledge in the use of the drugs for the treatment of disease.

So, Sir, from these facts one can realise the importance of pharmacy. All over the world, Sir, medicine receives the same importance as pharmacy. If a degree course is established in the proposed University of Nigeria it will lead students to obtain the Bachelor of Pharmacy degree. An Institute will lead only to a Diploma in Pharmacy. I, therefore, maintain that if we are going to give pharmacy in Nigeria the importance it deserves the relevant faculty should be established.

With these comments I support the Bill.

**Mr Eyo Ita (Calabar Division):** Mr Speaker, while speaking yesterday, I expressed very strongly our feelings on the coming of the University. We on this side of the House see nothing to object to in the amending law which will make the coming of the University quicker and its running more efficient. I support the Bill.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*



[*University of Nigeria (Amendment) Law, 1956—Com., and 3R*]

20th March, 1956

[*Printing Corporation (Amendment) Law, 1956—2R*]

*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

Clause 1.

**The Minister of Education:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move that the following words in Clause 1 be left out: "and shall come into operation on a date to be fixed by the Governor by notice in the *Regional Gazette*."

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clauses 2 to 8 agreed to.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported with an Amendment; Read the Third time and passed.*

### **The Eastern Region Printing Corporation (Amendment) Law, 1956**

*Order for the Second Reading read.*

**The Premier:** Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the Bill for a Law to amend the Eastern Nigeria Printing Corporation Law, 1955, be now read a Second time.

This Bill has two objects. The first is to restrict the functions of the Corporation to printing and to prevent its invading the province of the Eastern Nigeria Information Service in respect of publishing. This will be achieved by clause 2 of the Bill which will also permit the Corporation to undertake activities to promote, encourage and stimulate interest in the art and science of printing and allied trades.

Today there is a very great need for improvement in the field of printing and its allied trades in this country, and this addition in its functions will enable the Printing Corporation to assist in meeting this need.

The second object of the Bill is to empower the Printing Corporation to invest in securities and borrow money within Nigeria with the approval of the Minister responsible for its activities. These powers are essential if the Corporation is to run on a sound financial basis as the principal law requires.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Health:** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr D. A. Nnaji:** Mr Speaker, I rise to support this amendment. I am very pleased that Government has discovered the omission in the original law. This omission was to the effect that the Corporation may not establish and maintain printing works or print newspapers and periodicals. Those of us who know the difficulty facing the Eastern Nigeria Information Service in the publication of the *Eastern Outlook* will realise that the time has now come when this difficulty should be resolved. For a corporation of this nature to be barred from printing newspapers or undertaking printing works would have spelt failure, because the establishment of this Corporation was meant to provide an avenue for getting more money to the Eastern Region. Therefore, I am grateful to the Government for having found its error in the previous law.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*

*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

Clause 1.

**The Premier:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to leave out in Clause 1 the following words: "and shall come into operation on a date to be fixed by the Governor by notice in the *Regional Gazette*".

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clauses 2 and 3 agreed to.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported with an Amendment; Read the Third time and passed.*

### **The Eastern Region Development Corporation (Amendment) Law, 1956**

*Order for Second Reading read.*

**The Premier :** Mr Speaker, I rise to move that the Bill for a Law to amend the Eastern Region Development Corporation Law, 1954, to repeal the Eastern Region Finance Corporation Law, 1954 and the Economic Planning Commission Law, 1955 and for matters connected therewith be now read a Second time.

During my recent visit to the United Kingdom I had a lengthy discussion with the Secretary of State for the Colonies, on 10th November, 1955, on the matters raised in this Bill. I am far from agreeing with his views on some of them; but since he sees serious objections to a great number of issues affecting our economic planning, I do not consider that we need have any fear (since in any case we already have an Advisory Economic Planning Commission) that to repeal its corporative law and the Finance Corporation Law would seriously impede our plans for the economic development of the Region.

The object of this Bill is to amalgamate these three bodies and to give to the Eastern Region Development Corporation the functions of the Eastern Region Finance Corporation and the Economic Planning Commission. This step has been taken on the advice of the Secretary of State, as I have just indicated, on the ground that the functions of both the Development and Finance Corporations so do overlap that they should be merged into one corporation. In his opinion such a course of action has considerable advantages particularly in regard to economies in the use of highly specialised, highly skilled and specialist staff, who are said to be difficult to procure. It is also claimed that this would create a simpler machinery for promoting the development of the Region.

Clause 2 of the Bill defines "Minister" in a more flexible manner.

Clause 3 empowers the enlarged corporation to give financial assistance to a Government Authority or Agency, a statutory corporation, a Local Government body, a registered co-operative society, or a private or public company by the granting of allowances or subsidies or by the taking up of loan or share capital as may be expedient.

Clause 4 provides for the insertion of a new section in the principal law which deals with the safety, health and welfare of persons in the Corporation's employment, or in the employment of organisations working in association with the Corporation.

Clause 6 provides for the taking over of the assets and liabilities of the Finance Corporation and the Economic Planning Commission by the Development Corporation and the cessation of the activities of the former two corporations. It also provides that any suit pending against either of these corporations shall be continued or enforced against the Development Corporation.

[*Development Corporation  
(Amendment) Law, 1956*]

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[*Second Reading*]

I feel it is my duty also to inform the House that the Secretary of State has insisted that until we have taken action on this Bill he did not propose to tender any advice to Her Majesty for the signification of her pleasure in connection with all the Bills we passed in 1954, last July and in December, 1955, establishing eight statutory corporations.

His Excellency had already assented to them in Her Majesty's name but these have yet to be confirmed in the usual constitutional manner. Presumably the repeal of the Economic Planning Commission Law and the Finance Corporation Law, which we are now seeking to do today, will facilitate the last act which will give the eight substantive and two amending laws concerned necessary constitutional sanction.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Health:** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr M. E. Ogon (Ikom Division):** Mr Speaker, before I support this Bill, I will like the honourable Premier to clear a number of points. Under the old Finance Law, there was a provision Sir, that no member of the House should be a Member of that Statutory Corporation. This has gone a long way to secure public trust and confidence in the way that the Corporation has carried on its business so far. One would have thought that under this new merger, what the Premier should have done was to abolish all the membership of these three bodies and elect new ones; because the position of the Corporation had changed considerably by these amendments. We want this point to be cleared because the circumstances that made us not want a member to be in the Finance Corporation are still there, and turning it over still, gives members in this House a control over it.

The second point is that, so far, the Finance Corporation has given a number of loans and has carried on activities. Now that it wants to hand over to a new body, we should have thought that this House is entitled to know how far it has carried out business; how much money has been given out, and how much by way of loans has been taken. Sir, it is just like liquidating, and when you are liquidating, the public is entitled to know the circumstances.

I say so, Sir, because somebody gave me a clever joke sometime ago. He said the Finance Corporation is for the Awka-Aro Group and the E.R.D.C. for the Ibibio Group. I want an assurance from the Premier that the new Corporation will be for the benefit and progress of the Region and the only way is that we have to review all that the Finance Corporation has done so far; and what the E.R.D.C. has done under the loans section.

Sir, Corporations are good things. Under a democracy their affairs are taken away from the scrutiny of the public. What happens in England is that when a Corporation publishes its accounts, the next day they are checked in Universities and by Chartered Accountants as statements of accounts. These are produced the next morning for everybody at their breakfast tables to read and understand. In Nigeria, we have not reached that stage where people understand accounts and anybody can play fast with figures and get away with it. I am saying, Sir, that the Minister in charge of Corporations must be careful to check these things. Not that I doubt the integrity of any one member of the Corporation. The only way in which the Members can understand the activities of these Corporations is in the profits and loss accounts we see outside. If there is a scheme in my Division, I will see it and know it is successful; but to give us a piece of paper as an account of the Corporation—administration, so much, cocoa, so much—without our seeking to know whether there is squandermania in the process of this administration, will only leave us at sea. That is why we insist that there must be a better way of checking squandermania and inefficiency in Corporations under the Government.

I had intended at a later stage to bring the activities of the E.R.D.C. to the floor of this House for debate. It is a Corporation which handles more than £5 million of the peoples' money. Their economic progress is bound on the wise investments of this Corporation because after all, this money which is being given by the Marketing Boards to the Finance Corporation and the E.R.D.C. is the peoples' money—the farmers' money. If the farmers have accumulated it wisely over the years, we who inherit it should invest it for generations in a better way.

I am glad that there is provision for the health and safety of the employees of this Corporation. I am requesting Sir, that the staff which is leaving the Economic Planning Commission and the E.R.D.C. want a guarantee that they will have fair and proper treatment both as regards their increments and promotion rights under the E.R.D.C. We think that they should have their rights in this Corporation to rise by way of promotion. If there is any Corporation that is worse in its employment policy—worse than the civil service—it is the E.R.D.C. I have had the good fortune of seeing some of these ex-Malayan planters. These are the people who brought Communism into Malaya—people who had not treated Malaysians as human beings. I know one of them who swears harm and iniquity on the whole African race. When we say that the Governor is handling the Civil Service, I think we should also give the whole measure to our people. I do not like to say that all these Managers of oil mills and plantations are inefficient. I do not mind whether they are black or white. All I say is that the faces of the Africans working on these establishments show nothing but abject misery. They feel that they have not been given proper treatment with regard to promotion. Where Africans can do their work properly, these ex-planters are made managers and paid fabulous sums of money. I think the General Manager of the E.R.D.C. earns much more than the Governor of the Region.

This E.R.D.C. has started for a long time now. It was inherited from the old Corporation but up to this time there has been no project which has yielded any profits. I will like to be corrected if I am wrong, and I will be prepared to apologise. Some of these establishments have been existing for over five years. In some, it is a question of cattle producing for one year and bringing milk and sugar. How much money is coming in for the large sums invested. If you put so much, you expect so much. If it is running at a loss, then fold up. We have the famous groundnut scheme as an example. It was being run on the same basis as the E.R.D.C. It had to be closed after an inquiry by the House of Commons.

Somebody has described the E.R.D.C. as being run as a private cattle ranch. I must say, Sir, that the pioneer oil mill section of the E.R.D.C. is being run like Chicago under world business.

One should have thought that if you erect a pioneer oil mill, the fruits will be brought in and in a short time you will be able to produce oil. These are short term projects. But the E.R.D.C. now wants to turn itself into a licensed buying agent in order to cover up its inefficiency and squandermania in the running of these mills. Let the E.R.D.C. produce the oil, mill it and not be a licensed buying agent itself. I have already said that we have not reached the stage in this country when we can read the report of a Corporation and say we are satisfied. We only understand it from the way the project is being run by the people on the spot.

I understand that when a pioneer oil is being opened you have a committee fund and there is a Chairman of that Committee. On the day of opening, the Pioneer Oil Mill Manager presents a watch to him in order that he should keep his eye on the Corporation. I say, Sir, that this watch is a bribe to keep the Chairman quiet. This is the people's money. Here, a mill is being opened in the ininterests of the people and you buy a watch and give it to the Chairman of the Committee; because he wants all the producers to sell their fruits.

I am saying, Sir, that the Minister in charge of this Corporation has not kept sufficient watch on the employment, investment and general working of the Corporation. I insist that the old argument which led to the Finance Corporation being independent of Members of this House is a good one and must continue. No Corporation can work efficiently if it has not got the trust and confidence of the people it is supposed to serve, and we, the Members of this House, are the people to judge the reports of these Corporations.

Last year, we had the unfortunate situation of the Chairman of the E.R.D.C. who is the Chairman of a Statutory Corporation being a member of the Statutory Corporation of the Eastern House of Assembly itself. Here is a man who is standing trial before the jury to acquit

[*Development Corporation  
(Amendment) Law, 1956*]

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[*Second Reading*]

himself. I am glad the honourable Premier says that this arose as a discussion with the Secretary of State. There is a custom in England that Members of the House who serve in Corporations should not receive any pay under the Corporations. I understand that Members of another Corporation who are not Members of this House are not being paid fixed salaries, because they are not Members of the House, on the instructions of the Secretary of State.

I am not saying that the Secretary of State's advice is final and above the competence of this House, but I am saying that we expect that the whole facts should be placed on the floor of this House for acceptance or rejection. If Members of one Corporation cannot receive salaries because they are Members of the House, Members of other Corporations should receive the same treatment because what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.

The last point, Sir, is that I understand that another sum of £400,000 has already gone into this Corporation. We have not seen the profits coming in and I will ask the Minister of Trade not to throw money blindly into a wastepaper basket, £400,000 of the Eastern Regional Government. If the Premier can clear this staff of squandermania and inefficiency and lack of Nigerianisation, then I will support the motion.

*Sitting suspended at 1 p.m.*

*Sitting resumed at 3 p.m.*

**Mr B. C. Okwu:** Mr Speaker, I rise to contribute my quota to the present Bill before the House. Before doing so, I wish to draw the attention of this House to a statement made by the previous speaker in which he told us that the E.R.D.C., as public corporation, is handling over £5 million belonging to the farmers of the Eastern Region. That being the case, I think that this Region or this House is entitled to know how this particular Corporation is being run. I think we should hold that as a duty to the Government, to let the people know how this Corporation is working.

In the first place I wish to point out that my main quarrel with the E.R.D.C. is that of squandermania. It might interest Mr Speaker, to know that in Enugu, the headquarters of this E.R.D.C., there are eleven expatriates in the senior service and three Africans. In view of the fact that again and again the attention of this House has been drawn to the Philipson-Adebo Report which emphasises Nigerianisation one is compelled to ask whether the E.R.D.C. is exempted from the recommendations of the Philipson-Adebo Report. If it is not, we are entitled to know why the E.R.D.C. is tardy in recruiting Africans or Nigerians into its fold. I wish to point out, that the conditions under which the Africans work in E.R.D.C. makes it impossible for Africans with intelligence to be attracted to employment with this particular Corporation. It may interest you to know that an African Assistant Manager receives £600 per annum and an Expatriate Assistant Manager receives £1,200. In addition, Sir, he enjoys an expatriation allowance, children, travelling and other allowances; whereas the African does not. After one year and six months service the African is entitled to two months leave; the expatriate to four months and my argument comes in here. When you decide on what conditions you are going to offer for employment you should not think of the colour of that person, but the responsibilities of office which entitle the holder to those conditions of service.

I wish also to say that it may interest Mr Speaker, to know, when I accuse E.R.D.C. of squandermania, that in the award of sixteen scholarships which were distributed recently, an expatriate had to be flown all the way from overseas to preside over the distribution of the scholarships and I am compelled to ask whether in the Federation of Nigeria there could not be found even one man who could preside and advise E.R.D.C. on such matters as to who should receive scholarships, etc. This is an example of squandermania.

Some time ago an Accountant was recruited by the E.R.D.C. and this gentleman was flown to this country at the expense of this particular Corporation. He landed in Nigeria; and no less than a week later was dismissed because of misdemeanour. This particular gentleman was

brought to this country at the expense of the tax-payers of the Eastern Region. I am not satisfied and I do not think that we can willingly support the present motion; unless the Government will give a guarantee that having invested £5 million in this particular Corporation every step is being taken to make sure that we are not throwing away £5 million of this Government. I cannot understand that in England, in America or anywhere you can have a set-up like the E.R.D.C. where you have a Resident Chairman at a fat sum of money for his salary and a highly salaried General Manager. You have in addition a vice-chairman who receives a fat sum of money monthly and a chain of secretaries. I anticipate that someone might get up and say that the conditions were inherited but then I ask myself this question: What has the Corporation done to put these in order? Am I to believe that it is not competent to do so? If it is not competent, then I have cause to advocate for its immediate dissolution.

I wish to say at this stage, that the merging of the Finance Corporation and E.R.D.C. can only be agreed to, if the Government will give assurance that everything connected with loans either to individuals or bodies of people, will be handled by that new section of E.R.D.C. which before the merging was the Finance Corporation. You have a sort of independent committee of E.R.D.C. charged with the finances and loans of the E.R.D.C., while the original E.R.D.C. set up concentrates on the projects or the schemes. The E.R.D.C. is then no longer deciding what loans to make and what not to make. Before we go to the extent of giving this approval, we wish to know how all the existing projects are progressing. I want to confess to you.

Mr Speaker, it may be, I am not intelligent enough to understand what happens in the E.R.D.C. by reading the annual reports. They are so technical and vague that the ordinary man cannot understand them. I take one specific example, the Pioneer Oil Mills scheme. Let all those who happen to be in the know, in this Corporation, tell this House and the people of the Region how much has been borne as losses since the scheme began. How many petitions have come to E.R.D.C. Aba centre, complaining against the careless and expensive ways in which these schemes are being run. I have an example of these petitions here but I do not intend to ask your permission to read it or even to summarise the contents. But I just want to show you as an illustration for there are many petitions of this kind coming up before the Board. It might interest you to know, Mr Speaker, that I have a list here that shows what actual losses in cash have been sustained by operating this particular scheme; that is, the Pioneer Oil Mills scheme. All the mills in the Region are listed here. There is not one without a loss so far, less than four figures. In some cases it rises to five figures, and if the whole is added up I am sure it will be about half a million pounds. I have not done that but hope to do so when my motion matures.

Sir, there is much I would wish to say and it will be for the good of the Government and the House and the people of the Eastern Region. I want everyone to give his best by way of co-operation to ensure that it is smoothsailing. You have the E.R.D.C., a giant undertaking which has the necessary resources to change the economic conditions of the Eastern Region; but I am not satisfied from the evidence at my disposal that the Corporation is moving in the right direction fast enough to achieve the goal. The only way the public can get to know enough about the actual state of affairs is not by the annual reports but rather by appointing an expert enquiry to enquire into the accounts of the Corporation and report on its projects and their administration. We need facts to justify the continued support which this Corporation has been enjoying.

On the matter of the present proposal by the Minister of Trade that the Marketing Board has recently allocated £400,000 to the E.R.D.C., I do want to know how much money the Finance Corporation will bring and how much money will be coming from other sources after the merger. So, before we go ahead with granting more money, we must be sure that the one granted before is being well spent. I think we should be dispassionate in discussing this proposal as it is a matter of great importance. Sir, I hold too, that we cannot, afford to, have a jack of all trades and a master of none.

I contend, that the Chairman of the E.R.D.C. is too much loaded up with various offices in the government and one is under the impression that in the Eastern Region there are no capable people to hold some of the offices now being held by one man. It will interest you to know, Mr Speaker, that the Chairman is also a Director of Oban Rubber Estate, the Nigerian Cement Co. Ltd. and a Director of Recruitment. I say recruitment because it is one of the factors of squandermania in E.R.D.C. Last year, he made his trips on recruitment twice, and during these trips on recruitment, he spent weeks only to recruit one ex-Malayan planter. When he returned he went again. I feel I am in duty bound to protest against such culpable acts of squandermania at the expense of the farmers of Eastern Region.

I have to protest, Mr Speaker, because we have Commissioners in the United Kingdom and we have the Public Service Commission too. E.R.D.C. can save a good deal of money by using these other agencies for recruitment. Surely it cannot afford to fly the Chairman again and again to the United Kingdom to hunt for one man or two.

One specific example of the unreasonable method of recruiting was an African, who was for three years an Assistant Manager in the Cashew Industry. He was the first African of that rank to hold such a position. This man was in the cashew industry from its very start, and so knew his job. At the end of last year there was an advertisement by the E.R.D.C. inviting an application for an Assistant Manager. One Nigerian was taken on trial at £500 per annum. In the meanwhile the Chairman went to the United Kingdom without previous advertisement either in the United Kingdom or Nigeria, and recruited another man, an expatriate as an Assistant Manager. Later this European came. As soon as he came, he was transferred to Ajali Cashew Plantation. It might interest you to know that at that particular stage the Manager of the Cashew Plantation while going on leave had handed over control to the 3-year experienced African Assistant. This African Assistant Manager handled this work perfectly. There was no trouble with him having been brought up with this new project. As soon as this newly recruited expatriate arrived and was offered the job, this man was shifted at once. All sorts of reasons were concocted and all sorts of things were said of him. This young man wrote a letter of protest to the Chairman which I had the privilege of knowing of as he was living in my constituency. I am also entitled to know what was happening as a representative of my people here, and as a Member of the Government, I am entitled to seek and obtain information on public projects. I visit the plantation often, and often called on the man. Since these incidents letters and queries have been sent to him saying "you have not done this or you have done that". I have seen some of the letters, since he is one of my constituents.

Being a tax-payer of this Region, and a man who has been victimised because of his race, he was entitled to appeal to me. At the beginning of this year this young man insisted that if this recruit who had no previous knowledge of cashew be placed above him, he would resign, and you members of the board of E.R.D.C. in this House know about it. He then got a letter from the Chairman later saying he had to accept the authority of the inexperienced new comer or relinquish his post within three days. Being a man, an African, who was sure of himself, he chose to relinquish his post. This man is now the Project Manager in the Western Region. He went with bitterness in his heart, thinking that he was victimised because he is not an Easterner. We all know that the Eastern Region is being run for the whole country and by the whole country. I do fear such an occurrence may create the wrong impression abroad about the general attitude of the Easterners. All things being equal I should have thought that this gentleman should have been promoted full manager of the Cashew Industry.

I wish also to make the point that before many Africans of worth can go into the E.R.D.C., all conditions that make their position there discriminatory should be removed. I further wish to stress that all those to be appointed either on the staff or on the Board of the E.R.D.C. should be men of sterling qualities and men with a good knowledge of their jobs.

Look at the way attempts are being made now to transfer this eye sore—the pioneer oil mills—to co-operative societies after the mess, in order eventually to tell the world: the whole trouble started after we have given up the management of the mills.

We should not go a step further until we have consolidated our position. Let the Government not be in a hurry. The Government meant well when it decided to transfer £5 million to E.R.P.D.B. and still more when it decided to turn the former Board into a Statutory Corporation, thus giving the people connected with it a free hand to go ahead with Nigerianisation wherever necessary and desirable. The Government also thereby gave a free hand to Africans to go ahead with the development of their own country at their own pace, because as a Statutory Corporation, they enjoy internal autonomy.

I am certain that the Minister in charge of this corporation has not been getting all the information about its internal working. When he gets the right information he will be satisfied that the annoyance of some of us over the way this Corporation is being handled is justified.

An honourable Member mentioned to me during the break that there are some rascals who would like to say many things against the E.R.D.C. He added that he knew one of them who once applied for a loan but was unsuccessful. And I said, "So what?" Does the argument lose its force because the person making it has unsuccessfully applied for a loan? Should the fact that a man has applied for a loan but did not succeed prevent him from coming to the floor of this House to state facts about the Corporation? After all, everybody in the Eastern Region is free to apply for a loan from this Corporation.

I am in support of this Bill in principle; that is, subject to the Government giving a guarantee that necessary investigations will be made, and that the whole structure will be re-examined and re-consolidated before we go another step forward.

**Mr J. E. Eyo (Abak Division):** Mr Speaker, I wonder whether some Members come to this House just to amuse people; especially when some Members rise to speak of Nigerianisation. I think they do not really mean what they say.

I listened very carefully to the speech of the honourable Member who spoke before the suspension of the morning sitting—honourable Ogon—and I have no doubt that he has the support of his good friend, honourable Okwu. Having studied carefully what these two honourable gentlemen have said I have come to the conclusion that what they said arose from malice and jealousy.

**Mr Speaker:** I must ask the honourable Member to refrain from imputing motives.

**Mr J. E. Eyo:** The honourable Member who spoke in the morning was trying to accuse this Corporation of squandermania; but he could not adduce evidence to support his accusation. The only evidence he tried to adduce was to call the Corporation an Ibibio people's affair. I do not know how he has arrived at this. The Corporation is composed of the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman—who by the way is a Cameroonian—and seven members. And what is the composition of this membership? Mr Speaker, it will interest you to know that three members come from Owerri, one from Onitsha, one from Calabar, one from Ogoja. If we have three members from Owerri, one from Onitsha, one from Calabar and one from Ogoja, (*Interruption from the Opposition Bench—So what?*) (and I think the Opposition should be interested to know that Mr Wachuku—a member of the Corporation is not an N.C.N.C. man) I do not see how this question of the Corporation being an Ibibio affair comes in. This statement is suggesting something to my mind, Mr Speaker.

This Corporation came into being on 1st February, 1955—barely a year ago. But the E.R.P.D.B. (Eastern Region Production Development Board) was in existence very many years.

I had been looking into the *Hansard*—I do not know whether all Members were asleep; not one question was adduced about the E.R.D.C. There has been a report for 1954-55 submitted to the House (*Hear! Hear!*). We would have loved to see Members debate that report, and not to come out and attack E.R.D.C, which is innocent,



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[Second Reading]

Mr Speaker, it was Mr Guise who was the former Chairman of the E.R.P.D.B. before the Nigerian took over as Chairman. I do not know whether Members are grudging because we have an all Nigerian Corporation. It would have been interesting for us to wait and see the work of the Corporation and then be able to comment. I must tell you this because of the attacks they are going to send out on the E.R.D.C. We have got projects established and inherited by E.R.D.C. Now we have one Cocoa Estate at Ikom, Ogoja Division (Mr Ogon's home). We have got Obudu Cattle Ranch in Obudu Ogoja Province (Ogon's place). We have got other projects carried out by the E.R.D.C. It would have been good for Members to ask what is the working of the E.R.D.C. People do not know that running an Estate is not plain paper work. I think that these Members who were criticising them should have been able to adduce that while there are vacancies in E.R.D.C. they had not been advertised, or if these vacancies were advertised there were Africans who were qualified to be appointed as Managers of the Estates but expatriates were preferred. If any Member of this House cannot prove that we have got Managers of Estates coming forward who are Nigerians and they are not appointed, I do not see how the question of having many expatriates employed in the Corporation can be raised in this House.

Mr Speaker, since E.R.D.C. took over the Corporation we have got less expatriates appointed into the Corporation; we have given encouragement to Nigerians. If you go to the Estates you see that we have Assistant Managers who are Africans. We do not want to employ one expatriate to be an Assistant Manager; we always want Africans to understudy the expatriates and in due course, when we know that he can manage it quite well he takes over. We have got one Sierra Leonian who is capable. He has proved his worth and arrangement is being made to appoint him as Manager at Ikom. When we have not the people Members need not to come to the floor of the House to grudge about. I would like to tell this House, Mr Speaker, that an Estate is not what one can manage to get to within a very short space of time. When Members speak of loss, I do not know if we are talking about operating at a loss. For example, you go to plant some cocoa; nobody will expect that in the first year that you plant cocoa, you will go and cut small box and sell in order to say that you have money. It is the money paid to the labourers, and to the staff in planting the cocoa that is known as operating loss. In five years when the Estate has matured and started bearing fruit one can begin to fetch some gain.

Mr Speaker, there might have been those who have been carefully or personally interested in going to oil mills. They say that they will take the oil on contract but when they take the oil, they will go and dilute it; when asked, they will say it was oil bought from Oil Mills. We do not want people to be causing such frauds. I would challenge anybody who can adduce any facts or any statement to show that the present E.R.D.C. is not working well. In fourteen months now, the Corporation has been able to produce £20,000 gain and if given more time, it is going to do better than that. Go to Kingsway and you will see some cashew nuts produced from the Cashew Estates. Members will be interested to know that trees planted two years ago are now starting to bear. When all these are got, there will be money coming in.

Honourable B. C. Okwu was trying to talk about one Assistant Manager in the Cashew Estate. Well, I do not think it is encouraging to see people who are employees trying to force themselves above what is required if they cannot attain the highest at the material time. They must organise a strike. The Member who was speaking was the person behind who engineered this person. This man had to organise and the Corporation was not prepared to have somebody who was trying to cause confusion in the Estate just to discredit the Corporation.

Sir, another point a Member was mentioning was that we have Assistant Managers employed at £600 when we do not have Assistant Managers employed who are expatriates but all Africans. I will convince him that this schedule he was trying to compare does not

come about. I have not the intention of imputing some motive; but if there had been some Member who during the Loans Board applied for a loan and the loan was granted in principle just because . . .

**Mr Speaker:** I will not allow you to impute any motive.

**Mr J. E. Eyo:** When the E.R.D.C. were going to assess selected staff, it was always the whole staff selection Committee which used to go over to select the staff. The Corporation knew quite well that that was a waste of public funds and the Corporation therefore, I understand, gave a sort of mandate. It was only the Chairman of the Corporation and the General Manager who went over to Europe to select necessary staff. Whenever we say that these staff are needed in Nigeria to safeguard the public fund, I do not see how anybody can accuse the Corporation of squandermania.

I know very many Members are very anxious to speak in that they know there is only one Corporation that has been given this privilege, but if they would compare the volume of work which is given to the Corporation—many estates—they will not grudge. One thing is that Members should note that at present, the Corporations should be such bodies that run and maintain their own staff. It should be operating at a gain and it should be self-supporting.

With these words, Mr Speaker, I support.

**Mr A. J. Ekpe:** Mr Speaker, Sir, the Bill before us is a very important one indeed. It brings very vividly into our mind the shame of our colonial status. I cannot imagine, Sir, a Parliament—a free Parliament in Nigeria passing a law to establish a statutory Corporation and then having this red tape at the top stopping it from doing what is set out in good faith to do for the economic well-being of the people. It is very shameful indeed. In fact, it makes me feel sad, that most of the time, we sit here talking and thinking we are really serious in what we do. There is a power above our control that will always put a red pencil across what we do. I hope that time will come when it will be possible for a Nigerian Parliament to pass a law and that law stays put. (*Hear! Hear!*).

Now this again, Sir, brings me to another very important point. That is the warning which this part of the House gave to the Government Party when these statutory Corporations were mushrooming up. We did warn that it was wiser to make haste slowly. We warned also that we might start with a few corporations—not too many of them—and see how they work and see how they develop and then increase the number of statutory corporations, as experience dictated. Today we are called upon to amalgamate the Finance Corporation and some other Corporations into the Development Corporation. I have not much to say about the inner working of the Eastern Region Development Corporation; because as a matter of policy we of the Opposition are precluded from the Membership of these Corporations, and perhaps the Premier or the Government knows that they do not want them to be criticised. I think that for a healthy Government and for a healthy debate, it is only essential that there should be Members of the Opposition in some of these Statutory Corporations. As far as I know these Statutory Corporations should have a serious public duty, quite apart from increasing the financial output of the Region. It is interesting to note that the vista has fallen from the eyes of the youths of the Government party that is to do a grim thing—that is to criticise the working of an institution of their own making. It is really interesting indeed; because it has been the characteristic of the Members of this House to say “Aye” sometimes without considering the implication of what “Aye” means.

Look at the Pioneer Oil Mills Scheme and the Boatyard Scheme which are the two schemes with which I am particularly familiar because the Boatyard is in Opobo Division. My friend from Udi had wanted it in Enugu but nature really did not side with them because Enugu has no water. I am quite familiar with the boatyard in Opobo Division and also the Pioneer Oil Mills scheme. We all had thought that these schemes were intended to benefit the people generally. Let me take the boatyard scheme first. I can say that if at all there is anything that has ruined the people round about Opobo area the Boatyard Scheme has completed the ruin.

Some years ago, Sir, the E.R.D.C. imported one Manager—they are giving me the name of the Manager—I had forgotten the name; but they seem to be quite familiar with the story. This Manager came and started a wonderful business. Many people became Contractors overnight. Experience was no longer necessary. A lot of people were invited to take contracts to supply timber for the Boatyard, so you found men and women floating logs along the river and the whole division was in a very joyous mood.

What happened, Sir, was that some 900 people were employed within three months and the Boatyard project flopped because of intrigues, inefficiency, dishonesty and corruption that were absolutely transparent in the working of the Boatyard. I hope that the Chairman of E.R.D.C. will place on the table of this House an explanation of what profits have accrued to the Eastern Region as a result of the establishment of the Boatyard Scheme in Opobo. I sincerely expect it. Some time last year, after these young men had been in jobs for about nine months, in fact less than that, about 500 of them were cut. There were no more jobs for them and that has contributed to the failure of the Regional District Council to pay their tax. These young men are dependent on employment in the Boatyard but all of a sudden, they were told that the Management had made a mistake; that too many people were employed and these people could not continue to be in employment. The position in Opobo, as far as the Boatyard is concerned, is not cleared up to the present moment.

Then there is the Pioneer Oil Mill. I know very well that nobody can sincerely come up who is a native of Opobo Division and say that he has benefited from the Pioneer Oil Mills Scheme. What happened immediately after the end of the contract term and tenders are invited for the purchase of the produce of the Mill? There is a terrible race; all over the Region people are scrambling to come and buy this produce. This year the local producers of the area formed themselves into a society with the recommendation of the Ibekwe County Council and the backing of the Ibibio Union went to the Pioneer Oil Mills and asked to be allowed to buy the produce. But the powers that be got the contract and gave it to some other person who does not have a single palm tree in the division. Now, a situation like that has resulted in many of the mills in the area not working because the people in anger and protest have withheld their fruit. That may be, and certainly it is one of the reasons why the Pioneer Oil Mills Scheme is running at a loss. I hope it is not.

Certainly I will expect from the Chairman of the E.R.D.C. a statement also about the profit figures of the Pioneer Oil Mills Scheme. The time has past when we were expected to hear from a responsible person to this House a jumble of figures and waving of figures in front of us. We want to get the facts placed on the table of this House for the information of everybody. What I have heard here today from honourable Ogon and honourable B. C. Okwu are really startling. They are startling, Sir, because I think these young men have been dissatisfied and in the interest of the Region they have raised an outcry asking for the position to be investigated. I really support that the workings of E.R.D.C.—in the past, in the present and a bold programme for the future—should be investigated by an expert. When the time comes for Mr Okwu's motion I think there will be no difficulty for this House to pass it; for if there is anybody who has the interest of this Region at heart certainly such a person should support such a motion.

I am not anticipating the motion, Sir. I am only trying to point out that the position we have reached about the working of E.R.D.C. schemes in the Region is most unsatisfactory. We had expected that E.R.D.C. Schemes would relieve our farmers by granting them small loans to develop their farms. As the Chief Whip of Government said the other day the main object of this public utility service and Corporation is to translate the economic policy of the Party in power into reality. It is also the aim of Government, through these public utility services, to improve the economic well-being of the people of the Region, and I do not see any other way that the E.R.D.C. and its various schemes can improve the economic well-being of the people of the Region except to go to the level of helping the farmers at the local level.

We have been told about Co-operative Societies, and until you form Co-operative Societies—what do they call it? Produce or Marketing or something Society—you cannot have help. I would like to hear from the Chairman how many such Societies have been formed in the East; how many Societies have received grants to buy mills during the present tenure in office of the Chairman. I hate people going to own up what other people have laboured to provide in the past, and then claim these things as products of their brain, when they are not. These are false claims and they do not help anybody. I really came to see the E.R.D.C. as a public corporation thrive and actually help the people of the Region by giving loans to small farmers at the village level to improve food production in the area. I would also like to see the indigenous people, the producers, the owners of the palm trees buying the products of the Mills.

Now it is most inequitable, it does not help the people at all for a big producer or licensed buying agent to be preferred in the award of contracts for buying the products of the mills to local people, who form themselves into societies and unions. In other words, the object of E.R.D.C. is not to help the big traders and licensed buying agents.

I went to Aba, leading a delegation of the people of my Division to meet the Pioneer Oil Mills Scheme Manager there. There we put the fact to him that our people wanted to buy the local produce—i.e. our local people had formed themselves into a unit. He said “we cannot do it. It is the Board that will consider it. If it is merited, well we will give it to them. If they do not well that is all we can do about it.” And certainly they gave it to some big licensed buying agents. We went back to protest, and the Manager replied: “Well, we did have in one of your mills more tonnage than we really anticipated. If you go and tell your people to stop producing more we will thank you for that.” I think it was a mad thing to say. I am prepared to make this statement again in front of the fellow who said it. He is the Manager of the E.R.D.C. at Aba. I know the date and I know the time and I had a witness who heard him say this. I would like it to be investigated.

I am not interested in the discussion of personalities, but whoever is the Chairman of E.R.D.C. if he does his job well I do not grudge an honest man his hard-earned wages. What I am interested in seeing is the principle of a public corporation being run in the interests of everybody; being run with a view to developing the economic well-being of the people of the Eastern Region. If we come to talk about corruption, bribery and nepotism and all this kind of thing in the public service of Nigeria, I do not think that the E.R.D.C. could come out from the fire, the testing fire, unscathed. I do not think so, Sir, I am not accusing anybody; I am merely appealing to this House that before it adopts this Bill and passes it, it must be quite satisfied that the inner working of E.R.D.C. is in the best interests of everybody in the Region. I hope this will be a lesson to the Government that it is wiser at times to make haste slowly, and that this multiplicity of Corporations and public utility services that have no real meaning and do not produce quick results should be resisted. That is my contribution to the debate, Sir.

**Mr E. U. Eronini (Owerri Division) :** Mr Speaker, Sir, as the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee and watchdog of this House, it has been my privilege once to see into the accounts of the E.R.D.C. when the accounts were those of the Board. It is indeed regretted that even the Director of Audit was not able to clear us of the difficulties of squaring the accounts. We went through—we could not get what we want—we called him to explain this, but he was not very much able; so we called in the Secretary and I wanted even the Chairman to come along. Unfortunatley we could not get him.

It is indeed regrettable that the Opobo Boatyard was a failure—indeed a failure. And more still it is very regrettable that the E.R.D.C. should venture and clash with the Federal Industry. There is a Boatyard owned by the Federal Government and in the same place there is a boatyard owned by the E.R.D.C. Both are trying experiments. How would they run it? We suggested that the E.R.D.C. closed its boatyard or handed it over to the Federal Government to try and venture an experiment; because it is not the fault of the present E.R.D.C. He inherited a bad organisation and the boatyard was built even before the Corporation.

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[Second Reading]

The Obudu Ranch is also, to my mind, a failure. We had to ask a lot of questions which the Secretary in Charge would not answer, and Members of the Committee here will bear me out. We felt that apart from getting butter and a few herds of cattle, there is not much good coming for this Region from that venture. If at all, it may be a matter of a change of hands but not with the present working.

Then there is this vexing question of the Pioneer Oil Mills. What has made Pioneer Oil Mill not to be a profit-making venture is that there are a lot of administrative hands. One mill is supposed to pay to the Administration at Aba about £1,700 just to administer its work. It does not include the man who is the Manager of the Mill: it does not include somebody who is a runner with a motor-cycle who goes up and down one mill almost every day. You see a lot of things wasted. The aim of making these mills pay so that they will be handed over to the natives is not to the best interests of the people. There is no possible way of making the Mills pay; the only way of making them pay now is to convert them into licensed buying agents. In that respect they took the fruit from the natives, processed it and take it up with the aim of selling it abroad. In the near future perhaps most of the mills would remain without fruits. There is the possibility as the Chairman said yesterday or other day, of ordering for another 40 mills. It would be a waste of public funds. I should say that he should try with what he has and where he finds that a mill is not paying, he should either remove it or advertise it for sale. He should do something else instead of ordering so many mills and so on. It is a waste of good money. We cannot go on like that indefinitely. There is nothing wrong with the Corporation except that it inherited a bad reputation.

Let me touch upon the accounts system of the E.R.D.C. That organisation has ten accountants and yet still Castleton Elliot with about two or three accountants has to audit the accounts of that Company. It is squandermania to have nine or ten accountants of which two or three are Africans and the rest Europeans.

Mr Speaker, I agree with the speaker who said that before the Finance Corporation falls into the hands of the E.R.D.C., we must know how far they have carried on with their business. Looking through here, Sir, since about a year, when you see the *Nigerian Trade Journal*, you see a large number of Companies springing up in the East. Some of them are private companies and when a Company is private, you hardly know what is going on there. So the mere fact of being a Company does not entitle you to get a loan because you say the Company's capital is so and so. It is wrong. It is necessary to prove how much you are working with, and that can only be proved by a statutory report. I do not think the Finance Corporation had ever asked for a statutory report of any Company before they granted loan. Grant a proper loan to an individual who you know his worth rather than to a Company which you do not know. The question of capital is different from subscribed capital, which is what his prescribed capital is. I feel, somehow that there is need to scrutinise them properly before these Corporations are amalgamated. This will enable the Government to know where it stands and where it is going to.

**Mr E. O. Eyo (Uyo Division):** Mr Speaker, if I may break the monotony of the debate, I would like to speak as Chairman of the E.R.D.C. and defend its policies, management and administration. Before doing so I would like to draw your attention to the provision of Standing Order 11 (12) which lays down how a question should be asked in respect of an Industry run by a public Corporation in the Region. I am raising this point because instead of debating the Second reading of the Bill before the House which seeks to merge the Finance Corporation and the Economic Planning Commission with the Eastern Region Development Corporation, two Members of the House, Mr M. E. Ogon and Mr B. C. Okwu have devoted some time to attack the policies and the Management of the E.R.D.C. and have made wild statement founded on no facts. I must say that there is no iota of truth in the wild allegations and statements that have been made against the E.R.D.C. The Sixth Annual Report of the former E.R.P.D.B. for the year 1954-55 was laid on the table of this House and I would have expected a Member to initiate a debate on: he Annual Report in order to enable Members to debate the policies and

various schemes and projects of the E.R.D.C. That is the normal practice in the United Kingdom. I would like Members to understand that when a public Corporation has been charged with responsibility for a particular Industry it must be given an opportunity to develop that Industry for the welfare of the Community as a whole—there must be no outside interference in its Management and its day to day routine administration. The criticisms made might have been true in respect of the E.R.P.D.B. which ceased to function on the 31st January, 1955. The E.R.D.C. came into being on the 1st February, 1955 and I can only accept responsibility for the policies and the Management of the E.R.D.C. as from 1st February, 1955.

It has been suggested that the Pioneer Oil Mills Scheme has been a failure because it has been operated at a loss. That may be true up to 1954 when a Civil Servant—a former Development Secretary of the Eastern Region was the Chairman. But yesterday in my speech I told the House that over the past 14 months the Pioneer Oil Mills Scheme will make an estimated net profit of £20,000 as against a loss of £50,000 in 1954. How did we do that?—reorganisation and efficient management. We divided the mills into groups as follows:

|                        |                    |              |
|------------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| (a) ABA:               | Aba I ... ..       | 8 mills      |
|                        | Aba II ... ..      | 3 mills      |
|                        | Opobo ... ..       | 4 mills      |
|                        | Total ... ..       | 15 mills     |
| (b) CALABAR AND AKPAP: | Calabar ... ..     | 6 mills      |
|                        | Akpap ... ..       | 1 major mill |
|                        | Total ... ..       | 7 mills      |
| (c) AHOADA:            | Ahoada I ... ..    | 6 mills      |
|                        | Ahoada II ... ..   | 4 mills      |
|                        | Ahoada III ... ..  | 3 mills      |
|                        | Owerri... ..       | 4 mills      |
|                        | Brass ... ..       | 2 mills      |
| Total ... ..           | 19 mills           |              |
| (d) ORLU:              | Orlu ... ..        | 9 mills      |
|                        | Onitsha ... ..     | 8 mills      |
|                        | Okigwi ... ..      | 8 mills      |
|                        | Ogoja ... ..       | 4 mills      |
|                        | Obubra ... ..      | 2 mills      |
| Total ... ..           | 31 mills           |              |
| (e) IKOT EKPENE:       | Ikot Ekpene ... .. | 5 mills      |
|                        | Uyo ... ..         | 9 mills      |
|                        | Total ... ..       | 14 mills     |

An African Junior Mill Manager is in charge of four to six mills and each group is controlled by a Senior Mill Manager with a Mechanical Engineer. For the fourteen months ending March 31st, 1956, I estimate that we shall have 86 mills processing 120,000 tons of fruits, that is, nearly three times the quantity in 1953 and 1954. Extraction from this quantity of fruit will be 20,000 tons of special palm oil and only a few hundreds of grade one oil plus 9,000 tons of palm kernels. For the first time the Corporation will make a profit which is estimated at approximately £20,000.

[Development Corporation  
(Amendment) Law, 1956]

20th March, 1956

[Second Reading]

We have been criticised for operating a Licensed Buying Agency. This criticism comes from other Licensed Buying Agents and Contractors. Under the former E.R.P.D.B. these Licensed Buying Agents and Contractors were allowed to purchase the oil and kernels produced at the Mills. They delivered the oil and kernels to the U.A.C., P.Z., John Holt and other firms and earned substantial profits by way of Commissions. That was one of the reasons why the E.R.P.D.B. was operating the mills at a loss. Now the E.R.D.C. has opened two beaches at Port Harcourt and Aba and will open two more beaches at Nwaniba and Calabar. All the oil produced at the mills will be delivered at these beaches and from there direct to the Bulk Oil Plants for the Marketing Board. The E.R.D.C. as a public Corporation *must* continue to do that in order to make a profit on its mills. We are out to protect the Industry and the interest of the producers who happen to be the farmers in the villages and not the Middlemen and Contractors who are now complaining. We must draw a line between private interest and public interest.

We have been accused of squandermania, of employing redundant expatriate staff and of not encouraging Nigerians in our employment policies. Mr Speaker, this is not true at all. I will now give you relevant figures:

In 1953 the former E.R.P.D.B. employed forty-two Senior Expatriate staff, three Senior African staff, four Assistants-in-Training and 4,000 General labour. In 1956 under the E.R.D.C. the position is forty-one Senior Expatriate Staff, twelve Senior African Staff, 23 Assistants-in-Training and 7,200 General labour. In spite of increasing development and activity, as borne out by General Labour increase of 3,000, Senior Expatriate Staff has decreased by 1 and African staff increases of twenty-eight speak for themselves. A fair criticism would be that we have gone too quickly in reducing experienced expatriate staff. Pioneer Oil Mills have increased from fifty to eighty-six and will reach one hundred this year. Expatriate staff in Pioneer Oil Mills was twenty-one in 1953 but now is sixteen in 1956. We have been accused of employing Malaysians on our plantations. This is not true as there is no Malayan in our establishment and I challenge the honourable B. C. Okwu to check up his source of information. We employ three Dutchmen, two Germans, one Indian and the remainder are British and Nigerians. Dutch men all over the world are known to be expert planters and so we have employed them as Plantation Managers. I don't know of any Nigerian who is a planter. If there is any one then the E.R.D.C. will employ him straight away as there are still vacancies. The highest paid planter on the E.R.D.C. earns £2,000 as against £5,000 earned by a Manager of a Rubber Estate within the same vicinity. I have quoted this in order to relate the salaries of the Expatriate Staff under the E.R.D.C. with those paid by other Commercial Establishment to answer the charge of squandermania.

It is very interesting to hear in this House that Members cannot read and understand the Annual Reports of the E.R.P.D.B. and even my honourable Friend Mr E. U. Eronini, who is the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee confessed that he, his Committee and the Government Auditors of Accounts could not understand or interpret the Accounts as shown in the 1954-55 Report. Mr Speaker, if Members are not intelligent enough to read and understand the Report and the Accounts, I don't think I should be held responsible for that.

**Mr Speaker:** I would like to remind the honourable Member that the reporters are finding it difficult in getting his speech down.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Thank you Mr Speaker—that seems to be one of my weaknesses.

I was saying, Sir, that if Members are not intelligent enough to read and understand our report and accounts I don't think I should be held responsible for that.

**Mr U. Onu-Chima (Afikpo Division):** On a point of order. May the speaker withdraw the statement that Members are not intelligent enough to read the report.

**Mr Speaker:** The honourable Member may proceed.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Mr Speaker, we have in the E.R.D.C. the best qualified Accountants in the Eastern Region. As a matter of fact we have more qualified Accountants than the Government and the system of our accounting is purely Commercial Accounting which is quite distinct from Government or Civil Service Accounting. We are accused of employing ten Accountants. Now Sir, I would like the House to realise that the E.R.D.C. is the largest Corporation in the Region handling £5,000,000 as capital, which is invested in ten different projects or businesses. Each project should be regarded as a Company of its own. If I did not employ enough Accountants and our accounts went wrong, I am sure this House would have crucified me for it. Now the criticism is that the E.R.D.C. has employed more Accountants than necessary.

My honourable Friend, Mr A. J. Ekpe, complained about the Boatyard at Opobo. My answer to that is that when the E.R.D.C. took over we were satisfied that there was mismanagement of the Boatyard and so we dismissed the Manager of the Boatyard and reduced the labour force by one half. Considering the rate of expansion of the projects handled by the E.R.D.C. we invited Messrs Urwick, Orr and Partners—a firm of Business Consultants—to advise the E.R.D.C. on re-organisation. A Representative of the firm came out and toured the various projects of the E.R.D.C. He has submitted a report which will be discussed at the next Board Meeting.

Mr Speaker, before I conclude this speech, I wish to draw your attention to the fact that the criticisms of Mr M. E. Ogon and Mr B. C. Okwu are centred around me and not so much the E.R.D.C. Now, Sir, if a Member of this House could give false evidence in secret against me before the Ikpeazu Commission and then went to an Assistant Manager of the E.R.D.C. and offered him a bribe to give false evidence against me before the Commission, then, Mr Speaker, you will realise what my position is. If an Administrative Officer far away in Sokoto could write letters to one of the Managers of the E.R.D.C. urging him to do everything possible to get me involved before the Ikpeazu Commission—and I am now in possession of those letters—then, Mr Speaker, you will realise my position at present. Well, I happen to have a tough skin and can fight back.

Let me conclude. We have not done anything for which we are ashamed in the E.R.D.C. and we are quite prepared to submit the whole of the E.R.D.C. Management to the Premier for examination. The Premier can conduct whatever investigation he likes, but we shall never submit to a Commission of Inquiry because of what transpired in the Ikpeazu Commission. We will resist any such Inquiry. We would like a special Committee to be set up for the purpose, and I challenge Mr Ogon and Mr Okwu to go before this Committee and repeat the allegations they have made in this House. They cannot claim privilege or protection before a Special Committee as they would in the case of a Commission of Inquiry and people must not be allowed to run down others before a Commission of Inquiry and get away with it on the protection under the Commission of Inquiry Ordinance.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*

*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

*Clause 1.*

**The Premier:** Sir, I beg to move in Clause 1 to leave out “and shall come into operation on a date to be fixed by the Governor by notice in the *Regional Gazette*”.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*



[Development Corporation  
(Amendment) Law, 1956  
Com. and 3R]

20th March, 1956

[Abolition of the Osu System  
Law, 1956—2R]

Clause 2.

**The Premier:** Sir, I beg to move that subsection (b) of Clause 2 be deleted.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clauses 3 to 6 agreed to.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported with Amendments; Read the Third time and passed.*

### The Abolition of the Osu System Law, 1956

*Order for Second Reading read.*

**The Minister of Welfare:** I beg to move that a Bill for a Law for the abolition of the Osu system and to prescribe punishment both for the practice of it, and for the enforcement of any disabilities arising from it be passed into Law.

I am proud to have the privilege of being the Minister to introduce this Bill to the House this day. I invite this House to join with me in making it a matter of pride that your support of this Bill which abolishes a caste system which is a shame to this Region, should be a unanimous verdict.

The principal features of the Osu system are already well known to honourable Members and I need not waste much time in describing them. It is sufficient to say that this practice creates a caste of persons who by the accident of birth are denied certain elementary and basic human rights. Because they happen to be descended from persons whom our forefathers sacrificed to the gods, or who became Osu by close contact with any person who belonged to this class they are so treated. It is a system of social discrimination and it prevails only, I am glad to say, in certain limited areas in this Region. In other areas it has long since died out, or was never practised.

Mr Speaker, I had supposed that such a Bill to abolish a caste system would command the universal support of this House and that we should hardly need to debate it at all. I am surprised, I am astonished, I am shocked to learn that certain honourable Members from Owerri wish to oppose this Bill. I hope I am wrong, and if it proves to be so, I shall be the first to apologise to them. This Bill makes it an offence for any person to molest or injure or annoy or boycott any other person by reason of his being an Osu. It makes it an offence for any person to enforce against another person any disability with regard to marriage, or the acquisition or inheritance of property, or joining of any title society or the observance of any social custom or ceremony on account of being Osu. It also makes it actionable for a person to taunt another person that he is an Osu. This House will agree with me that every one of these proposals is reasonable. Nobody can possibly oppose these things unless they are anxious to preserve this system of social discrimination.

Do not let us make any mistake about this system. It is a caste system. It is apartheid. It is what Dr Malan and his followers have been preaching and practising in South Africa. It is the same as the social disabilities under which negroes in America have been suffering. Let us be honest with ourselves and recognise this caste system for what it is.

It may be said "it is not as bad as these terrible practices in other countries. Osu is dying out. It does not seriously hurt anybody today." But let us consider the facts: If I am Osu, and I want to marry the daughter of a Diala, can I marry her? No.

If I am Osu, and want to join a title society like anyone else, am I free to do so? No. If I am Osu, and want to own land, can I own land freely like any one else? No.

If I am Osu and want to stand for election in any area where this system is practised, can I be elected? No.

This is social discrimination of a serious kind. But I am told that it is worse than this. I am told that children in schools who are discovered to be children of Osu, are taunted and persecuted constantly by their school mates. I am told that there are cases of ostracisation or persecution of individuals amounting to torture. This is happening in our land, to our lasting shame, to this day.

Do not let us get complicated with arguments about how serious it is, or byside issues about the Bill itself. The simple question is this: Is the Osu system right or is it wrong? If it is wrong, let us say so unanimously without a single dissentient voice. If I have a poisoned finger, do I say, "I am not going to treat this unless it gets so serious that I have to cut my arm off?" Let us treat the poison in our body politic without further delay.

This Bill is a declaration to the world that the Government of this Region does not support discrimination of any kind. For that alone it would be fully justified. But it is much more than that also. It is a practical remedy. Previously it could be said that Osu was a custom which, since no one had declared it to be wrong, could be presumed to be harmless. Now the onus is on the other side. Now by this Law it is for the *Dialas* to prove that they are innocent of any form of social discrimination.

It may be said that the answer to Osu is not to make a law about it, but to let education and the progress of enlightenment do the work automatically. Unhappily this is not proving to be the case, and this is just why it is necessary for this Government to pass a law about it. Unfortunately, it is in schools where Osu taunting today is found to be at its worst. If it is said that education will remedy Osu, why then are some leading lawyers and other educated men openly supporting Osu? The fact is that education is not curing it.

It may still be said, "Let Osu die by itself. Do not make a law about it. Osu is not worth taking any notice of." But if that were so, why object to the provisions of the Bill? If you do not steal, why object to a law against stealing? If you do not discriminate against Osus why object to a law imposing penalties for practising discrimination?

Again, it may be said, "It is true that Osu should be abolished, but do not make a law imposing penalties for practising it, or it will stir up quarrels and litigation, and the Osus will take advantage of the law to abuse their new rights." Let me tell you this. This very argument was used by the slave owners and others in William Wilberforce's day against the abolition of slavery. It was said, "This is a most dangerous measure. The slaves will rise up and abuse their freedom". Fortunately, their arguments did not prevail. The point is, does this House support these arguments or does it not?

I appeal to honourable Members to give a clear and unanimous decision today. Let us show the world a clean record. Let us show those who support racial discrimination in other parts of Africa that we are prepared to practise what we preach.

I appeal to the Churches and to the Educational institutions to make their stand clear on this point. They should come out openly and teach their congregations and the children in thier schools that the Osu system is wrong and that they should set an example in refusing to practise it.

I appeal also to the people known as Osus themselves. Now that you will have gained a great victory, for I am confident that this House will support this Bill, do not seek to avenge yourselves on your former persecutors. I suggest that you should ignore the past and start a clean page, and show your greatness of heart. The law is there to protect you for the future.

I understand that there is a body existing now in Owerri, called the Anti Social Discrimination Movement, which is said to draw membership from both Osu and non-Osu. I note, with pride and satisfaction, that this body is pledged to build good and smooth relationships in the community between the various sections, and to prevent revengeful litigations as a result of the legislation against Osu. I wish this movement every success. Lastly, I appeal to the honourable Members from Owerri, and any others who may yet have doubts about this Bill. I know that is a matter of pride for a certain section who have a vested interest in preserving their superiority over another section. Naturally they want to retain their privileged position. We are all sometimes called upon to make sacrifices of pride or of vested interest for the good of the Nation. I ask them to make this sacrifice. And I ask the honourable Members to tell their people the plain truth, and to invite them to put the national interest before their own pride. I invite the House to join with me in taking this historic decision today.

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Premier:** Mr Speaker, I beg to second. In doing so, I wish to say that I feel highly honoured to be given the opportunity to second a Bill which is bound to be a milestone in the long history of the struggle of African humanity for social equality. I would equate it with the Magna Carta of 1215, the Petition of Right of 1628, the Abolition of Slavery Act of 1806, the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, and the Untouchability Act of 1954. The Magna Carta laid the foundation of civil liberty in England. The Petition of Right secured political liberty in the United Kingdom. The Slavery Act abolished slavery from the British Empire for ever. The Emancipation Proclamation manumitted all slaves in the United States of America and arrogated to them citizenship rights. The Untouchability Act guaranteed social equality to all the Indian untouchables and secured for them full liberty under the law. Today, we are treading the path which was trodden by the reformers of history, and, in the language of the honourable mover, I pray God to give us the vision and the strength of conviction to stand firm in the cause of righteousness.

This Bill seeks to do three things: to abolish the Osu system and its allied practices including the Oru or Ohu system; to prescribe punishment for their continued practice; and to remove certain social disabilities caused by the enforcement of the Osu and its allied systems. The objects and reasons for the Bill are humanitarian and altruistic. They are a positive attempt on the part of your Government to implement one of the recommendations of the Bride Price Committee which found, as a fact, that certain persons suffered social disabilities and were stigmatised for purposes of marriage simply because they were labelled to be Osu or descendants of Osu, or Oru or descendants of Ohu.

What is the Osu system, and why must it be abolished? If any honourable Member of this House should ask such a question, it is a perfectly fair one. After all, we must define our terms clearly so as to appreciate the issues at stake. According to this Bill, the Osu system includes any social way of living which implies that any person who is deemed to be an Osu or Oru or Ohu is subject to certain prescribed social disability and social stigma. An Osu may be a person who had been sacrificed to a shrine or a deity, and that person and his descendants are therefore regarded as social pariahs with no social rights which non-Osus are bound to respect. An Osu may be a person who descended or can be proved to have descended from a slave, and that person and his descendants are for ever proscribed as social pariahs.

Lest there be doubt about the definition of Osu, which our law has clarified, it is very material to appreciate the sociological implications of this inhuman practice. Dr C. K. MEEK, the eminent social anthropologist with whose authoritative book on Ibo ethnography most of us are familiar, has given a lucid exposition of this social phenomenon in his "Law and Authority in a Nigerian Tribe" as follows, with your permission, Sir:

"... it may be of interest to say something about the cult-slaves known as Osu... An Osu is a person who has been bought and dedicated to the service of the owner's cult. Or he is the descendant of such a person. He differs therefore from an Ohu, who is a slave in

the ordinary sense. An Osu is both despised and feared, his person being taboo; but an Ohu is not. Any free-born person, whatever his position may marry an Ohu's daughter, but no free person would marry an Osu. To do so would be 'abomination', and if a free-born person were to marry an Osu he would himself become an Osu. An Osu can only marry an Osu. An Ohu could be redeemed, but an Osu could not. The owner of an Osu could only sell an Osu with the consent of the deity served by the Osu (the consent being given by means of divination). If an Osu were sold he had to be replaced. A master might inherit the property of an Ohu, but in no case would he take that of an Osu. Free-born persons avoid buying seed-yams from an Osu, and people are even afraid of buying seed-yams in a market, lest they should have been grown by an Osu and so infected by the deity he serves. Persons who pawn themselves acquire the status of an Ohu until redeemed, and the children of unredeemed persons are also regarded as Ohu. The children of an Osu can never be anything but Osu, but the children of an Ohu by a free woman have the full status of free-born persons (with the exception that they cannot inherit the Ofo or any of the cults of the master's family).

The owner of an Osu must provide him with a piece of farm-land, seed-yams, and also a machet and gun (for war purposes). The Osu then works on his own account and is entitled to the products of his labour. He may assist the master on the latter's farm for two days in each eight-day week. The master may, at the instance of a diviner, provide the Osu with a wife (the daughter of another Osu); or the Osu may marry a wife on his own account, the master assisting him to obtain the bride price. But the owner of an Osu woman cannot accept a bride price on her account. The bride price would be receivable by an Osu of her own household. An Osu could be punished by his owner, but only with the permission of the deity served by the Osu, the permission being given by a diviner. In no case could a master put an Osu to death, for fear of the vengeance of the deity. An Osu must always continue to serve the deity to whom he has been dedicated. He cannot dedicate himself to some other deity. But nowadays he may re-dedicate himself to his own deity, and so earn a substantial fee. He may even re-dedicate himself to a deity in another town which bears the same name as that of his own."

That is the evidence of a famous anthropologist. Amplifying this exposition Dr Meek emphasised that an Osu who had committed a crime was often allowed to go scot-free because no one was willing to prosecute him, lest one should incur the wrath of the Osu's deity. He cites an instance of Native Court judges becoming afraid to sit in judgment over an Osu. This social practice is said to be so much of a phenomenon that it could be a valid ground for dissolving marriage, especially if a wife could adduce evidence to prove that her husband had become an Osu. Miss Margret M. Green said that it was strict taboo for an Osu to marry a non-Osu. She has related an explanation of an Mbieri observer who told her in London that the repugnance felt for an Osu is partly because he is usually regarded as a dead man who is alive. This slant is due to the metaphoric interpretation given to the fact that, in the past, an Osu was usually killed as a sacrifice to a deity, instead of being preserved alive, as at present, as a cult-slave.

The incompatibility of the practice of the Osu system with Christianity has also been spotlighted. In her "Ibo Village Affairs" Miss Green revealed that she discussed this subject with an educated Ibo Christian in Owerri. Whilst he admitted that Osu status was not compatible with the tenets of Christian religion, which do not discriminate between Jew and Gentile, yet this respectable church-going christian gentleman was emphatic that he would not contemplate giving his daughter away in marriage to an Osu suitor. He admitted being a hypocrite, because he confessed that he had preached in his church against this form of social discrimination. Yet he was categorical that he was not prepared to put this christian principle into practice. The main point Miss Green was stressing is that the Osu element in Ibo society is not only an exceedingly interesting phenomenon, but also a considerable social problem. Although slavery had been abolished as a legal status since the coming of British Government, yet the stigma attaching to the fact of being Osu or Oru remains and is a matter of great distress to those Osu or Oru who have been christianised and given Europeanised education.

Mr Speaker, these revelations make it plain why this nefarious social practice must be abolished from a country like ours which is on the verge of independence. How can we prove our political capacity if we impose social stigma on any section of our population? Can the outside world be convinced that we would use our newly-won freedom in order to guarantee to all our citizens social equality? Is it possible that this Government can claim to be a member of a political party which believes in social equality, and yet be supine about the practice of the Osu system within its territorial jurisdiction? Let us give second thought to our aspirations for self-government, especially when certain imponderables, like the Osu system, stare us squarely in the face. If we must be honest about our aspirations, then we must admit that self-government would be worth-while as our goal provided we guaranteed social equality, among other rights, to all elements of our population. This Bill presents us with such a challenge. The world will watch our reaction with heightened interest especially in this year which is regarded by some of you as Nigeria's year of destiny.

Clause 3 of this Bill utterly abolishes the Osu system. It frees and discharges from any consequences thereof any person who on the date of the commencement of this Law is by custom or usage deemed an Osu, or Oru or Ohu. The effect of this clause is to abolish the Osu system for ever, and henceforth to declare it unlawful. This clause is the operative part of the Law which will give this Legislature a place of honour in the social history of Nigeria. It takes moral courage for any person to attempt to disturb what is revered as tradition but it takes social vision for the duly accredited representatives of the people to abolish such a tradition in the interests of social justice.

Clause 4 defines the major offences arising out of the Osu system. My honourable Friend the mover has explained that one important provision in clause 4 of this reformed Bill which demonstrates Government's earnestness in guaranteeing social equality to the people within its jurisdiction is to the effect that a person should be deemed to have ostracised another person socially, if he refused to allow him to enjoy certain rights normally due to others who are not regarded as Osu. Clause 5 of the Bill emphasises that not only refusal but denial of the right or privilege to a person because one is, or would have been deemed to be Osu or Oru or Ohu, but for the enactment of this Law which will constitute an offence equally punishable by fine or imprisonment in order to leave no doubt as to Government's determination to abolish utterly the Osu system.

Clause 8 of the Bill provides that words spoken and published which impute that a person is an Osu or Oru or Ohu are defamatory *per se*. This means that if any person calls another an Osu or Oru or Ohu orally then it becomes slanderous and if the defamation is written then it becomes libellous. The legal implication is that the mere uttering or publishing that one is an Osu or Oru or Ohu or that one is any way descended from an Osu or Oru or Ohu is defamatory for which legal remedy can be obtained. I understand that a considerable body of opinion in this Region is opposed to the enactment of this Bill into Law. Certain delegations have conferred with the honourable mover of this Bill. I have tried to find out the reasons for the opposition to this healthy piece of legislation and I am informed that among those who wish Government to adopt a *laissez-faire* attitude towards it is what may be called the vested interest. This interest feels that customs and traditions must be revered and must not be changed, not even by legislation. With due deference, I must say that this stand is a blind worship of tradition. It was the attitude of King John at Runnymede and you all know what happened to this obstinate English Monarch. It was the stand of the Stuarts with their curious faith in the Divine right of Kings and you know what happened to the stubborn head of Charles I of England. Several slaves dealers in England were opposed to the Abolition of Slavery Act, and the Government of King George III on the recommendation of the House of Commons had to pay them the sum of £20 million as compensation for the loss of their property. Yes, they were re-imbursed for their loss of profit in the traffic in human cargo and human blood.

May I confess, Mr Speaker, that since the publication of this Bill, I and the honourable Minister of Welfare have received a number of protests against it from certain interests not only from this Region but also elsewhere in this beloved Nigeria of ours. The remarkable

feature of these protests is that the protestants do not argue that the practice of Osu is desirable; but they suggest that this iniquitous system should not be abolished by legislation but by a gradual process of acculturation which, to my mind is not only recondite and abstruse but also vague and hieroglyphic. Typical of this immoral view is a statement which I have just received from a body at Kaduna which styles itself as the Owerri Division Cultural Society. It is a very short statement and I know the stand of Mr Speaker not to weary us with long quotations, but I ask your indulgence to read it Mr Speaker. It reads as follows:—

“Before the advent of Western Civilisation the Osus had the following social disabilities: Osus were not allowed to live in the same compound with Dialas; Osus were not allowed to buy or to sell in common markets with Dialas; Osus were not allowed to shave with the same razor with Dialas; Osus were not allowed to feed from the same dishes with Dialas; Osus performed certain rites before their deities annually; Osus could not farm on same portions of land with Dialas; Osus were not buried but thrown to the forest of their deities; Osus were not allowed to intermarry with Dialas, etc.

Since the advent of Western civilisation all those restrictions and social disabilities are no longer in practice, save the question of marriage. Onitsha Division has Oru system, Awka Division has Agba-enu system, Orlu Division has Ume system. All these systems are in practice in these Divisions and if they are to be done away with, it cannot be successful through legislation.

For the above reasons, be it resolved and it is hereby resolved that the Owerri Division Cultural Society disassociates itself from any decision of the N.C.N.C. Government of the Eastern Region to abolish the Osu system by legislation. Lawlessness, strife, bloodshed and several other disturbances will be a commonplace practice. By legislation against Osu system, (a cultural tradition of the people), the N.C.N.C. Government in the East is giving importance and reviving the already dying away Osu caste. We believe that the only right channel of doing away with the Osu caste system is through education and civilisation, as said by the former Secretary of State to the Colonies, Mr Oliver Lyttleton, now Lord Chandos, in the House of Commons in an answer to Mr Sorenson's question on the Osu caste system in Eastern Nigeria.”

Mr Speaker, that was the resolution of this Society. That a Cultural Society should pass a resolution of this kind is a reflection on the moral inconsistency of our people today. Otherwise, how can any justice-longing person allow himself to be so prejudiced as to justify what is morally wrong by sheltering under a tattered umbrella of expediency? What is the meaning of the mystic words “education and civilisation” if they do not connote honest conviction in admitting that, in the light of modern life, the practice of Osu and its allied stigmatisations are immoral, unjust, unfair, unreasonable, illogical, dishonest, inconsistent, anachronistic and antediluvian?

Mr Speaker, an English religious writer of the nineteenth century said “Whatever is unjust is contrary to the divine will; and from this it follows that no true and abiding happiness can be gained by those who are unjust”. I agree, because the main point in the above Kaduna resolution is the delay of justice. Although the practice of Osu is known and acknowledged to be a flagrant degradation of human dignity, yet we are requested to delay the righting of this diabolical wrong until an indefinite future. Was it not some one who said that “Delay are injustice” and should we therefore delay justice and thereby commit two wrongs in order to do one right belatedly?

Another aspect of this type of reform is the price which certain reformers had been called upon to pay on issues of this type in order that justice may prevail over the forces of injustice. The question whether slavery must be abolished in the United States led to a Civil War between the Northern States, which were opposed to slavery, and the Southern States, which supported this scandalous practice. The issue was ultimately resolved by the Emancipation Proclamation which was promulgated by the American President, Abraham Lincoln. It is needless for me to remind this honourable House that this great political reformer was assassinated by a minion of the slavocrat who felt that Lincoln had betrayed the landed gentry of the deep South depriving them of their socio-economic pastime.

Then there is the case of the Republic of India, which for many years was a colonial appendage of Britain. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and other leaders of India challenged the moral right of Britain to treat Indians as an inferior race. They demanded freedom for India, and the British made fun of Indians by countering with the propanganda that India wanted self-government in order to substitute British rule with Indian Imperialism. Then it dawned upon Indians that the caste system was a degradation of humanity and that the Indian nationalist movement was inconsistent in its demands from British for social equality whilst the Indian ruling castes denied same to the Indian masses. Freedom did come to India in 1947, but you will remember that in the following year an Indian fanatic assassinated Gandhi because he had challenged India successfully to ban untouchability and emancipate the so-called untouchables. After Indians had won their independence, they introduced an Untouchability Bill to do for Indian Untouchables what the Bill before this House seeks to do for all the Osu or Oru, of whatever cognomen they are called, who inhabit the Eastern Region. This Bill is based largely on the Indian legislation which was enacted after stiff resistance by the vested interests in India. I understand that it is working smoothly there now, and that it had made India more morally consistent in the eyes of the world.

I hope that opposers of this Bill will appreciate their unfairness in attacking the honourable Minister of Welfare. Mr Speaker, if this House should pass this Bill, the legislators of the Eastern Region would have proved to the world that our demand for self-government is based on sound ethical foundations. It will demonstrate our moral consistency. Otherwise, what right have we to demand for self-government when a minority segment of our population has to demand their elementary rights to social equality? There is no reason why any person should be socially stigmatised because of what we all know to be an accident of history. If it is true that certain people are descended from slaves or were cult-slaves, there is no justification for treating them as if they are such today. We no longer recognise the practice of slavery in the laws of our land. Slavery was abolished in Nigeria in 1874 and 1916 and none but those on the lunatic fringe will advocate its recrudescence in this country today. Let me emphasise that one of the reasons why we have been ruled by foreigners for centuries is because of this historic curse. Slavery was partly responsible for the decline and fall of the Songhay Empire, and it enabled millions of our kith and kin to be dispersed to many parts of the New World. Depopulation led to unstable societies in West Africa. Why then should we yearn for the continuation of a practice which the forces of history have proved to be brutal, inhuman, fiendish and degrading?

Mr Speaker, I call upon all nationalists on both sides of this House to dissociate themselves from a satanic practice which sentences our kith and kin to social degradation.

Mr Speaker, I appeal to all patriots of this country to join this Government in its noble crusade against a vicious social system. Let us recognise a person for what he is and not who he is. Mr Speaker, I demand the emancipation of our people from a social stigma which has instilled in them an inferiority complex. Some of them have scaled the ladder of progress in many spheres of human endeavour in this country and have proved their ability as human beings. What right have we to destroy their personality on the altar of tradition? What kind of tradition shall we revere? A tradition which consumes man's humanity on the passion of man's inhumanity? Why must we question the need for a law of this kind when it is obvious that it is the right thing to do so as to justify our faith in our ability to rule ourselves justly and righteously.

I will not be a party to any social proscription of my fellow man. I will not support any stigmatisation of human beings simply because they were said to have descended from a family which none of us had the power to predetermine.

I will not join in the encouragement of a system of society where one stratum can superciliously claim to be descended from the best strain and would therefore consign the others on the scrap heap of their own invention and ostracise them socially. They tell me that

somebody is descended from a slave and they tell me that he must be treated as a social pariah, but none of these self-righteous saints can tell me how they know that what they believe is not a cock-and-bull story based on legends and fairy tales that were told long, long ago.

Mr Speaker, this Bill offers a challenge to the morality of the Easterners no matter where they live.

I submit it is not morally consistent for us to condone the Osu or Oru or Ohu system. I submit that it is most uncharitable to brand any human being with a label of inferiority due to accidents of birth.

I submit that human beings are entitled to the right of social equality. Because of my personal convictions I feel it is an honour to second this historic motion and it is my prayer that God may guide us to do the right.

Mr Speaker, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

**Dr A. N. Obonna (Owerri Division):** Mr Speaker, I must first of all congratulate the Minister of Social Welfare and the Premier. Before commenting on the Bill, I would like to make a statement, and that is, that if clause 2 of the Bill reads, "Osu includes a descendant of an Osu or Ohu or Oru or Ume" I am prepared to take the challenge and go home to tell my people that they should support it.

I associate myself with the sentiments expressed by the two previous speakers. It is true that it is evil and unchristian to discriminate against any human being. But what we fail to realise is this: that in passing such a law we must bear in mind that we are not legislating for people who understand as we do. We must understand that most of them do not understand what human right means.

In any case I am sorry to say that the Government has discovered the Osu system too late. Did it really require the Balonwu Commission on Bride Price for the Government to discover the Osu system? What has the Government done since it first discovered the Osu system? That was the time the government should have taken steps to mobilise public opinion against the Osu system. But Government did not do that.

Instead of this, what the Government has done now is to legislate without consulting the people. I know for certain that if you had consulted the people you would not have received their sanction, but there is the advantage that you will have gone a long way towards educating the people and preparing their mind for a change in the future. Reading a pamphlet on Osu here we are told that these people suffer discrimination even in schools and churches. If some welfare bodies had gone all out to mobilise these men to fight against this evil, I think this law would have had a chance of surviving. Let me tell you this. I do not for a moment believe in legislation for the sake of legislation. This Bill is just what I call legislation for the sake of legislation. The law, if passed, will be almost unenforceable, and I shall proceed to prove this.

The Minister of Welfare has told you that by passing this law an Osu will have the right to marry a Diala's daughter. I do pray that this is possible, and I do pray and wish that this law will achieve that much. But if I tell you that it will, I am not honest with myself. How on earth can you prosecute a man for refusing to give his daughter in marriage to an Osu? Mind you, if an Osu comes to me, and I have a daughter, I will certainly give him my daughter to marry. In fact I have never discriminated against the Osus, and, in truth, until this Bill came up I had not known more than two osus in the whole of Owerri Division, where this thing is most rampant. In fact one of the things this law will succeed in doing is to revive the dying thing.



If an Osu comes to a Diala and says, "let me have the privilege of marrying your daughter" and the Diala knowing (as he certainly will know) that he is an Osu or a descendant of an Osu, refuses, saying, "I am sorry; my daughter is not ready to marry", and the following day a Diala comes to marry the same girl and he agrees, will the Diala be prosecuted in any Court of Law? Although the Diala has not told him that he is an Osu the latter understands that he is refused marriage because he is an Osu, though he will not tell the public so. Therefore, the purpose you want this law to serve has been defeated.

There are other social privileges which these men are unfortunately denied. But, I tell you, this law can never change this situation. Change to be effective must come from the heart; no amount of legislation can bring about such change.

One other point I like to make is this. If we all are honest in this matter, and we want the Osu system to be abolished, we must not stop at passing mere legislation; we must acknowledge that it includes Ohu, Oru and Ume, and strive to see that the discrimination against these classes is stopped. I say this because in Owerri, today, the people have it in their mind that the Government is out only to abolish Osu, and not Oru, Ohu or Ume. My understanding before is that with the abolition of the slave trade Oru system was supposed to have been abolished as well, but to this present day people still discriminate against Orus. Therefore the abolition of the slave trade did not put an end to the Oru system. My opinion is that if Government accepts the amendment to include Orus, Ohus and Umes this Bill will stand a change of achieving the desired end.

We all stand here to say that it is unchristian to discriminate against Osus. I agree that it is unchristian, and, being a christian, I will never discriminate against anybody. Any christian who discriminates against Osus and Ohus is not true to his conscience. But one thing we fail to understand is that we are not all christians, and therefore, in fighting things like this we must try to coax those who have faith in these jujus.

One other thing I would like to say is that there is no country without its own social disabilities. I, personally, would not, for instance, like to be recognised as the equal of a white man through the force of mere legislation. If this should be the case it is toleration. I do not want to be tolerated. As a human being I want to be taken and acknowledged as the equal of any other human being. I say emphatically that if this Law is passed it will only mean a toleration of people created by God.

Let us do whatever we can to see that this system is eradicated from its root—that is, from the human heart. There is no use coming here and pretending that we are going to abolish the system when the position is just as it was, or even worse. My contention, therefore, is that legislation against the Osu system is premature. This legislation being premature it has not the finishing touch which it should have had. It is known that this type of system operated even in the great Roman Empire. How was it stopped? It was education that did the work, followed by legislation.

I know that many honourable Members will like to speak; so I must make my position quite clear. Personally, I am in favour of the Bill, but I have been instructed by my constituency to say that they are opposed to this Bill, and they have demanded that we, their representatives, should oppose it. Of course I have made my stand clear to them even before the framing of the Bill.

My stand is this. I am all out for the abolition of the Osu system, but that it should not be done by legislation. I am sure that the Government will be helping this House a lot, and save much time being spent in arguments, if it will make a statement saying that this Bill will apply to all other systems which give rise to social discrimination in every part of the Region. If other divisions decide to abolish their own forms of social disabilities I do not see any reason on earth why our own division should like to uphold theirs. If this suggestion is adopted, I will support the Bill.

**Chief N. N. Anyika (Awka Division):** Mr Speaker, I stand firmly on my feet to oppose the freeing of the old Osus in existence. If there are no masters there will be no Osus or Orus. There is a difference between Osu and Oru. I am talking about Osu now. In my division, nobody will have any dealing with Osu—I mean the old ones now living not any new ones as the practice is dying out now. It is the duty of the Government to prosecute anybody who is seen making any new Osus and have him imprisoned. But to abolish the old ones in existence is not good.

I do not know whether many honourable Members are afraid of the Missions or of the Ministers here. I do not want to say anything when I go outside. Let us say that we oppose this Osu system. I am strongly mandated by my division not to support the Government in this. If Government wants to do anything for the divisions let it give them the amenities they are crying for.

Before abolishing the old Osu in the District, you, Sir, the Speaker of the House and the Premier, who are Onitsha indigenes, will bear me out that the Onitsha indigenes will never take the Ozo title with the Orus not to mention the Osus. I know this because I lived in Onitsha when I was a young boy. If you tour the divisions, one by one, you will find that heathens are more in number than the Osus and Orus. Have the Ministers making this Law, who received petitions from the Orus and Osus to pass the Law, heard from the heathens? Or did they only hear one party when we are here representing the heathens as well, and not only one party.

Ohu is ten times better than Osu. Nobody will call him or her names. We never marry Osus, but we can marry Ohus. But supposing we agree with the Premier to abolish Osu many of the people will not give their daughters to the Osu.

We must face one thing this year. We want self-government this year before any other thing. Therefore we must not do anything which will destroy our great political party's plan, otherwise the heathens affected will begin to spoil our plan. May I remind the Government that the Missions are washing these practices away gradually by preaching the Gospel to the heathens. How can you force the heathens to accept the new order. If the Orus know where they come from they can go back or redeem themselves. Some Reverend gentlemen, like Reverend Ibeneme—I am sorry to mention him—and other people redeemed themselves from the Onitsha people where they were slaves.

If I were a slave I would redeem myself from my master. If I knew how much I should repay to him or her so much the better. Let the Osus do the same. There should be no more Osu if the juju shrines and the heathens are buried together immediately, for if there are no masters there will be no Osus. I implore the Government to listen to me, although they will not hear me. I will support the Government in anything they do here but not as far as the Osu system is concerned. This is not why we are here. I am ashamed to see that some gentlemen, who are respectable, and who said we should not support the Osus have entered this House to say they are supporting the Osus. Surely they are afraid.

With these few remarks, Mr Speaker, I oppose the Bill.

**Chief G. N. Agbasiere (Orlu Division):** Mr Speaker, I rise to support the Bill. I am sorry that some honourable Members do not understand what is called "Osu". They do not know that God has created them, human beings as He created Osu. The Osus are those people who were captured in olden times, when wars were taking place. Some of them were captured but when they reached their home they took them to the juju and sacrificed them to jujus. In my own town that is what I see. These people are called Osu. Many people do not know that they are created by God. Some people think that these people are created by juju. It surprises me that human beings can be dedicated to juju rather than to God Almighty who created them.

**Mr Speaker:** Order ! Order ! I have observed that people in the gallery appear to be taking part in the proceedings and clapping their hands. If I observe any further demonstration I shall order the gallery to be cleared.

**Chief G. N. Agbasiere:** The Osus themselves are much abused in the whole Region. For instance, before I became a chief of my town, when one of them dies his body is deposited in the forest without even the respect of burial in a grave. Some people point at them in the public with the remark, "That is an Osu man". The Missions are doing all they can to abolish the Osu system. There was one Mission where an Osu man died and the Mission went to bury the remains in the church cemetery, but the free-men refused that the remains should be buried in the same burial ground. Surely this is an abuse to God Almighty. Anybody who says that people should continue to be dedicated to Juju is not of God. Rather he is abusing God Almighty.

Well, I support that the Osu system should be abolished. To this end, this Bill should be a very strong guide, because I know that honourable Members over there will go home and begin to announce another thing. If you go to the people at home and tell them that Government is abolishing the Osu system they will not grumble. They will be very pleased.

As I stated earlier the Osu men were those captured during war. Will any man be happy to be captured in war and dedicated to Juju? Honourable Members who do not support the Bill do not know the present condition of the world. If they know anything about the world they should realise that we were created by God Almighty, and not by Juju, which is made by hand. Juju is a stick. A man can go to the bush and cut it, call it one thing—either Atamiri or Idemiri—and serve it. Then when you see a human being you say he belongs to this Juju.

I will be very glad if honourable Members will realise that an Osu is a human being like them—with five fingers like them, and the same number of eyes. There is no difference—their bodies are the same.

**Mr U. A. Otop (Opobo Division):** Mr Speaker, I rise, to support the Bill because Osu is a social evil and a setback to the progress of our people.

We in the Calabar Province are astonished to hear that such a social evil still exists in a place where we hear that the tree of freedom has been planted. We have heard from the Premier himself how human beings are being treated and discriminated against in society. Such a thing, at this time, is in fact, a setback. We ask that this Osu be abolished in whatever form it may be. It should be buried with the slave trade because we know that Osu was extracted from slavery and should therefore be buried with the slaves of bygone days.

It is really a disgrace to hear enlightened people from Owerri Division opposing the Bill and saying that such things should continue in their area. Some of them have had some training in England, and yet have returned home to support this system. It is really a disgrace to them.

Mr Speaker, in brief, I associate myself with all those who support the Bill.

**Mr P. N. Okeke (Onitsha Division):** Mr Speaker, in rising to support this Bill, I can appreciate the difficulty of Members of this House because the tendency is that if anybody supports this Bill he might feel that it would suggest that he is an Osu. I do know that is the reason why some Members find it very difficult to support or not to support the Bill.

I think this is a humanitarian Bill. Some of us do realise that it is very difficult to introduce such a Bill in any society. Customs die hard with people. To base our argument on Christian charity may not work, because in the Region today a large majority of the people are pagans, and we must take their feelings into consideration. I can appreciate the arguments of one of the honourable Members, Chief Anyika, that these Osus or Orus are few in number.

I agree with the Premier that if there are only two Osus in the Eastern Region it is sufficient reason to pass this Bill. Throughout history, if we go back to the days of the slave trade or even during the social reform in England in the 18th and 19th centuries, we will find that vested interest had always made it very difficult for such legislations to go through, but that men of conviction, in spite of opposition, have always closed their eyes and ears and passed the legislation and have always been praised by posterity after them.

I think this Bill, as I said, is a social and humanitarian Bill, and we should not consider what would be the feeling, even of our constituencies outside this House. We have been sent here to fight in the interest of the people of this Region, and it is for us to examine our conscience and do what we think is right. I think that this Bill, if we pass it, if it has the support of the majority of the members in this House—as I expect it will have—and if every member goes out here to educate our people outside, will be acceptable.

On one point, Sir, I agree with my honourable Friend, Dr Obonna, that the title is a bit confusing. It will be very difficult to convince people outside that the definition includes "Oru". With me, I am convinced that it includes Oru, but I think it would be better to include the words "Oru, ohu, or ume" because the argument outside is that people from Owerri Division feel that this law is being made to affect Owerri Division alone, that in Onitsha Division it is called Oru. I think the question of title by putting in the word "Oru" will not make much difference in the Bill. It will also help the people from Owerri Division to explain to their people when they get home, that this law is not being passed against Owerri Division alone.

I come back to the social legislature, as the Premier has ably put it. In India—some of those who did a little history of India knew the history of the untouchables in India. They were a large number of people; they were discriminated against; they had no social right. But then immediately India had independence, they made a law abolishing this question of untouchability. I think that as the country is now approaching independence, and this is a year of destiny, it is fair that this Bill should come at this time; so that in 1957 everybody will come into the new year as a free man. In fact it is unthinkable that because somebody's father was an Osu the children of the parents also become Osu, when it is not the fault of these children. I think that naked justice or Christian charity should compel every Member to think twice and support this Bill.

We talk of discrimination by the Europeans. Most of us in this House fume when we hear about discrimination against the Negroes and yet when we come among ourselves we discriminate simply because one is an Osu. You must realise that the way you see an Osu, is the same way the American Whites see Negroes there. If you condemn them for treating the Negroes in that way you must at the same time condemn our people for treating the Osu in the same way. That these people are descendants of slaves was an accident of history; that the Negroes are descendants of slaves in America is an accident of history; therefore the fact that certain people are Osu in our society is also an accident of history.

I am not an Osu. If I defend this Bill some people will feel that I am an Osu. I am saying this from the attitude of the Christian Church. I must say that the Church seemed to have fought shy in this social evil in our society and I cannot blame them. If they had attacked it right from the start, the Christian religion could not have succeeded in the Eastern Region; and I think it was prudence on their part. I think the time has arrived when this Osu should be abolished.

Mr Speaker, I support the Bill.

**Mr L. O. Uzoigwe (Aba Division):** Mr Speaker, I rise to support this Bill. I feel that the Osu has become anachronistic particularly at this age. This age is more scientific than any we know of. This system of Osu drives us down the old line of superstition. One of the speakers here suggested that if the title of the Bill were amended he would be prepared to support it. I refer him to Clause 2 of the Bill. That clause defines the Osu system. It says, with your permission:

“‘Osu’ includes a descendant of an Osu and also includes any person subject to a legal or social disability or social stigma which is similar to, or nearly similar to, that born by an Osu or a descendant of an Osu”.

In my opinion, I think these terms are well included.

With reference to the question of marriage, I feel that marriage depends very much on the love between a girl and a boy. This law will only come into operation if the boy and the girl are in love with each other and the parents try to prevent the marriage on the grounds that one or the other is an Osu; otherwise I do not think that if a girl refuses a man because she is not in love with the man this law can do anything about it.

Mr Speaker, the Osu system is in direct opposition to democratic practice. In various parts of the world we know that the coloured man always fights against discrimination. We are made to understand that in some States in America, the coloured man is refused admission into some institutions of learning. Recently in South Africa a Bill was passed removing coloured voters from the roll of voters; and occasionally, even in England, people are refused admission into hotels or lodging simply because of their colour. Of Dr Obonna—I know when he was there he used to be very much offended if he was discriminated against. Should we then here condone these practices because they suit us, and then condemn them when they are against us; if we do this, Mr Speaker, I feel that we are nothing but careerists, opportunists, who would approve things simply because they are at our advantage and then condemn them when they are against us. I feel that this is a time when we should learn to call a spade a spade. We should build our democracy on a rocky foundation, on the foundation of truth and honesty. Until we do this, Mr Speaker, I feel that we have not begun to erect a democratic edifice.

The Osu system is the offspring of superstition, of idolatry, of paganism. You have heard that in the olden days Osus were sacrificed to the gods, and if we should condone this system then we are, as it were, sacrificing the Osus to the gods. I feel that this legislation has come just at the right time. I remember that it was said in the Bible that when Abraham was about to sacrifice his son, Isaac, an angel came at the eleventh hour to stop him. So, I feel that this legislation has come just in time to stop the oppressive sacrificing of the Osus to the gods.

Mr Speaker, if we hate oppression, if we abhor human sacrifice, if we are opposed to hereditary privileges, and if we want to establish equality of opportunities in our community the best way to prove it is to support this Bill.

Mr Speaker, I beg to support.

**Rev. M. D. Opara (Owerri Division):** Mr Speaker, I rise to speak to this Bill. A good many people here do not understand what exactly an Osu is. An Osu is a person dedicated to a certain kind of juju to appease the gods. Nobody sacrifices an Osu; but you perform a certain ceremony of dedication.

I want to correct one erroneous remark made by the mover of this Bill concerning the Members from Owerri. We did not go to him to oppose this Bill; rather we were opposing certain words inserted in the clause dealing with offences arising out of the abolition of the Osu system.

When speaking the other day in this House I said that if the Government were to include Oru and other like things in the Bill, we would have no axe to grind. Just to show this House that not all of us are opposed to the Bill, but that we wanted to point out certain words or clauses which might arouse the indignation of our people to be cut out, I should inform the House that I have myself helped these Osu people very much. About nine years ago, in Owerri Division, I was the very person who took the Osu people to the District Officer and the Resident to protest against the dedication of children, boys and girls, to juju. The District Officer, Mr Butcher, and the Resident, Mr Smith, took prompt action, and from that time to this day our people do not dedicate boys and girls. They use either cow, or goat or sheep in their propitiation ceremonies.

May I also point out that a good many of the Osus benefit materially from their position. They accept cows and goats and sheep used in propitiation ceremonies. The Dialas even give them money so that they can help to appease the gods. When this Bill was sent to us I felt that I should support it because I had suffered discrimination in the United States of America. When in the State of Missouri I was asked to go to eat in the kitchen when the others were eating in the house. This treatment hurt me, and on coming home I cannot think of practising discrimination against a class of people.

The parts of the Bill I am worried about are the words in clause 4 (1) (b), "molests, injures, annoys" particularly the word "annoys". Suppose somebody were to come to your house at a time you do not receive visitors and you say to him, "Go out". If he is an Osu it becomes an offence. But if he is a Diala what he will probably do is to take it coolly or retort, "Go out". I solicit the Government to take out this word "annoys".

Another phrase in clause 4 (1) (b) which causes me worry is, "or causes or attempts to cause obstruction to any persons in the exercise of any such right". I would ask that the following words be added after "right": "to which he or she is entitled". It is not all people that are entitled to everything. If these words are not added there is nothing to prevent an Osu wanting to enter any and every society to which he is not entitled, and if the members of the society say no to him he will turn round to say that they have obstructed him, whilst the truth is that he has no right to belong to that society. If you listened when the Premier read a quotation during his speech you would have heard where it was stated that the son born by an Oru woman though he could be regarded as a Diala might not hold the Ofor. Ofor is something by which a person is recognised as a head in a family. Without the addition of the words, "to which he or she is entitled" the Osu people will want to get the Ofor of the family, which is not held by any and everybody. We all know that not even the free-born is entitled to everything. Unless these words are added it will mean that what is refused a free-born will be an offence if it is refused an Osu.

If a man does something very wrong in my area, like stealing, the probable punishment is that we boycott him. This form of treating wrong-doers has been in existence for a very long time and is applied to everybody even if he is a free-born. The object is to make people to be honest. Under this Bill, if this treatment is meted to an Osu it will be an offence. I am giving these instances in order to show that certain clauses in the Bill will lead to litigations. These clauses should be amended.

To show that we in Owerri (according to what the Premier read as coming from our people in Kaduna) have tried very much to eradicate the Osu system, may I point out that an Osu man contested the last Federal Elections and many Dialas voted for him. (*Interruption: How many votes did he get?*) I do not know the number of votes he got, but I am sure he was the third runner-up. Had he won the election we would have accepted him as our representative.

Finally, what will happen when a free-born now refuses to call an Osu man to offer sacrifice for him. If he refuses to do this will he not be accused of denying the Osu man his right? The Government should have inserted in the Bill that with its passage into Law the Osu people would forsake all the rights to which they were entitled in offering sacrifices to jujus, or groves or shrines, because if you do not consult them you are depriving them of some of their rights.

I suggest that, as the Premier and the mover of this motion have said, circulars should be sent to churches, the local government councils, societies and trade unions, when this Bill is passed into law, so that the contents of this Bill will be known everywhere.

Mr Speaker, I beg to take my seat.

**The Minister of Health:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I do so because I regard it as a privilege to speak in support of this Bill. I come from a division where this Osu System still exists. It does not exist in all parts of Bende Division, but only in a small section of Bende Division, rather, in my own part of the Division. I must say that I personally am ashamed that in this

country today this Osu system still exists. One would ask what will happen if there is no Osu system. What will happen to these so-called gods to which these Osus are dedicated? What will happen to them? They will die. Mr Speaker, I submit, that that will be a very fine thing to happen in this Region. There are far too many gods. There is the god of water, the god of fire, the god of yam, the god of disease, the god of dysentery and all sorts of gods. Most of these Osus are human beings—people like you and me—dedicated for life to gods. And for any one to come to this honourable House and even attempt to defend this system is a matter of the greatest disgrace.

I know in my division one young man whose father was dedicated to one of these gods. He was rather a prosperous trader, incidentally the god was unable to keep the father alive, and on his father's death he refused point-blank to take up the worship of that god and all the paraphernalia. Nothing has happened to him to this day, and that fear has now completely wited away. That is what we want to happen in all the Region and we want these Osus to be set free.

I have another story to tell the honourable House. I know a young lady, very brilliant, very beautiful. Somebody wanted to marry her but because she was an Osu, the moment that man discovered it, he left that girl and the word went round that this girl was an Osu and up till today nobody has dared to go near her to ask her hand in marriage. This is the sort of thing that is happening in our country today and we have the nerve to criticise South Africa, and what the white man is doing in Kenya where our own kith and kin have been driven into the hills and reserves. We have the nerve to criticise America with its democracy where we heard one honourable Member say that he was asked to go into the kitchen to take his meal instead of the hall where the other guests were.

There was a young man, aged fourteen, called Emet Louis Tell. Just because he whistled at a white girl, the husband of that woman came and kidnapped that boy and went and killed him. A jury was set up to try the case and they acquitted him with all the clear evidence before them.

And we in this Eastern Region have the nerve to condemn an act like that. When I read that story I almost wept. But, Sir, it is much worse in this country because what you have here is a sort of prejudice. You cannot marry, you cannot mix with other people, you cannot own land. A small pamphlet here says that anyone can set up a wave of persecution against him at any time. Such an agitation once started, can never die down until the Osu is removed.

I think we have enough evidence to ban this thing. Really it is a disgrace. We should today move forward to a system, a clean system where there will be equal rights for all.

There is only one thing I really have against the Bill. The penalty is not enough. There should be no fines. Anybody who is caught going against any section of this Law when it is passed, ought to be jailed right away. I want to make my stand clear. I know in my own division I will be unpopular. There I have always stood against it. If you cannot extend basic human rights to all in England, Kenya, Uganda, South Africa, America at least in this our own country, we should make sure that these basic human rights are extended to all.

Sir, in a few months time, I hope this nation will come of age and may be when we reach the United Nations we might enquire into the state of our kith and kin in America, then we can argue from a position of strength if we have banned the Osu system.

I think, I will wind up by imploring honourable Members not to have a division on this Bill. It will go down very well in the outside world if it were said that the Eastern Region House of Assembly unanimously passed this Bill. About those fears of some honourable Members who are opposed to the Bill, I say that these gods will not do anything.

Chief Agbasiere has already said that these gods are made of hands; they will do nothing. I would not be happy to have a Division; let us support it in one solid voice. I support the Bill and hope the Minister will make an amendment to remove the fine of £50.

**Mr Speaker:** I would like to say it is quite clear which way the wind is now blowing. Also I want to remind all honourable Members that this morning we suspended Standing Orders in order to enable this debate to go on. Tomorrow, the Appropriation Bill is in the Committee Stage and will take at least seven days and I do not particularly want to sit up all night. In connection with this, I think it is only fair that Members should not repeat themselves unnecessarily. I doubt if there is any other arguments that can be advanced now which we have not already heard. After the exhaustive speech of the mover and the honourable the Premier, I also think it is my duty to draw Members' attention to our Standing Orders.

Standing Order 35 (1) reads as follows:—

“Mr Speaker or the Chairman, after having called the attention of the House or of the Committee, to the conduct of a Member, who persists in irrelevance, or tedious repetition either of his own arguments, or of the arguments used by other Members in debate, may direct him to discontinue his Speech.”

I therefore appeal to honourable Members that unless they have anything particularly to refer to the Bill to refrain from speaking.

I therefore propose to put the question.

**Mr Eyo Ita:** Mr Speaker, Sir, we on this side of the House stand very firmly on our feet; like my friend, the Chief from Awka, we stand firmly on our feet to support Government in getting this Bill passed. We feel very grateful for the Bill. I think the Commission that went to conduct the investigation of the conditions of the bride price has done the country a great service. That Commission is like a Doctor who is sent to diagnose a disease and in the process discovered worse diseases. I think the Bride Price Commission should be heartily congratulated for digging out these social evils. I think the Minister of Welfare should also be heartily congratulated for following up immediately and as speedily as this to remove this thorn in the flesh not only of our people in Owerri Division or Owerri Province but in the whole country. I think it is a matter for pride that this thing should come up now to be dealt with and abolished for ever.

The honourable the Premier has put the case so very beautifully and so very strongly that I do not feel it necessary to recount the horrors of the system and why we should abolish it. Even if we were not Christians who believe in the dignity of man and freedom of our country we ought to support this Bill because we cannot build democracy on a system which is so evil.

It is said that in the case of Abraham Lincoln he had two alternatives facing him at the time he made his proclamation emancipating slaves. He was facing the problem of either holding the Union together or of abolishing slavery, and he found that he could not save the Union by having certain people free and others slaves. For that reason he both abolished slavery and saved the Union.

I believe it will go down in history as a great achievement on our part if at this stage in the development of our country we abolish something which is so evil. Therefore, without spending more words I want to say that we on this side of the House very heartily and firmly stand behind the Government. We support this Bill.

**Mr C. Okafor (Orlu Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to support this Bill. In doing so, I want to make everybody understand that I am a free-born man, not an Osu, and can trace my genealogy back to the seventh degree. One thing I want everybody to understand is that once you have any connection with an Osu you become an Osu. If you have ever gone to



[Abolition of the Osu System  
Law, 1956]

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[Committee]

school and sat together with an Osu or if you ever taught and marked their paper in the school you automatically become an Osu. Therefore everybody should support this Bill. It is a case of pride and conservatism, selfishness and primitive superstition. That is the only reason why people still adhere to the old system of observing the Osu system.

In my own part of Orlu Division, we have entirely forgotten everything about them and we have emancipated them. Therefore you must understand, because human beings discriminated against them, God blesses the Osu people. Their men are the most handsome and their women are the most beautiful. When they put their hands into any trade within a few years their shillings become thousands of pounds, and it is all because God has recognised them as people who are rejected that is why He blesses them. Therefore let us emancipate them and see that blessing should also come to free people. I do not see why in this place we should show repugnance to Osu people while we criticise those who discriminate against the blackman. Therefore, it is wrong for anybody to stand here and say "No" when the question is put. I therefore support this Bill wholly and entirely. I would add that the punishment should be raised to £500.

**The Minister of Welfare:** Mr Speaker, I am glad to note the saying of the Poet Tennyson that "Old order changeth giving place to new". I have always believed that the Eastern Nigerian people are a thinking people. They would at all time discriminate what is wrong from what is right and tonight I am all the more convinced of that. I am also happy in that the Opposition stand solidly behind us.

I do not want to waste your time but I would like to make some observation about what Dr Obonna said. He wants some amendment to paragraph 2, and I think I will give immediate consideration to that. He said there was no consultation; that is not right. I took immediate steps when I got the report of the Bride Price Committee before the Executive Council, and circularised every division especially Owerri Division. When I took the paper to the Executive Council the second time, I was asked to circularise, and I did that; so the people received all the information they needed. I received a lot of telegrams and letters from the Osu people.

I am sorry to note that a few days ago in a cocktail party at the house of the Minister of Industries, there was a young woman of status of diala class who sent for me and said she wanted to confer with me. She said: "I am in love with an Osu boy. I cannot marry him because he is an Osu". It is very pitiful indeed. Another case was after the House had been in session, a young man from H.R.C. at Owerri came to me and said: "I can't get married to a young woman I love because I am an Osu". We cannot allow these things to continue and I feel that we should give a stop to this matter. As I have said, I do not want to waste your time; because I feel Government will get this Bill through. I am only expressing to the House how deeply happy I am when the Bill is through the House.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*

*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

*Clause 1 agreed to.*

*Clause 2.*

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Mr Chairman, I rise to move in clause 2 to leave out the definition of Osu and insert the following "Osu means an Oru or Ohu or Ume or Omoni, and also includes the descendant of an Osu, an Oru, an Ume, and an Omoni and any person subject to a legal or social disability or social stigma which is similar to or nearly similar to that borne by an Osu, an Oru, an Ohu, or Ume or an Omoni".

Mr Chairman, I beg to move.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clauses 3 to 11 agreed to.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported with an Amendment; Read the Third time and passed.*

#### ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, that this House do now adjourn—(*The Premier*).

*Adjourned accordingly at sixteen minutes past seven o'clock p.m.*

[Written Answers]

[Written Answers]

**WRITTEN ANSWER TO QUESTION**

**Tuesday, 20th March, 1956**

**Pipe-Borne Water Supply for Owerri Township**

110. **Chief S. E. Onukogu** asked the Minister of Development, when will pipe-borne water supply be provided for Owerri Township.

**The Minister of Development:** I cannot say. Owerri can benefit under the Development Plan. But the plan requires engineers and inspectors to execute it. Every effort is being made to engage experienced staff.

# Eastern House of Assembly

Wednesday, 21st March, 1956

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

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

Prayers

## ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

### Royal Visit to the Eastern Region

33. **Mr D. A. Nnaji** asked the Minister of Welfare whether the school children who were brought into Port Harcourt, Enugu, Calabar, for the Royal Visit were fed by the Regional Government; if so, how much was spent for this purpose in each place.

**Mr L. O. Uzoigwe (Parliamentary Secretary):** Yes, Sir, the school children brought into Port Harcourt, Enugu and Calabar for the Royal Visit were fed by the Regional Government.

The cost was as follows:—

|                      | £     | s  | d  |                        |
|----------------------|-------|----|----|------------------------|
| Enugu... ..          | 1,468 | 9  | 5  | on food alone.         |
| Calabar ... ..       | 862   | 10 | 10 | on food and transport. |
| Port Harcourt ... .. | 2,773 | 6  | 6  | on food and transport. |

No figures are available to show the cost of food alone, apart from transport, at Calabar and Port Harcourt.

**Mr D. A. Nnaji:** Why was no transport provided for the school children who came to Enugu.

**The Minister of Welfare:** As far as I am aware the Government provided transport for all the school children.

### Resident Magistrates for Ahoada Division

74. **Mr J. H. E. Nwuke** asked the Premier how soon a resident Magistrate will be posted to Ahoada Division.

**Mr A. G. Umoh (Parliamentary Secretary):** The Premier is informed that there are, at present, only fifteen Magistrates, including Chief Magistrates, against an approved establishment of twenty-five, and it is very difficult to staff the eleven Magisterial Districts and the three Chief Magistrates Groups which presently exist, and maintain leave reliefs. Every effort is being made to fill the existing vacancies to facilitate this. A Bill is now before the House which provides for a reduction in the prescribed post-call experience from five to three years. As soon as the deficiency in the establishment has been met the opening of new Districts will be considered by the Chief Justice and the claims of Ahoada taken into account.

**Mr M. E. Ogon:** Does not the honourable the Premier think that this inability to recruit Magistrates is due to the disparity in pay between Magistrates in the Western Region and here?

**The Premier:** It may have been so until about a month ago, but when the Appropriation Bill comes into the Committee of Supply, honourable Members will notice that we have increased the salaries of Magistrates and Chief Magistrates.

**Mr Nwuke:** Is the Premier aware that the people of Ahoada Division are dissatisfied by the Magistrate from Owerri hearing cases at Ahoada?

**Mr A. G. Umoh (Parliamentary Secretary):** The honourable the Premier is not aware.

#### Ahoada Magistrate's Court

82. **Mr J. H. E. Nwuke** asked the Premier, whether he is aware of the inconvenience caused to litigants from Ikwerre and Etche by the long distance they have to cover when attending the Magistrate's Court at Ahoada: if so, will Government consider the hearing of cases by the Magistrate at Ikwerre and Etche periodically.

**Mr A. G. Umoh (Parliamentary Secretary):** There are many places in the Region where litigants have to travel long distances to attend Magistrates' Courts, and the inconvenience is fully appreciated. The Magistrate, Owerri, who sits at Ahoada also sits at Orlu, Oguta and Owerri and it is not considered that more can be expected of the Magistrate.

When the difficulties of recruitment, to which I have referred in answer to an earlier question by the honourable Member, have been overcome it may be possible to consider the holding of Sessions at additional stations, but, at present this is not possible.

#### 9th Mile-Nsukka Road

93. **Mr M. U. Obayi** asked the Minister of Transport, what is the present position with regard to the tarring of the 9th Mile Corner-Nsukka road.

**The Minister of Transport:** The tarring of this road is a part of the Federal Government Economic Programme. The necessary survey has already been carried out.

**Mr E. A. Chime:** Is the Minister aware that money has been voted since 1954 for the tarring of this road.

**The Minister of Transport:** I am not aware.

**Mr D. A. Nnaji:** What is the result of the survey carried out?

**The Minister of Transport:** The result is that the Federal Government is now writing out documents to call tenders.

**Mr R. O. Ukuta, M.B.E.:** May the Minister tell us any part that he played about the tarring of this road?

**The Minister of Transport:** My part is to make representations to the Federal Minister of Works, and that I have done several times.

#### Visit to Ogoni Division

96. **Mr Kemte Giadom** asked the Minister of Transport, if he has since his assumption of office visited Ogoni Division to study the road problems there.

**The Minister of Transport:** Yes, Sir. During the period October, 1954 to date Ogoni Division was visited as follows:—

15th October, 1954.

11th February, 1955.

26th to 27th April, 1955.

**Mr Giadom:** Is the Minister aware that Trunk B road leading from Port Harcourt to Ogoni has been closed down for over a year now and money has been voted for it since 1954-55 and what is he doing about that?

**The Minister of Transport:** I am aware that the road is closed for some time and money is also voted for the construction and tarring of that road. The preliminary work has been done for the past five to six months and we have now invited tenders and the 22nd of this month is the closing date.

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Speaker, with your permission I would like to make a statement on the subject of the re-organisation of the administration. On the 22nd March, 1955 this House unanimously passed a motion in the following terms: "That this House disapprove the policy of provincial administration and favours divisional administration and therefore urges Government to abolish the existing system of provincial administration and set up machinery to administer all the divisions in the Eastern Region directly from Enugu".

At that time, I made a statement in the House to the effect that when a new Local Government Law and Customary Courts Law had been passed, the Government's plans to replace the provincial administration would be announced. The Eastern Region Local Government Law became operative on the 1st July, 1955, and with the appointment of District Officers as Local Government Commissioners the administration has been brought within the Local Government framework. The Customary Courts Law will be presented to this House today.

During the past five years the fact that Residents have had no direct say in Local Government matters has established the general practice of correspondence direct between the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Councils and with District Officers when necessary. Also, powers formerly exercised by Residents by delegation from the Governor have now been delegated to Ministers. The replacement of Direct Taxation Ordinance in the Region by the Finance Law, 1956 means that Residents, as such, have no statutory powers in taxation. The introduction of the Customary Courts Law will result in Residents no longer exercising the jurisdiction they had under the Native Courts Ordinance. These changes have rendered the posts of Residents almost entirely redundant. It has, therefore been decided that from the 1st April, 1956, the Provincial system will be replaced by a system whereby the officers in charge of Divisions deal directly with the Ministries on subjects within Ministerial Portfolios. Provincial Officers will cease to exist and the personnel will be reallocated to Divisions or to Ministries.

Naturally the details will take a little time to work out and implement. In taking this decision, the Regional Government has had to consider certain other factors. In the first place the five posts of Residents in the present establishment are all filled and under the Constitution they cannot be abolished.

Secondly, there are many officers who, though competent enough in the field, are not suitable for posts in the Ministries. It is considered necessary to offer some promotion inducement to such officers.

Thirdly, the list of Administrative Disposition at the 1st of March, 1956, shows that of some seventy officers in the Divisions, thirty have less than three years experience and it happens from time to time that such junior officers and others with not much more service, have had to take charge of Divisions. It is necessary that both they and the Ministry should have the benefit of the advice of senior officers of greater experience in times of difficulties.

It has been decided, therefore that there shall be twelve super-scale posts—five in Group 6, since as I have stated previously, the posts of Residents grade cannot be abolished, and seven in Group 7—that is Senior District Officer Grade. The two existing Senior Residents will hold their present grades as personal to themselves. These twelve super-scale officers will be placed in charge of important Divisions—those containing large counties or municipalities—and in addition will be charged with responsibility where necessary of supervising the work of junior officers in charge of neighbouring Divisions. Such supervision will be confined to ensuring that the policy of the Government was carried out and to co-ordinating action affecting two or more Divisions. It is not intended that these super-scale officers will be in charge of several Divisions as the Residents did. They will be in charge of each Division and will have no offices other than their own divisional offices, but they will have to keep an eye on junior officers to advise them in difficulties, to co-ordinate action and to ensure that the policy of the Government is correctly carried out.

[Provincial Administration]

21st March, 1956

[Presentation of a Bill:  
Customary Courts Law, 1956  
—Second Reading]

It has been decided to group Divisions as follows:—

The first name being in each case the super-scale post. Onitsha and Awka, Udi including Enugu, Nsukka and Awgu. Abakalili and Afikpo, Ogoja including Obudu with Ikom and Obubra. Aba, Owerri and Orlu. Bende including Umuahia-Ibeku and Okigwi. Port Harcourt, Ahoada and Ogoni. Degema and Brass. Calabar, Uyo, Eket and Opobo, Ikot Ekpene, Abak and Enyong.

The concentration of control of Local Government Councils at Ministerial level has resulted in a very large increase of work in the Ministry of Internal Affairs. In addition to handling the day to day affairs of over 100 County and District Councils, there are new developments to be catered for, such as the Local Government Service Board, the Tenders' Board and the Local Government Whitley Councils, all of which must be set up in the near future. There can be no doubt that the Ministry of Internal Affairs is at present very sadly understaffed. It has been decided to reorganise the Ministry and to rename it the Ministry of Local Government with three branches—one for Political and Administrative matters, one for Finance and one for Personnel. To staff these, it will be necessary to increase the number of Principal Assistant Secretaries by two, so that there is one in charge of each branch and to add three more Assistant Secretaries. There must also be an increase in the clerical establishment of one staff officer, formerly called Assistant Chief Clerk, five First-class Clerks and ten Third-class Clerks.

The abolition of provincial offices means that personnel will be available to make up this increase in the establishment of the Ministry, so that there will be no overall increase in the total establishment of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration—that is Heads 454 and 455. The necessary amendments will be moved in the Committee Stage of the Appropriation Bill.

#### AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF PUBLIC BUSINESS PRESENTATION OF BILLS

Local Constabularies—Bill entitled—The Local Constabularies Law, 1956—presented by the Minister of Internal Affairs, read the First time; to be read a Second time on Tuesday, 27th March, 1956.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### The Customary Courts Law, 1956

*Order for Second Reading read.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Speaker, I rise to move the second reading of the Bill for a law to make better provision for the administration of justice and constitution of Customary Courts.

This Bill which has been eagerly awaited by many people for some considerable time now, will, I am sure, be welcomed by both sides of the House. As honourable Members will recollect, as a result of the dissatisfaction with the composition and operation of Native Courts, His Excellency the Governor of Nigeria in September, 1950, appointed a Commission of Inquiry to inquire into the working of the Native Court System in the Eastern Provinces with the following terms of Reference:—

- (1) To investigate the working of the Native Court System and review the position with regard to the law to be administered in the Native Courts of the Eastern Region.
- (2) To report on the constitution of these Courts.
- (3) To consider the practice and procedure in the Native Courts and the system of transfers, appeals and reviews.
- (4) (a) To make recommendations as to the enactment of legislation to amend if necessary the Native Courts Ordinance Cap. 142.
- (b) To make recommendations as to the enactment of legislation to replace the Native Courts Ordinance 36 of 1948 which expires on the 1st October, 1951.

The Commission of Inquiry which consisted of Mr Justice N. J. Brooke, Chief H. Buowari Brown, Mr A. Asuquo Okon, and Chief M. W. Ubani held meetings at Onitsha, Aba, Port Harcourt, Uyo, Enugu and Abakaliki, during the months of September, and October, 1950. It was intended thereafter that the Commission should visit the Cameroons, but owing to exceptional weather conditions, it was necessary for the Commission to postpone this visit. In the end this Commission never visited the Cameroons. A separate commission was appointed which made recommendations for the Southern Cameroons.

The Report of the Brooke Commission for the Eastern Provinces, minus the Cameroons and Bamenda Provinces, was published by the Government Printer in 1953. This report therefore, deals exclusively with the present Eastern Region. This has proved appropriate in view of the constitutional changes which took place on the 1st October, 1954.

Since the receipt of the report in 1953, for one reason or another it has not been possible to decide what effect should be given to the recommendations of the Commission. Under the present Constitution, which provides for the regionalisation of the Judiciary, Government has now enacted legislation setting up High Courts and Magistrates Courts for the Eastern Region of the Federation of Nigeria.

The time is therefore, ripe for fresh legislation for the Courts administering Customary Law, and the Bill which we are now to consider will replace the existing legislation—the Native Courts Ordinance, Chapter 142 of the Laws of Nigeria. The Bill is based on the draft Bill for a Customary Courts Ordinance prepared by Mr N. J. Brooke; although it differs from it substantially because of the constitutional changes which have taken place since the draft was prepared. It also differs from the recommendations of the Brooke Report since the position of Administrative Officers which has already altered since the report was written will be altered still further.

Before proceeding to discuss the provisions of the Bill, I think it will be practicable to give a short resume of the history of the Native Courts since their first establishment in the Eastern Provinces in the first years of this century.

The first Native Courts were established for the Eastern Region as far back as 1901, to administer Local Government law and custom in so far as it was not repugnant to natural justice and morality.

These courts were native councils presided over by the District Commissioner and minor courts. The native councils were in addition to being courts of first instance, appeal courts for decisions of the minor courts. Further appeal lay to the Supreme Courts where debt, damage or fine exceeded £50 or the term of imprisonment three months. When hearing such appeals the judge of the Supreme Court sat with assessors. One of the difficulties of the early system was that the Supreme Court and the native councils had concurrent jurisdiction, and it not too frequently happened that the Supreme Court sitting in distant places adjudicated on matters, such as the definition of tribal boundaries, which had already been adjudicated in a native council. As a result of this in 1914, the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court was restricted to commercial centres, and a new system of provincial courts staffed by Administrative Officers and native courts in which Administrative Officers no longer presided, but over which they exercised close supervision, was established. These courts were set up under the Native Courts Ordinance No. 8 of 1914. The provincial Courts administered English law but the procedure was simplified.

The preoccupation of administrative officers with the work of the provincial courts eventually led to the native courts being inadequately supervised, and dissatisfaction with them became acute. The fact that the native court members who were appointed by warrant were given executive functions as native authorities, was also a reason for the growing dissatisfaction with the courts. The court members who came to be known as warrant chiefs exercised their authority through the court clerks and court messengers, who thus obtained a position of undue influence.



Many warrant chiefs were men of considerable force of character and initiative and wielded very considerable authority. In many instances they abused their powers and were in opposition to the constitutional executive authority of the villages.

The report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Aba riots had a great deal to say on the subject of native courts and warrant chiefs; and it attributed the lack of success in the attempt begun in the late twenties to establish councils based on the indigenous social structure to the weakening of the authority of the traditional members of the councils by the taking over of their judicial functions by the native courts.

In 1933, there was a substantial reform in the judicial system. The provincial courts were abolished and the protectorate courts established in their places. These courts were the Magistrates and the High Courts. At the same time the Native Courts Ordinance Cap. 142 was enacted establishing the Native Courts as they are, in essentials, today.

In the years between 1934, when the Native Courts Ordinance came into operation, and 1950, when the Brooke Commission was appointed, there were very considerable improvements in the standard of the native courts. This was largely effected by reducing the size of benches and panels of court members and by more care in their selection. But the improvements were very slow and patchy. In some areas, the courts were reasonably good, while in others they were still very unsatisfactory.

The Brooke Commission while it considered that improvements must be effected, did not think that any radical change was needed or desired. In the draft Bill for a Customary Courts Ordinance, therefore, Mr Justice Brooke kept very closely to the framework of the Native Court system. He believed that one of the most necessary changes was in the authority and composition of courts of appeal. He held that what was necessary was a system of courts for comparatively restricted geographical areas with appeal courts exercising jurisdiction over quite a large area, with a small bench of specially selected members, possibly a single judge with assessors. He considered that specially trained clerks should be provided for these courts.

Since then constitutional changes have to some extent made the Brooke Commission's recommendations and the draft Bill look rather old-fashioned. Government has, therefore, decided that a new system of customary courts should be established, and these are embodied in the Bill now before the House.

I apologise, Mr Speaker, for the rather lengthy disquisition on the history of the native courts in this Region, but I am now done with this aspect of the matter and will turn my attention to the provisions of the Bill. In particular, I shall address my remarks to those of its provisions which are a departure from previous practice.

Part II of the Bill, which deals with the establishment and constitution of customary courts, provides that the Minister charged with the responsibility for customary courts may, by warrant under his hand, establish such district courts and county courts as he shall think fit. The Minister similarly will appoint the persons who are to be members of these courts. It is the intention that district courts only shall have original jurisdiction, and the county courts shall exercise only appellate jurisdiction. This Part also provides for such matters as sessions of the court, the remuneration of members and officers of the courts and the provisions of facilities. It also provides that the revenues from courts shall accrue to the Local Government Council responsible for the maintenance of the courts. The Minister is empowered to declare that existing courts, established under the Native Courts Ordinance, shall be deemed to be District Courts or County Courts established under this law.

The jurisdiction of customary courts is set out in Part V of the Bill and in the First Schedule. It will be observed that there will be two grades of District Courts only. This part also provides for the law to be administered by the customary courts—clauses 22–29 refer.

In Part VI, which covers proceedings in customary courts, it should be observed that clause 31 (1) prohibits a legal practitioner, as defined in clause 2, from appearing, or acting for, or assisting any party before a customary court. Learned and honourable Members may consider this a strange provision in this Bill, but Government does not consider that the time is yet ripe for the members of customary courts to be faced with the forensic eloquence of our Nigerian bar. Moreover, there are now many opportunities both on the bench and at the bar for our legal practitioners which did not exist when there was a demand for legal practitioners to be permitted to appear in the customary courts.

To speak seriously on this point there are the strongest grounds for keeping proceedings in the customary courts as simple and inexpensive as possible. And with the avenue of appeal to the Magistrate's Court and the High Court, which will exist, it will always be open to dissatisfied parties to brief counsel when a suit goes to the Magistrate's Courts or to the High Court on appeal.

Transfers are dealt with in Part VII of the Bill, which provides for the transfer of cases by the Customary Courts Adviser, which term by definition includes Assistant Customary Courts Advisers, either of his own motion or on the application of either party to a cause, to some other customary court, to a Magistrate's Court, or to the High Court. Likewise, a customary court may transfer any case or matter before it, before judgment is given, to any other customary court of competent jurisdiction. This Part also provides for the transfer of suits from the High Court or the Magistrate's Courts when it appears to the court that the matter is one which can be more appropriately dealt with in a customary court.

Part XI of the Bill, which deals with the control of customary courts, is very important. The Customary Courts Adviser and Assistant Customary Courts Adviser appointed by the Governor under clause 57 (1) will, as the name suggests, advise the customary courts where there has apparently been an error or a miscarriage of justice; and to that end the customary courts adviser will have access at all times to the records and proceedings of such court. Where advice is offered to a customary court and is rejected, the Customary Courts Adviser will advise the Minister and transfer the case to the appropriate County Court where a District Court is involved, or to the appropriate Magistrate's Court where a County Court is involved. This Part also provides that the prerogative writs of *mandamus*, *certiorari* and *prohibition* shall not lie in respect of any proceedings in District Courts or County Courts.

Appeals are dealt with in Part X of the Bill, and, as will be seen provides for the appointment of county courts as courts of appeal from district courts. It also provides for further appeal to Magistrates Courts or to the High Court and, in certain matters, to the Federal Supreme Court.

To sum up, Mr Speaker, this Bill provides for a system of customary courts in tune with the time in which we live. The powers of the Administrative Officer as such has been abolished in relation to the customary court. Review of cases has been removed; and the first steps have been taken to integrate the customary courts with the magistrates' courts and the High Court. This, I think both sides of the House will agree, is a step forward.

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Health:** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

**Chief U. Onu-Chima (Afikpo Division)** Mr Speaker, this Bill is a welcome one; but it should be noted that it is a carbon copy of the previous Native Courts Ordinance. In proof of this, may I refer you to clause 4, subsection (5): "No person shall be appointed as a member unless any advice and recommendation offered in that behalf by the Customary Courts Adviser . . ." Who the Customary Courts Advisers are is not defined; they may be District Officers; they may be Residents. I have always been bringing it before the Resident of my province that the native court benches in my area are currrupt; but he has never acted.

I have also observed that the proposed customary courts have no jurisdiction over white men. This means that if a white man, whether he is a Syrian, or comes from any other European country, commits a crime he cannot be tried in these courts. This is exactly the case with the former Native Courts Ordinance.

This Bill contradicts itself. The Customary Courts Adviser may be an African in which case he is liable to be tried by the customary courts under section 17 which says: "The following persons or classes of persons shall be subject to the jurisdiction of customary courts: persons of African descent, provided that the mode of life of such persons is that of the general community . . ." On the other hand, a non-African, be he even a Syrian merchant, cannot be tried in these courts but he can be appointed a member of such court under clause 5 (1).

In other Regions even District Officers are tried in such courts. The Emirs in the Northern Region can try District Officers in their own courts. In the Western Region they are tried in native courts. All that the Attorney-General has done is to copy the old native courts Ordinance verbatim. We must have a realistic law. If a man, whatever his nationality, commits a crime let him be tried and punished by the local courts of the place in which he lives.

I am sorry that I have not the book *The Political Blueprint* written by the Leader of this house to quote, but in section 34 of the book he said that the essence of justice is to maintain within a vicinity that law which is not brutish and which includes any person who commits a crime. Therefore, placing some people outside the jurisdiction of the customary courts is encouraging evil. You passed a Bill yesterday to abolish the Osu system saying that one class of persons should not be above another, but now a person who is not a descendant in this part of the country will be free to do anything he likes, but will not be tried.

Sir, may I point out also that the fee is too high. I am referring to clause 40 of the Native Court Ordinance. If somebody is charged with an offence, supposing he kills a man, he is fined £60 and six months imprisonment. I want to make it clear, Sir, that this customary court is not customary in that it does not include all parts of Native Law and Custom. If a non-African in this Region commits a crime, he goes to Enugu to be tried. The Emirs of the North have all along paid attention to their own custom and are developing on it. In the West it is the same. But to make a law here and say it is in accordance with Native Law and Custom, and let non-Africans to be free when they commit any crime is bad. I want to refer this House to an incident which happened on the 11th of November, 1953, during an N.C.N.C. campaign tour in Afikpo. One Mr J. Livingstone-Booth made himself master over crimes in Afikpo Division but was not punished; and he is supposed to work under the Local Government Ministry. He broke a bridge with intent to do harm against the delegates, but was not punished. That was an illegal act. The National President and his co-delegates were present during this incident.

Is that not an intention to murder? Is that the type of crime these people can commit in this area and they are allowed to go free? The bone of my contention is that this law is incomplete. Something should be done by way of amendment to provide that any person who commits a crime within the Region is punished. I support the Bill in principle, though with doubts.

**Mr O. O. Ita (Eket Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I rise to support this Bill in principle. I was one of those selected at Calabar to give evidence during the Brooke's Commission. I remember that when I was at Uyo on that day the chief complaint against the native courts was bribery and corruption, and we had suggested—three of the lawyers who were there—that the only way to check it would be to reduce the number of judges. But reading through this Bill (I refer to clause 4, dealing with the personnel of the court) I do not see that this suggestion is being adhered to. The numbers of judges will be just as many as they were before. This fact makes the proposed law not to be an improvement on the present one.

One difficulty in the native court system is that there is a sort of bargaining going on between the litigants and the judges. If you can capture three out of five judges you have got the judgment. Sometimes, you may capture a President and one other person. If you are not quick enough, and your opponent is able to outbid you, you have lost. During reviews of cases, when the District Officer asks the judges why they gave a judgment one looks at the other, and the other looks at another, and that is the end of it. Nobody will say why they have given the particular judgment.

We are actually imitating the British system of justice. It is only in the case of preliminary investigations that we usually have judges sitting in a large number because they actually do not pass the final judgment. They only get the facts down and the clerk is usually a trained lawyer who knows precisely the difference between facts and law. But in the native court system the difficulty is that the clerks are usually educated but the judges are not. I have seen in many cases the clerks taking down proceedings in pencil. They take them home and transcribe them in ink. In ninety-nine cases out of hundred whoever buys the clerk has bought the facts; so that when the judges gave judgment thinking they were passing their judgment on the facts which they had heard, they were in fact basing their judgment on entirely different facts from what they heard. When it goes on appeal or on review an entirely different situation arises.

So I urge that at this stage we should have a responsible judge who is educated to take down the proceedings himself in ink. We may then have assessors who are old men and who really understand native customs. Even so as I said once in Calabar, during the hearing of an appeal, the Native Customs of Calabar are as varied as the number of people in Calabar. You can never get two chiefs to agree on a particular native custom. A thing is a native custom when it suits your purpose. When you get a bottle of whisky it is another; and a bottle of brandy yet another custom.

There is another point which, I feel, might have been an oversight on the part of the draftsman. I refer to Section 59 which deals with the prerogative writs. The reason why lawyers usually want prerogative writs is that usually you can have recourse to these writs to lessen the rigour of proceedings by moving a Higher Court to compel the Lower Court—the Native Court—to bring a particular judgment up to the higher court to be quashed, because it is contrary to natural justice. If this is abolished now it means that a poor litigant who has been imposed upon by the native court has no other alternative except to proceed by way of appeal. If he has not the money that is the end of the matter even if a judgment is contrary to all rules of equity and justice. So, I suggest that that particular provision should not have existed; it should rather remain as it was before in the Native Courts Ordinance which the present Ordinance seeks to repeal.

Here I may point out what happens in ninety-nine cases out of hundred. Take a case involving a title to land. Well, when we take it to the native court the native court may leave the title to land and decide the issue of possession. When you take it on appeal the appeal may leave possession and go back to title; so that you get two conflicting things in one particular action that is brought in court.

The usual thing is to appeal to a higher court to bring that judgment to the higher court to examine in the light of law, and to request that they quash it and start all over again to get the justice you want. But if it is abolished here, the poor litigants may be unable to bear the expense of either going to the county court or the Magistrate's Court. Then you will go to the high court before the end will come. That is my own experience of appeals. The litigants always like to carry all appeals to the final court before they are satisfied.

Therefore, instead of preventing these people from fighting their cases in that way it would be proper to allow that particular provision to continue, so that if you can help your client and you know that there has been an injustice owing to improper appreciation of the issues involved you can then move a higher court to examine it and then regularise the position, either by asking for a fresh hearing or by giving judgment to the person who has adduced sufficient evidence to justify that judgment.

Referring to what the honourable the Premier said (perhaps in a jest though it is really true) that ever since I came back from the United Kingdom and started my practice I had never appeared in any native court, I feel it will be a waste of time to do that because they will not understand what we are talking about. For instance, in some cases a person might be prosecuted for trespassing. In the high court that is a civil offence. In the native court it is sometimes a crime. It is so difficult for anybody to go and convince the native court judges that this is not a crime. They will look at you and tell you that they are used to treating such matters that way, and that is the answer. I feel we have got enough in the higher court to detain us there. My contention is that we should reduce the number of judges and allow prerogative writ to continue. This will enable the Higher Court to query the decision of the native court without going through the process of appeal.

With these few remarks, I support the Bill in principle.

**Mr C. A. Abangwu (Nsukka Division):** Mr Speaker, in rising to support the Bill I would stress very briefly two points which I think should be taken into consideration before the Bill is passed into Law.

The first, Sir, is that the time is due when this Region can afford to go all out and establish customary courts in place of the old Native Courts with something different from what we used to know before. I have observed in the speech which was made some time ago here, that the present Bill is not very much different in respect of appeals from the old Native Courts Ordinance which was drafted some years ago. I would have thought that everybody who is in this Region should have been brought under the jurisdiction of the customary courts. I say this, bearing in mind that even in the Northern Region, when this Native Courts Ordinance was altered and brought into the Regional Law, they provided that everybody in the Region should come under the jurisdiction of the Native Courts Law. I think this Region, which is a little bit ahead in this respect, should have gone forward and had the courage to bring everybody under the jurisdiction of the courts. That is my point.

The second point I might refer to is the jurisdiction of the courts. Under the proposed Law it is envisaged to have Grade A and Grade B Courts. Now, the jurisdiction of these Courts is very much limited—one is £25, and the other is, I think, £50. These amounts, at the present stage, are very small. Under the old law, the courts had almost the same jurisdiction—£25 and £50. You will find therefore that some one who has a big claim, say, in respect of dowry, which might be up to £150, cannot safely go to the native courts. (*Interruptions:* Dowry is now only £30). If I am claiming for a wife that I married ten years ago, and the new Law is going to be retrospective for ten years, I must still claim this particular amount of dowry which I paid when this law was not in existence. So a case might arise where it would be necessary to claim the sum of more than £30 which the present law is going to establish.

The present value of money has very much decreased and in deciding on the jurisdiction of the courts there should have been an increase of the amount which can be claimed from the customary courts. I might add that even up to £100 is not such a large sum at present. I think that if the jurisdiction of Grade A Courts was raised to £100, that would lighten the matter. I have known, personally, cases where people want to take up a matter in the Native Courts and claim about £65. The District Officer will write back and correct me, and say this court has not the jurisdiction to hear it. If you go to the Magistrates' Courts although the amount is within their competent jurisdiction, as it is exclusively a matter for the native courts, they cannot entertain it. The man is stranded. He must either claim less or forgo the whole amount.

I would like to make some observations on the power which this Bill proposes to give to native courts. It says that native courts shall have the power to issue search warrants. This provision is made with the best of intentions, but at this stage of our development I think it is placing a very dangerous weapon in the hands of the native courts. It is for this reason

that, at the present time, the power to issue search warrants is vested in the Magistrates and Justices of the Peace only. If somebody has a complaint to make, in which it is necessary to search a person, then you have to swear a certain form before the Magistrate, who will go into the matter to know whether there is any need to issue a search warrant.

Under the proposed law what happens is you then go to the President of the native court. The President may be a person who is completely illiterate. The Court Messenger will produce a search warrant, and he may not know what is contained in it, with the result that anyone who has malice against another person can go before this man and swear to anything, which he can deny at any time, and then go to ravage the person's home. The President of the native courts can always say, "I do not know what was written in the warrant". If one had a warrant to look for a pair of glasses and, going down removed a bag of seeds, that would be trespass in law, and if all the people claimed they did not know what was in the warrant, the man would have no remedy at all. I, therefore, contend that the power of search in the hands of the President of the native courts, as envisaged in this law, is very, very dangerous.

I would say that the power which the Magistrates have at present to issue warrants suffices for our needs until we come to the stage when the officers of native courts will all be completely literate and can appreciate the gravity of search warrants.

If I might digress, I refer this House to a series of cases we had in England dealing with search warrants. In those days it was a weapon which was being used against enemies of certain sections, and when the cases came to court the Judges of the High Court in England awarded very heavy damages against persons who were found guilty of illegally issuing these warrants.

I am warning that if we give this power to the native courts it may be necessary to safeguard the interest and sacredness of a person's home. In this respect, I would say we should defer this particular power given to native courts.

The other point I want to mention is prerogative writs. When I was just coming in I heard my honourable Friend O. O. Ita referring to these writs. I am not going into all that but these writs serve a very useful purpose. For example, if we find a Native Court has exceeded its jurisdiction, as where it has the power to try a case for £25 and it is trying a case involving £60, and there are no such prerogative writs, the higher courts will have no power to control the Court and ask it to stop hearing the case. Or if we find a Native Court illegally imprisoning somebody or doing something which is obviously illegal, higher courts will be powerless to act if you remove these prerogative writs. As matters stand in the Bill there is no power by which you can control the Courts.

I maintain that it would be to the interest and preservation of the freedom of the person that we leave these prerogatives to lie. I would just mention a particular case. If, for example, a Native Court is adjudicating a case relating to land which lies within the jurisdiction of two customary courts, when it has not the power to do so because the land is not lying wholly within the jurisdiction of that court, the proper thing to do if the judgment has already been given is for the Higher Court to issue a writ of *Certiorari*—that is, a writ by which the higher court quashes the judgment of the lower court because it had no jurisdiction to determine the case. Under the proposed Law should such a case arise there is nothing we can do about it. I do not know any particular advantage which we are going to gain by removing these three writs of *Prohibition*, *Certiorari*, and *Habeas Corpus*.

I now refer to the section dealing with jurisdiction in a particular matter. I have already put in an amendment to this particular section. I hope that when the time comes I will be able to deal with it. In one county area a dispute might arise say between Udi and Nsukka on the boundary. There is no provision in our present Bill for the determination of such case. You cannot take the case in Nsukka because the land is not lying within the Nsukka County exclusively; you cannot take the case in Udi because the land is not lying within Udi exclusively.

You then do not know how to go about that case. Therefore there should be a provision in this law similar to the one in the old Native Courts Ordinance—section 8—to meet such a situation; so that in such a case you might refer the matter to another authority where the jurisdiction will lie. That is the amendment which I will raise at the Committee stage, Sir.

I congratulate the Government in the matter of appeals. It has been admitted by officials, non-officials and barristers themselves that the old system of reviews by which a District Officer reviews a case, and if one is not satisfied with the review one appeals to the same man who reviewed the case, is unsatisfactory. It is like appealing from Caesar to Caesar. A man has reviewed a case and said that 'A' was wrong. 'A' then appeals to the same man again. That is a position which is untenable. It is high time this system of review was abolished.

Now the other point is the system of appeals. You appeal from a district court to a county court, thence to a Magistrates' Court, and up to the High Court. This is as good as it should be. But it will be very expensive going through this gamut—from the district court, then to a County Court, then to a Magistrates' Court and then to a High Court. I should have thought that a stop would have been put somewhere. Let us say a case goes to the High Court and then stops there. If it goes to the Magistrates' Court let it go straightaway from the district court and leave some of these Courts out.

That is all I have at this stage, Sir, and as I said, I am supporting the Bill. I hope that some of the points which I have raised will be taken into consideration.

**Chief N. Essien (Uyo Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I thank you in the first place for permission granted me to say a word or two on this very important, indispensable and unprecedented Bill in this House.

I support this Bill in principle. I will support it with all my power when it goes into operation.

At this stage of our progress and advancement we have to take a leaf from the nations which have advanced ahead of us already, in every aspect of human existence. Those nations take justice as their finger post to direct them in their way of existence and being. It is justice, Sir, that makes America what America is today. It is justice, Sir, and the administration of it, without respect of persons, that makes Britain to be Britain and makes English to be the English. Otherwise we would not have got British justice or English justice.

It is such a quality that has made British a land of the free. It is said, the moment one sets one's foot on British shores and breathes British air he becomes immediately free. It is justice that renders it so. Therefore, Sir, I have to thank the authorities who have been able to furnish us with this Bill on Native Customary Courts.

We would not have overhauled our Government without beginning step by step with overhauling our machinery for the administration of justice.

**Mr Speaker:** We are rather limited as to the time at our disposal. I, therefore, suggest that the honourable Member should confine himself to the principles of the Bill.

**Chief N. Essien:** The Bill has given real satisfaction. In the constitution of the courts I support those speakers who suggested that the President must be a literate person, and should himself take down the proceedings of the court, the court clerks remaining there as Registrars to register exhibits and issue processes. Presidents are responsible for the dispensation of justice, and there is no reason why they should not be responsible for recording the proceedings. If one person sits in judgment in a Magistrates' Court, one Judge takes control of the Supreme Court, and one Judge takes control of the High Court, there is no reason why one Judge should not take control of a customary court.

My reason for this suggestion is that a long bench opens the way to corruption and bribery. If one Judge is sitting on the bench it is quite possible to trace whatever goes wrong there to the door of that Judge. Therefore, that Judge will be very careful knowing that if anything goes wrong nobody, but himself, will be held responsible. For this reason he will be very careful to administer justice with care and a full sense of responsibility.

Another suggestion is that none of the existing sitting members should be given a seat in the present Native Court because all members who sit in the court today have been infected with corruption. Sir, it is a rule rather than the exception that no one who values justice would be willing to remain in any Native Court today. If he sticks strictly to administering justice he would be kicked out by the rest of the people.

I was a Native Court President in Calabar as well as in Ibibio land, (Uruan Clan in particular) and I know what is going on there now. Therefore, in order to effect correct and proper administration of justice let us ring out the old and ring in the new, completely. When the Israelites left Egypt they travelled for forty years. That was not because there was no short road for them to cut through to Canaan. The purpose was to let all those who had been infected with Egyptism die in the wilderness within forty years; so that all the blood of corruption should die in the wilderness and a new generation go in to inhabit the land of Canaan.

In matters involving interests in land the single customary court's judge should sit with a jury.

Lastly, Sir, we understand that a Commissioner is coming out for a while. I suggest that his interpreter be sworn on the Bible. If we say that a Bible will not take effect, let him be taken into every corner of black-man's land and be sworn on juju. I do not believe in juju, but some people do. Unless that interpreter is sworn, that commission will not be very effective. We have got to see to that strictly. With these few remarks I support the Bill.

**Mr K. Giadom (Ogoni Division):** Mr Speaker, I have nothing to criticise in the Bill except to make a suggestion, and that is about section 8, subsection (2). This subsection makes provision for arbitration. There is one thing I want to say about this. There are some people who do not believe in doing things for gratis. I would like the Government to take into consideration the fact that some people would like some sort of compensation in spending time to act as arbitrators.

The Government should come out to say here if any compensation is needed or not. If it is needed I think it will be wise to state the amount; so that any parties to any dispute will have that understanding, and when this subsection is translated into practice there will be no more trouble. As it is now it looks very well on the paper; but when we come to translate it into practice there will be some trouble because the arbitrators would want something from the parties and in such a case there may be some kind of extortion. So I suggest we amend this section by saying that there should be compensation or not. If there should be any what is the amount? Everything should be stated in white and black.

With that remark, I support the Bill.

**Mr M. C. Awgu (Awka Division):** Mr Speaker, I rise to support the Bill. Since it states that the Minister in charge will impartially scrutinise any recommendations from the Adviser of our Customary Court, there is nothing to be afraid of again. But I should say that whatever recommendations are put up to the Minister must be impartially scrutinised because the Adviser, whoever he may be, may depend on his interpreter. At present, Sir, rumour is afloat that some people are approaching some interpreters who promise to recommend them to District Officers to be made members of our customary courts. But since we have a Minister in charge to scrutinise every point, there is nothing to be afraid of.



Mr Speaker, there is a point which I think is omitted. There should be in one of the clauses a provision for swearing-in whoever is to be a Judge or a member of our customary court. Here in the House of Assembly Members are sworn in, and the normal effect of it, however light anybody may take it, is that it leaves a feeling of moral compunction in the heart of any person who takes the oath. So I feel that it should be included in one of the clauses that members and or Judges of our customary courts should be sworn in.

**Mr N. L. P. Apreala (Brass Division):** Mr Speaker, I am supporting this Bill too. I pray that certain points which have already been emphasised by previous speakers be considered. We are told that the law is no respecter of persons; therefore all colours should be included in this law.

It is mentioned that District Courts and county courts would exist, but I am afraid that as the places they will serve are so wide apart they will not serve the purpose for which they were created.

In my own place, in a single district we sometimes have not less than five or six clans forming a district. I am afraid if we do not form these district courts, and people have to travel two or three days in many places to attend the district court, many people will be disinterested and in a lot of cases will fall back to the old practice of being tried in their private rooms and family courts, which will lead to our losing much revenue.

Mr Speaker, before going any further in this Bill, I would like to express special appreciation or respect to those European officers—the District Officers and Residents who review cases and appeals in several districts and divisions. We will do some kind of injustice to them if we do not comment on the efficiency with which they did their work. They have been rendering such valuable services as have made many people feel proud of their presence in the Courts. It is a special tribute to them that in the execution of their duties they do not know who is who. They have so dispensed justice that not a single time have I heard that a District Officer has been bribed or corrupted, or that a case has been wrongly handled. I pay special tribute to all of them.

The County Court appears to me as an Appeal Court, but I would like to give some warning here. In the Western Region we have some of our tribesmen, the Ijaws, already having a similar Court. Mistakes have been made by appointing members of the customary courts, or district courts, as we call them, as members of the county court, which is the Appeal Court. After trying a case, they go to sit in the Appeal Court again to hear an appeal in the same case, and the result is always disgraceful. Many a time they have never gone against their decisions than confirming the decisions they made in the lower courts. Therefore I appeal that care should be taken to see that a member already serving in the District Courts should never be a member in the County Court.

Mr Speaker, honourable Members as well as councillors contest elections. There is always the fear that if you do not pull your weight your people will not bring you back into this honourable House. Therefore, we all try our best to satisfy our people. There is however the belief among court members that once they are appointed a member, nobody on earth can remove them. They, therefore, give judgment anyhow. Openly they will say, "who will remove me from this seat?" They go the way of looking for the highest bidders in rendering justice in such a clever way that in many cases they never lose. If, say, there are three members sitting, one will be for the man who, they know, is actually wrong in the case; the other two will be for the other party, and they will so oppose themselves that the parties are deceived. In the end they always divide the spoils.

I feel that if honourable Members are required to undergo elections every five years as well as three years for councillors, there is no reason why Court Members should not undergo elections under certain specified conditions and periods.

*Sitting suspended at 11.30 a.m.*

*Sitting resumed at 12 noon.*

**Mr N. L. P. Apreala:** Mr Speaker, I have but only one point left and that is summary trial in Magistrates' Courts where it is expected that there will be a high sense of justice to the people. One has the right to refuse summary trial if one notices that some sort of back-door business is going on. But in our Native Courts or Customary Courts, though you may have seen your opponent with some members, perhaps giving them money, and you are unable to establish a case for the police to take legal proceedings, yet you have no right to refuse a trial in these courts. If we are allowed, as we are allowed in the Magistrates' Courts, to refuse trial in the Customary Courts, we will stamp out this type of corruption and irregularity.

In conclusion, I must pay special tribute to the Administrative Officers of the past. I would like them to feel that these steps are not being taken because we find them inefficient, but that, in my humble opinion, it is high time the African is given his own part to play in his own country.

**Mr R. O. Ukuta, M.B.E. (Nsukka Division):** Mr Speaker, I support this Bill, but I have some suggestions to make.

Regarding section 4, subsection (5), I agree that the Customary Courts Adviser should do the recommendation as regards who should be appointed court members, with the approval resting with the Minister. It is not good to give councillors a loop-hole to recommend somebody.

Section 59: I think this section should stand because it is proper. If two parties go to Court, one should lose. But if this section is removed then everybody may ask the High Court to intervene each time, and that privilege will be abused because no case will be settled. Anybody who loses will go to his lawyer to put the case to Council. I do not think it is good. I am just speaking as a layman.

By removing Administrative Officers who are the people on the spot, from doing any reviews, we lose most of the truths that those people bring to light when they go to inspect land in dispute when reviewing cases. Now that all appeals are going to the Magistrates' Courts, except Government is ready to assist poor people by providing a Crown Counsel to stand for any poor man who has no money to make an appeal to a Magistrate, the poor man will be deprived of his own right and appeals will be for the rich people only. I know that most of the lawyers will be happy because all these cases will now be going to the Magistrates' and High Court. How many Magistrates are you going to employ? It means that in each Division you are going to have three to four Magistrates to be able to cope with all these cases. If some people are going to be advisers (I do not know whom you intend to be your Customary Court Adviser) they should also review cases. I should like these suggestions to be taken into consideration.

**Dr A. N. Obonna:** Mr Speaker, I rise to support the Bill and to make a few comments. First of all, I must deal with the point raised by honourable Abangwu when he said that if one wants to make a claim of over £55, which is perhaps beyond the jurisdiction of the court, what obtains at present is that you either claim sums equivalent to the amount—I mean that is what is happening now—rather than drop it as is suggested.

Another point I would like to stress is section 8 of the Bill where you have adjudication without authority. Section 8 provides:

“Any person who shall exercise or attempt to exercise judicial powers within the area of the jurisdiction of a duly constituted customary court, except in accordance with the provisions of any Law, or who shall sit as a member of such court without due authority, shall be liable on conviction before the High Court, a Magistrate's Court or a District Court Grade A to imprisonment for a period not exceeding six months or to a fine not exceeding fifty pounds.”

Mr Speaker, Sir, in some parts of Owerri Division we have what is commonly known as votes—many Members here will not be aware of these votes. It is what you may call Communal Court. I will explain it by saying—take a village where somebody has stolen some money and you wake up and find that a house has been burgled. You have not the slightest clue as to who is the culprit. The headman rings a bell and the whole village gathers and every nook and corner in the village is searched. No question of search warrant is asked and if you find the man who stole the money, he is arrested, tried before the village and then taken to the Police station afterwards. Anyone sitting in such a court does not receive any salary as a compensation at all. Really, the Police Officers term it illegal; and some people have been jailed for six months with fines of over £100. I do not see the justification for it because such men, now jailed, were not receiving any salary at all. All they are concerned with is to maintain peace in the Division. From my personal experience, Sir, I believe that removing such a weapon from such areas will make it almost impossible for people of any importance to live therein.

I do not know what could be done to see that these people are not treated as such or a device which could be found to see that the procedure in these communal courts is regularised.

On the whole, the Bill is very good, but it is bound to create difficulties in places like Owerri Division, where at the moment, we have hundreds of Court Members. In fact they sit three times in a year or so; and go there to feed fat on what they will get. The whole thing is full of corruption. In the selection of court members, or Presidents of courts, I think that to make it rotatory in our Division will be a wise solution to the difficulties.

It is provided in the Bill that the Customary Courts Adviser recommends the members to sit in the courts. In the past, these men have been influenced by outside people. I do not know who is going to be the customary courts adviser, but I do hope he will have no vested interest. I would have welcomed election as suggested by the previous speaker, but I know that during elections members have to spend a lot and when they come in they try in every way to recover the money. This only encourages bribery.

I want to point out, Sir, that one of the causes of bribery is that the people are not paid well at all. I cannot see how a man can live on 10s a month without seeking ways and means of receiving money in the form of bribes.

I hope that the authorities will see to it that the remuneration is adequate. With these few words, Mr Speaker, I support the Bill.

**Chief M. W. Ubani:** Mr Speaker, Sir, it is gratifying to support this Bill. I agree that the machinery of justice of any nation must eventually contribute towards the progress of that nation. Our customary courts, Magistrate Court and High Court should aim at efficiency in their discharge of justice without fear or favour.

It is gratifying to note that the present Government has at last taken action on the work which was commenced by the members of the old brigade, and also that when the honourable Premier spoke he made mention of some of us who actually contributed towards this end.

We have got to reform our society. We should take measures to lead our nation into proper nationhood. The judicial system is one of the aspects that we should get all out to fight and devise ways and means of seeing that things that have been done wrongly are rectified.

One of the Members has mentioned the personnel of the customary courts. It is true that most of the recommendations as contained in the Brooke's Commission have not actually been accepted, and the Premier has explained that the new Constitutional Revision has made a tremendous difference.

One of the things I would like to see written into this Bill is the method of selecting personnel of the native courts. I will not support the idea of a wholesale wiping out of the present members of the courts because there are some of them who are really good. I am suggesting that when it comes to the time of selecting, it should be kept open, so that those who discharge their duties with satisfaction could be asked to continue. I know a very good system adopted by the District Officers in my Division. They keep a "black book" in which a record is kept of every court member's conduct. I do hope when the time comes for the selection of these members, these records will be called for. This will make these members aware of their responsibilities in the dispensation of justice.

Sir, I now come to the bench. It is still very unwieldy and I am suggesting that it should be reduced. The few members will be on a real salary that will command respect and there will be no cause for their going in for bribery in the dispensation of justice.

I would also like to see that we have a judge of the court and two assessors who should be given a sort of permanent appointment for two, three, four or more years as the case may be.

May I, Sir, add something to what Mr Apreala has said. We should not go by way of election. If we do, our system will become a political institution. I think we should adopt the "best-man" policy. What I recommend is that if the court members are good, the period should be extended. The community will be able to assess from time to time those court members who have not discharged their duties effectively and honestly. Their desire to serve the people becomes automatic because they have the hope that they will be selected to come back.

Another point, Sir, is that the Bill is silent over the matter of who is this "Mr Adviser". We would like to know who he will be. We do not want an individual to have all the powers in his hands and thereby make recommendations which are not in keeping with the feelings and wishes of the people. I think that this Adviser can only come in if and when the people have failed to decide who should be a native court judge.

Sir, I will also stress on remuneration. At present our courts are suffering and one of the reasons is that the court members are poorly paid. This brings me to the point I made about reduced bench. If you have a small bench you are able to pay the members adequate salaries. It is true that a man who is used to taking bribes will continue to take them whether he is better paid or not, but I submit, Sir, that it will go a great way in stamping out bribery and corruption which now exist.

I also suggest, that when the Bill becomes law, there should be a schedule to act as a guide in the matter of fixing salaries and allowances of court members.

There is another point, Sir, about something which has been left undone. Customary courts in the old Ordinance which was for the whole country—North and West inclusive—were graded A, B and C. These courts were given jurisdiction over and above £100. Some of the big courts in the North were given jurisdiction of going into capital offences.

The jurisdiction of our A and B courts is limited—it is still the same. What is there to give a native court judge the impulse or feeling that he is doing something that is worthwhile? The exception is in the land and customary marriage system. In these, he has unlimited jurisdiction. I should recommend that our Grades A and B courts should be taken a step further—higher than what they are now. Let them go up to £200. I do not think there is any harm. We are growing, and I feel we should give them a trial. It spells lack of confidence. I should also like to see that the criminal jurisdiction of our customary courts is much higher than it is at present.

Sir, as I said before, the one thing that worries our courts is this question who is a chief and who is a court member. Some people say that because you go to the court and sit, you are a chief. That is why everybody is scrambling to be a court member so as to be recognised as a chief; and this is causing trouble in some areas. Because people are fighting to be court members our Local Government Councils are left to the mediocre type of man. I am glad that a Commission of Inquiry is now sitting. Its findings will help to define who is a chief, so that people who sit in the court will be designated as court members.

With these few remarks, I congratulate the Government for having thought it fit and proper to bring up this matter which men of the old brigade have really initiated. I also take this opportunity to congratulate these men of the old brigade because all major reforms in the Eastern Region have been initiated by them.

**Mr E. Ashirim-Unosi (Ahoada Division):** Mr Speaker, I rise to support the Bill. I have only one or two observations to make on clause 5. This clause, I observe, is silent on the qualifications of court members. I should think that we have advanced to the stage where our court members should be educated men. I say this because cases have occurred where courts have been asked to determine whether documents before the courts were false or genuine. In hundreds of such cases they have been unable to do so, and they have always relied on the court clerks. If a court clerk is interested the court members are bound to take whatever decision he gives, and in many cases they are led astray.

The second point is this. Many complaints have been made that the records of courts are not correct. I should say that court members should be in a position to verify whether the statements made by litigants were recorded correctly and accurately or not. For this reason I suggest that court members should be educated.

With these few points I support the Bill.

**Chief S. E. Onukogu (Owerri Division):** Mr Speaker, I am glad that Government has introduced this Bill to refine native Courts. I suggest that customary courts be classified into three categories: group court—a court made up of five to seven villages; district court—a court which was formerly known as clan court, that is, a court made up of the people under one District Council; and county court, that is a court which has jurisdiction over all the villages in the whole district under one Administrative Officer.

I do not agree with those who say that judges should serve for a short period only. If this is the case the court members will not have time to understand court procedure. Those who suggest this are only anxious to go in. I would rather say that if a judge is found to have misbehaved himself he should be severely punished. This will teach others a lesson.

More power should be given to native court judges. They will use this power well. Afterwards it is the court clerks who mislead them. The court clerks call out cases. They take records of cases, and in a court where the members are illiterate they write only what they like. Court members should be properly remunerated so as to encourage them to be honest and to dispense justice.

Mr Speaker, I do not agree that our customary court judges should be recommended by members of District Councils or Local Councils. This system will invariably lead to bribery and corruption. Besides every village is represented in these councils, and if they are left to recommend those to be appointed judges there will be a struggle by the council members to push in their village man or their relative.

Most of the present members of native courts do not go in for the purpose of making money. Many of them are there to maintain peace and dispense justice.

The villages over which a customary court has jurisdiction should be allowed to select who will be their court members. Going to the local council to ask for recommendations is merely creating confusion. (*Interruption: Vested interest. Are you afraid of losing your seat in the native courts?*)

**Chief S. E. Onukogu:** I am not talking to you. You cannot stand an election now . . .

**Mr Speaker:** I must ask the honourable Member to sit down.

**Chief G. N. Agbasiere:** Mr Speaker, I rise to support the Bill with some amendments. One of the things that cause confusion is the large number of people appointed as court members. In some places you have as many as twenty-four to thirty members. These members sit for once or at the most twice a year. They receive £1 10s to £2 per sitting which gives a total of not more than £4 a year. I suggest that the panel of native courts be reduced to eight members divided into two, so that each group will have six sittings. Each group should have a president to direct procedure. If this suggestion is followed it will lead to efficiency in the native courts.

I do not agree with the honourable Member who suggested that one man only should sit in the native courts. If it is only one man who will sit in the court then it is no longer customary court. Again if only one man sits in the court people will blame him for every judgment he gives, and will even want to harm him.

Again I do not agree with those who say that only literate people should sit in our courts. The majority of our present court members do not know how to read and write, and if you send them all away now it will lead to confusion. If half the members of a native court are literate and the other half illiterate that will be all right. We must remember that you do not need to be literate to know native law and custom, and again there are many illiterate men who are more righteous than literate men.

A land dispute in our town is settled by the Amala. They are the people who know the root of the dispute. Many cases go to the Judge and the Resident and in the end are returned to the Amala for they know the law and custom. With these few remarks, Sir, I support the Bill.

**Mr R. U. Umo-Inyang, M.B.E. (Ikot Ekpene):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I wish to make a few suggestions about Customary Court Judges. First and foremost is the question of selection: whether it should be by election or otherwise. I feel that a Customary Court Judge should be selected by the Council of his area.

On the question whether he should be illiterate or educated, I feel that he should be educated to the standard where he could either check the recording by the clerk in charge or take the proceedings himself.

How many of them should be in one Court? It is true from what my honourable Friend the last speaker has said that to be one is to be in danger. Somebody might organise some people against him and might kill him; but it is a step forward to progress, and, therefore I think there should be one man. I do not think that there should be as many as four people as in my area at present. At present each of the judges is being paid £3 in my area. If one educated man is put there and paid just as much as the four people earn in a month, I think it will attract people of integrity into the job.

Regarding the period of service. I think it will be proper to make it rotatory as some speakers said. If one man is tried for one year, another man might be tried another year and then after five years we should know which person is better able to serve the community, and give him a longer period of service.

I feel that the salary of court judges at the present moment is too low in my area. They could be given something up to £5 or £12 per month.

**Mr G. I. Oko, M.B.E. (Awgu Division):** Mr Speaker, I rise to support this Bill and in doing so I have only very few remarks to make. I wish to confine myself to section 10—officers of customary courts. Here in this country we have got clerks trained so far to discharge their work in Court but they have not gone so far as to use that training to advance the knowledge

of court judges. I think at this stage Government would be well advised to give our future court clerks good training—may be here in Nigeria or outside Nigeria—to enable them to get people to know the laws of the land. They are the people who are in a position to guide the court members. They know the procedure of the Court and they translate these into the language of the Court judges. I think, Sir, that this will go far to help, as honourable Agbasiere has just said, those members who are not literate.

Regarding Customary Court Advisers, as the other speaker said earlier, I do not know who will be the advisers but whoever they may be I hope they will be free from politics. In other words, that it will not be a political appointment. The administration of justice should be free from political flavour, real or apparent. If this is taken into consideration advisers should be people of the calibre of lawyers, independent people who have nothing to do with the politics of the land.

May I, Sir, go on to section 20 of the law. Something is omitted there. The law omits to provide for the determination and place of trial of a land matter. We have district, county and urban areas in certain Divisions. You may have inter-divisional land cases. As honourable Abangwu well said, when he was addressing this House, provision ought to be made whereby people of different court areas could be allowed to go to one court or the other to have their cases tried in conjunction with court lawyers. If two Divisions happened to have a land case one side would demand the case to be tried in their own Division and the other side would demand that the case be tried in their own Division. There is no provision to show where this matter should be tried. I am suggesting strongly that amendment be made to this section.

Let me switch over to the question of search warrants. This is a very serious and dangerous section, which gives the power of search to officers of customary courts. This action may yet bring back the terrors of the 1920s when our paramount chiefs held their posts and used their influences in any direction. The experiences of those days were very bitter ones and no one would like a return of those days of oppression. The powers of search given to the Police, I think, are adequate and should be confined to the Police only. I fear that if power to search is given to people at this stage not much justice will be expected from them. It will be wrongly used. With these few remarks, I support the Bill.

**Mr P. G. Warmate (Degema Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I rise to support this Bill. The very fact that the word "native" is removed from our courts is sufficient advancement so far as I am concerned. But there is one point which I want to bring to the notice of Government. It is said, "When you are in Rome you should do as the Romans". Unfortunately, customs differ in this Region from one locality to another. What may not be an offence in one locality is regarded as a serious offence in another locality. I am appealing to Government—I know the volume of work entailed in trying to codify our laws according to locality—to make a start right now by trying to put into written form such very common offences which people are prone to commit in certain areas. If we make comparison there may be some similarities. It might take some time, but I think in time to come it is quite certain that we might be able to have a uniform code of law for the whole Region.

Referring to clause 22, it is said that:

"Subject to the provision of this Law, a customary court shall administer the customary law prevailing in the area of jurisdiction of the court."

This goes to confirm what I am saying that there is some difference of custom from one place to another, and Government should start right now and let every area try to codify its custom, so that if I go to an area with a different culture from my own place I shall be able to know what constitutes an offence in that area.

In the same locality—I am referring to my place—you will find that men of the same age in fact, contradict themselves in trying to explain or interpret some puzzle particularly in cases where they have some vested interest. They often find that no small man can interpret the custom of the place, excepting people with grey hairs but it should not be the case. They feel that whatever they say is true. If there is a written law we might be able to know exactly what is the custom and what is not, Sir. There was a case which happened in my place in the native court. An old man said that a woman can never lease land to another person; another man said that a woman can lease land to another person. You know how land cases are so important in the minds of our people. When you see two old people arguing on what is the correct custom you find it very difficult to arrive at a fair and equitable decision.

*Sitting suspended at 1 p.m.*

*Sitting resumed at 3 p.m.*

**Mr P. G. Warmate:** As I was saying before this House rose this morning, I was trying to give the reasons why Government should start codifying our laws. I gave an instance of a case at home where two old men disagreed on a special custom, and what was the right of a woman in her custom to give out a parcel of land to somebody. Well, it was a case of the woman who had no child when she was alive, and when she saw she was going to die she had to give the land to somebody. After many years the case was brought up in the Native Courts, and this man claimed she was his step-mother and she gave him the land. The other party told the man that the woman had no right to give the land to somebody else. I have quoted this example to show the necessity for codifying of the laws.

If we can codify the laws we shall be able to have a uniform system for the dispensation of justice; but at present we find it is all not uniform because at a certain time one custom is interpreted to mean one thing, and at another time it is interpreted to mean another thing. Young people do not know much about the customs of the people. It is only the people with grey hair that always tell us about the customs. I know it is a hard job, but if Government starts doing it before long we can get something out of it.

Another point which I wish to bring to the attention of this House is about court chiefs and court members. There are some court chiefs who have been members for years on end. People feel that some of them are not good enough and according to a system by which they are appointed they seem to be permanent. We want others to take their place. Other speakers have said there should be some reduction in number. It might be a period of three years or five years as the case may be, but I do not want to go into details. I am just suggesting that Government should look into the matter seriously to know exactly how many years these people should have to remain, but to allow them to be there with an impression of permanence is a principle to which I very much object. There is a great deal of dissatisfaction among our people that so many of these Chiefs have been there for years on end and they feel some of them are not good enough.

I now come to the question of salaries of these court members. It is a well known fact that no human mind can fathom the amount of money to be paid to some one so that he will refuse to be corrupted. At the same time if you give a man something appreciable to manage his house there is less risk of his being corrupted. But now we find that our court members get nothing practically—£3 to £4 a month in my place. Some of them are very busy people and prosperous traders. They have to leave their homes and attend Court for a month for £3 to £4 a month. This is a very deplorable state of affairs. I think Government should think of paying them £20 to £25 a month depending upon the resources of the Local Government concerned. Salary must be paid to them to uphold their integrity. My chiefs have complained very bitterly that they should be considered for adequate salaries. They quoted my case to support their claim saying that if I am paid for attending meetings of the House of Assembly, there is no reason why they should not be paid. I think they are quite right too.



Another point I want to make is the appointment of court members by Councils. I think that is a very wrong idea. It is quite good that the Minister should appoint, if formerly the Resident appointed the court members. The District Officer has a dossier of the chiefs in his area and he knows those who are upright and have integrity. That is what happens in my home. I do not know what happens in other places. The District Officer knows those people who have integrity and such people are appointed to be court members among the chiefs. For Councils to elect their court members, I feel, would be building a very strong home for corruption and bribery. I would not like it, Sir.

Many Members stress that in these customary courts only literates should be appointed. I do not agree. I would agree that the President and the Vice-President should be literate. They must be literate enough to be able to write down proceedings because I feel that most of the court clerks have been misleading the illiterate court members. In fact it is the court clerks who are the actual judges not the chiefs. So, whenever he likes to do so he can pervert justice and actually does this time and again. If the court President or Vice-President is literate, either of them can take down proceedings and read to the other members who are not literate because there is some collective responsibility that if any judgment is bad, it is for all the members of the court. But the court clerk, who is not responsible for the determination of the matter, is virtually the judge. That kind of practice must stop.

I would suggest that Government should see that the President and the Vice-President are literate but the other court members need not be literate. There are some good people, versed in native law and custom, who are not literate; such people should also be considered as court members. Education should not be the only criterion for consideration. Integrity is important and should be given paramount consideration.

The number of judges is quite unwieldy in some areas. I understand that in some areas they have up to thirty; in my own area we have about four to six at the most. It should not be too many, about twelve at the most, and then, of course, depending upon the consent of the people after consultation with areas concerned. I think Government should try and consider all these points. It is a very healthy sign that a Bill of this nature has come to this House. The very fact that this word "native" is expunged from our language and from our Ordinance is sufficient sign of progress and I feel everything must be done to help these customary courts to live to a high standard of integrity.

**Mr D. E. Akilo (Udi Division):** Mr Speaker, my observations refer to clause 16 of the Bill where mention has been made of corruption. To eradicate corruption in the Native courts or customary courts, I suggest that something be added to this paragraph, and that is the administration of oaths to the members of the court as well as to the court clerk. The present swearing in of the Members of the Council is doing excellent work for the councillors. If such will help to stop bribery and corruption, the members of the court should also be sworn-in.

We must consider the type of oaths that we should administer. The native always fears juju and the type of oath for them to swear will be the juju that they fear in their own areas because if a Bible is given to these people, they take it as nothing. By the same token a christian does not take the juju as anything. If court members are mixed up, christians should be made to swear on the Bible and heathens made to swear on juju.

Now, unless this is done—I refer you back to clause 5, sub-clause (3) where the Bill says that the majority of the members should be there for the decision of the case—it will mean that we have decided by a majority that justice can be bought since if in a court of thirty members I am able to bribe about twenty people judgment will be in my favour. They are not administering justice with their consciences and if such is the case, unless something is done to make these people fear something that will just harm them if they do not do justice, they will be deciding unjustly in the court.

Mr Speaker, Sir, if our customary courts are to dispense justice then members of the court as well as the court clerk or scribe should be sworn-in.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Chief N. N. Anyika (Awka Division):** Mr Speaker, I have a few suggestions to make in the customary courts Bill. I suggest that for the present all our courts should be graded Grade C courts which will have jurisdiction to inflict fines of up to £5, and in civil matters to try cases where the amount involved is up to £150. If any Grade C court proves itself worthy of greater responsibility it should be raised to grade B court which will have jurisdiction to inflict fines of up to £100 and to try civil cases where the amount involved is up to £250. If any Grade B court proves itself worthy of greater responsibility it should be raised to grade A which should have jurisdiction to try civil cases where the amount involved is up to £300.

As regards the judges in these courts it is suggested that five people or seven be appointed permanently, and be paid £20 to £25 a month. When they are paid well, bribery and corruption will cease. If anybody is found taking bribes or if an examination of the judgment books by the Reviewing Officer shows that a large number of judgments are set aside on appeal or review then all the judges should be dismissed and a new set appointed. This will oblige the court personnel to give fair judgments, and if anybody attempts to bribe them they will not accept it for fear that they will get dismissed from the Court. But if they are told that their appointments will be terminated within two or three years, when their time is expiring they will try to rush over the cases untried in order to get much money and thereby unfair judgments will be given.

The customary court should have a President and a Vice-President who must be literate. The President or the Vice-President should take record of proceedings by themselves. Nobody else should do it. In calling up cases, if a court scribe is bribed he will jump the first case on the case list. It will be the duty of the President to call out cases in their proper order. In land cases the elders of the town where the land case has arisen, will be called to give evidence in the court or on the land. Swearing-in judges and scribes will be to no avail. You know that thieves can swear anything, yet in the night they go to steal. Therefore it will mean nothing to them to swear on the Bible or on anything. Considering how we came to this House, we as politicians, do not want to speak the truth.

I understand that in Grade B court the Premier of the Eastern Region will appoint a retired officer as the President. The appointment should not be made by Ministers only for we do not trust all of them, but the Premier. The Premier should appoint people in the Division who are reliable. He should go through all the past files of old and new judges to ascertain those that are reliable.

Lawyers and barristers when they go to England to study Law are really studying English customary laws. If they know more about native laws as applied in these customary courts perhaps they will use their law books to confuse the customs. Then perhaps the customs will be changed and it will be against the customary courts again. Lawyers know how to twist language.

Therefore, I do not agree that land cases should be tried in the Magistrate's Court and High Court. It should not go further than the customary courts. We have got good administrative European officers. When they review cases nobody argues. If they are appointed Reviewing officers everybody will be satisfied. It is only when some of the interpreters confuse some of the District Officers that appellants will find it necessary to take their cases up to the Resident to obtain better judgment. So I agree that we appoint good Administrative European officers—who are many in the Provinces—to review cases. If Black men are appointed to review cases there must be bribery and corruption either directly or indirectly. I do not support Black men becoming reviewing officers. (*Shouts of shame!*) I am speaking from experience. I was twenty-five years in the Native Court and I can tell you better about this thing than those who do not know about court work and who shout "*Shame, Shame!*"

**Mr Speaker:** I think you have made your point.

**Chief N. N. Anyika:** I support the Bill with these few remarks.

**Chief A. N. Onyiuke (Awka Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I rise to support in principle this Bill with these few observations. I feel that anybody from anywhere being resident in the Eastern Region must sue or be sued in the customary court in the area in which he finds himself.

I would suggest an increase of the jurisdiction of the customary court to double what is now embodied in this Bill. The Adviser of the customary courts, before recommending to the Minister the personnel of the customary court must first of all examine the review register of each court and take a list of those members who gave minority judgments, and whose judgments are confirmed or upheld by the reviewing officers. These are the people to be recommended. The majority gave wrong judgment for reasons best known to them and the minority gave their minority judgment, and when it is upheld there is something there to say he is a good judge. The Bench of the customary court should not be less than three and should not be more than seven. This Bench must sit permanently with a President who is to record the proceedings and findings of the court. They should have attractive salaries and if possible their salaries should be made pensionable. It is a very difficult thing to be a Judge. If you do not want any bribery and corruption in the court, judges must be well treated. The court clerk is to issue summonses and copy cases and keep custody of the records.

I should like a new sub-clause to be added to clause 20, to the effect that when a case arises between parties of different districts the county court should be the court of first instance; and when it arises between parties of two different county court areas the Magistrates' Court should be the court of first instance. I say this, because if such cases arise, each party must desire to take action in his own court.

I am glad to see in clause 41 the provision for a court to order the restoration of stolen and unlawfully obtained properties after sentence. This will reduce the number of rogues because it is widely understood that when a thief is found guilty and sentenced, after serving sentence, he returns to enjoy the property he stole. Something should be done about this.

Clause 59 should be left as it is now in the Bill. I do not share the views of those Members who want the prerogative writs of *certiorari*. Those who wish to appeal are allowed in the customary courts. There is scope for appeal from the district customary courts to county customary courts to Magistrates' courts up to the High Court and the Federal Supreme Court; but in clause 61, Sir, it ends with Supreme Court as if it means that appeals heard by that Court cannot be heard by any other court on earth. I think an allowance should be given there or a new clause added to the end of clause 61, that after the Federal Supreme Court has determined the case they should go to the Privy Council.

With these few remarks, I support the Bill.

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Speaker, may I say that I am very grateful to honourable Members for their contribution to this debate.

Winding up the debate, I note that three main points have been made by various speakers today. They are personnel of the courts, jurisdiction of the courts and powers of the courts.

On personnel, various speakers suggested that there should be a small panel, and that we should not have many judges in the customary courts. Other speakers suggested that the Presidents of the court and Vice Presidents possibly should be literate. Others suggested that all the members should be literate and some speakers suggested that some members be literate and others illiterate. It was also suggested that the personnel of the court should consist of individuals who should be sworn in before assuming office. It was also suggested

that it is not necessary for a rogue can swear and turn round and steal. It was also suggested that judges should be assisted by assessors or jurors and that they should be paid adequate salaries. I think it was the first speaker to the motion who suggested that judges in the customary courts should not be allowed to be influenced by customary courts advisers in accordance with the provisions of clause 4, sub-clause (5).

On the jurisdiction of the courts, it was suggested that the customary courts should have jurisdiction which should apply to everybody in the Region. A little mistake was made in that it was suggested that we should follow the examples set up by the North. I shall come to that in a few moments.

On powers of the courts, criticism has been levelled on the power of the courts to issue search warrants. It was said that we are not as yet developed and so we should prevent the customary courts from issuing search warrants until the personnel or until the Presidents are literate. It was also suggested that we should allow prerogative writs and from what the last speaker said it is quite obvious that not all the speakers are agreed on this point.

Finally, it was suggested that interpreters should be made to swear before assuming office. I want to thank those honourable Members who were able to spotlight the incorruptible practices of the Administrative Officers, who hitherto had played a very important part in the administration of justice in the native courts. Indeed, they set a very high standard and I hope that if this Bill is passed into Law, we will also bring it home to those who administer justice to maintain these high standards.

I am grateful to the honourable Member who mentioned that the provision for appeals is progressive.

Now, Sir, to go back to the point about copying the North. What is the position in the North? I think that my honourable and learned Friend from Nsukka Division read in the newspapers what was debated in the North. I think all of us have been so influenced, but I want to bring to his attention that the newspaper report was misleading. I have the Bill with me now and with your permission, Sir, I would just like to read the portion referring to it. It is a Bill for a Law to provide for the reconstitution of native courts and to make further provisions for the administration of justice. The persons subject to jurisdiction of native courts were defined to include *inter alia* "all persons who permanently reside on land within the area of jurisdiction of a native authority with permission, expressed or implied, of the native authority, given in virtue of any power which the native authority in any capacity may have to give such permission." But there is one proviso, and that is, these persons should be individuals "whose general mode of life is that of the general native community" which does not mean that all persons black and white are necessarily under the jurisdiction of the native courts.

Then sub-clause (b) of clause 15 reads, "all persons not permanently resident within the area of jurisdiction of a native authority but who are within such an area and whose general mode of life while therein is that of the general native community." Again sub-clause (c) makes jurisdiction to include *inter alia* "all persons who reside or are on land within the area of jurisdiction of a native authority as tenants or employees of any person holding such land in virtue of a right of occupancy granted in writing or otherwise by the Governor or by some person, not being a native authority, to whom the Governor may have delegated the power to grant such a right of occupancy, and whose general mode of life is that of the general native community". However, that does not mean that I do not agree with the honourable Member.

I only point this out that we have all been misled by a newspaper report; and unless these provisos had been removed when the Bill was in the Committee stage it was obvious in the North it would not have jurisdiction over all persons. But Government will consider very seriously amending this Bill, so that it should apply to everybody in the Region. The reason

[Customary Courts Law, 1956  
—2R]

21st March, 1956

[Supplementary Appropriation  
Law, 1956—2R]

is because even in this Bill clauses 22 and 24 show that it is necessary to reconsider the jurisdiction. Clause 22, with your permission, says that "subject to the provisions of this Law but notwithstanding anything contained in the Criminal Code Ordinance, where any person is charged with an offence against native law and custom, a native court may try the case in accordance with native law and custom even though the act or omission constituting the offence may also constitute an offence under the provisions of the Criminal Code or of any other enactment". Well, if we take these two paragraphs of sub-clause (1) that is (b) and (d) it is possible that non-Africans can come under the jurisdiction of the native courts, especially if we read this clause 22 jointly with clause 24 which says, "the Governor-in-Council may by order confer and impose upon all or any native courts jurisdiction to enforce in respect of Regional matters and within the local limits of the jurisdiction of such courts all or any of the provisions of any written law specified in such order and to impose penalties on persons subject to the jurisdiction of the court who offend against such provisions, subject to such restrictions and limitations, if any, as may be specified in the order". In other words, Government will take into consideration the various suggestions made by honourable Members, and see what should be done to meet with your views. The aim is to bring about a change in the customary courts system and we will not naturally tolerate half-measures; but as I pointed out when moving the second reading of the Bill, it is a step forward and naturally your suggestions will be taken under active consideration.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*

*Bill committed to a Committee of the Whole House.*

*Committee upon Tuesday next.*

### **The 1954-55 Eastern Region Supplementary Appropriation Law, 1956**

*Order for Second Reading read.*

**The Minister of Finance:** Mr Speaker, 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 31st March, 1955", be now read a Second time.

Honourable Members are aware that very often when the accounts for any particular financial year have been closed it is found that the expenditure authorised in the original Appropriation Law under individual heads has in some cases been exceeded. This excess arises from supplementary expenditure approved during the period by the Standing Committee on Finance, which, of course, acts on behalf of the Legislature.

Members will wish to know that all the excess expenditure shown in the Schedule attached to the Bill under consideration by the House has received the approval of the Finance Committee. Members will also wish to know that the final accounts for the year 1954-55 show a gross under expenditure of £892,126, and when the excesses under the heads set out in the Schedule to the Bill are deducted there is a net under expenditure amounting to £725,537.

It will, therefore, be appreciated that this Bill does not seek to ask the House to vote new money. It seeks merely to regularise expenditure which has already been incurred on behalf of the Government and has actually been paid.

Sir, this Bill is non-contentious and seeks only to formalise expenditure already approved by the Finance Committee. I therefore move that the Bill be now read a Second time.

**The Minister of Health:** Sir, I beg to second.

*And under Standing Order 67—Supplementary Appropriation Bills—the debate thereon stood adjourned until Tuesday 27th March, 1956.*

**The Pharmaceutical Corporation (Amendment) Law, 1956***Order for Second Reading read.*

**The Minister of Health:** Mr Speaker, I beg to move that a Bill for a law to amend the Pharmaceutical Corporation Law, 1955, be now read a Second time.

This amendment seeks to effect four changes. Firstly, it is now thought more appropriate that this Corporation should be under the control of the Minister of Industries. Secondly, clause 3 provides for the promotion, encouragement and stimulation of interest in the science and study of pharmacy and cognate subjects. Honourable Members are aware that at the moment there is no place in the Eastern Region where the study of the science of Pharmacy can be undertaken. Thirdly, clause 4 empowers the Corporation to invest money standing to its credit in securities approved by the Minister and also to sell such securities with the approval of the Minister. Fourthly, clause 5 provides that the Government of the Eastern Region may guarantee any borrowings of the Corporation otherwise than from the Government of the Eastern Region. This particular amendment is useful as honourable Members are aware that the Corporation at the moment has no securities whatever with which it could obtain credit from banks.

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Agriculture:** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr J. H. E. Nwuke (Ahoada Division):** Mr Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Minister of Health for this amendment. I am particularly very happy that the Minister has thought it wise to recognise the importance of the study of Pharmacy.

There is, however, one point I would like Members of this House to note. The history of pharmacy is linked up with the history of medicine. Originally the early medical practitioners studied pharmacy just as our native doctors are doing today. But when, because of the increased research in pharmaceutical studies, it became too much for one person to study both subjects, pharmacy became a separate subject.

Here in the Eastern Region pharmacists are living under a very deplorable condition. All over the world pharmacy receives the same importance as medicine, but here in the Eastern Region the Chemist and Druggist is placed under a Medical Officer. It is really important for this House to note that before one qualifies as a Chemist and Druggist one must have matriculated and then spent four years studying the profession. Yet on qualifying, a Chemist and Druggist is given an initial salary of £296.

**Mr Speaker:** On a point of order. Does this relate to the motion?

*Question put and agreed to.**Bill accordingly read a Second time.**Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

*Clause 1.*

**The Minister of Health:** Sir, I beg to move that the following words in lines 2 and 3 of clause 1 be left out, "and shall come into operation on a date to be fixed by the Governor by notice in the *Regional Gazette*".

*Question proposed.**Question put and agreed to.*

[Pharmaceutical Corporation  
(Amendment) Law, 1956—3R]

21st March, 1956

[Wild Animals Preservation  
Ordinance (Amendment) Law,  
1956—2R, Com. and 3R]

Clause 2.

**The Minister of Health:** Sir, I beg to move to *delete* the words "Trade and" in line 6 of clause 2.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clauses 3-5 agreed to.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported with Amendments; Read the Third time and passed.*

### **The Wild Animals Preservation Ordinance (Amendment) Law, 1956**

*Order for Second Reading read.*

**The Minister of Agriculture:** Mr Speaker, I beg to move that a Bill for a Law to amend the Wild Animals Preservation Ordinance be now read a Second time.

As stated in the Objects and Reasons at the foot of the Bill as published, this arises out of the International Conference for the Protection of Flora and Fauna of Africa. The conference, which was held in 1953, realised that the protection of flora and fauna must rest ultimately upon a staff devoted entirely to the achievement of this aim, and recommended that contracting Governments should establish and maintain a competent and qualified staff adequate to give proper effect to the Convention in respect of wild animal life.

It is impossible to attempt to enforce Games Laws without appropriate staff and without appropriate advisers. To this end this Bill provides for the appointment of such staff and for the appointment of an Advisory Committee.

It is our duty to protect the wild life of this Region and it is my hope that with the advice which the Committee will be able to offer me, and with the staff which it will be possible to appoint by passing this Bill, we shall be able to give proper effect to the provisions of the Wild Animals Preservation Ordinance. There is nothing contentious this Bill, and I commend it to you.

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Industry:** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr D. A. Nnaji (Udi Division):** Mr Speaker, very often we are called upon to amend Ordinances, the possession of which we have not. In this connection, Sir, I would observe that in quoting Ordinances to be amended the pertinent section should be inserted for the guidance of Members of this House because we do not know what section 3, which we are called upon to amend, means. I would suggest, Sir, that in future when we are being called upon to amend Ordinances other than the Laws passed by this House, the extracts should be inserted so that the Members know exactly what is to be amended.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*

*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

*Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported without Amendment: Read the Third time and passed.*

### **The Age of Marriage Law, 1956**

Second reading deferred until 27th March, 1956.

### The Fatal Accidents Law, 1956

*Order for Second Reading read.*

**The Minister of Transport:** Mr Speaker, I beg to move the second reading of the Bill entitled a Bill for the Fatal Accidents Law, 1956. This Law will provide in certain circumstances for compensation to be paid to the family of a person killed by the wrongful act, neglect or default of another person.

Under the High Court Law, 1955, statutes of general application there were in force in England on the 1st January, 1900, are within the jurisdiction of the High Court. However, doubts have been expressed in certain quarters whether the Fatal Accident Acts of 1846 and 1864 are in fact statutes of general application. It is in order to remove these doubts that this Bill is being presented.

The Bill now before the House is based on the two United Kingdom Acts referred to above, and on certain amending Acts. The Fatal Accidents Acts 1846, made an exception to the general common law rule that no action in tort is maintainable for causing death. Subsequently, experience showed that various amendments to the Act were necessary.

I would like to draw the attention of the House to the two most salient points. First of all, the definition of funeral expenses. This is set out in clause 2 and defined as reasonable expenses of the decent interment or obsequies of a deceased person. It specifically excludes the cost of the mourning of any person or of a tomb stone or memorial or any celebrations or customary present. This definition is concise and to the point. Mr Speaker, it will immediately become apparent that the Government has no desire to institute a measure which would encourage extravagant second burial rites, rites which to some people in this House will be contrary to their conscience but which so many people in the Region hold in great regard.

The second point is the definition of immediate family, that is the people who can benefit—the wife or wives of a deceased, a husband, a parent or grand-parent and a child or grand-child inclusive of step-children. I shall move at the Committee stage to include also brothers and half-brothers, sisters and half-sisters because there could be cases where a degree of dependence existed which must be compensated for by damages. I instance the schoolboy who might face the extinction of his school career by the death of his brother.

Clause 4 sets out how the action is instituted in the court. Sub-clause 2 is of particular note. If the person who would benefit from the action fails to take action, as he might well do from ignorance, then action can be taken on his behalf. This, I think you will agree, is a most valuable provision of the Law. We are too often troubled by the fact that in the more rural parts of the Region our people are not cognisant of their rights.

This proposed legislation is entitled the Bill for the Fatal Accidents Law. It applies to any fatal accident no matter how it has been caused. As I have said earlier its whole purpose is basically to preserve the rights of the heirs to the deceased and to ensure that these rights will not be impugned by any legal quibble. Over 200 people have been killed in the last three years on our roads. This is a tragic figure. In this connection some Members may be asking themselves why this Bill is being presented when there already is on the Statute Book the Motor Vehicles Third Party Insurance Ordinance. The issues are, however, quite distinct. The Third Party Ordinance makes it certain that if a person is involved in an accident then by reason of his Insurance cover there is sufficient money to meet his liabilities. If he was not insured, while a plaintiff might get a successful judgment, nevertheless, it might not be possible for this judgment to be satisfied. In other words, the Third Party Insurance Ordinance puts blood into the stone. The Bill that is now before the House, however, is designed to ensure that an action can be taken to get that blood.



Mr Speaker, at this stage the House considers the policy behind a Bill. The policy of this Government towards fatal accidents, or in particular the policy of the Government towards road accidents which are fatal, is to ensure that the bereaved shall receive financial compensation, however inadequate a compensation for grief that may be. With the two prongs—this Bill if it becomes law and the compulsory Third Party Ordinance—we are assured that our policy can be carried out.

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Trade:** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr C. A. Abangwu (Nsukka Division):** Mr Speaker, I rise to support this Bill which deals with Fatal Accidents.

From what I could see of this Bill, it appears that quite a lot of accidents do occur in this Region, and very many people in fact do not know or appreciate what rights they have against certain persons for accidents which might result fatally. In this regard I refer to the Insurance Companies—that is in connection with motor vehicles. Quite a good deal of people have no idea at all what this Third Party Insurance business means, with the result that an accident may occur and you get about eight or nine people dead on the spot, and no actions are brought, or if actions are brought at all they come rather too late for the action to have effect. It is in this particular respect, Sir, that I refer to this Bill—section 6 (1) which deals with the period of limitation.

It is, in a country that is developing like this, incumbent on us to copy countries which have had a lot of experience, for example England. But I feel that in such cases we must make allowance for local disabilities, local conditions and things like that. In this country, an accident may occur and the relations of one may not even know that an accident has occurred until about three or four months. He may not know anything at all about insurance business; so if you put a limitation period so short you will find that quite a good deal of people are excluded from the benefit of the Law. In fact it is only in townships, places like Lagos, Enugu, Port Harcourt and others where the people actually know of these things. If, therefore, the period of limitation of actions in these cases were extended beyond what is the normal thing—in England it is one year—to let us say, from eighteen months to two years, there will be nothing wrong about it.

My contention is that owing to local conditions—ignorance of the law and mode of travel—which are far below what we find in England, Government might consider extending the period of limitation from the twelve calendar months which has been provided, to something more.

The next point is the question of who are the people who can claim. At present that is contained in clause 4. What happens is that if an accident occurs you find that it may be a young man who may be a teacher and may not be married. If a young man who is not married dies and you put up a claim to the Insurance Company for, say, £50 in respect of this man, the first question you are asked is, who is claiming? It takes a lot of time to be able to prove that the mother of the deceased is entitled to get something or that the brother, who may be at school, and is maintained by that very person who died, is entitled to claim anything. The result is that before you are through a series of correspondence, the time limit is gone, and invariably you will find that you have no remedy at all.

I am very glad that this has been put here now. We expect to find that not only the immediate relations of the person but also the brother and the sister of the persons who are young enough to go to school and are being maintained at school by the dead person, are included. It is only natural that these people should benefit.

Also it is very difficult under the present Law to be able to sue certain bodies. Let us say the Government. The Public Works Department has a lot of vehicles. Suppose they kill somebody on the road, it is very difficult to be able to claim anything from the P.W.D. since it is a Government Department. What you have to do in such a case is that you go through the old procedure of petition of rights, which is so cumbrous, and so the question is that invariably you do not know how to go about it. It is an old system which obtains in England but I think in 1947, the Law was amended. I do not think this country has followed suit, so I am asking that Government might consider relaxing the difficult method we have at present of claiming anything from the Government. As I said earlier, it is very difficult to get anything from Government Departments; so if the new law which obtains in England at present is applied in this Region it is going to simplify things. You can bring your case to the courts straight away. I think Government might look into it with a view to simplifying these matters. With these few remarks, Sir, I support the Bill.

**Dr A. N. Obonna (Owerri Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, I greatly support the Bill with one or two comments. I support the last speaker. In section 3 it is stated: "Notwithstanding any rule of Law, practice or procedure heretofore enforced to the contrary wherever the death of a person shall be caused by a wrongful act, neglect or default of another and the act of another person . . ."

Well the Minister of Transport has told us the number of fatal accidents on the roads but one wonders what are responsible for such accidents. You will find invariably that in some cases such accidents are not due to wrongful acts of the drivers or the man killed. In some cases it is due to bad roads so I think a provision should be made where people could sue local councils or county councils or even the Minister of Transport himself. Mr Speaker, Sir, I have seen this done. In England they are the first people to be sued, and I dare say that more of the accidents in Nigeria today are due to bad roads. Therefore, if such laws are being brought the people should be made to be responsible.

In England, hospitals are under corporations or hospital management committees, and people have the right to sue. I know several cases where people died in hospital due to neglect of doctors and the people have no action to institute. So, if such a law is passed it should be widened so that relatives can claim in such cases. I do not know how on earth, with the present law, one could claim any money from anybody responsible for one's death when such a person is not in a position to pay a brass penny. In that case I think that as is the case in England national compulsory insurance should obtain. Mr Speaker, with these few words I beg to support the Bill.

**Mr O. O. Ita:** Mr Speaker, Sir, I rise to support this Bill and I would like to add an observation to what is said here in clause 2 of the Bill. It seems to me that the purpose of giving this compensation is to assist the family of the deceased somehow. In fact, it would have appeared more reasonable to think of helping probably those who are minors and who cannot afford independent life as much as fully grown-up people. The people included here, Sir, if you take the brother and sister into consideration, may be wealthy brothers and wealthy sisters or wealthy parents or wealthy wives and so on. What about the children?

Let us say I have a nephew and I put him in school, and I am accidentally run over by a person who cannot afford to give adequate compensation. As the law stands now, my nephew will be sent out of school because by my death he has lost his own guardian. But why not include a dependent or those who would have normally benefitted by the continued existence of the deceased, rather than limit it to that class of people who would probably be well-provided for, because they are leading independent lives by way of working. I am suggesting that some amendment be made in that particular clause in order to add "a dependant". I think that will cover just what I have in mind, Sir.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*

*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

*Clause 1.*

**The Minister of Transport:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to leave out in clause 1 "and shall come into operation on a date to be appointed by the Governor by notice in the *Regional Gazette*."

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 2.*

**The Minister of Transport:** Sir, I beg to move in page C 2, clause 2, paragraph (c) line 2, to leave out "and" at the end of the paragraph.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Minister of Transport:** Sir, I beg to move in page C2, clause 2, paragraph (d), line 3 to add "and" after the semi-colon, at the end of the paragraph.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Minister of Transport:** Sir, I beg to move in page C2, clause 2—the definition of "immediate family"—to add a new paragraph (e) as follows: "Brother and brothers and sister and sisters, which expressions shall include half brother and half brothers and half sister and half sisters."

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** Mr Chairman, I think that this is a convenient place to take Mr Ita's amendment which you promised.

**The Chairman:** You can add it at (f).

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Mr O. O. Ita:** Sir, I beg to move that a subsection (f) be added which reads "and dependants". I want to define dependants as follows: "It shall be deemed to include any minor who up to the time of the death of the deceased shall be dependent on the deceased for their maintenance".

**The Chairman:** It is a convenient time for an adjournment so that we can adjust this. Order! Order!

*Sitting suspended at 4.30 p.m.*

*Sitting resumed at 5 p.m.*

**The Chairman:** You have got it properly organised now, have you?

**Mr O. O. Ita:** Yes, Sir.

**The Chairman:** Will you read it out please.

**Mr O. O. Ita:** Subsection (f). Nephew and nephews, niece and nieces of a deceased person who were under the age of sixteen years at the time of the death of the deceased and who were being maintained by him.

**The Chairman:** I do not quite understand 'brother and brothers' and 'sister and sisters'.

**The Minister of Transport:** What I mean by brothers is people of the same parents same mother and father.

**The Chairman:** The amendment said 'brother and brothers' and 'sister and sisters' on the list you supplied to me. Will you please discuss this with the Attorney-General? (to Mr Ita) Will you please add your amendment?

**Mr O. O. Ita:** I will cross out the plural and the second "and".

**The Chairman:** Please cross out "nephew and niece". What are the words now?

**The Minister of Transport:** "Brother and sister" which expression shall include half-brother and half-sister.

**The Chairman:** I am waiting for Mr Ita.

**Mr O. O. Ita:** Add subsection (f). The words "nephew and niece of a deceased person who were under the age of sixteen years at the time of the death of the deceased and who were being maintained by him".

**The Chairman:** I understand this is acceptable to the Government?

**The Minister of Transport:** Yes, this is acceptable.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clauses 3 to 10 agreed to.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported with Amendments; Read the Third time and passed.*

### The Eastern Region Co-operative Societies Law, 1956

*Order for Second Reading read.*

**The Minister of Trade:** Mr Speaker, I beg to move that a Bill for a law to make provision with respect to Co-operative Societies in the Eastern Region of Nigeria be now read a second time.

This is the first Regional Bill for the Regional subject of Co-operation. It is intended to supersede the Federal Co-operative Ordinance of 1936. This Ordinance is in any event unsuited to present day conditions. Members will recall a new Eastern Region Bill was published in 1953 but owing to certain changes in that year it was not pursued and did not become law. In 1946, the Secretary of State for the Colonies published a model Co-operative Ordinance. We have used that model as a basis for this new Bill. In addition we have made improvements and adaptations of the model to suit local conditions. When drafting the Bill, we maintained continuous contact with the Secretary of State's adviser on Co-operation and obtained the benefit of his experienced advice. A major change introduced by the Bill is the prominent part given to the Minister instead of to His Excellency the Governor.

Clause 54 empowers the Minister to make rules. In many instances there can be appeals to the Minister against decisions of the Registrar. In one instance an appeal may be made to the Minister in respect of the decision of the Society's Committee. That is, under clause 25, part 5, concerning the qualifications for membership. Part 7 introduces a new system for dissolution. This follows the law of Cyprus and was recommended by the Secretary of State as being preferable for us than either the old laws or the model Ordinance.

Part VIII relating to sur-charges and attachments comes from the model Ordinance of the Secretary of State.

Under clause 63 there are new offences and penalties concerning the misappropriation and misapplication of loans. The maximum penalty is now raised from £25 to £100. These are intended to increase the credit worthiness of Societies and make them more effective channels for agricultural and other credits.

An important change is a reduction of the minimum number of members for Productive Societies only which under clause 6 is now a minimum of six members instead of ten. A minimum of ten continues to apply to all Societies except Productive Societies. Co-operative Societies form an increasingly important part of our every day life and we have great confidence that they will be a dominating influence in the future as regards produce buying, banking, insurance, transport and many other branches of both commerce and industry. The small Societies of today will be the large commercial and industrial concerns of tomorrow. This Bill forms an important gateway to those successes. I therefore commend this Bill favourably to the House.

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Transport:** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*

*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

**The Chairman:** I gather that this Bill is non-contentious and I have received no notice of amendments. Therefore, I assume that honourable Members will have no objection to taking the clauses in batches of five clauses. There is an amendment to the first clause only.

*Clause 1.*

**The Minister of Trade:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to leave out in clause 1, line 2 "and shall come into operation on a date to be fixed by the Governor by notice in the *Regional Gazette*".

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clauses 2 to 60 agreed to.*

*Clause 61.*

**Mr U. Onu-Chima:** With reference to clause 61, may I point out . . .

**The Chairman:** Are you moving an amendment, you have given no notice?

*Clauses 61 to 65 agreed to.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported with an Amendment; Read the Third time and passed.*

**The Limitation of Dowry Law, 1956**

*Second reading deferred till Tuesday, 27th March, 1956.*

**The 1956-57 Eastern Region Appropriation Law, 1956**

*Committee deferred till tomorrow morning.*

**ADJOURNMENT**

Resolved, That this House do now adjourn. (*The Premier*).

*Adjourned accordingly at twenty-five minutes past five o'clock.*

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Wednesday, 21st March, 1956

**Ezangbo-Effium-Iziogo-Iboko-Onu Ebonyi Road**

98. **Mr S. N. Alo** asked the Minister of Transport when will the Eastern Regional Government take over the Ezangbo-Effium-Iziogo-Iboko-Onu Ebonyi road from Abakaliki County Council which has repeatedly requested Government to take over the road.

**The Minister of Transport:** The honourable Member will be pleased to note that the Amike-Effium stretch is in the Development Plan 1955-60. As for the remainder, it could only be taken over when staff and funds are available.

**Okpoha Bridge**

99. **Mr S. N. Alo** asked the Minister of Transport, why has work on the construction of the Okpoha Bridge been discontinued.

**The Minister of Transport:** There was no technical staff to continue the construction of this bridge by direct labour nor was any available to draw up contract documents in time for the work to be given out to contract this financial year. It is therefore proposed to complete the construction by contract in 1956-57 and necessary investigation is now in hand.

**Obolo-Ehamufu Trunk B Road**

138. **Mr C. A. Abangwu** asked the Minister of Transport, whether in view of the very bad condition particularly in the rainy season of the Obolo-Ehamufu road, which is an important route for the evacuation of palm produce for the entire Isiuzo District of Nsukka Division, he will recommend:

- (i) the up-grading of the route from class B II to B III ;
- (ii) immediate laterite re-surfacing of the route as a temporary expedient; and
- (iii) the tarring of the route during the next five-year development period.

**The Minister of Transport:** While I fully appreciate the honourable Member's anxieties, this road is not an evacuation route for inspected produce. Its importance to the people of Isiuzo District is not gainsaid but I am unable, after a careful consideration of the conflicting claims of roads throughout the Region, to recommend its early inclusion in the reconstruction and tarring programme.

The up-grading of a road from B II to B III affects the percentage reimbursement of the maintenance expenditure. As the honourable Member will know from my policy paper, this Government proposes to take over both financially and physically the maintenance of all Trunk Roads in the next five years.

# Eastern House of Assembly

Thursday, 22nd March, 1956

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

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

Prayers

## ORDER OF THE DAY

The 1956-57 Eastern Region Appropriation Law, 1956

(First Allotted)

*Considered in Committee of Supply.*

**The Chairman:** For the benefit of new Members, I would like to refer to the procedure which it has been agreed to adopt at this meeting. Under Standing Order 66 the correct thing to do would be for the Chairman to propose that an item for a sum not exceeding a certain amount shall stand part of the Schedule. Thereafter all amendments relating to that particular head will be proposed, and, if carried, the Chairman shall then propose a question that a definite sum of so many pounds shall stand part of the Schedule. On the question being proposed the House may proceed to debate that particular Head of the Estimates. Under our Standing Orders, debate shall be confined to the revenue heads of the Estimates, and, therefore, Members would not be authorised to speak on the expenditure.

It has been considered that that procedure is undesirable from many points of view, and after consultation with people who are closely connected with such matters, it has been agreed to modify that procedure a little.

The modification will enable the Minister charged with the portfolio in relation to any particular head to lead discussion on that particular head; so that when the question is proposed that a sum not exceeding a certain amount stand part of the schedule the Minister shall stand and open discussion. After his speech members who wish can then debate and shall in their discussion refer not only to the revenue head but also to the expenditure. Following the principle that naturally before granting any sums you would like to be satisfied that good and proper use will be made of the sum you are going to grant, and that the Minister has satisfied you on that after you have heard the discussion, and the Minister if he considers it necessary, has replied and explained all the points which you wish to hear, he will then proceed to the details of amendments. Thereafter the question shall be put and if it is the wish of this House, be carried; if it is not, of course, it is to be deleted. That is quite simple, and I do not imagine there is going to be any difficulty about it.

**The Minister of Finance:** Mr Chairman, Sir, I rise to inform the House that Head 401 of the Draft Estimate before the House will have to be deleted. Honourable Members are aware that by the passage of the Finance Bill through this House the direct taxation ordinance has in effect been repealed in the Eastern Region. This being so, it follows that we shall not expect to raise any new revenue from this source during the coming Financial Year. In order to present a correct financial picture to the Legislature, it is therefore necessary to delete this head. Small amounts will probably be received by way of payments of arrears of taxes for 1955-56 and earlier years. This will be brought to account under Head 410—Miscellaneous.



Similarly, Mr Chairman, Head 411, Sub-head 4, will have to be deleted from the draft Estimates before the House. Honourable Members will recall that this item was removed from the Fourth Schedule of the Finance Bill. The result of this deletion is that the estimated revenue from this proposal will not be collected during the coming year. It is therefore necessary to remove the item of Estimated Revenue from the draft Estimates of Revenue for the next financial year.

I would ask honourable Members to note the effect of these deletions is that the estimated surplus for the Region will be reduced to something of the order of £709,135 and I would ask that this be borne in mind during the consideration of the Expenditure Heads, particularly if it is proposed to seek any additional expenditure by way of amendments.

I must again point out to honourable Members, that whilst Government has every intention of ensuring the full collection of the revenue from the new tax proposals, it is at this stage in the financial year an unknown factor in our fiscal life. It is my duty to the Legislature to say that the utmost caution must be exercised in the matter of any additional expenditure this coming financial year, until such time as we shall have sufficient returns from the new tax measures, to enable us to forecast a revised revenue figure with greater accuracy than is possible at present.

*Clauses 1-4 postponed.*

SCHEDULE.

#### Head 420—The Governor

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £24,040 for Head 420—the Governor—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Chairman:** I consider that this Head is not one which ought to be discussed or debated in this House. The ordinary Government Departments are properly represented in the other Heads, and should any Minister or Member want to discuss the Government or policy of the Government as a whole there will be ample opportunity of doing so when dealing with those particular Heads.

**Mr E. O. Eyo (Uyo Division):** Do I take that to mean that this House cannot even debate the vote for Other Charges. We are not so much inclined to attack the Governor, but does your ruling imply that we cannot discuss any item of this Head.

**The Chairman:** My ruling only intends to indicate that if a Member wishes to deal with all the Charges or any particular Sub-head under this Head, then he should give me proper notice either with the object of reducing any particular item or, in the case of a Minister, increasing it. I have received no notice whatsoever.

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### Head 421—Public Service Commission

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £34,190 for Head 421—Public Service Commission—stand part of the Schedule.*

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E. (Enyong Division):** Mr Chairman, Sir, it is unfortunate that there appears to be no Minister good enough to look after this baby.

I rise to move, Sir, that this Head 421, the entire vote, be reduced by 1d. My object is, as Members can very well guess, to draw the attention of the House to a certain degree of dissatisfaction that is almost common within and outside this House with respect to the performance of the Public Service Commission.

First of all, it is a general feeling that the pace of Africanisation is too slow. Evidence was adduced here during the debate to show that African Surveyors, for instance, are not being considered with the sense of urgency that that Department ought to use in recruiting people to fill their establishment. Then there is the question of Pharmacists. We do not think that our Pharmacists are getting a square deal. Not long ago there was a mass exodus of them, as indeed there was of Surveyors.

With reference to Education, we do not think that the Education service should be a closed box. I know of other countries where people in the Education service, be they in Government proper or in Voluntary Agencies, are invited according to merit to fill educational posts in the Government proper. I think it is an anachronistic system whereby the Government Education service is regarded as a closed reserve for those who were in Government. I know of places where if a very important post should become vacant the Government would call from Voluntary Agencies and from inside Government for the right person to occupy the right post. That is to say, the feeling behind that is that the Education service is one whole undivided service that looks for merit wherever it exists and rewards it by higher trust.

If I might illustrate, Sir, it will be quite a miracle in this country if the Principal of D.M. G.S. (Dennis Memorial Grammar School) were invited to fill the vacant post in the administration of education, say Deputy Directorship. I do not want to say I am fed up, but I think it is common knowledge that some of the posts we advertise are already filled before advertisement. It is all merely eyewash. I think this is, to say the least, a very bad system.

Where you have Africans at all appointed to higher posts, we find also, and there are examples all over the country whether we like it or not, there is a feeling that appointments to high positions of trust in the country are done with a discriminatory eye, and the discrimination is in favour of the Onitsha Province. It is there in the air, and we only want to draw the attention of the House to it. For instance, the Director of Recruitment is from Onitsha, the Assistant Commissioner of Labour is from Onitsha, the Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Health is from Onitsha, the Legal Adviser to the Premier is from Onitsha.

You all know, and the Speaker will be the first to admit, that I am speaking with as much objectivity as I can command. There are many Onitsha people—and the Onitsha people will be the first to admit—who are my personal friends; and of course we admit that Onitsha is to be congratulated for producing many worthy sons and daughters. There is no gainsaying that. The Premier has, I believe, unjustly been criticised for nepotism, and I was very encouraged when the other day in the House he came out with the statement that he had no hand in the appointments by the Public Service Commission. But, if that is so, Sir, then certainly the Commission appears to be, shall I say, inadvertently weighted in favour of Onitsha Province, perhaps because the office is in Onitsha Province and it sees Onitsha boys about oftener than people from elsewhere.

I think, I cannot honestly exculpate the Premier *in toto*, because if we look at another list we see that the Commissioner in the United Kingdom is Onitsha, the Chairman of the Finance Corporation is Onitsha Province, the Chairman of the Pharmaceutical Corporation is from Onitsha, the Chairman of the Bride Price Commission is Onitsha, the Chairman of the Bribery and Corruption Commission is Onitsha, or Onitsha Province, the Chairman of the Scholarship Board is the Premier himself, who, I believe, is Onitsha. The Marketing Board is also Onitsha. These are not appointed by the Public Service Commission. I think the honourable the Premier is entitled to have a hand in these appointments (if he has no hand), and the feeling is abroad, Sir, that we are running the Region as an Onitsha Empire. Therefore, I beg to move.

**The Chairman:** In a matter like this it is necessary for me to explain. I am not quite certain whether in making the motion for this Head 421 to be reduced by one penny, it is merely the intention of the honourable Member to bring to the notice of this Government what he considers are his grievances against this particular Department or whether he seriously intends that the question shall be proposed and put.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** Mr Chairman, I will abide by your advice and ruling in the matter. But I think I have drawn the attention of the House to this, and if you allow one or two Members to speak, if it is your wish, I might decide in the end, subject to your advice, to press my motion or withdraw it.

**The Chairman:** Should I proceed to propose the question you can only withdraw by leave of the House.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** I abide, as I said before, by the Chairman's advice.

**The Chairman:** If you intend to draw the attention of Government to what you consider your just grievances, I think you have so done, and what you should do at this stage is to withdraw the motion. If you like it debated then I have no alternative. I will propose the question and it shall be put.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** Mr Chairman, I interpret your last statement to mean advice to withdraw the motion, and I so do.

**The Minister of Health:** With your permission, Mr Chairman, I would like to say a few words. I think it is unfair, having finished with the Public Service Commission, to accuse the Premier of nepotism in the appointments to public corporations.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** I never did. He has been criticised on that score and in fairness to himself, he should make a statement.

**The Chairman:** I think in view of the fact that it does appear to require some form of debate, I shall propose the question.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** May I say, Sir, that I have withdrawn the motion.

**The Chairman:** In fairness to all concerned I shall propose the question.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr B. C. Okwu (Awgu Division):** Mr Chairman, I wish to point out that there are some interesting points made by the last speaker in connection with the Public Service. I have only to point out that one who knows what the position is will come forward boldly to call a spade a spade or to call dirt its rightful name. Facts about the Public Service Commission have been placed before us in a clear manner, and I am sure that all sides of the House have been satisfied with Government's explanation about the situation. It has been made clear that the Ministers have no control over the civil service. I wish Members, particularly those who are interested in how many of the civil service posts have gone to Onitsha Province or how many people of Onitsha origin have been appointed Chairmen of Corporations, would realise the simple fact that if the Ministers, twelve of them they used to be, have a say over who should be appointed and who should not, it is obvious to everyone that Onitsha Province has no majority in the Executive Council. This also applies in the case of the appointment of Chairmen of Corporations. It is, therefore, unfair, shall I say cowardly, to say that things are done purposely to favour Onitsha Province, since the Ministers owe collective responsibility.

I had earlier presented the case for Onitsha Province. I will go further to say that in matters of civil service appointments those who are responsible can discharge their duties with a view to promoting harmony, goodwill and efficiency in the civil service of this Region or to embarrass and confuse. We have, for instance, heard that there are Africans who can, on the basis of merit and qualification, be given civil service appointments; but there is nothing to prevent the man in charge from preferring some one less capable for the mere purpose of proving to the world that the African is not competent.

I wish also to point out that although we are complaining, it is quite obvious that if the expatriates in this Region decided now to go, the Government will collapse. I would have expected a comprehensive scheme by this Government to show how the pace of Nigerianisation can be quickened.

We know that in offices, for instance, most of the hard work is being done by first class clerks. The men on the top only give instructions and then append their signatures. I am not suggesting for one moment that first class clerks should take the places of the men at the top. What I am saying is that there are many young men in the junior service who could be given training facilities in order to fill the hundreds of vacancies now existing.

You are aware, Sir, that those in the North are not so fortunate as we are. They have been forced to lower the requirements for entry into the Senior Service and these chaps who get promoted are doing the job. They have been forced by circumstances to lower standards and there is no such thing as learning to swim by plunging into the water. I am not suggesting that unless we get first rate men with B.A., and B.Sc. the African should not be given an opportunity to learn by getting into contact with the real job.

There is also one aspect of the Civil Service to which I want to draw the attention of this House. I refer to the advertisement for the appointment of Secretary-Typists. Mr Chairman, we know, for instance, that in this House we have been enjoying the services of Verbatim Reporters—both Africans and Expatriates. I have the information that there are Africans who have served efficiently for eight to ten years, and that these Africans have not been considered qualified to hold substantive posts as Secretary-Typists. I understand Sir, that there is a big stick which is always invoked to keep them down. This is the Royal Society of Arts examination. A certificate issued by this body provides grades for stenographers Grade I, II and Secretary-Typist depending on the number of words a minute which can be written down in Shorthand and Typewriting.

I challenge the Government to produce a list of the Africans and Expatriates in this Region who hold posts as Verbatim Reporters or Secretary-Typists who have these R.S.A. Certificates. If it is true that most of the holders of these posts which are Senior Service posts, do not have these certificates, the Government or whoever is responsible should give this House an explanation. Why should Africans who are efficient and capable be denied appointments as Secretary-Typists? It is a glaring case of injustice which should not go unchecked.

Lastly, Sir, I come to the field of Administration. I feel, Sir, that although we have no direct control over the Administration, a scheme should be evolved to give the Africans in the Secretariat and other offices an opportunity of going into the field to prove their worth. I think, Sir, that we cannot afford to delay in this age of speed. Time is against us and in this race we want the Government to go forward with a comprehensive scheme of Nigerianisation.

At this stage, I feel morally bound to pay tribute to some of our friends—the expatriates who work with us in the field. In Awgu we have had District Officers, most of them expatriates. Most of them are very hard working and self-sacrificing. Some complain that they have not got the men, but I will say that we only need the right type and we hope to work with them. Thank you, Mr Chairman.

**The Minister of Health:** Mr Chairman, Sir, may I bore you by giving a different type of catalogue that will knock the bottom out of the arguments used by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

The Cinema Corporation has a Chairman but he is not from Onitsha Province. The Tourist Corporation has a Chairman, but he is not from the Onitsha Province. The E.N.I.S. (Eastern Nigeria Information Service) has a Chairman but he is not from Onitsha. The Printing Corporation has a Chairman but he is not from Onitsha. The E.R.D.C. (Eastern Region Development Corporation) has a Chairman, but he is not from Onitsha. The Secretary of the Public Service Commission is not from Onitsha Province. The United Kingdom Commissioner for the Federation, presumably nominated by the Federal Ministers in conjunction with the N.C.N.C., is not from Onitsha Province. The Library Board has a Chairman, but he is not from Onitsha. I can also cite other appointments.

If you take the number you will find that Onitsha Province is hopelessly in the minority. Sir, I think no useful purpose will be served by coming to this honourable House and talking this ballyhoo in and out of season. If you look at the membership of these Boards you will find that the utmost care has been taken to ensure that there is adequate representation of every Province. It is misleading, Sir, just to tell us who is the Chairman of a Corporation without telling us who are the other members. If honourable Members will take the time to look at the membership of these Corporations, they will find that in every one of them practically all the provinces are very well represented.

[1956-57 E.R. Appropriation  
Law, 1956]

22nd March, 1956

[Committee]

Naturally, Sir, the contention that Nigerianisation should be speeded up by the Public Service Commission is well taken, but, Sir, you will realise that the appointment of officers is not under our control in any way. The Constitution does not give us that power. We cannot even advise as to who should be appointed. I do not, therefore, see why the debate should be allowed to be taken here—rather the critics should ask the Governor who does the appointments.

Sir, I wish to end by saying that I fail to understand how in all the world appointments to the Public Service could be made on any standards other than standards of merit. The moment we depart from that principle we shall be going headstrong into the precipice. The thing to do is to go and get our own young men to be properly educated and then bring them to compete. It serves no useful purpose shouting that Onitsha has got all—it does not help us at all. These appointments can only be made on the basis of merit. If you have any evidence to show that they are being done on conditions other than merit, you can say it, but do not attack people not in any way connected with the Public Service Commission.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Mr Chairman, my attitude to the Public Service Commission is well known. I would like to address you on the policy and composition of our Public Service Commission. Before doing so, may I trace very briefly the history of the Civil Service Commission in the United Kingdom, which dates back to the year 1853.

In that year, Sir, Mr Gladstone was Chancellor of the Exchequer, and in this capacity he had special responsibility for the Civil Service. He appointed a small committee consisting of Sir Stafford Northcote and Sir Charles Trevelyan to make a report to him on the reform of the system by which vacancies were filled almost entirely by patronage. The Committee recommended, among other things, that all situations in the Civil Service should be filled by open competition. The Civil Service Commission was established in 1855 and in 1870 full weight was given to this important recommendation.

In the United Kingdom, at present, there are six commissioners in the Civil Service Commission, and they are civil servants. They are appointed by the Crown on the advice of the Prime Minister, who usually consults the Permanent Secretary to the Treasury. The real basis of their position is that there is a tacit agreement between all political parties, reinforced by strong parliamentary and public opinion, that it is desirable that the commissioners should exercise their functions in an independent and impartial manner; that promotions in the Public Service should be by merit and not by political or any other affiliation, and that as between serving officers there should be no discrimination in regard to promotion. These were clearly defined principles which were to govern the working of the Public Service Commission in the United Kingdom. And this is precisely what we want done in the Eastern Region.

As far back as 1870 the Civil Service Commission in the United Kingdom has adhered strictly to these principles. It will interest you to know that by an Order-in-Council dated 22nd July, 1920, it was clearly provided that the qualifications of all persons proposed to be appointed to the Civil Service, whether temporary or permanent, should, before the appointment, be approved by the Commissioners.

Turning to our Public Service Commission I have the following observations to make: (1) that our Public Service Commission is not independent and impartial; (2) that promotions in the Public Service do not go by merit; (3) that among the present serving officers there is definite discrimination in regard to promotion. I will continue saying this until things are put right in our Public Service Commission.

Our Public Service Commission consists of a Chairman, who is an expatriate civil servant, and four members, one of whom is an expatriate civil servant, the remaining three being Nigerians. I ask, why should an expatriate civil servant be the Chairman of our Public Service Commission? And why should a civil servant be a member of our Public Service Commission?

I am raising this point because Mr Gorsuch clearly made certain recommendations on this matter in his Report which I understand the Government of the Region has accepted. I am referring to paragraphs 40-41 on page 24 of the Report, which, with your permission, I beg to read:—

“40. A Public Service Commission is required to exercise wide quasi-judicial functions affecting all branches of the Public Service; it should be, in the words of the Phillipson-Adebo Report, ‘a high-level quasi-judicial body of unimpeachable detachment and impartiality.’ It is for each Government to decide, in the light of this consideration, what the composition and numbers of its Commission should be, and whether the members should be on full-time salaried or part-time fee basis. On one point the Commission’s advice has been sought—whether a serving official should be appointed to membership while continuing to exercise his executive functions in the public service . . .”

I repeat, “whether a serving official should be appointed to membership while continuing to exercise his executive functions in the public service”. On this point Mr Gorsuch made the following recommendations in paragraph 41 of his Report:—

“41. In advising against the appointment of serving officials the Commission should not be taken as implying that service in a public office should disqualify for appointment to a Public Service Commission. On the contrary, such service may provide a valuable background of experience. In Australia, for instance, where the Commonwealth and State Commissions are executive bodies, men whose careers have been in the public service are commonly called upon for membership, and Nigeria also will in time build up a useful body of retired senior Nigerians on which to draw. In the meantime it is recommended that if circumstances make it necessary to select a serving official there should be two conditions of appointment:—

- (a) either he should retire from the public service, or if he remains in it with accruing pension rights, he should serve as a wholtime member of the Commission and be divorced from any other executive post or function in the public service during membership;
- (b) in the latter event he should not return after conclusion of his service on the commission, to any other public office in the service of any Nigerian Government”.

If Government has accepted this Report why is it that there is still an expatriate civil servant as the Chairman of the Public Service Commission? And why is it that among the four members of this Commission one is a civil servant?

I feel very strongly that the whole of the Public Service Commission should be Nigerianised forthwith, but in taking this view I see the issue of tribalism staring me in the face. Frankly speaking, I have never believed in tribalism; but I regret to say that I have now come to believe in it. There is tribalism not only in this Region but throughout the whole country. Tribalism has been injected even into our politics, into our civil service, and exists in various aspects of public life.

Two days ago, Sir, an honourable Member in this House told you that the Finance Corporation was an Aro/Awka affair, and that the E.R.D.C. was an Ibibio/Calabar affair. What did that mean, Sir? An honourable Member has made this allegation simply because the Secretary of the Finance Corporation and the then Minister of Finance, who was charged with the responsibility for directing the policy of the Finance Corporation, happened to be Aro men, and because a few men from Awka Division have been given loans by the Corporation. This is the sort of politics that has been introduced into the Region. Having had that on record, I do not see how any Member of this House can deny the allegation that there is tribalism in the Eastern Region.

I want to make it quite clear that since the Ikpeazu Bribery Commission I have personally made up my mind to revise my former theories about certain things. For instance, some persons, including myself, were particularly earmarked for destruction during the sitting of the Commission. We have evidence to support the conclusion that there was some element of tribalism injected into that Commission. The point I am really making is that we have now come to realise that there is tribalism in the Eastern Region and throughout the country; and that there is no point in denying this fact.

What harm has not been done to the Government of the Eastern Region by people who go about carrying vicious propaganda about appointments being given to Onitsha people? And do you realise that even before the Bribery Commission a man came forward to challenge the Director of Recruitment and Training to produce a list of all Nigerian civil servants who had been offered appointments? And who was that? An Ibo. As the Director of Recruitment happens to come from a particular town is that any justification to infer that if anybody from that particular town with the necessary qualifications is offered an appointment it was the Director of Recruitment himself who influenced the appointment?

You hear of appointments of magistrates. Who are the people going about calculating those offered these appointments? The Ibos. How do those of us who are not in the Public Service Commission, know of these appointments? The moment an appointment is made, somebody in the Public Service Commission or connected therewith gives out the information to the Action Group in the West within twenty-four hours, and they have it in their record that such and such a man has been appointed and he comes from Onitsha.

Now, Sir, it is high time people stopped indulging in this type of vicious propaganda. You cannot say that because the Director of Recruitment and Training happens to come from a particular town, therefore every person from that particular town who happens to have the necessary qualifications and gets a job must have obtained the appointment through the influence of the Director of Recruitment.

What I am suggesting, Sir, is that the whole of the Public Service Commission should be Nigerianised, and should consist of six members—one from each province making five and an independent Chairman. If I may be heard, it is only Calabar and Onitsha Provinces that are represented in the Public Service Commission. You cannot go out and defend any appointment. If people from Owerri Province appear for interview and are turned down, you cannot go back to the people of Owerri Province and say it was all fair. Or somebody from Rivers Province who was interviewed and turned down, you cannot go back to the Rivers Province and convince them that it was not because somebody from their Province was not on the Public Service Commission. I am expressing my own personal views and the position as I see it. You must have all the provinces represented on this Public Service Commission with an independent Chairman.

I do not see how you are going to grapple with this question of tribalism in the Public Service Commission in this Region unless all the provinces in the Region are represented on this Commission.

**The Chairman:** I would like to interrupt. I think the honourable Member has spoken longer than is necessary and we would like to wind up. If you like to come by a motion you know what to do.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** I just want to draw Government's attention to the Gorsuch recommendations in paragraphs 35-39. I understand that those recommendations have not been implemented. It suggests that establishment and personnel matters be removed from the Public Service Commission, and I suggest that they should be transferred to the Ministry of Finance.

In conclusion, I must say that I have been very unpopular in certain official circles because of my views and opinions about our Public Service Commission. That, Sir, does not bother me at all. I will even from now on adopt a more aggressive attitude until all is well in our Public Service Commission.

**Mr J. O. Umolu (Port Harcourt Division):** Mr Chairman, the Public Service Commission is a very interesting Department of Government and I am happy that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has been able to move a certain amendment which I think is just to enable him to let out his steam.

This House has been treated this morning to certain debates, some are very logical and some are very illogical. I wish to say a few words . . .

**The Chairman:** Shortly, I hope.

**Mr J. O. Umolu:** Yes, Sir. I wish to say a few words about the mover of the amendment. At the beginning he made this House to understand that the Public Service Commission is not under any Minister. He made it quite clear that no Minister was responsible for this Department. From the statement of the Premier previously during this Session on this question of domination and nepotism I think the honourable Premier has been able to clear himself. In the matter of appointments in the Region, no Minister is responsible but the Governor; he is responsible for promotion, transfers and appointment. The Public Service Commission can even recommend and be turned down by the Governor under the Constitution that we are running. This, I think, our Members should understand.

If, therefore, somebody who is called the "generalissimo" of this Region continues to employ applicants from a certain section of the community in order to embarrass certain individuals, I think we are in a position to understand. For the Premier himself has no hand in the appointment of people and I do not agree with anybody who says that the question of appointments should be based on tribe. It is wrong. It is never done, even in the United Kingdom or other parts of the world.

In the previous years, under the old Constitution when the Bench, say the Legal Department, was filled by Yorubas only and tribal unions influenced appointments of magistrates and judges in this country, none of them raised their voices to talk about domination and tribalism. In the Western Region today—I come from the West—we have not even one magistrate. All the Magistrates in the Western Region are Yorubas.

Well, there is no point in anybody coming to this House to tell me, if we come to this question of Onitsha or non-Onitsha, that Onitsha has the staff; that they made use of the opportunity of education to produce the men that are able to fill certain vacancies. I would like to hear argument adduced in this House that such and such a man who has been appointed is not qualified for the post. That is the time when we should quarrel. This is not a question of shouting, when somebody has been appointed, "Oh! he comes from this tribe," whether he is even qualified for the post or not. I would like to hear the argument adduced that so and so has been appointed; he is from Onitsha, and he is not qualified for the post to which he is appointed. Well, the last speaker adduced an argument here that he would like the Public Service Commission to be reorganised in order that future appointments may be based on Provinces or even Divisions.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** I was only saying that in the composition of the Public Service Commission, all Provinces should be represented.

**Mr J. O. Umolu:** Mr Chairman, if the Public Service Commission is to be reorganised where every Province will be represented, it leaves you with the argument that when Provinces are represented, a fair share will be obtained for every Province. It leads to that argument, and very conclusively too. I would like to ask this simple question—what about the Judicial Department? Suppose there is a division where you have not somebody qualified to be appointed to the Bench, will you, because a certain division has a qualified man appointed a Judge, then appoint equally somebody in that other division to be a Judge? It is wrong in principle—it is purely wrong.



Well, my argument is this, Mr Chairman. Let us all know from where the wind is blowing. Let us understand whose foot is in the boot as far as the Civil Service, and appointments in this Region are concerned. Let us know whose foot is in the boot so that when we get up here and air our views we may direct our remarks to the proper quarters. Everybody is dissatisfied. Last year, by this time during our sitting, we had a chance of being at loggerheads with the Governor of this Region over certain appointments—it is still fresh in our minds—and he had his way, we still know that under the very Constitution the Civil Service is not under a Minister, and no Minister is responsible for appointment or promotion, and if we are directing our attack towards that channel we are merely impugning the good reputation of somebody by accusing him of nepotism.

Mr Chairman, I oppose that amendment.

**The Minister of Finance:** Mr Chairman, Sir, I just want to say something in the way of advice. The last speaker but one was trying to tell members of this House that tribalism has come to stay, and therefore this House must be prepared to recognise it. If I got him well, I think that was the theme of his speech.

I just want to say, Sir, that this country is a growing country with the mass of the people not able to understand, and can be easily led astray by those who represent them in this House. I would like to see these representatives think deeply of not only playing politics but thinking at times like statesmen, not just politicians.

The question of employment, either by the Public Service Commission or in the Corporations, coming from one particular area is not really a thing that a statesman ought to bring into this House. I feel that if we can go out of this country to a labour market to seek people—people who can man our service so that it may be efficient—I do not see any reason why we should not think of employing people of merit in this country. If we want people employed on merit we ought to have checked our facts properly to make sure that there is no partiality in getting people from one area, before coming to this House. Certainly the labour market today is in favour of Onitsha Province in this country. It follows therefore that if there are more people employed from Onitsha Province we have to check our facts to make sure that it is not just because the labour market is there, and is in favour of that area. But we have not done that, I am quite sure.

It has been pointed out by my colleague that in every Corporation about five of the members out of about ten or so are not from Onitsha Province. Moreover, you have got your Ministers. If you check up you find that three are from Calabar Province; before the two that left us recently went away there were three from Onitsha Province; four are from Owerri Province which is the largest Province; one from Ogoja Province and one from Rivers Province, the smallest Provinces. These are the men who sit together to nominate or suggest people to be appointed to these Corporations before the Executive Council takes a final decision on them.

To me, what this motion actually points to is an attempt to move a vote of no confidence in the Government Bench. Since it was not only the Public Service Commission that was mentioned in the amendment, but also the Corporations, somebody might as well move a vote of no confidence in the Government and let it be contested.

Mr Chairman, I am really disgusted with this sort of affair. I think it is about time we became more serious as statesmen, and not as politicians.

**Chief A. N. Onyiuke (Awka Division):** I do not think this petty jealousy and enviousness will help this Region. The policy of this Government is to employ civil servants on merit and merit only. Whether all these civil servants come from the same family does not matter as long as they are qualified. We have in our Civil Service and Boards and Corporations people from every part of this country. We may as well sack all of them and divide the posts amongst the villages in the Eastern Region, whether they are qualified or not. What an impertinence! This cannot be allowed. I challenge any Member of this House to prove any appointment made by the Public Service Commission that is not on merit, and we dissolve this Public Service Commission here and now.

Is it the Civil Service Commission or the Premier that is responsible for the ordination of Priests and Pastors and Bishops of Roman Catholic Missions and Church Missionary Societies? Which Province has more of these? If any Province wants to have these people let that Province go all out to train its people for it. How many Lawyers and Doctors are there in the Eastern Region? How many come from each Province?

I agree with the Minister of Health that this debate should not have been allowed at all. I move that the question be now put.

**Mr A. J. Ekpe (Opobo Division):** Mr Chairman, Sir, I think that some honourable Members have misunderstood the point made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. He did not intend to embarrass anybody or to impute motive.

**The Chairman:** Will you confine yourself to your own views.

**Mr A. J. Ekpe:** Thank you very much, Sir. What I am trying to say is that in the civil service, as has already been pointed out, there are elements of tribalism. It would be very wrong indeed for Members of this House to come here and fail to express what the feelings of the people in the Eastern Region in respect of appointment to posts in the civil service are. A stage will come during the debate in this House when we may have to point out actual acts of tribalism and nepotism and as we get on, Sir, it may be possible to bring out facts and figures.

**The Chairman:** I will not permit that. I will naturally allow, and it is the right of every member who so desires to table a motion which will enable him to argue facts and figures, but I will not permit this indirect method.

**The Minister of Education:** Mr Chairman, I would like to take this opportunity to say a few words. Often times, I have heard people say that this is done by the Premier or so and so. Whenever they say something like this, they do not know that it is an insult to other Ministers. If all the Ministers met, whether for appointment or anything, and appointed somebody why should people come to this House and feel that it was done by one particular person? What conclusion do we come to? Do you mean others are goats, silly things sitting round a dictator? Personally I object to it. Even the Premier himself knows that he has people who can reason and you may not agree with him if he were to bring any points.

I think in the matter of appointment to any Board, as far as I know, we take the suitability of a certain individual into consideration. Government wants to succeed in anything Government wants to do, and so when we want to appoint anybody on the Board, what we ask is: Will he be able to control, and to help our people to progress? We have forgotten that leadership in individuals means ability to control, to help the Government to implement the policy; but why should we from time to time feel that there is a certain giant at a certain corner who sits down and says "Go, or run madly; go the other way". I am the last who would do it. The Premier knows it. If anything were to happen, even in the Ministers' caucus or even in the Executive Council against my will, I will not take it and I will not side with him.

I can say as far as I know that in appointment to Boards, we think of morality, loyalty of any individual, how he will be able to help the implementation of certain things that lead to the progress of Nigeria. So, when we come here and somebody begins to say "this man has been appointed"—I do not talk much but when I feel like talking I really do—this is what I say.

From my home in social life I can bet anybody that there was a time when I take part in a meeting and I had no position to occupy. Before I came here I was a Chairman of different sections—Urban District Council, St. Anna, etc. All these happened ever since. When a person is not fit, cannot do anything, there is no reason for saying that he has been put aside.

As I am here, if you want to appoint my brother to any post I would object if I know that my brother would not be able to perform the duties of that post. As far as I know if I want to suggest any person from Calabar Province to any Board I would suggest such a person who I know would represent me in a better way, and he would not be ridiculed. I would say we

cannot move forward if we carry on all this tribalism. I know there was a time at Ikot Ekpene when people felt that my own father and my brothers usurped many other things and we have to suffer today. They would say "scholarship" when they are not able to pass entrance examinations and so on. The best way is to educate your people. I am not jealous of anybody but when it comes to the time, I know I have a suitable person for any place and other people brush him aside, I would not agree.

The Premier does not lead us like goats. Whenever a decision has been arrived at by all the Ministers here, people accuse us, all of us. If you feel that we have not done anything, we are not carrying on the project as you wish, we would like you to vote us out but not to direct attacks to one person.

**The Premier:** Mr Chairman, I should not have taken part in this debate but the honourable mover did use the word "culpable," although he realised, as I said last week, that this Government—the Executive Council—has no say, not even a final say, no say at all, in appointment, promotion and discipline in the civil service. He said he could not exculpate me from blame for appointment to statutory Boards and Corporations. I need not go into details because my honourable Friends the Minister of Health, the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Education made the point quite clear. Surely this is a Cabinet Government which rests on the basis of collective responsibility. Not only that, as has already been pointed out, I do not believe in provincialism. But even in the Executive Council of twelve Ministers, Awgu, Onubogu and myself come from Onitsha Province and surely the other nine people cannot be so overshadowed by the great personalities of these men from Onitsha Province.

The funny part about it, Mr Chairman, is that even in Onitsha Province itself there are some town men who go and point that these men are from Onitsha town itself.

I want to say right now that if there is any element of tribalism or favouritism in appointments to the civil service, your Executive Council pleads not guilty and I plead not guilty myself. The Governor is given that power under the Constitution. If the Public Service Commission does anything wrong, why not direct your eyes to the Public Service Commission. Under the Constitution—Section 173—Control of the Public Service—it is made quite clear that under section 179.

"There shall be for each Region a Public Service Commission which shall consist of a Chairman and such number of other members as may be prescribed by regulations made under section 177".

"(2) The members of a Regional Commission shall be appointed by the Governor of the Region".

Not only that, it says in section 189—

"In the exercise of the powers conferred on him by this Chapter the Governor-General shall act in his discretion".

Surely my honourable Friend knows this. How can he come here and try to leave an impression that there is an element of partiality on the part of your servants. I do not think this is fair. With respect, I say it is hitting below the belt, but I do not blame him much. If he does that, how about the millions of people who rely on what they read from poison sources. Have we not an Information Department—it is under my portfolio—and I have not come here to run it down. As a matter of fact, I have suggested that the Standing Orders Committee should adopt a new measure so that we have in our Standing Orders that we should not discuss civil service affairs here for fear of demoralising the best of them who are doing their very best. In fairness to this Government, we have an Information Service which is to give out correct and accurate information to newspapers and to readers. We have also a Chairman of the Public Service Commission who is paid £2,880 a year and we have Secretary to the Public Service Commission—leaving out the Governor so far as his own share of responsibility is

concerned. Why did they keep quiet? Why did not the Secretary of the Public Service Commission or the Information Services give out to the world that under the Constitution, appointments, promotions, granting of increments, discipline in the Civil Service are within the exclusive competence and jurisdiction of the Governor? Why did they keep quiet?

Apart from that, is it not a fact that in Onitsha certain people were actually inciting one group against the other by impugning the integrity of the Premier, that the Premier was an inefficient Minister because he was appointing people on the basis of favouritism and he was guilty of nepotism? There is a section in our criminal code—I think it is section 51—which says that if you incite one section of the community against the other that is a seditious intention. Have we not a Legal Department? Was any action taken? I am only mentioning these things here to show you that I am not very much annoyed at what my honourable Mover has done because things have been allowed to go on and taken for granted, until last week when we began to point out to you that after all “all that glitters is not gold”.

We are not given any power over the Civil Service. Under this Constitution the Governor has that power, as I read out. He exercises it in his discretion but I want to be fair to him. Before appointing these three African members, he did consult us—the Executive Council—and the Executive Council gave him these three names and he appointed them, but they are responsible to him although he is not bound to act on their advice. I think I can say this too, that in the case of Dr MacLetchie, the Director of Medical Services, your Minister pointed out to the Governor that in accordance with the Gorsuch recommendation, it would be highly improper to allow the Director of Medical Services to continue. He assured us that efforts would be made to change him and he told us that he would serve until 31st March, 1956. Since then a name has been suggested and that name is acceptable to the Government. The Governor will appoint Barrister Ihenacho, as a member of the Public Service Commission from April 1st. That is all we know and I am quite sure that my Friend will by now realise what harm he has done by putting his motion the way he did.

Surely I will not be justified if I get up here and say that in the last six years the Aggrey Memorial College got grants totalling £33,337. I would not say that it is favouritism or that that was given to the Aggrey Memorial College because of any special competence, or because of its efficiency. It would be most unfair to say that; but that is a fact. So I am appealing to my friend to realise what harm could be done by making a motion of this nature. It is just like throwing an apple of discord.

We leave those who are really responsible to know who inspired this motion—I do not mean who asked the Speaker to put it up but whose dereliction of duty made it necessary for this motion to be brought to this House. It is that individual or those sort of people who work frantically. They are responsible and not the honourable Mover.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** Mr Chairman, I am very grateful for an opportunity to make a few closing remarks.

I am very gratified in that the object of the motion has been abundantly achieved. It has drawn out comments from both sides of the House and if that and nothing else, I am thoroughly satisfied.

I must apologise to Members on the Executive Council bench who are inclined to misunderstand me, and to take the matter personally. Some have even gone to the extent of feeling that a motion such as this is an insult to their personal dignity. That is very far from my intention and I shall ask them not to take umbrage therefrom.

I think anybody will be courageous enough to tender an apology to the Calabar and Rivers Provinces for the tone of the debate, which appears to take for granted, that these two Provinces have not produced eminent men in the last hundred years of contact with British civilisation. So that no matter what you say, Sir, you cannot get away from the fact that at least the Onitsha

Province has done only a part of what practically everybody else has done and I was careful enough to say—and I mean it in all sincerity—that the Onitsha Province, and Onitsha town for that matter, deserves unstinted congratulations for the way they have taken to the light, and proved themselves very worthy of the advance they have made—I mean that, I mean every word of it, I am not saying politics. But I want respectfully to suggest that other Provinces have done so too, and nobody in his senses will talk about appointment on anything other than merit; but if you thereby assume that all the merit in the Region has been gold, then of course you are absolutely going astray.

The Premier has done me the justice of pointing out that this kind of talk is held also inside Onitsha itself and that Onitsha Province itself is divided against itself. Some say Onitsha boy and not Onitsha Province—I have heard that; and that section of my speech was designed to underline the evil that the gossip might do and to give the Premier an opportunity of making his stand quite clear. He is aware of the rumour, everybody is aware of the gossip and if people lack the courage to bring into the body of this House the things they say outside the porch, it is a shame on them. So, Mr Chairman, I believe I have done my simple duty in bringing into full light these little petty talks here and there.

About the Public Service Commission, Sir, and its unalloyed power, the Premier—I would like to finish off this joke there. The Premier told us that “all that glitters is not gold” and I think inside that he must include the thing he brought in a platter of gold. That also is not gold, nor does the platter glitter at all. That is to say, I believe that the Premier was quite sincere when he thought after the last Constitutional Conference that he had made tremendous achievement. But it is now dawning on him day by day, that we are given a semblance of freedom and no freedom. I shall call upon both sides of this House to walk resolutely towards the reality of that semblance and then the Premier will have our full support.

I do not think I should say more at this stage. With your permission, Sir, I might, having achieved the purpose of the motion, beg leave to withdraw it.

**The Chairman:** This amendment has been discussed in accordance with parliamentary tradition and for that purpose I have given ample opportunity for all views to be aired. Is it the consent of the House that the amendment be withdrawn?

**Whole House:** “Aye!”

*Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.*

*Question: That the sum of £31,190 for Head 421—Public Service Commission—stand part of the Schedule, put and agreed to.*

*Sitting suspended at 11.30 a.m.*

*Sitting resumed at 12 noon.*

#### **Head 422: Clerical Training School**

*Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £6,820 for Head 422—Clerical Training School—stand part of the Schedule.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### **Head 423: Premier's Office**

*Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £35,430 for Head 423, Premier's Office, stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Premier:** Mr Chairman, I move that sub-head 3—Local Transport and Traveling be amended by being increased by £50. Honourable Members will have noted that this sub-head includes provision for the payment of chauffeurs' allowances of £75 to Parliamentary

Secretaries. In previous years this allowance has been £60, but was increased to take account of recent wage and salary increases. After the draft estimates had been printed it was pointed out that the increase was inadequate since the minimum salary of the drivers employed by Government is £90 per annum. Therefore the chauffeurs' allowance for Parliamentary Secretary has again been increased to £100 per annum and this necessitates the consequential amendment to the total of sub-head 3.—Local Transport and Travelling under each Ministry head. In the case of the Premier's Office where there are two Parliamentary Secretaries the amount of the necessary amendment is £50.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** On a point of order. I was wondering whether the first two amendments should not be taken.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** Mr Chairman, Sir, I had thought that I had listed this amendment in the hope that it would elicit some explanation from the honourable Premier and so in that spirit I also had on the list an amendment under sub-head 1, Item (17) because I have not seen any explanation in the memorandum to show the justification for that number of office cleaners—as many as eight. I had thought that the Premier might be able to give us some clue and in the light of that I would perhaps have begged leave to withdraw the motion. I have listed it merely to elicit information.

**The Premier:** These posts are shown under sub-head 1 Item (15)—Premier's Office—for convenience, since these office cleaners are responsible for the cleanliness of both the old secretariat building and the new ministry building. There has therefore been a very slight increase in the work of the office. After these buildings were constructed it was found that the former cleaners were not sufficient, so we had to increase the number and that was why. It is because of these buildings and the consequential increase in work.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** Sir, I do not move.

**The Chairman:** *The question is to increase sub-head 3 by £50.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Premier:** In connection with sub-head 1 Item (1) we have of late had complaints by the Ministers that they have been experiencing visitations by burglars, and it became necessary to have night-watchmen to take care of the buildings with the co-operation of the Police. The Police have been sending guards every night but not quite regularly and that was why that was included.

**Mr A. Ikoku O.B.E.:** Mr Chairman, Sir, with reference to sub-head 1 item (17), I had thought that in the Regional capital if nowhere else it is the business of the police to look after the safety of Government buildings.

**The Chairman:** Do you intend to make a formal motion?

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** Yes, Sir.

**The Chairman:** You may do so.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** Under sub-head 1 Item (17), Sir, I move that the entire item be deleted, because I think that it is the business of the police to look after these things.

*Question proposed*

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Mr Chairman, I would like to say that we do not think that one night watchman is sufficient, and I am wondering why provision was only made for one. I know of certain houses in Enugu in which they have one night-watchman to a house, despite the fact that the Police at the same time do their beats. I say that it is time the number was increased; so that at no time will the Secretariat buildings or Ministries be burgled.

**The Chairman:** I understand Government Bench oppose the amendment. In view of that, Mr Ikoku, do you wish to speak?

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22nd March, 1956

[Committee]

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E. :** I would say, Sir, that I believe the last speaker was referring to private houses where people, in addition to the general watch kept by the Police, take the trouble to engage watchmen of their own. But is it right to do that for Government buildings? I do not accept that.

**The Premier :** This is for the Premier's Lodge.

**Mr E. O. Eyo :** I cannot understand that argument. If a private individual can afford a night-watchman in addition to the Police I do not see why Government cannot afford it.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E. :** The point, Sir, is that the Police are there primarily for Government buildings and they are paid by Government.

*Question put and negatived.*

**The Premier :** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to include provision under Head 423 : Premier's Office of £500 for the foundation of a Library.

The Government has agreed that the very varied nature of the work carried out in this Office makes it most desirable that a Library of essential Law books be established; and I am sure that honourable Members will have no objection to this additional expenditure.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Question proposed: That an increased sum of £35,980 for Head 423—Premier's Office be inserted in the Schedule.*

**Mr E. O. Eyo :** Mr Speaker, I want to observe the grading under this Head—Post of Clerk to Executive Council. Some time ago the Secretary to the Premier went away on leave, and it was necessary to appoint a Permanent Secretary from another Ministry to act. I am thinking of a system where we have the whole establishment complete, so that each time the Secretary to the Premier is away on leave, there will be no necessity to transfer another Permanent Secretary. You will have continuity. I think, Sir, the post of Clerk to the Executive Council is so important that I do not see why it should be graded on the Ordinary Scale A.

May I refer to the recommendations in the Gorsuch Report at page 84 : recommendation 229 : "The Commission have taken the definite view that the senior administrative posts to the Ministries, i.e., Permanent Secretary and below, should be graded by the value of the individual post itself". My interpretation of that is that a post like that of the Clerk to Executive Council is of such value that it should not be on the ordinary one of Scale A.

I am suggesting that the Government should consider this. I do not see any reason why Clerk to Executive Council should not relieve or act in the absence of the Secretary to the Premier in the running of that office.

**Mr G. I. Oko, M.B.E. (Awgu Division) :** Mr Chairman, I am also referring to what the honourable Eyo said. I wish to draw the attention of the House to sub-head 4 Head 423. It is the salary of the Clerk of Executive Council. I remember during the present financial year when I was a member of the Finance Committee this very question was once discussed. To my knowledge the scale approved was more than what is shown here. It came as a surprise to me, Sir, that this particular item was at the time shelved.

**The Chairman :** Are you going to move that the sum be increased?

**Mr G. I. Oko, M.B.E. :** I am suggesting that Government look into this matter and consider the value of that post which the Clerk holds.

**The Chairman :** You will proceed by way of question some time?

*Question, That an increased sum of £35,980 for Head 423—Premier's Office—be inserted in the Schedule, put and agreed to.*

**Head 424 : Commissioner in The United Kingdom :**

*Question proposed : That a sum not exceeding £20,310 for Head 424—Commissioner in the United Kingdom—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Premier :** Mr Chairman, I beg to move with His Excellency's assent that item 1 be increased by £600. This amendment is deemed to be desirable in order to bring the salary of the Commissioner in the United Kingdom to the same level as those paid by the Western and Northern Regions to their Commissioners, and I am sure that honourable Members would not wish our Commissioner to be in a worse position than that of his colleagues from the West and North.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E. :** Mr Chairman, Sir, I beg to move that Sub-head 1 item (9), be reduced by £200. My true intention really is to underline my disagreement with this invention of Disturbance Allowance. I can understand a Surveyor, for instance, or Forestry man, who is more out of his home than at home being disturbed. In a measure all of us are certainly disturbed if we undertake a job. You are disturbed from your sleep if nothing else.

**The Chairman :** I do not want to disturb you but perhaps you would like information from the Government on what this means.

**The Premier :** It is an allowance given to Civil Servants when they leave their ordinary place of service. If they leave Nigeria for the United Kingdom it applies to all Civil Servants whether expatriates or Nigerians and it is regulated by General Orders and the particular officer concerned is entitled to it. It is part of the terms and conditions of employment.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E. :** What is the difference between that and Inducement Allowance ?

**The Premier :** Inducement Allowance is Expatriate Allowance; that is the other name given to it by Gorsuch; but that does not affect an officer leaving one particular country and going outside the confines of another country. If an Englishman comes here he is entitled to Expatriation Allowance as part of his condition of service. If he is sent from here to the Congo or to England in addition to that, he is entitled to Disturbance Allowance.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E. :** What happens if an African goes from here, the Commissioner for the United Kingdom, for instance, which of the Allowances does he get—Disturbance or Expatriate ?

**The Premier :** The Commissioner will not be entitled to either; because he is not a Civil Servant. He will be entitled to a certain allowance which will enable him to pay his Income Tax in the United Kingdom.

**Mr Chairman :** I do not intend to propose the question. Do you really wish to make an amendment ?

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E. :** No.

*Question proposed: That an increased sum of £20,910 for Head 424—Commissioner in the United Kingdom—be inserted in the Schedule.*

**Mr E. O. Eyo :** Mr Chairman, I happened to look into the office of our Commissioner during my last visit in London. I observe that there is provision of £2,000 for publicity. Well, Sir, who is going to do the publicity ? I observe that there is no provision for either a Publicity Officer or a Press Officer. If we provide £2,000, who is going to do the publicity ? My attention is drawn to the Memorandum on the Estimates—Page 5, paragraph 29 :—

One Assistant Secretary,

One Student Officer,

One Press Officer.



I think that was an omission on the part of Government. If we are going to pay £2,000 for publicity there must be an officer in charge of publicity.

The Commissioner in London does not seem to enjoy other amenities enjoyed by his colleagues. For instance, I think he had only one car the last time I was there, as against three cars owned by the Commissioner for the West. The point I am making is that if we must have a Commissioner in London he must enjoy some prestige.

**The Chairman :** Prestige of what ?

**Mr E. O. Eyo :** Prestige of the Office. I am stressing prestige of the Office of Commissioner because it seems this Government cannot provide what other Governments do provide. The Commissioner should have all the provisions necessary for him to maintain the prestige of office.

**The Premier :** Mr Chairman my first point is on publicity. It is true as the honourable Chief Whip pointed out, that there is provision here for a Press Officer. It is included as an honourable sum to the Commissioner to enable him to make use of Press Agencies in the United Kingdom. You know that there are publicity experts, so that instead of engaging someone, we intend to have a Publicity Officer who will be a Liaison between his office and these press agencies. We have found it is more economical and that is why we have put a lump sum of £2,000.

About prestige, I must point out that this question came up last year and honourable Members will notice that the money voted last year for two cars was used in buying one car for prestige purposes. We have decided to make provision this year for another. We have, however, included £1,000 this year for the office to enable distinguished visitors to United Kingdom and our office to be carried about. I can assure you that efforts are being made to make sure that our Commissioner also lives up to expectation.

*Question: That an increased sum of £20,910 for Head 424—Commissioner in the United Kingdom—be inserted in the Schedule—put and agreed to.*

#### **Head 425: Eastern Nigeria Information Service**

*Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £33,230 for Head 425—Eastern Nigeria Information Service—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Premier :** Mr Chairman, Government proposes to provide under Head 425 E.N.I.S. the sum of £33,230. We do not, however, expect that all this sum will be spent. That is not to say that we do not intend to provide an improved and expanded Information Service. This will further be provided not by means of a Government Department but through the medium of the E.N.I.S. Corporation set up under the provisions by E.R. Law No. 15 of 1955. If this be the case, honourable Members will ask : Why make any provisions at all ?

The reason for this is that the Statutory Corporation has only been recently inaugurated and funds voted have not been made available. However, the Corporation is attempting to engage staff, and as soon as the new offices are ready, it should work smoothly. The vesting date has been arranged for May 1st.

It is, therefore, necessary to continue to make provision for the Information Service until the Corporation is ready to take up its allotted task. Until that time, it is necessary to pay the staff and provide the materials for the department.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Mr Chairman, I just want to pay tribute to this department for the first time. During the Queen's visit we saw a handbook entitled *Eastern Nigeria*. It was first. It was beautifully got up and I think everybody who has read it is satisfied.

What is worrying me at the moment is the lack of publicity and information about Government's activities. If there is any time that we want this publicity, it is right now. In every village now, there is an opposition. As a matter of fact, pamphlets are distributed by political parties to the effect that all women are going to be taxed. It is the duty of this Department to go round and do some propaganda. This department should open branches in every division. The Opposition is taking this very seriously, because I know how destructive they can be.

There is one complaint which has been brought to my notice. It concerns an officer of this department who is posted to my division. I am informed that he goes from village to village organising political meetings. The people have complained to me and I promised that I would report the matter to the department and ask that inquiries be made. If this is true, I suggest that he should be withdrawn and another officer sent there. What I mean by politics is, take for instance, instead of going to tell the people that government does not intend to tax all women, he tells them that the N.C.N.C. is bad and is in fact going to tax all women. His duty is to take the Finance Bill to the people and explain the provisions of the Bill. I would call that politics because it goes to support the view of the Opposition against the government.

**Mr K. J. N. Okpokam (Ikom Division) :** Mr Chairman, I have a few words to add. I can remember that we of the Finance Committee of the House did say that information should be spread more widely than at present. All publications issued by this department should reach the people in their villages. The way to do it is that as soon as the pamphlets are published, they should be sent into the local treasuries in the different divisions of the Eastern Region, so that the people should have a first hand information of the activities of Government.

**Mr D. A. Nnaji (Udi Division) :** Mr Chairman, it has been said here that much publicity is not given as it should be by this Department. I wish to point out some of the reasons.

The first is that the department is under-staffed and those who work there are overworked. If any of the honourable Members care to go there, he will be convinced that that department is badly under-staffed.

The second reason is that there is much grumbling in that Department. Many of the junior staff complain of suppression by the man at the head. These men have no means of putting their complaints to the Government. There was, for instance, provision in that department for certain grades; but the people to fill these vacancies have not been engaged. The result is that one man does the work of three or four men. The manager of the news section is one of the men who should be considered for a senior post. He carries the *Eastern Outlook* on his head from the Printing Department to his office and works until 2 o'clock in the morning sometimes; but there is nothing like overtime paid.

I wish to make suggestion which will remedy the situation as regards publicity. The first is that the Cinema Section of this Department should do all it can to go to the villages to screen films showing the activities of the Government. I say this because our people are still unable to read; and those in the rural areas who read at all are few. Pamphlets are only read by a few and the majority of the people only look at the pictures and throw them away. I also seize the opportunity to say that the Cinema Section of the Information Service should not be transferred to the Corporation because it will not be to its interest.

Secondly, we all know the *Eastern Outlook* is the only medium of spreading Government Information; but this paper is handicapped because the Government Printing Department which does the printing sometimes felt reluctant to continue. I suggest that the pages of the *Outlook* should be increased so as to contain more news even if this will mean that the price of the paper will have to be increased. All the newspapers, with the exception of the *Sentinel* are sold at 2d.

Referring to a point made by a previous speaker about a member of this department engaging in politics, I think it is unfair to make any mention of it when investigations have not been made.

I suggest that instead of depending on Press Releases, officers of this department should go out to all parts of the Region to tell the people about Government's activities. I do not think the Director or his Deputy has ever toured the rural areas. The Director sits in the office and makes noise instead of doing some work. Those under him are abused, overworked and paid no overtime and this only makes them disgruntled. Three junior officers have already been served with notices of termination. What is the use of retrenching people when the department

is short-staffed. I think the Premier has already received a petition. I wish him to investigate the working of this department. People there are groaning and I wish something should be done for them.

**Mr P. G. Warmate (Degema Division) :** Mr Chairman, I have only two points to make under this Head. One is that some time ago, I made it quite clear in this House that if there is any section of this Region requiring accurate information on current affairs, it is the Creek areas. Telegrams take two or three weeks to get there and any person can go to these areas and disseminate false information.

In a place like this, I feel that this arm of Government should be there to have very close contact with the people. In the hinterland, you find Cinema Vans going round, but in the creek areas such vans cannot get round the creeks; so I am suggesting that Government should arrange to have a special boat built at the Opobo Boatyard to serve this purpose. I have met the Director of Information Service who informed me that his difficulty is that each time he asks for a vessel from the Resident it will not be available. Such an excuse serves no useful purpose, and Government should arrange to build a boat to enable the mobile cinema to go into the creek areas. Those who have been in the Creek area will agree with me that it ought to be the most educated area, but unfortunately, it is the other way round. This is due to lack of communication in the area. I cannot over-stress the importance of this fact, and Government should please take immediate action.

Though not coming under this head I feel that the N.B.S. should include Ijaw language in the vernacular news broadcast. I have made this plea several times in this House. I have discussed this matter with the Director of Information Service, and he stated that the N.B.S. was not under his control. In support of my case may I state that the Report of the Economic Mission did in fact stress the importance of Ijaw language. I see no reason why Government should not take immediate steps to introduce Ijaw in the N.B.S. If this is done you will find that more radio sets will be bought.

**Mr R. O. Iwuagwu (Okigwi Division) :** Mr Chairman, what brings dissatisfaction to the people in the rural areas is that what is sauce for the goose is not made to be sauce for the gander as well. Twice last year a team of Information Service personnel visited some divisions to collect native airs and dances but failed to visit other divisions. Naturally, the people from the divisions they did not visit will feel that Government is interested in one set of Division only. I, therefore, suggest that, in future, such services should be extended to the people in all the rural areas of the Region.

**Mr E. A. Agim (Ogoja Division) :** Mr Chairman, in addition to what honourable Members have said, I want to call the attention of the department concerned with the music programme of the N.B.S. The Obudu and Ogoja people are very good musicians. I recommend that this department should come to record native music from Obudu, Ogoja and Ikom. It is unfortunate that the nice music of these areas is not heard over the N.B.S.

**Mr J. U. Nwodo (Nsukka Division) :** Mr Chairman, I rise to join honourable Eyo in showering praises on the Information Service for the booklet entitled *The Eastern Region* published during Her Majesty's visit. One of the important personalities described in that booklet was Chief Ohabenyi from Obollo in Nsukka Division. I regret to announce to this honourable House, especially at this time when the House is in sympathy with the yearnings of the natural rulers, that he died in Nsukka recently. Chief Ohabenyi was brave and quick-witted, and was a man who among his own class was quite willing to change with the times. It is a real pity that he has passed away.

**Rev. M. D. Opara (Owerri Division) :** Mr Chairman, formerly we complained of the type of Ibo vernacular in which news were broadcast, but I am happy that our complaints were heeded and now news is broadcast in Union Ibo.

I have an observation to make on the pamphlet *Eastern Nigeria* which was published before the Queen's visit. The Owerri man shown therein was almost naked, carrying a bunch of palm fruit. The other divisions, even Nsukka, were well portrayed. In future Owerri people should not be treated like that.

I want also to point out that many people are misquoted in the news releases of the N.B.S. The other day, in this House—and I hope everybody will bear me out—I did not rise up to say that I opposed the Osu Bill. I merely criticised the Bill. I further maintained that if the Bill were made to cover all persons in the Region who suffered any form of social disability or social stigma, like the Orus or Ohus I would have no axe to grind with the government. I supported the Bill in principle. But the N.B.S. said in their news broadcast that Reverend Opara opposed the Bill. What they should have said was that Reverend Opara criticised the Bill. In conclusion, I have to say that the Press Officer who covers the sittings of this House should be more careful in taking his notes.

**Mr N. L. P. Apreala (Brass Division) :** Mr Chairman, I have a few points to make about the Film Unit. As has been stressed by a previous speaker, I would like this Unit to travel into the rural places and not to forget the Rivers area. Maybe they fear going to the Rivers area because they cannot swim. If that is so they should learn to swim.

Another speaker has stressed the importance of including the Ijaw language in our broadcasting service. This is very important, Sir. It is, however, a matter for regret that when this Member was speaking, instead of the other honourable Members showing sympathy they were asking "How many of you?" If this is their point of view then what is the use of our coming here. We are prepared to go home and have our own House of Assembly even under a thatched roof.

Mr Chairman, I would like to point out that Ijaw is the fourth important and largest tribe in the country, and Members should realise that being in the coastal area, the Ijaw people first saw the white man before many of them.

*Sitting suspended at 1 p.m.*

*Sitting resumed at 3 p.m.*

**Mr N. L. P. Apreala :** Mr Chairman, we have all returned with cool brains after a short relaxation, and I would like to decline from the very hot spirit with which I was replying fittingly to some arrogant honourable Members who were villifying me by attempting to humiliate the Rivers Province while honourable Warmate was speaking. Had I continued in the morning, certainly I would have caused the displeasure of those concerned and even our acknowledged national hero.

I will appeal to this very Department—the Eastern Nigeria Information Service—to travel very widely for there is a tendency on the part of many people in the rural areas to do more of communal development than others and it is by means of their tours to these areas that they will help to educate many people, who are even perhaps idle, and they will be able to emulate and will do a lot to encourage this very important work.

I would also like that Department to desist from giving a lame excuse that they are short of launches. If it was in the past, I would perhaps agree; but I think that these launches have been regionalised and I think our Minister of Transport may do a lot to help them to obtain launches that will enable them travel to my Division soon.

**Mr E. U. Eronini (Owerri Division) :** Mr Chairman, I only want to make two points and that is about the Field Production Unit and the Cinema Section, One or two Members have spoken about schools and there is an arrangement in hand to get through all the districts, and have a list of all the schools that have up to 200 children, and see that these schools are within the list to be shown the Queen's Visit Film when it comes in. We will do all we can to see that almost all the schools in the Eastern Region see the Royal Film.

The situation is that at the moment, we are likely to have six mobile cinema vans and there is likely to be one for each province and then Rivers Section will be remembered. I hope we may be able to have a cinema boat which may travel up to Brass and Degema Divisions—I am speaking for my Corporation.

It is not easy, really, to produce films in a short time, but we hope to produce news reels where you can see the community development in various areas and with these few remarks, Mr Chairman, I take my seat.

**Mr C. A. Okafor, (Orlu Division) :** Mr Chairman, Sir, this Department, the Eastern Nigerian Information Service has done much work to deserve praise, but I have two remarks to make in connection with this Department. The first one is your law-makers in this publication. They appear there like ghosts and the pictures were not corrected. (*Cries of 'which one'*) . . . Your law makers—that is it ! Ghosts ! For instance at page 9 of that publication, honourable Abengowe does not appear like himself nor the Chief Whip, Mr Eyo. Nobody who does not know him before would recognise him here. Then again, at page 10 of that publication, Chief the honourable Agbasiere is not well represented. Then again, at page 13 of that publication honourable Ashirim-Unosi, Anoke and D. O. Anu do not look like themselves. The age of certain people was changed.

**The Chairman :** You have made your point . . . All Ghosts !

**Mr C. A. Okafor :** I would suggest that any work which is to be done, if it is not ready in time, let it be delayed, but let the production be very well done.

Sir, my second observation is this, in that Department especially in the Cinema Section, some people always try to tease the workers. By teasing them, sometimes junior persons may at times show some resentment and when he does, then he is queried. Sir, if a worker is to be teased, I do not think it should be a technician. For instance, in that Department we have driver-projectionists and we also have commentators. At times the driver-projectionist is told he is in charge of a team whenever they go on tour and then he is told he knows everything about the team when the Commentator should be told that. After all, he is a more intelligent and learned person. The other people are half-educated and do not know anything about administration. I do not know, in this instance, who should be the leader of the team when such representation is given to two different people. Then in some cases, also, some leaders appear as what John Ploughman calls "people with two faces". Why tell one man the other thing and then tell the other person something else. Then when they return from tour, sometimes they are not asked how they co-operated, but they are asked how they quarrelled. We do not expect a team going on tour to go there to quarrel, but to work together in harmony and give shows to people to enjoy. In some instances, also, the driver-projectionists are told to drink engine oil. Well, if people are told such things, I do not think they are being helped to work in a happy mood. Such situations, Sir, should be remedied. Then the appointments—in some cases I am told that certain people seem to show advertisements to their kith and kin and do not want others to know about some appointments. They like people from their own areas to be appointed. Such a thing, Sir, is not a good thing to be seen in any Department.

Sir, with these remarks, I beg to take my seat.

**The Premier :** Mr Chairman, I rise in order to reply to the various points raised during this Debate. The first point to which I should like to arrest the attention of the House is with reference to the three clerks who were alleged to be recently dismissed. It is true that they were dismissed, and I am informed that they were appointed on a temporary basis; that they were inefficient and also failed to learn. However, other clerks were appointed in their stead; and I understand that they are all of better calibre and more efficient and willing to learn.

Now the question of the Department being understaffed is admitted. Whilst unfortunate, efforts are being made now to recruit staff, but honourable Members will remember that one of the main reasons is because it was decided to transform the Information Service into a Statutory Corporation. It would not have been proper for the Public Service Commission to recruit staff for that Corporation. I think only this week you will notice that staff vacancies have been advertised and we hope that that will improve the situation.

Now, about publicity in connection with the present tax. I know that when the Finance Bill was at its initial stage, it was agreed that efforts should be made to publicise the implications of this Bill to every part of this Region. It was arranged that the publicity campaign should be undertaken under the auspices of the Information Service by means of press articles and touring with loudspeaker vans throughout the Region.

In connection with the request for more mobile cinema vans, I would like to remind honourable Members that we have five vans, that is, at the time when the Provincial system was in operation, one for each Province and they, naturally, are being used to their maximum capacity. At the very moment these vans are in Bende, Ahoada, Itu, Arochuku, Obubra and Ikom. A new van has just been purchased and another is to be put out soon.

Now, on the needs of Rivers Province, that has been constantly kept in mind before the Department. I understand from the Director that efforts are being made to seek funds in order to be able to purchase launches for the River Areas—he tried before and failed and he will try again. We do hope that when the request is made, that is, if the Statutory Corporation has not taken over by then, this House will give it support; otherwise it may have to be met from grants made to the Information Service.

A serious allegation has been made against an Assistant Publicity Officer in Calabar Province; I can assure honourable Members that it will be investigated, but I understand that so far no adverse reports have been made against this gentleman and that his work is quite satisfactory, but we shall make investigation.

Now, a number of Members have made references to the N.B.S. It is for their information that it is a Federal subject, and broadcasting is no longer part of the Information Service. So that criticisms of this nature, although well meant, are mis-directed. However, it is true that a Minister is charged with responsibility for acting as an agent of the Federal Government in this connection, but so many of us feel dark about the nature of such an agency. I do not think any self-respecting Minister will accept responsibility just to be known as a mere agent of the Federal Government to come here and get all the blame and then outside somebody else does the operating. It will have to be looked into very carefully. I understand that I am supposed to be in charge of broadcasting. It is quite anomalous because quite often one has to call attention to misrepresentations.

Even this afternoon at 1.30 when the news was given out it was only published that the honourable Member for Enyong Division attacked the Public Service Commission and attacked the Premier for wishing to transform the Civil Service into an Onitsha Empire. Full stop. Full stop. That was all that was published. No effort was made even to give the other side of the picture, the explanations made and the withdrawal of the motion. This happens quite often. I would not say it is the fault of the Broadcasting Service itself; but surely they must have someone here who must have sent the news. It is possible the news was sent and it is possible it was edited on the other side. It is very difficult and I must make it quite clear that I am not prepared to accept responsibility for such a type of work at all. However, a reference was made to Ijaw speakers in connection with the N.B.S. As far as the E.N.I.S. is concerned, two of the publicity staff are Ijaw, and the Cinema Section has an Ijaw commentator who is naturally in charge of the Unit allocated to the Rivers Province. But as my honourable Friend from Brass Division knows, appointments to the Civil Service are not usually made on tribal basis. As a matter of fact this Government is definitely opposed to making appointment to the civil service on any other basis than merit.

These are the main points raised and I hope that honourable Members will appreciate the conditions under which the E.N.I.S. works. I do hope also that with the transformation of this Information Service to a statutory corporation we will be better.

Finally, it has been questioned why the Director or his Deputy has not been touring. It is quite obvious that when conditions are like this they will not have much time. They are overworked with their staff and naturally they cannot find sufficient time to tour. But if these vacancies are filled and the Information Service works on full cylinders they might have time to go round.

Someone also mentioned loss of temper. I can assure the honourable Member that that is not usually the case. If anyone here knows a newspaper office, it always gives the atmosphere of quarrelling; but nevertheless they manage to get out publications.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E. :** Mr Chairman, I beg to move the motion standing in my name that sub-head (1) item 1, be reduced by 1d:

Speaker after speaker has underlined the point I have in mind, and listening to them I am more than ever perforced to make this motion. It has been complained, Sir, by many honourable Members that this Department does not propagate Government views enough. Again and again the word propaganda has been used and that is just the crux of the matter, Sir.

When this service was inaugurated Sir, a year and a few months ago, you will remember that I tried to make the point that an Information Service should be insulated from politics. There appears to me to be a fundamental disagreement in concept as to the duties and office of this Department between both sides of the House. It is accepted, judging from what I have heard that the business of this Department is to go all out and carry out propaganda for Government. On this side, we believe that the business of the Department is to disseminate information objectively, and if we are by any means right, then my motion is called for. We are thoroughly disgusted on this side with the treatment we have received month in and month out, if that expression will pass, from this Department and my motion that the salary of the Director be reduced by 1d is not intended to attach any special stigma to the gentleman who happens to be holding that office, except so far as his own share of the responsibility is concerned.

The honourable the Premier has just given evidence of what Members say is misconstrued. It is true he was talking about the Information Service but I presume rightly or wrongly that the *Outlook* gets quite a lot of its information from E.N.I.S. If that is not so, I apologise in advance, but even from the region publication of the E.N.I.S. as anybody can see on the pages of the *Outlook* there appears to be a deliberate determination to give the opposition no hearing at all, or at least to allow the country not to hear us. I think they leave out what you say entirely or report one sentence only that makes a man look a fool. Like this afternoon, Sir, I did not listen to the 1.30 p.m. talk, but that was an example that the Premier has just given. That proves my case. A member from Enyong said just one sentence, and it created the impression in the country very different from the impression intended by the speaker, and anyone sitting here this morning listening to the way in which I started my original motion will know what I mean.

That happens time without number, when they report us at all. More often they do not report us. I find it difficult to believe that a gentleman born and bred in the British system can go the length of behaving in such a brushing way to Her Majesty's Opposition. Even the Government Bench who disagree with us politically recognise the Opposition. The Information Service should try objectively and definitely to play the tune of the Government in the hope and belief that before the time of that Government is over, they will make overtures to another Government and play the tune. This is a piece of nonsense which I hope I will never see again. What I mean, Sir, is this. If the E.N.I.S. wants a lesson in parliamentary democracy they should watch the Speaker of the House who gives the Opposition all that parliamentary democracy requires. It is a shame that an African born and bred here who has studied

in this gentleman's country should know more about parliamentary democracy than the gentleman mentioned. The explanation is fear, and nothing else. We must remove this bogey of fear from this Department and make it stand on its own legs. Give information for what it is worth and if there is a point on which the House is disagreed, give both views without comment. That is how I understand a true information service should work. Give both views, without comment.

It is a Government paper, says the Minister of Health. That proves my case. If it is a Government department, the Government had better go all out and establish a paper and say it is a Government paper. That is exactly what I mean. We say it should not be a Government paper, it should be a Department objectively disseminating information. The Senior tutor of my school is an N.C.N.Cer. I expect him objectively to disseminate information and as a teacher he is second to none. We should not victimise people who disagree with us politically, and the Information Service, Sir, is surreptitiously denying this Region its democracy.

This Region is essentially and naturally democratic and any effort to push down the throat of a minority the views that happen to be today in the majority will fail whether done by black or white. It is doomed to failure because it is contrary to the nature of the Eastern Region. In simple language, the Information Service is doing this Region a terrible disservice and I am very happy to hear that in a very short time—I think it was the 1st of May the Premier said—you are going to turn this into a Corporation. But I sincerely hope we do not change the name and allow the leper to continue with its skin. If you want to give the Information Service freedom, give it full unaffected freedom and let it stand above politics and give the gentleman in charge of the Corporation the one thing he wants, an unaffected freedom and save him from the one enemy he has, fear, fear. It is impossible for him to serve all masters, he cannot serve God and man. He is placed in a very difficult position. Mr Chairman, I beg to move.

*Question proposed.*

**Chief M. W. Ubani (Aba Division):** Mr Speaker, I rise to support the views as expressed by my Deputy Leader. I can only say that I want to consolidate as shortly as possible the views of my predecessor.

The Information Service of the Region is deplorable and we can only locate the grounds for that criticism on whoever is the Director of that Department. It is one-sided and does not reflect the views of both sides of the House. We can also locate the blame on whoever is the Director of that Department. The method appears to be that of a whispering information service. We can also locate the false nature of it on the Director of that Department. It requires a thorough reorganisation, a Department in which the Director and who is in charge of that Department can collaborate with the African personnel of the Department. We are not suggesting we should really be left without criticism, but if we are going to organise a Department, I think it should be the Director who should do so. If he cannot he should pack his bags and go.

**The Premier:** Mr Chairman, I hesitate speaking because I know that we are fighting for time, but what struck me in the way this motion was made and seconded is that although allegations have been made that the Eastern Nigeria Information Service has been one-sided and does not reflect the opinion of that side of the House, yet not one concrete example, not one shred of evidence, was adduced here to substantiate that allegation. I should have expected the honourable Mover, or the honourable Seconder, to have come out with an issue, say the *Outlook*, to say, "this reflects the policy of the Government party. We sent in this article but it was suppressed." No such evidence is before us.

I am not here to defend any particular Head of Department, or any particular member of the Eastern Nigeria Information Service. I think they are capable of defending themselves if the opportunity arises. But I think it is not fair to make general allegations of this nature without proving them.



It is true, from the nature of the debates we have had hitherto, that something is wrong with the E.N.I.S. But if we come now, in connection with this particular motion, to try to attach blame without evidence to substantiate, that will be unfair.

I have the latest copy of the *Eastern Outlook* here, and I see nothing therein to support the allegation. I am quite sure that if any member of the Opposition, or if the Opposition Party for that matter should send any release to the Editor, he will consider such release along with others and publish the same using his editorial discretion.

I feel, therefore, that this motion may be well-conceived, but the way it is put does not justify the support of the House.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E. :** Mr Chairman, I had fully anticipated this line of defence; I knew I would be asked to stop generalisations and to adduce evidence. I want to remind the honourable gentleman that if he wants evidence we can well be here until midnight. In a matter of this nature I do not believe that these exhibits are of any value. We are talking of a general impression that has got down into our soul and which is true. The policy of a newspaper is one of those things that elude exhibit evidence, but it is there for anybody to see. The honourable the Premier himself quoted one this afternoon, and everybody in this House knows that the reporting is generally garbled. Even the Government bench people quarrel quite often about what they see. This morning Reverend Opara was quarrelling about a very garbled version of what he had said. It is impossible to collect all the papers and try to prove a case like that, especially as we are very pressed for time.

I do not want to take more time. We are complaining about something that by its very nature is elusive. The impression is there. Asking for exhibit particulars is a line of thought I fully anticipated, and I am not surprised that this has been the line of defence adopted, but, as I have already said, it is not admissible in a matter of this nature.

**The Chairman :** What does the honourable mover of the Motion intend that the Chairman shall do in this matter ?

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E. :** That the question be put, Sir.

*Question put and negatived.*

*Question, That a sum not exceeding £33,230 for Head 425—Eastern Nigeria Information Service—stand part of the Schedule, put and agreed to.*

#### Head 426—Judicial

*Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £97,690 for Head 426—Judicial—stand part of the Schedule.*

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E. :** Mr Chairman, I had listed my amendment merely to elicit information as the Memorandum on the Estimates does not say anything about sub-head 12—Labour. I should like to know what labour this is. Is it casual labour ? And why is there the increase from £800 to £2,150 ?

**The Premier :** It was originally a token vote until we were able to ascertain precisely what the cost would be. Then came the Gorsuch recommendation which inflated the cost of labour. This is the best explanation I can give.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E. :** Unfortunately that is not said in the Memorandum. The practice should be to show what was the actual cost in the financial year about to close. Then we shall be in a good position to compare. The rise from £800 to £2,150 cannot all be due to Gorsuch.

**The Premier :** If my honourable Friend will care to come to the office we will place at his disposal all the facts and all the record. But he should realise that this is an estimate made in the light of our past experience. What we voted last year was not enough as a result of Gorsuch recommendations.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** This is hardly satisfactory. It means that honourable Members who want information must go to the office to get it. This House is met here and now to vote this money, and I insist on having the information unless Mr Chairman is prepared to pass over this Head until I have got my information.

As I have said before it was in the Memorandum on the Estimates that the Minister of Finance should have told us all about this increase. £800 to £2,150 is quite a jump, and Members are entitled to know the reasons for that jump.

**The Premier:** I agree with the honourable Member. The Federal Government hitherto was responsible for the Judicial Department, and had expended quite an amount of money on our behalf. With the coming into operation of the new Constitution we took over this Department, and the amount shown represents the expenditure which we are now paying for Labour.

Nevertheless, my invitation holds good. If the honourable Member cares to know the details he will be welcome.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** I do not move.

*Question: That a sum not exceeding £97,690 for Head 426—Judicial—stand part of the Schedule—put and agreed to.*

#### Head 427—House of Assembly

*Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £69,630 for Head 427—House of Assembly—stand part of the Schedule.*

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Mr Chairman, I do not know whether, with your permission, I should not wait and address you *in extenso* on the Head as a whole during the adjournment. I particularly want to hold brief for the Clerk of the House, and would like to take longer time in speaking.

**The Chairman:** I assume that the Premier, who is in charge of this particular Department, does not wish to address at length. (Premier nods assent). I assume as well that no honourable Member is prepared to speak to this Head. The honourable Member may, therefore, proceed.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** What I really want to spotlight is that last year, when I was in London, the Clerk of the House of Commons, Sir Edward Fellowes, arranged a meeting of the Speakers of the various Legislative Houses in Nigeria. Unfortunately, I left London a day before the date of the meeting, but I was fortunate enough to see the minutes of that meeting, from which one sees the importance the United Kingdom Government places on the Department of Legislature. At that meeting certain important decisions were made, and I take it that these recommendations have been communicated from London to this Government.

There is need for the establishment of the Department of the Legislature, in which case I will have to dwell at length on the position of the Clerk of the House. I would like the House to remember that we have a Clerk who has put in already thirty years of service and is now in his thirty-first year. There was an attempt some time ago by the House of Representatives to attract him to the Centre, but he was good enough to resist such a temptation.

He has been a Clerk of this Legislature since 1947 and is the oldest Clerk in the country—the Clerk of the Northern House was appointed in 1950 and the Clerk of the Western House just last year. The same goes for the Clerk of the Federal House. My submission, Sir, is that if the Clerk of this House had been an expatriate he would now have reached the rank of a Senior Resident. If that is true, how can we come now to offer him the salary which other civil servants enjoy in Enugu, namely, the salary of Group 7—£2,040 per annum,

There is a case for the creation of a Department of the Legislature, and if I may remind you, Sir, the position at Westminster is that the Clerk is always appointed by the Crown on the advice of the Speaker of the House. In other words, he is not regarded as a civil servant. As a matter of fact, if we follow the practice in the United Kingdom, he cannot be dismissed except at the discretion of the Governor, or upon a prayer of this House.

May I draw the attention of the House to the message which was sent to this House by Her Majesty the Queen. With your permission, Sir, I read the portion relating to the Clerk:—

“Dear Mr Speaker,

I am commanded by the Queen to convey to you and to the Members of the House of Assembly of the Eastern Region Her Majesty's great appreciation of the manner in which this morning's ceremony was carried out within the House.

“The Queen hopes that you will express her congratulations to the Clerk of the House and to the members of your staff on their part in this dignified and historic occasion.”

How do we appreciate or how do we give expression to our appreciation of this recommendation other than by considering what special status the Clerk should enjoy. If you look through the salary scales under the new Gorsuch, Civil Servants with about 5, 7, 10 years' service are now on Group 7 earning £2,040. But I am holding brief for one who has been in the Service for over 30 years—now in his 31st year—and unless this House considers his case, he may decide to retire. I am informed that although the Executive Council decided to have two Clerk Assistants to this House, all the existing staff are on loan from the Administration. In other words, this House has no staff of its own and the other Clerk Assistant will be withdrawn to the Administration from this House the moment this House rises. I repeat that at the moment the Eastern House of Assembly has no staff of its own. All are on loan from the Department of Administration. This House cannot continue in such a manner every year to rely on the department of Administration.

Now that I have to address you generally, Sir, may I draw your attention to the fact, that even though there is provision in the Estimates for three Verbatim Reporters, that only one has so far been appointed. There is also provision for a Secretary-Typist but no one has been appointed. Office accommodation is inadequate, there is no proper office for the Clerk, no robing Room for the Speaker or the Clerk.

I would suggest, Sir, that steps be taken early to establish a Department of the Legislature as recommended by the meeting at Westminster. There is no guarantee of permanence of staff and if you go downstairs, Sir, you have these complaints from the Clerks, that even though they work all night when this House is sitting they are not entitled to overtime allowance, whereas others in the Printing Department who wait for something to be passed on to them to print, for every hour they work they get overtime pay, but the staff of this House sit all night and have no overtime at all. I certainly cannot understand how Clerks could be called upon to work after the hour of 2 p.m. and continue right through the night and then told they are not entitled to an allowance.

If I may claim your indulgence, there is also this question of the Chamber. I would not regard this as a Legislative Chamber, I would regard it as a Council Hall. Where you have Messengers going up and down the House there is nothing to stop anybody standing outside here listening to the debates. Those of us who have had the fortune of seeing other Chambers of Legislature, will agree that this is just a Council Chamber and if this Region is really going to have self-government this year, there is need for Government to consider the question of building a real House. In no parliament that we know of in this world are persons who are not Members allowed to walk up and down in the Chamber. Even Reporters are not allowed in the Chamber. They sit in the Gallery and, you remember, in Westminster, even visitors in the Gallery are not allowed in until Mr Speaker has entered and said prayers. You remember, Sir, we have been kept waiting outside Westminster until Mr Speaker has gone into the House to say prayers before being allowed in. That is just precisely what we want to see done in here.

If I may touch on the remuneration of Mr Speaker. Obviously everybody understands that the appointment of the Speaker at Westminster is regarded as a ministerial one and there is no reason, Sir, why Government should not go back to Executive Council and raise this vote to ministerial level. We want to have a feeling, at least in the Eastern Region, that we are running a full fledged Parliament.

I observe that the salary of the Leader of the Opposition is only £1,200 as against £1,680 in the Western House. I would not like the Action Group to claim that they are more interested in their Leader of the Opposition in the Western House than we are here.

With regard to this question of Verbatim Reporters, how soon will we have real Verbatim Reporters in this House? We have not got any Verbatim Reporters and I must thank those who are helping as Secretary-Typists—often I have been requested to speak slowly in order to have my speeches taken down correctly. I appreciate that it is one of my weaknesses to speak fast but if you have Verbatim Reporters, there is no reason why I should not be reported at 200 words a minute. Why cannot we get real Verbatim Reporters? We have got them in Lagos. Why do we engage Secretary-Typists to report the proceedings? When a Member is only allowed 30 minutes to make a speech, he must speak very fast in order to get to the end of his speech within thirty minutes.

Now, Sir, let me say something about the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. We moved a Motion in this House and we had a Branch formed and recognised at Westminster, but I do not remember having heard the Clerk of the House calling a meeting. As a matter of fact there are no elected officers. I might add that this House wants to be heard next year at the meeting of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. So what we are saying is that Government should consider the status, not only of Mr Speaker, but also of the Deputy Speaker and the Leader of the Opposition and also the Clerk of the House. We must have our two Clerk Assistants. I am told that effort has been made to produce a daily *Hansard*. How can you produce a daily *Hansard* when the Clerk of the House is also in charge of these records. At Westminster and in Northern Ireland the Clerk of the House has no business at all with the production of this *Hansard*. There is a separate editorial board headed by an editor. If we must have a daily *Hansard*, Government must be prepared to vote money in order to create an editorial board headed by an editor.

I cannot understand how we can pay tribute to the Clerk of the House after he has put in 30 years service by offering him a salary of £2,040. If you will agree with me, I have to stress that we are covered under the report of Mr Gorsuch at page 84 paragraph 229! "The commission has taken the definite view that the senior administrative posts in the Ministries, i.e. Permanent Secretary and below, should be graded by the value of the individual post itself". I will even go further and suggest that, if we create the Legislature as a separate Department the Clerk would have to rank higher than a mere Permanent Secretary. He would be the Head of his own Department. What, if the Clerk of the House is now on leave? Is there any Permanent Secretary who would relieve him? No, Sir, there is just no one who could walk into this House and act as the Clerk of the House, but the Clerk can relieve any Permanent Secretary, even the Deputy Governor or the Governor. So that his position is quite unique. He is performing a duty which no other civil servant can perform in the Eastern Region. I hope I have made out a case for Government to act, and consider first of all creating a Department of the Legislature, regulating the appointment of the Clerk by the Governor on the advice of Mr Speaker, which is the proper thing to do, and this Clerk cannot be dismissed except by the Governor acting in his discretion or by the prayer of this House. As a matter of fact, at Westminster the Clerk of the House is appointed for life—he continues in office until the Crown decides to get rid of him. He is not a civil servant at all.

I think the Eastern Region should give a lead and I hope when next year we come to present—I hope—the Budget of a self-governing Eastern Nigeria, that the Government shall have rectified all these. Let us have our two Clerk Assistants appointed. There should be no question of running this House with staff from the Administration. Let everybody under the establishment feel that he is working in a department of his own.

*Question, That a sum not exceeding £69,630 for Head 427—House of Assembly—stand part of the Schedule—put and agreed to.*

**Head 428—Legal**

*Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £19,860 for Head 428—Legal—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Premier :** Mr Chairman, I beg to move the deletion under sub-head 1 item (3) of the words "Group 8" and the insertion of the words "Group 7". In the Gorsuch Report it was recommended that the Grading of Senior Crown Counsel should be Group 8 which is accepted by Government. Later it was decided that in order to attract the right men from what we all know to be a very lucrative profession, the post of Senior Crown Counsel should be regraded Group 7. Finalising this decision came too late for its inclusion in the draft Estimates before the House and the amendment has therefore become necessary at this stage.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr E. O. Eyo :** Does it not require increasing the amount !

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Premier :** Mr Chairman, I beg to move with His Excellency's assent that sub-head 1 item (3) be increased by £540.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Question proposed: That an increased sum of £20,400 for Head 428—Legal—be inserted in the Schedule.*

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Mr Chairman, I am wondering whether this Department is not understaffed. I understand that the post of Legal Draughtsman has so far not been filled. If you observe, Sir, there have been series of amendments to Ordinances and at times I wonder whether sufficient thought was given at the initial stage when our Bills were being got up in the Attorney-General's office and whether he (the Attorney-General) cannot blame it upon us that we have not given him enough hands. In other countries, in every department there is a Legal Adviser or legal draughtsman who handles all the Bills for the Department at the initial stage. But here we have only one Attorney-General who handles all our draft Legislation.

I know the Attorney-General very well and I think he is a very capable and clever lawyer but I always have my doubts as to whether he is really interested in the service of this Region. I would not hurt his feelings Mr Chairman. Here is a young man who is very clever, very brilliant and who should be of real service to the Region, but he was formerly a Member of the Executive Council. I have always held the view that those expatriate Officers in the Region who formerly held posts in the Executive Council really find it difficult at this stage to fit themselves in the new set up in the Region. As I said, Sir, I have my doubts, but I would very much wish to see the Attorney-General really show some interest in his work in the Region. I have nothing against him personally; but my impression is that I find it difficult to fit in these expatriate officers who were formerly members of the Executive Council. The reaction is purely psychological.

Here is a man who was formerly a Member of the Executive Council and to fit him in the new dispensation he is made to take a back seat. Does he really feel that he can serve and fit into the new set-up? What are his feelings when he is called upon to advise an Executive Council of which he is not a Member. As far as he is concerned, the Government might well go to blazes; it leaves the impression in my mind of a man who may go one way or the other. What I would like to see would be an Attorney-General who believes in the Government of the day and is prepared to serve that Government and tender honest and sincere legal advice.

I have a feeling that unless we have such an Attorney-General this Government will be handicapped. I hate to hear that an opinion was expressed at one time, and later on the opinion was challenged and some other opinion was given. I am referring to what happened in the advice tendered in connection with our Local Government Bill. There was one interpretation

at one stage, and another at another stage. I appreciate that the Attorney-General was not in Enugu at the time but I would imagine that anybody who acted for him would be so sound, that having once tendered legal advice, that legal advice would stand. I do not want to hear that it was a Senior Crown Counsel who tendered the advice—and so what?

I want to see in that Department sound lawyers, so that when once they tender an advice it cannot be challenged; but if we are going to have people who would at one time tender legal advice and later on shift their ground, then there must be something wrong in the Legal Department. If this Department is under-staffed then I would suggest to Government to consider an increase in the establishment. It is really hard work to prepare these legal drafts. As a matter of fact, in the United Kingdom, legal draughtsmen are real experts in their jobs and I appreciate the fact that it is difficult to get Legal Draftsmen out here. Even if we have these Draftsmen, how do we know that they are going to work sincerely. Bearing in mind that in the Executive Council there is only one lawyer, how do we know that the Legal Department will not take advantage of this and draft Bills just to suit them. I would like the Government to investigate and find out what exactly is wrong with this Department. If it is under-staffed, then increase the establishment. I would like to make this appeal on behalf of this House to the present Attorney-General. We really like him; we appreciate that he can help this Region; he can serve this Region if he wants to; and I appeal to him to serve honestly and sincerely.

**Mr B. C. Okwu:** Mr Chairman, I only rise to suggest this to the House. In view of the fact that you do not reform a man by knocking his nose flat, sincerely the best service we can render to this Government for the smooth and harmonious running of this Region is to express precisely what we want. I appreciate the fact that in the Region we have sincere and honest men, black and white, who are serving us. We have also some who are mischievous; but while condemning the mischievous, we must also say a word of praise for the good ones, I feel that since on the floor of this House there are people who, unless they are defended by the Ministerial Bench have not the right to reply, the best we can do is to express what we feel to the Government and suggest where correction can be made.

I feel that since a thing like the Civil Service is entirely outside our control we cannot produce the maximum output both by the Legislature and the servants of this Region by what I might call indiscriminate accusations. It is better that advice be tendered at the right quarters and Government and those who are concerned should endeavour at all times to get the right men in the Eastern Region. I do not think that we can give the impression here that we are against any particular individual or groups of individuals. I wish to state that we feel that anybody, be his skin black, white or red, who is willing to serve this Region, is welcome. When somebody is deemed undesirable, whether his skin be white, black or red, he should be termed undesirable. But as far as this particular point is concerned, I think that if he feels he cannot accept this Government's policy, he can either resign or seek for transfer. But as long as he remains in this Region, it can only be assumed that he is doing something for which those who placed him in office are satisfied. In that connection, Mr Chairman, I feel very sincerely that for the interest of harmony what we are interested in is not personalities but principles.

**Mr D. A. Nnaji:** Mr Chairman, the last speaker has just nearly completed what I wanted to say. The other day it was the Governor; now they drag in the Attorney-General. Those of us who shouldered the 1953 crisis know exactly what happened. Sir, my personal observation was that those Civil Servants who took part in that crisis have changed considerably; otherwise they should have gone the way of Mr Beaumont. I feel that it is most unfair for us to come here everytime to level criticisms on some information which are unsubstantiated. I feel that the best thing to do is what was suggested by my honourable Friend, Mr Okwu. We have the Premier. He at present appears to be in charge of the Civil Service (*cries off* "No he is not").

Mr Chairman, it seems to me that all questions about Civil Servants are directed by the Members of this House to the Ministers so that if we have anything that we feel will affect the smooth running of the Government we have to make our representations to them to take to the quarters that are concerned. I consider it most unfair to level unfair criticism on those people who are in one way or the other misunderstood. I do not think everybody will pull in the same direction of the Chief Whip of the Government.

*Question: That an increased sum of £20,400 for Head 428—Legal—be inserted in the Schedule—put and agreed to.*

#### Head 429: Printing and Stationery

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £106,670 for Head 429—Printing and Stationery—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Premier:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move with His Excellency's assent that sub-head 9 be increased by £1,250.

Honourable Members will be aware of the provision under such a sub-head is always of a token nature, it being impossible to forecast accurately to what extent the Government Printer will be compelled to put out printing work on contract. The token figure had already been increased from £10 to £250 in the Draft Estimates before the House. Since the Estimates were prepared, Sir, the House has approved the Finance Law and honourable Members will appreciate that the implementation of this law will necessitate an unprecedented amount of printing work, much of which will have to be completed early in April. It would not be possible for the Government Printer to execute all this work in time, burdened as he is with the normal daily work of this House, and, of course, with the printing of the Approved Estimates. Arrangements have therefore been made for part of the printing for the Finance Law to be carried out on contract and it is estimated that the Bill which will amount to some £1,500 will fall due for payment early in April.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Question proposed, That an increased sum of £107,920 for Head 429—Printing and Stationery—be inserted in the Schedule.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### Head 430: The Ministry of Agriculture

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £13,130 for Head 430—The Ministry of Agriculture—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Minister of Agriculture:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move with His Excellency's assent that sub-head 3 be increased by £25. It is a consequential amendment to all Ministry—Local Transport and Travelling—sub-heads necessitated by the proposed increase in the Chauffeurs allowance paid to Parliamentary Secretaries from £75 to £100. In the Ministry of Agriculture, there is one Parliamentary Secretary and the consequential increase is therefore £25.

Sir, I beg to move.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Question proposed, That an increased sum of £13,155 for Head 430—The Ministry of Agriculture—be inserted in the Schedule.*

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Mr Chairman, I want to comment on the Nigerianisation policy of this Ministry. If you have a look at the staff list revised to 1st September, 1955, you will find that there is a post of Deputy Director of Agriculture vacant. The post of the Principal of the School of Agriculture is also vacant. There are four vacancies in the establishment of Agricultural Officers.

What I really want to know is, is there any African in that Department capable of filling the post of, say, Deputy Director of Agriculture, or the Principal of the School of Agriculture, or being promoted to the rank of an Agricultural Officer on Scale A? And what about this gentleman for whom we have been holding brief for some time now? What has the Department got against this gentleman—the man who (I do not want to mention his name; I hope the Minister knows) put in over twenty years in the Agricultural Department before he left for the United States in 1938. He put in five years studies in the University and obtained his Master's Degree in Agriculture—He came back to this country and was offered a post of Agricultural Officer.

He was asked to go to Trinidad. He was offered a temporary appointment as Agricultural Superintendent. After some time he was reverted to the Junior Service and is now posted at Oron to plant rice. I would like to know what has the Department got against this African? If he is no good, dismiss him. If you have an African with a Master's Degree in Agriculture and he is not good enough to be even an Agricultural Officer or anything better, what is the justification in retaining his services? If he is not good enough to be an Agricultural Officer he is not good enough to plant rice.

I must register, Sir, my dissatisfaction, because this gentleman is left with the impression that he has been victimised by his Department. With all the qualifications he has got he is not allowed to go and teach in the School of Agriculture. He is not even posted to any Agricultural Station. His case is that he is so victimised that he is not considered good enough to work in an Agricultural Station, and so he was posted to relieve an Agricultural Assistant at Oron to go across the river in a canoe and plant rice in the swamps.

I want the Minister to tell me whether it is true that on the last course in Trinidad one Expatriate Officer and two Nigerians went on this course. Is it a fact that the Expatriate Officer failed in that course and the two Nigerians passed? Is it also a fact that this Expatriate who failed the course was not only appointed an Agricultural Officer but was gazetted first in order to claim seniority over the Nigerians?

**Mr N. L. P. Apreala:** I would also like to add that all is not well in the Agricultural Department. In this very House we have times without number agreed that the soil in Brass Division is fertile, labour plentiful, and that extensive cultivation work should be embarked on. We have an Agricultural Officer in Brass Division who has been doing very well, but he went on leave and returned since three months nobody knows where he is posted. Even while he was there was no launch provided for him and he was even travelling in an uncomfortable small engine canoe and at times in a very dirty and disgraceful lighter. In fact this gentleman suffers a lot—lack of opportunities and had much inexpressible difficulties. I feel we should look into the matter and encourage the man as we would like to have him back too.

**Mr R. O. Iwuagwu:** I am afraid that this Department of Agriculture is going to become P.W.D. again. From time to time this particular Department or Ministry has been criticised very severely. Yet there is no change in its policy. This is the time for this Ministry to become more realistic and less theoretical.

Sir, today deforestation is rampant in the country warring against afforestation. I do not see any change in policy in this Ministry in order to prevent the widespread deforestation in the Region.



Today, Sir, history will be told about the iroko trees. The iroko tree is disappearing at a very fast rate. And if there is no legislation put forward by this Department whereby any iroko tree which is removed will be replaced, this Region is going to suffer from acute shortage of materials for building. We will be told to go to England and purchase iron materials for building. Why not preserve what we have? We are told to introduce foreign seeds, why not develop our own seeds? We are able to legislate on anything. Why not purify and preserve our palm wine? Why not prepare our materials for export? Our yams cannot be preserved for long our palm wine cannot be preserved.

*Sitting suspended at 4.30 p.m.*

*Sitting resumed at 5 p.m.*

**Mr R. O. Iwuagwu :** Mr Speaker, I was trying to show that it is time the geographical certificate in agriculture should give place to a technical certificate. I say this because now in the country many people are leaving the farms for townships. If the Minister of Agriculture had been able to make agriculture more attractive, I think people would realise the importance of agriculture as given in the speech of His Excellency. I am thinking that this is the time for the Minister to teach young ones and the farmers of the rural areas to have hope in Agriculture.

There is a serious emotion lying everywhere in this country today and I ask what is that emotion? Is it service? The answer is that in this growing country laziness has come in to tell the people that only the people who can read and write and are pen-pushers are respected. They have forgotten one thing, and that is food to avoid hunger. They have also forgotten that even the Master cries: Give us this day, not our daily money, nor our daily dress, but our daily food. We must be very careful, and I ask the Minister concerned to do all he can to encourage agriculture in this way. He can take it to the divisional level. Build an agricultural school in some divisions or group of divisions and get some children, or those school leavers and others, who are interested in agriculture, and train them there. Or possibly, give them some amount to set up on their own; so that in time we may have enough food. Besides, the answer lies with food. I do not know whether it is due to the application of fertilisers. We have, Sir, green manure in some divisions. If the Minister concerned will know that he is doing this Region a service I invite him to go and see how these people put to use this green manure. I think they produce more with fertilisers.

Mr Chairman, I was talking about forestry some time ago. I can remember today that the price of a plant is 10s 6d or 15s in some areas. This has enabled the wholesale plant contractors to save. I am emphasising that the Government should do something to put a chain on the random cost of plants. I think I have said a lot about agriculture. The money voted for this department is a waste. I would give the money to people to set up on their own so as to produce more food. Where a Minister is mentioned, money does not go to him; but if I were a Minister I would say reduce the number of officers who simply wear dress and just sit to smoke their pipes, and give the money to people to start on their own.

**The Chairman :** I would like to direct attention to the head we are taking. It is 431, Ministry of Agriculture. It refers to the Minister and that is all. I do not think you want to discuss anything really on that subject.

*Question: That an increased sum of £13,155 for Head 430—The Ministry of Agriculture—put and agreed to.*

#### **Head 431: Agriculture**

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £264,420 for Head 431—Agriculture—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Minister of Agriculture:** Mr Chairman, Sir, the items of special expenditure last year have most of them disappeared or have been integrated under Other Charges. There is however, a bright spot in the Agricultural Department horizon which I will come to shortly,

but in considering Section A of this Head I would draw your attention to the new form which has been devised so as to show you clearly how staff is deployed on the ground. The main extension Works Service and Administration are grouped together; the newly opened School of Agriculture, and the Research Sections are also shown separately.

On points of detail sub-head 6 includes general extension work, cocoa extension work, group farming and agricultural propaganda and shows, thus combining sub-heads 6, 12, 13 and 15 which appeared in the 1955-56 Estimates. Sub-head 9 is the old sub-head known as Rice Extension Demonstration. This includes seed selection, multiplication and distribution to Farmers, small demonstration plots, Departmental Rice Mills and the continuation of the existing scheme at Calabar and the Rice Mechanisation Scheme at Adani in Onitsha Province. Under sub-head 13 the £150 voted for 1955-56 Estimates was no more than a token allocation which allowed work to start on this scheme; but with the amount now devoted, it will be possible to achieve some results.

The new item of the grant to the Rural Training Centre at Asaba arises from the fact that this centre is an inter-regional one and run by a Board of Governors, which is predominantly Missionary, but on which this Region is represented. The basis of calculation of the grant to be paid has been that after deducting revenue from total expenditure the balance is divided by the number of students and each Region then pays for the number of students which it has there.

And now to the one bright spot. This occurs under Section B, Schemes partly reimbursable under C.D. & W. Funds. Honourable Members will remember that in the *Outline of Development Plan 1955-56* it was shown that Agriculture was to receive only £45,800 with which it was intended to extend the Regional Research Station and establish a new Provincial Farm in the west of Owerri Province. Since then however, two further schemes, one for the Agricultural development of the Rivers Province area for which a total expenditure of £90,000 is spread over five years, and another for the setting up of a Soil Conservation Section, costing some £20,000 spread over five years, have been approved and the initial work in respect of all these schemes is reflected in Section B.

The intention in Rivers Province is that an Agricultural Station shall be set up to develop the vast agricultural potential of this area and to conduct work on rice, cocoa, sugar cane and food crops and other crops in this area. The work on rice will follow the lines of the work at present in progress at Calabar and Oron for the clearing of mangrove swamps.

I must thank honourable Members for the constructive criticisms they have made on the activities of this Department. The useful suggestions they have made will be given due consideration. I wish honourable Members to remember, however, that the work of this Department does not readily catch the eye as is the case with some revenue consuming Departments. I am sure honourable Members will appreciate that even as I am speaking, officers of this Department are toiling in the fields among farmers.

Apart from the Report already in the hands of honourable Members, I have prepared a full statement on what is being done in all the divisions of the Region. This is too voluminous to be read here; but it will be available for any Member who may wish to read it.

Let me make a few remarks on the two important crops about which most honourable Members have spoken. These crops are cocoa and rice. Despite the fact that the price of cocoa has been falling in the world market, farmers were encouraged to grow more cocoa in anticipation of the inevitable rise in prices in due course.

The table of cocoa cultivation since 1951, is as follows: 1951—2,100 acres; 1952—2,900 acres; 1953—3,400 acres; 1954—4,400 acres; 1955—5,100 acres, and it is further estimated that in 1956 another 5,200 acres will be planted out. This gives a total acreage in the Region of 23,100 acres.

A detailed account of Amazon cocoa recently imported into the Region has been given in the report at Appendix R, already circulated to honourable Members.

Rice production in the Region continues to progress with Ogoja Province as the main area of Production and Abakaliki as a centre of distribution. This Region has more than 100,000 acres of swampy land under rice cultivation, and produces more than 100,000,000 pounds of paddy rice.

In so far as Nigerianisation is concerned, I am happy to report that of the total of twenty-one senior officers at present employed thirteen are Nigerians. This is approximately 62 per cent of the whole people employed in the Department. Since 1st October, when I took charge of this Ministry, there have been six new recruits to this Department and every single one has been a Nigerian from the Eastern Region.

Mention was also made of a post which was alleged to be vacant. The post is that of Deputy Director of Agriculture. That post has been filled. Another point raised was the question of the Principal of the School of Agriculture. The position is that this school was opened on 29th of November last year. Since that date an African has been acting as the Principal. The post has been advertised, and I cannot say more than that it will be for the Public Service Commission to decide whom to offer the post.

I cannot say anything about the Civil Service Commission because it is outside my control. This fact has to be repeated over and over again. We cannot repeat it too often because there are some people not only outside this House but inside it who think that the Minister of a particular department is also controlling the civil servants within that department. This is not the case. A great deal of time was spent in making this point clear, and I think it will not be a waste of time if I rub it in.

Mention was also made of an African who is holding the M.Sc. degree of a university not being appointed an Agricultural Officer. It is not for me, Sir, to stand here and say that that particular person is not qualified to be appointed to any post that can be imagined, but I cannot do anything as the Constitution does not allow me to ask that anybody be appointed to be the Director or Deputy Director or Principal of School. That is the position. All I can add is that feelings of honourable Members as regards this particular holder of M.Sc. degree will be made known to the proper quarters.

An honourable Member suggested that we should do everything to teach young men and women agricultural methods of cultivation. That has already been done. There is a School of Agriculture at Umudike near Umuahia. This school trains agricultural assistants and field overseers. Anybody with the requisite qualification will be admitted to this school. There is another school at Achi in Awgu Division—the division of my honourable Friend—to train young farmers. It is called the Practical Farm School. Anybody who passes through it goes straight to the land.

I do not blame my honourable Friend, Mr Iwuagwu, for mentioning this. Had he known that this school existed he would have spared himself the trouble of making the statement.

The activities of this Department cannot readily catch the eye as is the case with some revenue consuming departments. For instance, we mentioned the planting of cocoa, but it will take four to five years for results to be seen. It is not like putting up a building or constructing a road which can be seen immediately. Our work does not readily catch the eye; that is why every time we come under fire here.

Another Member mentioned the planting of iroko trees. If the honourable gentleman can but take a walk to the reserve not far from here he will see young iroko trees being planted. I did take some of my colleagues to that forestry and showed them young iroko trees being planted in thousands. This is not a new thing; it is being done everywhere in forest reserves. The matter is mentioned here simply because the honourable Member concerned has not bothered to obtain information.

I pause, Sir, till further bullets come.

**Mr U. A. Otop (Opobo Division):** Mr Chairman, this department is really a wasteful department. If they deny this let them produce proof to the contrary. Year in year out we hear of experiments. We do not see the results. An agricultural man buys garri the same price as an outside man. The result of these experiments are overdue. What is now required is more extension works, such as rice planting. In fact during the war the department encouraged rice planting in Calabar Province, but after the war they stopped it. There is sufficient land in Calabar Province and elsewhere where they can establish cashew, sugar and other industries.

We hear of few scattered things being done, like few piggeries, but it is high time Mr Chairman, that the Agricultural Department did something to produce food and thus help the population of the Eastern Region. Experiments do not save the situation. They should encourage fishing industry in areas like Opobo Division and Rivers. They should also help the poor farmer by giving him money to buy a canoe and net so as to provide more fish for the people of this Region, than telling us that a European or any higher experimental man has bought a canoe to fish under scientific methods.

**Mr L. O. Uzoigwe (Aba Division):** Mr Chairman, I rise to support this Head. Agriculture has been our way of life. The majority of the eight million people of this Region depend solely on Agriculture for their livelihood. A few months ago a school of agriculture was opened at Umudike. Your humble servant had the privilege of being present at the inaugural ceremony. I feel that that was a step in the right direction, because almost every Standard VI holder thinks he can earn his livelihood by pushing the pen. If many school leavers are allowed to go to these schools and receive proper training I think the Region will be benefited.

I consider, too, that all possible better methods of cultivation should be encouraged. I agree that the Minister has taken steps to see about that. But there is one point I should like to draw the attention of this House to, and that is this question of Nigerianisation. It is unfortunate that it is beyond the competency of the Cabinet to deal with it. One of the principles governing Nigerianisation is that no non-Nigerian should be employed if a qualified Nigerian can be found. I feel that lip service has always been paid to this principle, and I think this is a challenge to our representatives who will be going to London, say by September, to see that the Civil Service comes within the control of the Executive Council.

I have no doubt, too, that the Minister of Agriculture has taken steps to see that more crops are introduced, because I read recently that some more Amazon cocoa is being imported.

Another point, Sir, I should like to discuss is the method of agriculture. If I may be allowed to say, I would advise that courses be run, say, in some parts of the School of Agriculture for the peasants, for the ordinary farmer, say, fortnightly or monthly courses, to show them exactly how the fertilisers or how the new crops should be planted in a better way. I am happy to see that the Acting Principal of the College of Agriculture is a Nigerian. I am looking forward to a time when not only the Principal or the Deputy Principal but the majority of the personnel of the Agricultural Service would all be Nigerians.

**Mr K. J. N. Okpokam:** Mr Chairman, I am looking forward to a time when the Agricultural Department will change its policy. Probably the long name "Agriculture" deceives a lot of people and that was why Members stood here to refer to a man fully qualified in the field of Agriculture as being ill-treated because he was made to plant rice. I think Agricultural Officers are men who are connected with the production of food. That should be their main duty and they can only be happy when they have accomplished this end, that is, when they are able to produce more food for people to eat. I suggest that instead of calling it the Department of Agriculture, it would help more if it was called a Department of Planters or the Department of Food Producers. That, I think, would make those concerned understand what their responsibilities to the people are.

At the moment when a man has B.Sc. Agriculture or M.Sc. Agriculture, he feels he must sit down in an office, sign papers and send out men to work. What would it be if a doctor having been qualified in United Kingdom, comes out here and says "I no longer can perform an operation because blood would touch my hands, I who am highly educated". I do not think you would regard him as an ideal doctor. The S.M.Os. were doctors in hospitals. They were not made S.M.Os. just when they were first appointed. They first of all had to work in hospitals. They had to handle operations and all dirty things and served side by side with their hospital assistants before they were promoted to look after others.

That is my own feeling about this question of agriculture. What I would like this Department to do really is to send out men to the field to meet farmers. At the moment you talk of one experimental farm in the headquarters of a Division, and very few farmers ever go to see this farm. So the money you spend there is just wasted. It is of no benefit to the people at all. What I would like to see done in addition to this experimental farm in headquarters is to send out men to see farmers in their own farms. For instance, one Agricultural Assistant could choose to spend a year in a village and can make friends with two or three farmers and during the whole of that year take time to assist them in planting and improving their methods of planting. At the end of the year, if these men so assisted could see the differences between their usual production and what they produced that year, certainly they would be convinced that the methods they have learnt are much better. In this way, I think, the knowledge of farming would spread more quickly than merely having Agricultural Officers stay in headquarters to do paper work in the main. That is to say, they sit down on big tables and draft letters, giving directives to less qualified staff.

Therefore what I would like to suggest at this moment is that when next the Eastern Government is offering a scholarship for agriculture to anybody in this Region, the student should be made to understand that he is going out to learn the art of planting. He should bear in mind that he would come out to plant and when he does come out, I would suggest that Government should give him enough money to establish on his own, so that when he progresses other farmers would copy his methods and the knowledge of scientific agriculture would thus spread. I am strictly against people saying that once a man has B.Sc. or M.Sc. Agriculture he should not touch the soil again.

I suggest that instead of making the demonstration farms in the big centres, as the one in Enugu, they should be situated in the rural areas, nearest the local farms. I have been here in Enugu since 1952 and it was only last Saturday that I went to see one of these farms. You find corn, planted in the dry season looking very well. If such a thing was brought nearer to the people who plant, they would be convinced that it is possible to grow corn at all seasons. But how many people, how many Members in this House, know of the existence of that demonstration farm today? I did not know it until last Saturday. So we must have to do something about bringing demonstration farms nearer to the people and bringing the Agricultural Officers, or, whoever they are, nearer to the people. They should not be so far from the people as they are at the moment.

I would also like to suggest that whatever crops we want to plant should also be grown say, in clan centres or any village centres, where people can always see these things, because what you see is what you think about and when you think about something you are tempted to copy it.

I want to thank the Government for what they did in bringing 18,000 cocoa seedlings from the Gold Coast to Ikom. We are very happy and we are going to make use of these seedlings; but unfortunately, there is a little thing in it. I know that in bringing these things to Ikom, they cost up to 1s 6d per seedling. In fact they were flown by air and are being distributed to farmers at the rate of 1s 6d each. That is good enough and I thank the Govern-

he was saying that it was saved by the Agricultural Department. It was said that £25 was enough to cut an acre of cocoa plantation. I think that is not correct at all. This must have been based on the same book work on which Agricultural Officers sit down in their offices and work out. If you have been in the bush yourself, you will see that it costs far more than that. (*Interruption: You are not correct.*)

I will explain it to you. First of all, you must not think of the grass you see here in Enugu. That is not how the forest you plant your cocoa looks like. It is a thick forest. There, if the rain falls, and you are under it, it does not beat you. The first thing you do is to clear the under-growth. After the under-growth, you fell trees. Felling of a tree which is big enough will cost you from 10s to £1, and there may be 30, 40, 50 such trees in one acre of land. How on earth can you use £25 to clear the under-growth, fell the trees, do the packing, then the holing. After holing, you buy your seedling, and carry them for three to five miles for planting for only £25? If that had been the basis on which they had been working, I think it was all wrong. I will ask them to go nearer the farmers and know exactly the true cost of farming.

Mr Chairman, I thank you.

**Mr R. O. Ukuta, M.B.E. (Nsukka Division):** Mr Chairman, I think it is not a sin if the Agricultural Department can advance more from the demonstration stage. I have to thank them for the development of rice farming in this Region. If they can pull their weight more, as they did in the way of rice planting, I think the cost of food will reduce automatically. The Agricultural Department should go to Anam and learn how these people produce their large yams. It is of no use going to Trinidad to learn, because we have our soil here. Let the Agricultural Department change their policy and produce more food so that the cost of food may be less.

Actually I am not against this Department. I am aware that everybody is preaching that we should go back to the land. We will encourage this Department if a change of heart will enter the Department.

Mr Chairman, these are the only remarks I have to make.

**Mr Eyo Ita (Calabar Division):** Mr Chairman, I have had some discussion on the problems of agriculture in my Division with the Minister of Agriculture. I would like to air in the House some of these problems and the hopelessness given to me by the Minister in our private discussions.

We have, in the first place, something frightful happening in our Division which is hardly known in other Divisions, namely, the establishment of plantations by foreign firms like the U.A.C., a Danish Company, an Oban Rubber Estate, and the Dunlop Company, etc. We in Calabar Division are being filled with fear as to what is going to happen to the future of the people of that area because, as we all know, this type of thing we find happening in that division is what we ourselves have termed as capitalist abominations in Malaya. It is all very well to say that these firms are attracted to this area, and that they will help to give labour opportunity to the people of the area. But as the Minister himself admitted to me, it appears that no provision is really made for safeguarding the future welfare of the people of this area.

*And it being 5.45 p.m. the Chairman left the Chair to report Progress, and ask leave to sit again.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Committee report Progress: to sit again Tomorrow, 23rd March.*

#### ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, That this House do now adjourn—(*The Premier*).

*Adjourned accordingly at thirteen minutes to six o'clock.*

# Eastern House of Assembly

Friday, 23rd March, 1956

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

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

Prayers

ORDER OF THE DAY

(Progress: Head 431—Agriculture) (2nd Alloted Day)

*Considered in Committee of Supply.*

*Question again proposed: That a sum not exceeding £264,420 for Head 431—Agriculture—stand part of the Schedule.*

**Mr Eyo Ita (Calabar Division):** Mr Chairman, when I started speaking yesterday I drew the attention of the House to the large plantations we have in Calabar Division owned by foreign firms. I pointed out that this was transmission to Nigeria, especially that part of our Region, of the abominations of the Malayan Capitalist Plantations System. I pointed out that most people believed that the bringing into that division of large sums of money, like £2,000,000 from the Dunlop Company and other Companies working in the area, may be a blessing to the people, not only in giving employment to the unemployed, but in affording certain facilities like road development in the division. But I insist, as anyone here will agree with me, that these are not unmixed blessings, and that this plantation system is certainly not compatible with the declared faith of the N.C.N.C. Government in Socialist Nigeria or Socialist Republic of Nigeria.

We cannot be inconsistent in our policy. I well remember what the Government Chief Whip has said to the House. Talking about Co-operative Societies and Development Corporations he emphasised the fact that the Development Corporation was going to work hand in hand with the Co-operative Societies in order to bring about socialist economy in the Region, and I agree entirely with him that that was the proper thing to do.

I also find this policy declared in the Report of the Agricultural Department for 1954-55. If you will allow me to read one or two examples; it is said in Appendix 2, Section 4:—

“No changes designed to improve the welfare of the people can be carried out without commensurate changes in land tenure and land use, improvement in farming practices and the controlled use of the produce of forests and streams.”

Then under section 5 it is said:—

“The diversification of the economy of the Region by the establishment of plantations with approved sources of capital, and in partnership with the local people, will be encouraged.”

Further down, at section 10, it is said:—

“The time for the implementation of the Ministry's policy is NOW.”  
And “NOW” is put in capital letters.

“To extend the reclamation of mangrove swamps and flood areas and to increase rice production.”

and finally under (6)—

“To develop areas at present under-developed.”

I must insist, Sir, that the plantation system, as it has been going on in that division up to the present, is certainly not in keeping with this policy of Government. I would very strongly insist, Sir, that the Minister or Ministry should be consistent in carrying out the policy of the Corporation, and work a partnership system between the Co-operative Societies in the area mentioned and other areas, where for instance the land tenure system is so very encouraging. I do not know of any division which has a land tenure system as good as the one we have in Calabar Division. Obviously, that is the reason why these foreign firms came into that area to establish large plantations. They come because the system of land tenure is good.

Well, if the lack of suitable land tenure was a handicap in the past elsewhere, we have in this division an excellent opportunity for the Ministry, and for the Government as a whole, to try large scale farming by the people working in co-operation with the Government Corporations. It is therefore necessary that the Government should go all out and, like these big firms, put in a million pounds, working with the Co-operative Societies in the area to establish large farms.

In addition to this inducement of adequate land tenure, we have the willingness of the people of the area to form co-operatives. If the people are prepared to form co-operatives, there is then inducement for the Development Corporation and for the Ministry to bring about the socialist economy which I have already mentioned.

In addition to that inducement we have the third inducement, namely, the willingness of the people, even to pool their fragmented plots wherever possible. This disposition of the people should encourage that scheme. I hold, Sir, as the Ministry has declared in the paragraph quoted, that the time for the implementation of the Ministry's policy is NOW. I emphasise the word NOW, written in capitals. This is the time.

I turn next to the rice scheme. I must congratulate the Ministry of Agriculture for policy which I started some years back. This is a great scheme, a very useful scheme, not only for Calabar Division but for the Rivers and other areas. Again, it appears to me that the Government policy is not very consistent. We find that we have in the Calabar Division nearly 40 per cent of the mangrove swamp lands suitable for rice cultivation, that is to say, that about 300,000 acres of land available in that area are suitable for rice planting and growing, and the experiment has already proved successful. There is no reason why there should be any timidity in launching out a large sum of money to develop the scheme, as I have said, not only in Calabar Division but in Rivers and other areas where the experiments have proved successful. I am quite sure that that will tally with the declared Government policy and I believe the policy of the U.N.I.P. to increase food production in the Region.

I certainly believe that the time has come when we should go all out to increase food production. Rice is one of the things in addition to garri production, mentioned by someone speaking yesterday. The plots in Calabar are attracting the attention of many people. I am myself one of the rice farmers, and would certainly like to own a plot there in order to encourage the people of my area to plant more rice. The Minister of Agriculture has himself admitted that it is expensive to cut down the forest, and to wait for a number of years to have the land ready. I suggest that Government should invest sufficient money to destroy the forest, and help the farmers to get the land available for rice planting. I am quite sure that many people will go in very seriously for rice planting.



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The last point I want to make is about practical farm schools, with small experimental stations attached. I think that it should be the policy of Government to have such schools in every division. I know we have experimental farms in the Provinces, but I think these school farms are small enough and effective if we can put them in every division because they will help to demonstrate very successfully to the farmers. I have mentioned these large experimental stations because they are situated at such distances that they do not really have proper impact upon the life and practice of the farmers. Many speakers have admitted that owing to distances the farmers are discouraged, and do not even attend the big agricultural shows. Small farms owned and worked by the young people of the area and schools in which they are taught to do the proper thing will certainly help my division and others. This should be followed by rigorous extension work.

This has proved successful in America and other countries which regard agriculture very seriously, and I think we should go all out to do it. The beginning has already been made, but, as I have said, we are only scratching the surface.

**Mr B. C. Okwu (Awgu Division)** : Mr Chairman, I wish to say that any one who has intimate knowledge of the work which the officials of this Department perform in the rural areas and in the experimental farms cannot fail to pay tribute to these men—both white and black.

I wish, also, to say that it is not easy for one who looks at things from an official position, to appreciate the difficulties that these men are facing and their devotedness to their duty. But I will also say that I feel that the Agricultural Department should keep one-third of its staff in the experimental offices or workshops and two-thirds in the field. It has been generally admitted that our economy depends on agriculture, both on the national and regional levels. That being so, one would have expected that first-rate emphasis should be placed on our Agricultural development. I disagree with this department in their method.

I think their method is unproductive, short-sighted and slow. I feel that, no matter what this department might have achieved in its experiments, unless it changes the method of farming, the department would have failed in its principal mission. For these past fifty years, our people have consistently been using hoes and knives, and I think that the only thing which the Government might do is to convince us that the emphasis on agricultural development is not only theoretical but practical.

I feel, Sir, that our agriculture should be mechanised. The North and the West are giving us a lead in this direction. No matter what new discoveries may be made, they cannot be implemented to an appreciable extent by using hoes and knives, and I wish to throw a challenge to the Minister of Agriculture. At Oji, we have fertile land and my people will be prepared to give me half a square mile of land for this department to experiment and show to the world what their experiments and new discoveries have led them to. We are not satisfied with mere circulars and preachments. We want people to see what the department has been able to achieve by cultivating large tracts of land.

The last speaker made a point which should receive the careful consideration of Members. Unless there is a consistent and elaborate policy of encouraging Co-operative Societies in matters of farming, and Government participating with the farmers in this wise by technical advice and making available to them modern instruments for farming, it will be found that in the final analysis, we can only depend on the plantation system, either run by Corporations or by private concerns. This is not the declared policy of the Government.

I have consistently suggested in this House that this Department should have a special department of Food Production. If you do not have sufficient food in the Region, you will find that your Gorsuch loses its value. It is also true that more and more people in this Region are beginning to be averse to the use of their hands simply because our methods are still primitive. In the United States and India, for instance, people take honour in going to the land, but

own. I had the privilege, when in Lagos in 1952 as a member of the House of Representatives, to visit the farm which the Leader of this Government was running. It was a very interesting experiment and I know how much inspiration it gave me then. I wish to see more of such farms in the Region.

Again, Sir, the Minister of Agriculture has not told us what is his departmental programme for animal husbandry. We know that our food is lacking in protein, and although in the Policy Paper it is stated that Government will do all it can to increase meat production by embarking on schemes of poultry breeding, improving the meat value of our domestic animals, and so on, I have not seen anything to show me that the department, at this stage, is paying attention to this particular aspect of its work.

Sir, I wish to protest again against the indifference of the Agricultural Department to finding an answer to the annual poultry diseases which destroy the poultries of our people wholesale. I will say from intimate knowledge, that besides farm products, our people depend for their income on the money which accrues to them from poultry. But year in and year out, at a certain period of the year, the whole poultry population is swept away by disease. I even went to Nkwelle and found that the department had ceased to breed poultry. It has not been able to find an answer to this problem.

Another thing, Sir, is the disease to which our yams are subjected. We have had advertisements about the use of fertilisers. We all know that by using fertilisers bigger yams are produced. It is our experience, however, that before you consume them, they all go bad. What is the department's answer to this? This disease is called "Oku" in Ibo—I do not know its technical name. The disease causes the yams to wither away after they have germinated and produced leaves. If this Department wants us to take it seriously, it should find a cure for this disease.

I want also to congratulate this Department on its scheme for rice production. We want a definite programme of rice production. We want to be told that in the year 1956 the Department has earmarked so much for the production of rice in the Region. In India and other parts of the world, there are Ten-Year Plans and so on for agricultural development. We should also go by such a schedule.

I wish to end, Sir, by congratulating the Minister of Agriculture for the practical farm schools in my division. I think that other Divisions are deserving of such schools to enable school children who leave school to go there and learn modern ways of farming. This scheme will, however, collapse unless Government sets aside a sum of money to encourage these boys, after they have completed their courses, to receive loans or grants in order to put into practice what they have learnt.

Our people also have lands held on a communal basis. These communal lands could be earmarked for communal farming; and by getting experts to advise on and supervise these schemes, the Department will get into more intimate contact with the people and our agricultural development will have a new look.

**Mr A. J. Ekpe (Opobo Division):** Mr Chairman, before I thank the Minister of Agriculture for the lack of interest he has shown in agricultural projects in my division I want to observe to this House that during last year I received three telegrams announcing the visit of the honourable Minister of Agriculture to my division and three other telegrams cancelling the proposed visits. This state of affairs is very discouraging indeed, especially when one has made some points to discuss with the Minister on his arrival.

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What interests me very much in the agricultural development work in my division is the work of the Rural Science teachers in the various schools to which they are attached. In fact some of the school farms I have seen in some areas have more demonstrative value than the so-called demonstration farm centres run by this Government. Examples of this can be seen in schools like the Ibesit Central School, Ete Methodist Mission School and the Four Group District Council School. A visit to these schools will convince anybody that real agricultural development work is being taught and done there. This is directly of benefit to the children because they have portions in the school farm that they cultivate. This, in my opinion, is a more effective way of teaching agriculture than what is being done in demonstration farms.

Another point I want to emphasise is utilisation of community land for the development of agriculture. In my area there are many community farm lands that are lying waste. I remember that I wrote the Minister of Agriculture in 1953 inviting him to investigate the possibility of starting the cocoa industry in the Ete Community farm land which is several hundred acres in area. The then Minister of Agriculture was fully aware of the agricultural potentialities of the area. I think it will help the production of food in this Region if such community land is fully utilised, and if the people in such areas are encouraged to make the fullest use of such land.

I have observed that someone has moved a motion seeking to reduce the grant to the Rural Training Centre at Asaba. Maybe the honourable mover of this motion has not visited this centre, because anybody who cares to take off a week-end to see this centre cannot but be highly impressed. In fact I was there last week-end, and was convinced that there was real justification for whatever grant this Region makes to the centre.

There is one important fact that must be borne in mind, and that is that all the boys and girls in our secondary schools will not find jobs as clerks and artisans. Many of them will have to go back to the farm, and unless we have centres like that in Asaba, that give basic agricultural education to our people, our future as an agricultural community is very gloomy indeed. We in the rural areas are wedded to the land. We cannot run away from it. As a matter of fact it is the only place we fall back to when Government jobs fail us or ministerial posts are no longer available. Therefore, it is only fair that we give quite a good deal of our time to the training of the youths of the Region in agriculture, and a training centre like the one in Asaba is urgently needed in this Region.

We have heard of revolution in our fiscal policy. Certainly the educational policy requires revolution also. When replying to a debate here the other day the Minister said that farmers are very conservative. In order to help farmers to realise that they are living in a changing world where they have to adapt themselves to modern scientific methods of farming, all Agricultural Department workers in the field should go out and be personally interested in the work they are doing. Sitting in offices and writing statistics of prices in the markets does not help the cause of agriculture. I am referring, Sir, to the work of some agricultural assistants who are more interested in compiling statistics for headquarters than visiting these humble farmers in their homes and doing everything possible to get them interested in modern methods of farming.

I realise, Sir, that there is a big difficulty in the way of introducing mechanisation into our farming because of the system of land tenure in the Region. It is difficult indeed to persuade our people to pool their lands together to produce sufficient acreage for mechanised farming. That is where a revolution is needed, for unless this is done it will be very difficult to introduce mechanised agriculture in the Region.

I believe, Sir, that if a real investigation is made it will be found that there is sufficient land suitable for experimental planting of cocoa and coffee in the community lands in Opobo Division, especially in the Andoni area. The Andoni people are natural fishermen and they have a large tract of farm land which they do not use. If the Department of Agriculture relaxes its policy

division to meet the farmers. I can arrange the meeting if he will promise the people that experts will be sent to investigate into the possibilities of growing cocoa and coffee in the area. I shall be grateful for such a visit.

I had spoken earlier about school farms run by Rural Science teachers. If the Agricultural Department could help these farms they could be more useful and beneficial to the people for my division than isolated Demonstration Farm Centres because these school farms are in direct contact with the children and their parents, as the latter are shown these farms during school festivals, and they also see them when they go to see teachers or to pay school fees.

I trust the Minister will take these points into consideration and will also investigate the possibility of encouraging people with small loans to enable them to step up production of cassava, maize, yams and cocoyams in the Region. These are the staple food of the people. When we talk of stepping up production I know the Minister has in mind cash crops like palm trees, cocoa and coffee, but he must remember that our people do not eat or drink cocoa nor do they drink coffee so much. But what we want is increased production of the staple food of our people.

**Mr S. N. Alo (Abakaliki Division):** Mr Chairman, I beg to take this opportunity to thank the Department of Agriculture. This department has been very active in my own division—Abakaliki. Already it is popularly known that Abakaliki is the centre of rice production. However, the farmers there are in the habit of going to borrow money during the planting season, and it will be an encouragement to them if they receive small loans from the Government.

May I inform this House that part of Abakaliki is good for cotton cultivation. The people of Ishielu District produce a small quantity of cotton, but if they are given encouragement I think they will be able to produce enough cotton for this Region. There is also very good soil for groundnuts. We have a groundnut plantation in Ezzamgbo area.

Mr Chairman, there is a very big difficulty facing the farmers in my area about which they are unable to do anything. It is some kind of yam disease. Let this department help the farmers by devising a means of getting rid of this disease. The disease has many varieties known in the vernacular as Ikakpo, Nsoku, and Ekpi.

I have also to comment on what is commonly known as fowl disease. This disease, at a special period of the year, kills all the fowls in the whole area. I think it is the business of this Department to see that this disease is checked, and advise the farmers the means of checking it.

Mr Chairman, I beg to support.

**Chief I. I. Morphy (Ogoja Division):** Mr Chairman, I would like to say that this Government has forgotten Ogoja. I therefore, ask the Minister of Agriculture to come to Ogoja and help us.

We grow soya beans in Ogoja. Our people get these soya beans free from the people of the Northern Region at Gakem on the border of the Eastern Region on the understanding that the harvest will be sold back to the Northern Region. Last time about 400 tons of soya beans went to the Northern Region from the Eastern Region.

Kolanuts are grown in Obudu, but I have not seen this Government encouraging the people of Obudu to grow more kolanut. Groundnuts also grow plentifully in Ogoja. Last groundnut season traders bought over 500 tons of groundnuts and carried the whole quantity to the Northern Region. The tax on a ton of groundnuts is ten shillings, and all the money realised from these tonnages of groundnuts goes to the Northern Region. I am, therefore, asking the Minister of Agriculture to come over there to help us.

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I would like to say a word about the activities of the Agricultural Officers, their assistants and all those who do field work in Ogoja. They do not encourage the farmers. When they visit farms they do nothing except to walk about with their hands in their pockets. We would like them to be more practical. We do not like them to be theoretical all the time because the people do not understand their theory.

I would like cocoa to be grown in Obubra. The soil is very good for cocoa in Iyamoyong. If cocoa planting is carried out in the Usella and Iyamoyong clans it will be an encouragement to the people of that area to stay at home instead of going over to Fernando Po as they do at present. By these people going to Fernando Po we lose the tax they would have paid and their labour.

When, some time ago, we heard of the proposal to open an Agricultural School we thought that this school would be established either in the Ogoja or the Obubra Divisions where a lot of food is grown. I hold that Ogoja is the province that feeds all of us in this House and in the Eastern Region, and I would say that the Government is not doing much to encourage the food growers there. I am, therefore, appealing to the Government to encourage the people of Ogoja Province to grow more soya beans and kolanuts.

**Mr E. A. Agim (Ogoja Division):** Mr Chairman, no amount of talk on agriculture can be too much, as over seventy-five per cent of the people of the Eastern Region are farmers. The points I had intended to discuss have already been dealt with by previous speakers. I shall only deal with two points which have not been touched.

The Agricultural Department should be more active in their policy of helping farmers to produce more food for local consumption. Not only should the farmers of the Region be encouraged to produce more food for local consumption, but they should also be encouraged to grow more cash crops. In a mountainous region like Obudu the Agricultural Department should investigate into the possibility of growing coffee, tea and such crops that can grow in such areas. This will be of immense assistance to the farmers in that area who cannot grow yams.

My honourable colleague from Ogoja Division has spoken of soya beans. It will interest you, Mr Chairman, to know that Ogoja and Obudu are the only places where soya beans are grown in this Region. The northern parts of Ogoja and Obudu should be encouraged to grow more of these beans. Also people in the dry parts of Abakaliki and in the northern part of Afikpo should be encouraged to grow soya beans.

Although it is not possible to grow groundnuts on a large scale for export, if the people of Obudu, Ogoja, Abakaliki and Afikpo are encouraged to grow groundnuts it will be of great help to us, at least for local consumption.

Many honourable Members spoke of the effect of fertilisers on the soil. We must understand, however, that not all types of soil respond favourably to fertilisers. Fertilisers may do the opposite work on the land which a farmer wants to improve, but which, in fact, is good, for instead of improving the crops thereon it destroys them.

I join in praising the Agricultural Department for introducing the growing of rice in Abakaliki, Ogoja and Obudu. From what I have gathered from the Minister of Agriculture, it seems that the type of rice offered us is that which is grown in swamps. I would, therefore, ask the Agricultural Department to introduce rice which can be grown in places where there are no swamps.

A few years ago when we visited the Agricultural Headquarters at Abakaliki, the farm then looked very nice. This year, when I again visited the place, I was not satisfied with the results. The farm did not appear as it used to be. On enquiry I was informed that the

than twenty-two Field Overseers this year in the Estimates. Now that the people are becoming interested in agriculture, it should be the policy of this Government to engage more Field Overseers who should go to the out-of-the-way places and educate the people on how to cultivate both cash crops and food crops.

I would like to call the attention of this Department to one big evil, and that is bush fire. This yearly bush fire helps to destroy the fertility of the soil. The earlier the Government passes a Law to control bush fires the better for everybody. We are tired of the answer, "We shall do this as soon as possible".

I would even go further to suggest that if a farmer wants to set his own farm on fire he should take advice from the Agricultural Department. An officer of the Department should go to see whether it is good for the farmer that he should set the farm on fire.

We have in Abakaliki and Obudu a good number of rice mills now. The people are beginning to plant rice on a large scale and are paying less attention to the growing of yams. My people also grow cassava. I would like to ask this Department to assist farmers by introducing machines to help them grate cassava and thereby produce more garri.

**The Minister of Agriculture:** Mr Chairman, I thank honourable Members for their constructive criticisms and useful suggestions.

The Leader of the Opposition expressed some concern yesterday about the presence of plantations in Calabar area. It is true that he interviewed me some few days ago on this particular point and I explained the whole position to him. It is true, too, that I did tell him, when he expressed fears about the interest of the land-owners in that area, that the interest of land-owners in that area would be safeguarded by this Government. I do not understand how the honourable Member can interpret that to mean confession that provisions were not being made to safeguard the interests of the land-owners. He used the expression yesterday, "that the Minister confessed to him", and that struck me. I gave him an assurance, and that assurance is still valid, that the interest of land-owners in that area is safeguarded.

I might start by reminding the honourable Member that this Government does not force people to give their land to anybody. Since I took office on the 1st October, 1954, two firms have gone to that area to establish plantations. One is the Dunlop Rubber Company, which intends to establish a Rubber Plantation. The honourable Member is quite aware of this particular firm. The other one is a Danish agricultural firm, which has just started in that area. That Company intends to establish a Sumatra type of tobacco in the Calabar area and also bananas. They have actually started work. These two companies are in that area.

How did they get there? They actually toured the whole Region on their own. They were not invited by anybody to tour the Region. They discovered that particular area to be suitable for their own projects. They negotiated with the land-owners, and agreed in the first instance, before announcing it to us. I do not know whether my friend, the Leader of the Opposition, is in touch with members of his constituency, because if he is actually in touch with them he will know the facts. How did these people get to that area? Were the people of the area forced to hand over their land to them or was it a free discussion between them and the foreign firms? I do not know, but it seems to me as though the honourable Member is not quite in touch with some members of his constituency. The fact is exactly what I have said, that this is a private venture and this Government does not intend to interfere.

We safeguard the interests of the land-owners in two ways. One, we see to it that there is no exploitation in any shape or form. As I speak now, Sir, a case is before me of a particular firm that offered what sum of money they could pay per acre to the people in that area. The people accepted that gladly, but I have said that I will not allow it because the amount is not adequate. That is the way we safeguard the interest of these people against exploitation. If any amount is offered and they accept it, and I discover that that amount is not sufficient, I will not allow it. That is what I have done already.

Another way by which the interest of land-owners is safeguarded is by seeing to it that the land is not alienated to these people. The people can lease land for a certain number of years but may not purchase it. That is the position, and I think the honourable Member should be aware of it. These are the two main ways by which the interests of the land-owners are safeguarded.

The honourable Member made one point which I think I ought to dispose of before it is too late. He quoted the Policy Paper. He said that this Government is not consistent in carrying out what is provided in that Policy Paper. He talked about plantations. When we say we want to establish a socialist state, we do not mean thereby that we want to force people. We do not want to bring socialism by force; we do not want to do it by a sort of revolution, that is, by forcing people to hand over their things to us. We mean by that that private enterprise—the private sector of our economy—can go side by side with the public one. We mean by that that we will persuade people to allow the public to control all means of production. We do not want to force them to do so. If my friend on the opposite side thinks that by socialism we mean revolution, he is thinking of Communism. Public enterprise must co-exist with private enterprise. This is the sort of socialism I believe in.

He also quoted the Policy Paper and said by allowing these people to establish plantations, we are not implementing our Policy Paper. But he could not go further down to read paragraph 6 which laid it down that we are interested in developing the under-developed areas. The particular area that the honourable Member mentioned is very much under-developed. He himself admitted it when he interviewed me the other day. I am sure he will admit it openly here, too, that that area is under-developed and under-populated. It is such an area that we must bring up and the way to bring it up quickly is to allow private enterprise to function there side by side with public enterprise. That is not deviation from our policy.

We mentioned in the Policy Paper that we believed in partnership—whether partnership between Government Agents with private capital or partnership between free individuals, because this is a democratic Region.

Now, having disposed of the main points made by the honourable Member, I go to my friend Mr B. C. Okwu. He talked of mechanisation of agriculture. If he had looked under the very Head we are considering—sub-head 10—he will see a provision of £4,550 there for mechanisation of agriculture. This mechanisation has been going on for some time now, and the pity of it is that the work is going on in the very province of the honourable Member who is now complaining. The work is going on in Adani in Onitsha Province. The point is that most of the honourable Members here are not farmers. They have not been to any farm at all.

Yesterday, Sir, you heard the honourable Okpokam complaining that the vegetable garden we have at a corner in the town here—he called it demonstration farm and saw it for the first time yesterday, so he concluded that honourable Members have never seen it—should have been brought nearer to the centre of the town so that others could see it. That shows you quite conclusively, Sir, that this criticism arises because Members are out of touch with farmers. I am sure that if farmers come here they will sing a different tune; they will praise us; they will say we have done nobly for them. It is not sufficient for schoolmasters or chemists or members of any profession, just to stand up and say we want the Minister to do this or that for the farmer.

Now I go straight to the honourable Ekpe. He complained that the Minister never visited him. That is true. The arrangement to visit Opobo Division failed because of various causes. Sometimes when an arrangement is made to visit a particular place another more important duty of national importance prevents one from going. I believe my Friend Ekpe

The honourable Member was not quite consistent in his criticism. I am sure that we should experiment—he would give us certain things to experiment upon. He also wants us to go into production. He has a piece of land to give us. Many people do not quite understand the functions of this particular department. It is in the main a research department; it does research with various crops. Whenever it does the experiment and gets results, it hands out these results to the farmers. The actual application of the results is the responsibility of the farmers themselves who are scattered all over the Region. When you say a farmer in your town produced a hundred heads of yam, it is the Agricultural Department which claims the production. It is through the activities of this department that these hundred heads of yam were produced. If you want to assess the success or failure of the Department you must go back to the total production within the Region, be they cash crops or food crops. Whatever you realise, that is what the Department of Agriculture is entitled to claim as having produced. It is not correct just to think of experimental farms or demonstration farms or centres. They are not the only activities of the Department. The activities permeate right through the life of the average farmer in the whole Region.

I want to make it quite plain that the activities of this Department centre mainly around research and experiment. It cannot go into production under its present set up. If you want a body to function as a production unit, that body must be something different from the present Department of Agriculture. That is true because every member of the staff of this particular Department is a Civil Servant. He must run a scale, whether or not he produces. Whatever he produces is immaterial to him. He gets his salary, he gets his increment, he gets his allowance, pension and other claims which Civil Servants enjoy. It is not like a private firm where people cut their coat according to their size. There is no such thing in the Civil Service, where salary is according to the grade. The Department can never be a production unit.

I have spent time on these explanations because one of the speakers suggested that we could farm on a piece of land at Oji River. But we cannot do that. We can only experiment and hand over the result of these experiments to you. When it comes to actual cultivation it is you who will do it. When that point is understood, Sir, I think most of these criticisms will disappear.

I am sure that when we come to the next Head it will be the same. These Departments are not production units. Regarding Fisheries, for instance, if you ask me "How much fish have you caught?" I would not know—we do not catch fish.

I do not intend to waste more of your time. A Member mentioned animal husbandry that one can best be discussed under Head 430. So I leave that matter until we come to that Head.

**Mr D. A. Nnaji (Udi Division) :** Mr Chairman, I rise to move an amendment calling upon this House to *delete* sub-head 15, where provision is made for £9,360 to be sent to the Western Region—to the Asaba Rural Training Centre. In moving this motion, Sir, I wish to draw the attention of the House to sub-head 12 of the estimates. In sub-head 12 we have practical farm school, and the provision made for that school is only £900. I wish also to draw the attention of the House to sub-head 16—School of Agriculture—Maintenance £4,000. It means that in the whole of the Eastern Region £4,900 will be spent on improving and maintaining the two schools of agriculture, but the Government intends to send away £9,360 to another area, calling it a Regional grant.

Some of us who have been long in this House are getting tired of the lack of explanation in the memorandum to enable Members to know the purpose for which any expenditure is intended. Here under Head 421 no such explanation is given as to why the Eastern Regional Government intends to spend £9,360 for the maintenance, or any other things, of the Rural Training Centre at Asaba. The Government has also failed to show how much the other Regions have granted towards that institution, if that is necessary at all.



[1956-57 E.R. Appropriation  
Law, 1956]

23rd March, 1956

[Committee]

We want our agricultural schools in the Eastern Region. We want our boys and girls—those who want to become husbandmen—to study in our own schools here in the Eastern Region. Everything is regionalised now, Sir, and should not these schools be regionalised as well?

When I saw the Minister of Agriculture the other day, he told me that it was because of the Christian Council of Nigeria that the grant was being made. I asked him whether the Roman Catholic people have any hands in that concern if it is a religious organisation. If you want to give a grant to any religious organisation, I think the Minister of Welfare can do that, not the Minister of Agriculture.

Mr Chairman, there is no reason why the agricultural school we have at Owerri should lack equipment, staff and everything. The other day we heard that the Principal of one of the Agricultural schools is only acting. When that man reverts to his substantive post nobody knows how long it will take Government to get a substantive Principal of that school. I maintain that we should equip, standardise and modernise our own schools of Agriculture in the Eastern Region. I strongly oppose, and I call upon the honourable Members who know the difficulties which we suffer by going outside this Region to get our education, to support the amendment. We want this money to be spent in the Eastern Region.

*Question proposed.*

**The Minister of Agriculture :** I am very much surprised, Sir, at the the stand honourable Member has taken. Most of us have been saying "One Nigeria". If it is an explanation from Government that my honourable Friend wants I can proceed to give it. I think his main point is that this school is outside this Region.

**Mr Chairman :** No. That was not exactly the point.

**The Minister of Agriculture :** This is the position about the Asaba Rural Training School. The Board of Governors of this school is predominantly missionary, and this Region is represented on it. In October, 1955, there were 107 students of whom seventy eight were from this Region. This means that more than 70 per cent of the whole body is from this Region. Now of the forty-seven ex-students settled in this Region, thirty-three are farming, seven are teaching, three are policemen, three are training, one cannot be traced. You can see quite clearly that this is virtually our school. Apart from thirty-seven or thirty-eight students there, the rest are from this Region.

It is a missionary venture, and the arrangement has been that we subscribe our own share according to the number of students we have there. I am very happy that the honourable Member from Opobo told you that he was there last week-end. At another time the Minister of Transport and myself visited there. Nobody who visits that school can afford to submit to the terms of this motion. I am sure that if the honourable Member himself had visited the Rural Training Centre he would certainly not move this type of motion.

I will tell you the amounts the Regions spend on that school. The Eastern Region pays £8,349 for its sixty-six boys, the Western Region pays £2,783, the Cameroons pays £759 because they have very few students there. The Federal Government is not interested in it. The amount spent there is defrayed by the Regions sending students into the school.

The honourable Member said we have our own schools here. It is true that we have a Practical Farm Centre at Achi which is almost the same thing. But there is one big difference. The Asaba Rural Training School is a Missionary venture; its training is centred around Christian principles. The students are supposed to come out and settle down as farmers

**Mr D. A. Nnaji :** I do not, Sir. I want to make a few remarks. The fact that, according to the Minister, out of 107 students in that Centre seventy-eight come from the East strengthens my argument that we should equip. . .

**The Chairman :** You are not arguing the motion again.

**Mr D. A. Nnaji :** No, Sir. I am saying that he has made my argument stronger than before.

**The Chairman :** Do I understand that Government is opposed to the amendment ?

**The Minister of Agriculture :** Yes.

**Mr D. A. Nnaji :** I withdraw the motion but with a warning to Government, Sir.

*Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.*

*Original question again proposed.*

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E. (Enyong Division) :** Mr Chairman, I had inserted the motion in my name not by any means because I am opposed to the rice development in the Delta area. Far be it from me that I should, and I want to allay the fears of my Ijaw friends. I inserted it, Sir, to elicit the explanation from the honourable the Minister of Agriculture as to why the swamp rice scheme in the Lower Cross River, which was investigated several years ago by an expert imported into this country from Sierra Leone, and about which there was an official report, has been dropped out, if it has been. If it has not been dropped, I would like to get an assurance that the scheme will be proceeded with. The then Minister of Natural Resources visited the area and everybody around was very hopeful that at long last something might come to awaken the Enyong, Itu and Aro people from their slumber.

**The Minister of Agriculture :** Mr Chairman, Sir, the honourable Member has taken me by surprise. If he had told me that that was the sort of information he wanted I would have assembled all the facts and handed them over to him personally in the House. But he simply put the amendment to this particular item, and I got the facts ready as far as this particular Head is concerned. I can, however, speak in general terms now and assure the honourable Member that the scheme has not been dropped.

Work is going on in all the areas and there is no intention at all of dropping the scheme. Rice is being grown in Enyong Division and the crop under cultivation will increase considerably each year. I do not know the area in Enyong Division that the honourable Member is referring to. Enyong Division extends right up to Itu, Aro and so on. If the honourable Member can indicate the particular area that he is referring to I can say something definite. In Enyong as well as elsewhere work is progressing on the rice scheme, and I can give assurance that work will be increased during the coming financial year.

**The Chairman :** Do I understand that you would like to discuss the matter with the honourable Member if he cares to call on you ?

**The Minister of Agriculture :** Yes.

**The Chairman :** (To Mr Ikoku). I am sure you are satisfied with the assurance ?

**Mr A. Ikoku O.B.E. :** (Nods assent).

*Question: That a sum not exceeding £264,420 for Head 431—Agriculture—stand part of the Schedule—put and agreed to.*

*Sitting suspended at 10.30 a.m.*

*Sitting resumed at 11 a.m.*

#### **Head 432—Fisheries**

*Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £36,140 for Head 432—Fisheries—stand part of the Schedule.*

[1956-57 *E.R. Appropriation  
Law, 1956*]

23rd March, 1956

[*Committee*]

**The Minister of Agriculture:** Mr Chairman, the only increase is under Fisheries—Development and Maintenance of Experimental Stations—which is due entirely to the increase of wage rates to what formerly used to be known as our daily paid employees.

One item of special expenditure has however been inserted, and this is for the establishment of a Fish Farm, the exact location of which has not yet been decided, although it will probably be centred somewhere in the middle of the Region, geographically speaking, as a result of wishes expressed by honourable Members of the House at the Budget Session last year.

I would like at this stage to mention the staff position. Work for half the last financial year was supervised by a junior service officer, since there was no senior service officer available. But one has now been recruited and it is hoped that in the coming year the Nigerian who is finishing his training will be returning to take up work in this Department. However, once again the accent for expanding this Department finds itself in our Development Plan. The aims of our Development Programme were given as the development of powered sea-fishing, the achievement of maximum efficiency for sea-fishing by canoe, and the intensification of work on inland fish ponds. The Fisheries Officer has now submitted a detailed report on the implementation of these three aims and these estimates have been designed to allow flexibility and adaptation. The schemes have not as yet finally been approved by the Secretary of State and I trust, Mr Chairman, that honourable Members will see fit to grant me this money on Section B knowing that it will be used to the maximum advantage of the people whom they represent.

**Mr N. L. P. Apreala (Brass Division):** This is an important heading and as one who comes from the fishing areas of this Region I also have the pride to contribute my quota to this important item. I am really pleased that this Government has encouraged this industry a lot. In the past we have not been seeing a European Officer attached to that Department but rather a Master Fisherman. Now, I am pleased to see that we have had a Fisheries Officer.

In contributing my quota to this item I would not like honourable Members to feel that all my people are interested in the fishing industry. It is always a general belief that my people are all fishermen, but this is not so. We have only 30 per cent of our people as fishermen, 40 per cent are palm cutters, 10 per cent petty traders and 20 per cent farmers.

Mr Chairman, I would like this Department to encourage my people more. This encouragement should not consist of mere lectures which have been given from time to time. The people should be enabled to buy nets and canoes if possible; not only canoes made by the natives. I have personally seen a type of canoe specially prepared by this Department costing £35 to £50. Many of the fishermen would like it but they are not in a position to buy it because of its high cost. It will be realised that many of them, apart from having to earn their livelihood, cannot afford to accumulate so much to buy it. Should Government encourage them with little loans and enable them to buy it they will be able to make the best use of it.

I would like to point out one very important point. I have always maintained that fish live in water; but this very Department is trying to show us that they can live on land. My point is that I do not believe much in these fish ponds. After all, as living things, we like to travel very far; so would the fish like to do. But if you confine them to a very small pit with little water it is, in my opinion, imprisonment without trial.

May I point out that if there is carelessness on the part of the servant and he does not throw the necessary foods the fish need into the pond, they will starve. Nobody would like to starve. This Department has been giving lectures advising many people to go all out for sea-

so that when there is acute shortage of fish in the Region this Department will be able to supply fish to that particular area, I will then reluctantly encourage these ponds. But as long as a few experiments are made which never give us any material benefit, any money used in keeping fish in these ponds—which in my opinion is a sort of life-gaol—is an uncalled for punishment. It is a pure waste of our revenue too.

I would at the same time like to see this Department making use of powered engine canoes and giving employment to people to help solve our unemployment problem. If they will go all out in the sea to fish and bring in this important commodity for the use of people in this Region, I will always be very grateful.

It is such practical work, thus demonstrated, that will encourage my people to strive to acquire this modern method of fishing. Fishes are getting clever also and therefore mere lectures would not help the situation. Thank you.

**Mr O. O. Ita (Eket Division):** Mr Chairman, fishing is an industry which should be properly organised. At the moment it is not organised at all. In order to get this industry organised it will require not only the services of the Minister of Agriculture alone, but the co-operation of the Ministers of Trade, Development, Social Welfare and Industries.

I happened last year to travel to some of these fishing villages in order to have first hand information about how our people fish around the French territories. I discovered that one of the greatest difficulties facing them was lack of good water supply. They scarcely get good water to drink. The sanitary conditions in these villages are rather difficult to describe. It will not be too much to say that they are friends to mosquitoes, but nobody does anything about this. They put all that they have usually in one basket, including all the money they realise from their trade. They know nothing about banking; so that, sometimes, when fire breaks out it destroys both their fishing nets and whatever they have got in their huts.

All this means that Government should do something for these people. Government can appoint persons to visit these villages from time to time and advise the fishermen how to live decently. They are tax-payers and the one thing Government will do to assist them is to provide them with life-saving boats because many a time they suffer canoe wrecks and many lives are lost before any help can reach them.

It is really difficult to appreciate the difficulties which face these people in their fishing villages. They have difficulties of finance. Very often they get broke just at the time they need money for buying nets for fishing, and they are forced to resort to some kind of organisation of money-lenders. It is here that the co-operative society will be of great use to them, because it can grant them loans at regular intervals and charge moderate interest. This will help to develop the industry.

It may not be possible for us who know the usefulness of these things to go back and do the fishing ourselves. It is the very natives who ought to be organised and taught how to make a living out of fishing.

**Mr R. O. Ukuta, M.B.E. (Nsukka Division):** Mr Chairman, I think this department exists in name, and in name only. I recollect that during a former Residents' conference at Onitsha I mentioned the people in Nsukka Division on the Anambra River and at Umorum who carry on fishing; yet no Fisheries Officer has ever visited the people. They may pop into Nsukka but their tour usually ends in the District Office.

I think it is high time to establish fish farms. I have stayed almost two weeks in Enugu, but have not seen any fresh fish. Yet we claim to have a Fisheries Department. The Department may concentrate on the Creek areas, but its officers should tour and visit all the rivers, streams and lakes and do something better so that there will be more fish for consumption.

The Department should also do something about preservation of fish for up-country consumers. Distance is no barrier to anything this time. Fresh fish caught in Port Harcourt could travel very easily to Enugu. This department should be more active in these matters. I prefer fish to meat, and I have no doubt that many honourable Members are fish eaters.

**Mr E. Chidolue (Onitsha Division):** Mr Chairman, I wish to stress that we in the Onitsha Division have not seen the activities of this new department. It must be understood that we have many towns along the River Niger where fishing is carried on, towns like Onitsha, Odekpe, Atani and Osomari. On the other side of the Anambra River we have Nsugbe, Anam, Otu-Ocha, Aguleri and Nzam. It is important to note that with the exception of Onitsha, all the towns I have mentioned are in the undeveloped areas of the Region. They have not benefited from the developments going on in the Region on the fifty-fifty basis, and when it comes to small industries like this, I think they should receive first consideration.

Looking at the Estimates I see we have a Principal Fisheries Officer, Fishery Officers and Fishery Assistants—and there are many of them. It would, therefore, mean that they are all concentrated in the Rivers Province. I plead that these towns be remembered because it would appear that the Minister of Agriculture is not aware that we have fishing areas in Onitsha Division.

**Mr K. Giadom (Ogoni Division):** Mr Chairman, I have one contribution to make to the discussions on this heading. I take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the Ministry for the humble beginning so far made in establishing this industry in the country. I would like to add that more still has to be done by way of preserving our fish.

We are trying to build up a great nation, and we know that one factor that helps to make a country rich is its ability for mass production and distribution. Those who have been to the United States of America will bear me out when I say that if you are in a State like Texas you will get fresh fish and milk from California and Florida. Distance is no obstacle. I would like Government to do something to help the people in the Rivers Province to preserve the fish they catch so that it can be transported and distributed to the other parts of the country. At the present time fish caught by the Rivers people is consumed locally or it gets rotten. It does not find its way to other parts of the country.

It will be of immense help if the Minister concerned will see that the people are shown the way to preserve this fish to last for a day or two so that people in Owerri Division or province, as an example, can enjoy the benefit of the establishment of a fish industry in the country by eating fresh fish.

**Mr J. O. Umolu (Port Harcourt Division):** Mr Chairman, looking through Head 432 of the Estimates, one sees that besides the Senior Service quarter and the machinery to be purchased, there is nothing that gives hope to the people of this Region. Some of us who go into Stores like Kingsway and John Holts will see the result of the canning industry in Kano. On sale in these stores are tinned Jollof rice, pudding, cooked beans, which are all exported to the southern Region from Kano. But here is a Department with so many officers—Principal Fisheries Officer, Master Fishermen, etc.—yet here in Enugu some of us have remained for three weeks without even seeing fresh fish—and Onitsha is only sixty-seven miles away!

I remember that when the Colonial Development Corporation established a fishery enterprise in Port Harcourt they used to distribute their catches into the hinterland in ice boxes which kept the fish fresh. Although the Corporation has closed up I do not see the reason why this department should not follow their footsteps. I disagree entirely with the policy that the Fisheries Department, like the Agricultural Department, exists not for production but for demonstration. Even if it existed for demonstration purposes, how many Okrika men have been shown how to catch fish?

I am, therefore, appealing to the Government to adopt a new policy entirely. If the whole policy is based on the fact that these departments were created for demonstration and demonstration alone, and we are voting all the money shown under this Head for personal emoluments—almost two-thirds of the entire vote—I am afraid we are heading to something I know not. If we are going to create any department, that department must be creative.

**Mr P. G. Warmate (Degema Division):** Mr Chairman, I have to thank the previous speakers, whom I might term my disciples, seeing that so many of them are advocating what I have been preaching in this House for years now. I am grateful to all of them and I can assure them that the fishermen at home are also thankful.

The condition of life of the fishermen at home is so deplorable—so precarious—that I do not think I can portray it to you here adequately, except you go and see for yourself.

At one time the Minister said he was coming for a tour of that area to see the fishermen himself, but he has not been able to do that. If he sees the condition of these fishermen, he will shed tears. Their position is even getting worse. I am not trying to raise any false alarm, Sir. I am saying the conditions will be worse with the removal of the import duty on stock-fish. I said it a few days ago in this very House that it is Government's responsibility to see that these people also live—they have a right to live—and it is Government's duty to look after them properly. But the neglect shown for these people has been very culpable. I am appealing to the Minister of Agriculture to visit the area and see these fishermen himself.

If the Government want actually to help the fishermen, they should set up a corporation and employ these people. The catch is getting very much smaller; the fish in the water all know exactly the old tricks. They so know the tricks now, that all the primitive equipment cannot work again. When the canoe is about 100 yards away the fish know somebody is coming. Therefore, we want more scientific methods of catching these fish; that is what I am stressing. But the present method of casting nets with all the other primitive equipment does not work again. The fishermen told me that whereas before they can even put their hands in the water and get fish they get no fish these days. As the Member from Eket rightly observed, the fishermen are in debt. Government should go out to teach them to form some sort of Co-operative Society. I spoke to the Co-operative Officer several times and, to be fair to him, he did come out at one time to speak to them. But he has not been there again. He succeeded in getting some fishermen to come together to contribute some money to set up a sort of Co-operative Society, but when they looked for him for some time, and he did not come, the fishermen took back their money.

When I met the Co-operative Officer again, he told me that Fisheries Co-operatives are very difficult to establish and we need to get somebody from Malaya or the Far East who knows about them. He was not in favour of Fisheries Co-operatives and up to now no attempt has been made by Government to help these people. We must inculcate into them a sense of saving. This is very important. So if we want these people to contribute to the financial health of the Region, we must help them to be healthy themselves.

To round off, I have to say, with a degree of disappointment, that Africans are not promoted in this Department. There is a particular African, Sir, who has been serving in this particular Department for years. He has been acting for the Senior Fisheries Officer, but up till this day this Department has never seen this man fit to be worthy of any promotion. He has been to Denmark and some of you who heard him over the radio during "Government Hour" telling us his experience in Denmark actually know that the man was talking something. He knew what he was talking about. The man is from Opobo and has been working for the Federal Government. Any expatriate officer coming in has learned from him. Even they, themselves, express disappointment that this young man has not been promoted.

The reason, is Sir, that he is an African—that is his only crime. Whoever is responsible must see to the promotion of this man. He is somebody from the Rivers area. He knows all about fishing, and he has had the experience. Government should try to help this man. Whoever is responsible, whether the Governor or the Ministers or the Permanent Secretary, I am appealing to him to see that this young man is encouraged.

Thank you, Sir.

**Mr E. O. Eyo (Uyo Division):** Mr Chairman, I move that the question be now put.

*Question: That the question be now put, put and agreed to.*

*Original Question: That a sum not exceeding £36,140 for Head 432—Fisheries—stand part of the Schedule—put and agreed to.*

#### Head 433—Forestry

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £76,750 for Head 433—Forestry—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Minister of Agriculture:** Mr Chairman, once again honourable Members will note that although there is a net increase asked for, under section A, of £8,230, nevertheless all but £90 of this is due to revised rates of pay and increments. This section, therefore, under its sub-heads calls for little comments from me and the whole section serves purely to continue the essential work that my Forest Department undertakes.

As regards section B, honourable Members will recall that in the Regional Outline of Development Plans no funds were earmarked for Forestry Development. As a policy of exploitation of our natural forest reserves, and as a means of increasing the revenue of this Region, it was subsequently felt that some of the Development Funds should be devoted to the work of the Forest Department.

Accordingly a plan has been devised which will cost £25,000 over five years. The Forest Estate of the Eastern Region of Nigeria is small in extent and badly distributed in relation to the centres of high population. It amounts to 2,694 square miles or 9.1 per cent of the total land area of the Region, and it lies in large blocks in the areas of low population, mainly in Calabar and Ogoja Provinces. The unreserved forest elsewhere in the Region is no longer subject to forest regulation. There is little likelihood of any increase in area of the Forest Estate for the production of timber. Every acre must therefore be brought into production, if the forest is to supply the growing needs of an increasing population with a rapidly developing standard of living.

**Chief M. W. Ubani (Aba Division):** I have a few points to make. We, the people from Owerri Province and particularly from my own division, are suffering very much from the indiscriminate destruction of our trees, principally by the Prisons Department. In point of fact, my Councillors in Aba Division have petitioned and done all they can to bring this situation to the notice of the authorities responsible but all to no avail. I am putting it before the Minister in charge of the Forest Department to do all he can to stop this destruction of our trees in Aba Division in particular. All farmers are complaining. You often see prisoners going into the bush, coming out with bundles of sticks. The only remnants of bush we have, have been destroyed. If this continues, very soon we shall have a sort of desert land, and my people are not happy about it.

May I also bring to the notice of the Minister in charge that attention should be given to finding out the best method of developing our trees as is being done in the Western Region. I am sure, Sir, that if forestry work is really organised and trees really looked after with care, in the course of years we shall have sufficient trees to hew down logs from which to turn out timber. Furthermore, money can be made for the Eastern Region if something is done by way of developing our forests rather than clearing an area of forest and then doing nothing more so that it remains like that *ad infinitum*. I feel that the time has now come when the Government should concentrate on getting that done.

**Mr V. A. Nwankwo (Abakaliki Division):** Mr Chairman, Sir, I have only one point to make. In Abakaliki we have only one forest reserve. But payment of the compensation is not very well conducted, and the Department—that is the Minister in charge of this Forestry Department—should ensure in future that payment is made to the right people. On one or two occasions only one man out of the whole community—a man who is not even the head of the village—has received the compensation that was intended for the owners. This matter was even taken to Court but not well judged. Therefore I am asking that the Minister should enquire into the method of payment to the villagers owning forests.

It is very good that the Government has released most of the other small forests in the division, leaving the communities themselves to exploit them by felling trees and turning them into timber. This however, has not improved matters because the cost of plant is getting too dear—even dearer than it was formerly; thus taking us back to the experience of wartime when we had to control commodities like cars and other foreign articles, and people were selling them at black market rates. Releasing the forest altogether for the people to fell down trees, and then leaving prices of plants and other things to remain very dear, does not improve matters.

Government should consider how to check this. Either the old methods should be restored or a means devised whereby the prices may be much lower than they are at present.

I do not see why the Government should neglect small areas where we have big forests simply because some people are in the habit of setting fire to the small forests we have in the areas I have mentioned earlier. Government should exercise care not so much in restricting the use of trees in these areas, but in preserving these small areas.

**The Minister of Agriculture:** Mr Chairman, Sir, I only want to comment on one important point mentioned by the honourable Member for Aba Division, Chief Marcus Ubani, that is, about the destruction of trees in the Region. That is very serious. The position is that the Forestry Department concerns itself with trees within the reserve. We cannot cut or control trees outside the reserve. That is because the former House of Assembly passed a law to stop the regulations which controlled and allowed the Department of Forestry to control trees both within and outside the reserve. Until that regulation is brought back into force our hands are tied.

**The Chairman:** I gather the Minister wants to make one or two amendments?

**The Minister of Agriculture:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move the deletion in sub-head 1 item (2) of the words "Group 8" and the insertion of the words "Group 7".

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Minister of Agriculture:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move, with His Excellency's assent, that sub-head 1 item (2) be increased by £540.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Question, That the increased sum of £77,290 for Head 433—Forestry—be inserted in the Schedule put and agreed to.*

*And it being 11.45 a.m. the Chairman left the Chair to report Progress and ask leave to sit again.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Committee report Progress: to sit again upon Monday, 26th March.*



[Adjournment]

23rd March, 1956

[The Queen's visit]

## ADJOURNMENT

*Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn—(The Premier).*

**Her Majesty's Visit to the Eastern Region**

**Chief M. W. Ubani (Aba Division):** Mr Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I wish to make a little statement in order to correct an impression which has been created in this House.

On the 9th of March, during the Debate on the Motion of Thanks to His Excellency for His Excellency's Most Gracious Speech, an honourable Member, Mr Abengowe of Aba Division, connected my name, in the most derogatory and destructive manner ever imaginable with the events of Her Majesty the Queen's visit to this Region. An impression was created by the honourable Gentleman's Speech that there is a system of back-door taxation in Aba Division. To cite an example, the honourable Gentleman said that a circular letter was issued from the office of a well-known and very responsible citizen, none other than Chief Ubani, asking the people of Aba Division to pay money—say, £5 each—with which to receive the Queen and also buy a present for Her Majesty. Nothing is further from the truth.

Sir, this is a falsehood of the first degree calculated to besmirch the good name of somebody. What happened was this. The Southern Ngwa District Council of which I am the Chairman was as anxious as any other section of the community to welcome Her Majesty the Queen to the Eastern Region. Both men and women mandated me to communicate their appreciation to the authorities, in the following terms on 19-11-55: "that we have received with warmth and appreciation the news of the proposed visit of Her Majesty the Queen to this Region in January, 1956, as an illustration of the cordial relationship existing between Nigeria and Great Britain, and we hope that Her Majesty's visit will continue to promote that relationship." This genuine expression of goodwill was communicated to His Excellency the Governor of this Region, the Minister of Social Welfare, the Resident, Owerri Province, and the Senior District Officer, Aba.

Following this expression of goodwill, the Southern Ngwa Women's Association and the Southern Ngwa League decided to offer gifts to Her Majesty the Queen and mandated me to find out from the Authorities if it would be proper to do so. At first the Resident of Owerri said there would be no objection if any section of the community felt to do so. Later on, the Senior District Officer, Aba, informed me that he had learnt that it was not Her Majesty's wish to receive any gifts. This letter was dated 12th January, 1956. Throughout these arrangements nobody was asked to pay a penny, much less £5 per head as was maliciously and falsely made out by the honourable Nwachuku Abengowe. Both the Southern Ngwa Women's Association and the Southern Ngwa League are organisations which have their funds deposited with the Bank of British West Africa, Aba, and did not require anybody to raise funds specifically for the purpose of receiving the Queen at Aba.

**Mr N. W. Abengowe (Aba Division):** I did not say in my speech that any amount was to be collected. I said that a circular letter was written, and in the circular letter it was said that money should be collected for the Queen's Visit.

**Chief M. W. Ubani:** As the people were anxiously awaiting the arrival of the Queen, and desirous of seeing her either at Enugu or Port Harcourt, we made our own transport arrangements, the cost of which was met partly from the Association's funds and partly by me—an amount of more than £10 of my own personal money—in order to afford my people the opportunity of seeing the Queen, which was indeed a rare occasion. We hired three cars for the journey from Aba to Enugu and back. There was no provision by Government for any transport.

Regarding the question of feeding, I had earlier warned my people, in my letter of the 12th of November, 1955, that it would cost money to go to Enugu, and that every one who desired to take part in the visit must go with something in his pockets. These are genuine and honest facts. It would have been unfair for me to commit the Government by saying

that the cost of feeding, transport and other arrangements connected therewith, during the Queen's Visit, would be borne by Government. For a man to connect any honest citizen's name with this dishonest allegation, especially in connection with the visit of the British symbol of authority—Her Majesty the Queen—is the highest manifestation of wickedness. It were better that person were not born. We all must serve the Eastern Region honestly, sincerely and faithfully. We can agree to disagree, but character assassination should not be introduced in our political differences. I sincerely challenge honourable Nwachuku Abengowe to prove that I have at any time been engaged in a system of back-door taxation, which method is best known to him, or to make the kind of allegation he made here under cover of the privileges of this House outside the precincts of this House or in the Press.

**Mr N. W. Abengowe (Aba Division):** Mr Speaker, I accept the challenge.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Adjourned accordingly at five minutes to twelve o'clock noon.*

# Eastern House of Assembly

Monday, 26th March, 1956

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

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

Prayers

## ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

### Adulteration of Patent and Proprietary Medicines

38. **Mr J. H. E. Nwuke** asked the Minister of Health whether he is aware of the widespread adulteration of patent and proprietary medicines by traders throughout the Eastern Region, and if so, what steps are being taken by Government to check this practice.

**The Minister of Health :** I am aware of reports of adulteration of proprietary medicines in the Region. Ways and means of checking this illegal and dangerous practice are constantly in mind. A sub-committee of the East Regional Medical Advisory Board appointed to inquire into the illicit trafficking of drugs in the Region was asked to go into the question of the adulteration of proprietary medicines also. Its report and recommendation have been studied by the Ministry and negotiations are going on now with the Federal Government with a view to amending the Pharmacy Ordinance.

Steps are also being taken to appoint Pharmacists Superintendents to inspect pharmacies, markets and other places where proprietary medicines are exposed for sale. They will be instructed to hand over to the Police all who are suspected or found to be indulging in the practice of adulteration.

### Duties of Residents

46. **Mr D. A. Nnaji** asked the Minister of Internal Affairs what are at present the duties of Residents posted to the Provinces of the Region since District Officers are now Local Government Commissioners.

**The Minister of Internal Affairs :** The Resident, by virtue of his office, is responsible generally for the peace, order and good government of the province of which he is in charge.

He has a direct responsibility under the present Constitution to the Governor for internal security and, as the Senior Officer of the Civil Service in his province, is the principal agent of Regional Government for ensuring that its policies are carried out. Much of his time is therefore spent in an advisory and supervisory capacity over the District Officers in charge of the Divisions in the Province.

In particular he has certain statutory duties under various Ordinances. He has an appellate jurisdiction under the Native Courts Ordinance. Under the District Taxation Ordinance he has defined powers connected with the determination of incomes of persons or communities for the assessment of tax, the collection of taxes and the hearing of appeals. He does in fact authorise the District Officers to perform some or all of these duties. He is generally a prescribed authority under the Arms Ordinance. He is appointed to act as Chairman of Provincial Liquor Licensing Boards. Many of the powers of the Governor, formerly exercised by Residents by delegation, are now exercised by Ministers.

The honourable Member is referred to the statement that I made in this House on the 21st of March, on the subject of the re-organisation of the Administration.

### Water Supply in Uwani, Enugu

89. **Mr E. A. Chime** asked the Minister of Development if he is aware of the hardship caused to the inhabitants of Uwani by the shortage of water supply; if so, what steps is he taking to provide the area with sufficient water taps.

**Mr D. O. Anu (Parliamentary Secretary)** : Yes, Sir, Uwani is provided for in Phase II of the Enugu Water Supply Scheme. A tender for this has now been accepted and work should soon begin. When Phase II is completed the water supply in Uwani should be adequate.

### Dissolution of the Igbo-Etiti Rural District Council

120. **Mr C. A. Abangwu** asked the Minister of Internal Affairs why the Ibo-Etiti Rural District Council in Nsukka Division was dissolved.

**The Minister of Internal Affairs** : The Igbo-Etiti Rural District Council was dissolved as the result of an Inquiry held under sections 9 (2) and 13 of the Eastern Region Local Government Law, 1955. The conclusions of the Inquiry were as follows:—

- (i) The revenue of the Igbo-Etiti Rural Council has not been properly used in the interests of the area as a whole.
- (ii) The administration of the affairs of the Council has failed to act in conformity with the Eastern Region Local Government Law, not so much in transgressing the individual letters of the law but in a flat disregard of its whole intention and purpose.

(iii) That the primary reason for (i) and (ii) was systematic corruption and dishonesty. On consideration of the report of the Inquiring Officer, the Government agreed with these conclusions and for this reason, with the prior approval of the Governor-in-Council, I dissolved the Igbo-Etiti District Council, by virtue of my powers under section 9 (3) and (4) of the law.

**Mr C. A. Abangwu** : Were these reasons published either by radio or in the papers so that people might know the reasons why the Council was dissolved ?

**The Minister of Internal Affairs** : The Report is at present with the Government Printer and should be due as soon as printing facilities in the department allow when it will be made public.

121. **Mr C. A. Abangwu** asked the Minister of Internal Affairs whether he is aware that during the hearing of evidence at the Inquiry on the Igbo-Etiti Rural District Council preceding the dissolution, the two main accusers of the Council and its Secretary were two Members of the Eastern House of Assembly who have now been appointed members of the Caretaker Council; how soon will the Minister publish the report of the Inquiry for the benefit of the people of Nsukka in particular and the Region in general.

**The Minister of Internal Affairs** : I am aware that two honourable Members of this House gave evidence before the Inquiry into the affairs of the Igbo-Etiti Rural Council, and I am satisfied that in doing so they did no more than their duty as good citizens and as honourable Members of this House. The report of the Inquiry will be published as soon as the Government Printer is able to undertake the work of printing and publication.

### Payment of Allowances to Members of Local Councils

123. **Mr O. U. Afiah** asked the Minister of Internal Affairs, whether he is aware of the dissatisfaction of members of Local Councils in the Region on account of the non-payment of allowance to them whereas their counterparts in District and County Councils are paid allowances; if so, what does Government propose to do to remedy the situation.

**Mr F. M. A. Saronwiyo (Parliamentary Secretary):** Yes, Sir, I am aware that members of Local Government Councils in some areas are claiming that they should be remunerated for their services. I would point out that in the great majority of cases, members of Local Councils live near to the meeting place of the councils and do not have to travel far or spend a great deal of time away from home in order to attend meetings of Local Councils. The Councils normally meet not more than once a month and have no committees, nor under present conditions, are the duties of Local Councils very extensive or onerous. It is therefore my view that members of Local Councils have not real claim to allowances for their services and it should be remembered that if such allowances were paid the additional cost could only be met by special rates, and the honourable Member must be aware that there is considerable opposition throughout the Region to the rising incidence of rates. It is not considered that the burden of the average man in the village should be made heavier in order to pay allowances to councillors whose responsibilities do not merit them.

#### **Allocation of Junior Service Quarters, Enugu**

137. **Mr J. O. Umolu** asked the Minister of Welfare whether he is aware that the Civil Service Union, Enugu, is opposed to the recently declared policy of Government regarding the allocation of Junior Service Quarters in Enugu; if so, what steps does he intend to take to remedy the situation.

**Mr L. O. Uzoigwe (Parliamentary Secretary):** Yes, Sir I am aware. The Government has taken into consideration the representations of the Civil Service Union regarding the allocations of Junior Service Quarters, and have recently approved a revised set of rules which takes into account the wishes of the Union.

**Mr D. A. Nnaji:** Is the Minister aware of the fact that at present there are sixteen houses vacant at the Secretariat Clerk Quarters and that these houses have been so vacant since last year without being allocated to Junior Civil Servants in Enugu.

**Mr L. O. Uzoigwe (Parliamentary Secretary):** I am not aware.

#### **Linking of Calabar with neighbouring Areas**

142. **Mr F. E. Ikpeme** asked the Minister of Transport, in view of the insular position of Calabar which is responsible for the economic scourge pervading the whole land of Calabar, what plans is the Government taking to link her with other areas.

**Mr P. A. Onwe (Parliamentary Secretary):** If the honourable Member is inquiring whether it is proposed to bridge the Cross River, the answer is no. The Federal Government hopes that the Calabar-Mamfe Road will be completed while this Government plans to complete Ikot Ekpene-Arochukwu Road. When this has been done and the new ferry, the seal, brought into commission, Calabar will have an alternative route to the rest of the Region. It is proposed, too, that the problem of linking this road to the Obubra system should be examined in detail.

#### **Bridge across Qua Iboe River**

149. **Mr O. U. Afiah** asked the Minister of Transport when bridges will be constructed across the Qua Iboe River at Ibesit, Afaha, Ukanafun and Obong in Abak Division.

**Mr P. A. Onwe (Parliamentary Secretary):** I do not know. Abak will benefit from the provision of funds for bridges at Ibagwa and Ikot Okoro. The money now available to me is fully committed. Further projects can only be embarked upon if we get more money.

#### **Local Government Assistants**

159. **Mr K. Giadom** asked the Minister of Internal Affairs what will be the position of Local Government Assistants trained at the Ibadan University College on the introduction of Local Government throughout the Eastern Region.

**Mr F. M. A. Saronwiyo (Parliamentary Secretary):** It is presumed that the honourable Member is referring to persons who, having gone through the Local Government Course at Ibadan University College have not found employment with Local Government Councils and who are at present employed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, as Local Government Assistants. As the posts of Local Government Assistants are only temporary there can be no guarantee of employment for these persons when there is no further need of their temporary services, but every attempt will be made to find employment for them in suitable posts with Local Government Councils.

#### Catholic Hospital Nsukka

163. **Mr C. A. Abangwu** asked the Minister of Health how many Doctors, Nursing Sisters, qualified Nurses, qualified Mid-wives, and qualified Laboratory Assistants, are there at present in the Nsukka Catholic Hospital; how many out-patients and in-patients have been treated in that hospital in 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954, and 1955; what grants have been made by the Government to this hospital for the same period.

**The Minister of Health:** There are at present one doctor, three Nursing Sisters, nil qualified nurses, six qualified Mid-wives and nil qualified Laboratory Attendants.

Figures of out-patients and in-patients are not available in respect of the calendar years sought but in respect of the financial years nearest thereto except for the 9-month period April–December, 1954. Figures for 1955 are not yet available:—

|                     | 1950-51 | 1951-52 | 1952-53 | 1953-54 | 1-4-54-<br>31-12-54 |
|---------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------------------|
| Out-patients ... .. | 2,789   | 4,606   | 9,881   | 7,411   | 7,823               |
| In-patients... ..   | 256     | 1,047   | 1,131   | 2,106   | 1,951               |

Government grants are as follows:—

|                      | 1950-51 | 1951-52 | 1952-53 | 1953-54 | 1954-55 | 1955-56 |
|----------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Bed Occupancy ... .. | Nil     | Nil     | £ 375   | £ 772   | £ 630   | £ 1,775 |
| Training ... ..      | Nil     | Nil     | Nil     | Nil     | 100     | 100     |
| Capital ... ..       | Nil     | Nil     | 2,500   | Nil     | 2,500   | 3,500   |
| Maternity ... ..     | Nil     | Nil     | Nil     | 250     | 660     | 100     |
|                      | Nil     | Nil     | 2,875   | 1,022   | 3,890   | 5,475   |

#### Rice Cultivation in Ndeaboh

177. **Mr B. C. Okwu** asked the Minister of Agriculture what steps has the Minister taken to increase rice production in Ndeaboh, Awgu Division.

**The Minister of Agriculture:** A Senior Agricultural Assistant is stationed at Awgu and his touring area includes Ndeaboh. A Field Overseer is stationed at Ndeaboh itself to do extension work on all crops including rice.

The Department has encouraged the production of rice throughout this area by propaganda and demonstration and the issue of improved seed and seedlings. Departmental mobile mills have been available in the past, but a private rice mill is now established in Ndeaboh. Work is also done on fertilisers on rice in this area and there were four demonstration plots in the Ndeaboh-Oduma area in 1955.

3,490 lbs of improved seeds were distributed in Awgu Division.

#### Secondary Industries

179. **Mr B. C. Okwu** asked the Minister of Industries whether the Government does not think it desirable to make grants to the people of Awgu and Ogugu to develop the limestone undertakings as a Secondary Industry and the people of Inyi, in Awgu Division, to develop their industry.

**The Minister of Industries :** Following the successful experiment of producing lime from periwinkle shells, experiments are now in hand to produce lime by the same means from limestone in the Awgu area. Arrangements are in hand with the Community Development Centre to include demonstrations by the Department of Secondary Industries in their curriculum. It is hoped by these demonstrations to awaken interest in the production in these areas. Regarding Inyi, negotiations are in progress through the District Officer to re-open the Inyi Pottery and for this purpose the Department of Secondary Industries is seconding an Okigwi trained technician whose services will be free.

#### Tour of Awgu Division

181. **Mr B. C. Okwu** asked the Minister of Industries how soon he intends to make an official tour of Awgu Division.

**The Minister of Industries :** I propose touring in Awgu Division soon after the sitting of the House. Honourable Members may be aware that my last tour was cancelled because of the House.

#### Pottery Centres

182. **Mr O. U. Afiah** asked the Minister of Industries whether he is aware that work at some of the pottery centres of the Region has stood still because of lack of funds; if so, will Government provide funds for the encouragement of this local industry.

**The Minister of Industries :** I am well aware of the financial difficulties under which these centres are operating. The original intention was for local communities to sponsor the operation after the training had been completed at Okigwi. Efforts are constantly being made to find money outside Government sources, preferably from local communities and efforts have also been made to form them into Co-operative Societies. The Department of Secondary Industries, in addition to posting one technician to each centre, has recently succeeded in obtaining an interim grant for one of the centres.

#### Junior Service Quarters, Enugu

187. **Mr J. O. Umolu** asked the Minister of Welfare whether he is aware of the representation made to the Ministry by the Civil Service Union, Enugu Branch, regarding the allocation of Junior Service Quarters in Enugu; if so, is Government prepared to give due recognition to wishes of the Union.

**Mr L. O. Uzoigwe (Parliamentary Secretary) :** Yes, Sir, please see my reply to Question No. 137.

#### Inter-Divisional Transfer of Local Government Employees

190. **Mr J. E. Eyo** asked the Minister of Internal Affairs when will inter-divisional transfers of employees of Local Government Councils take effect.

**Mr F. M. A. Saronwiyo (Parliamentary Secretary) :** If the honourable Member has suggested that the Minister of Internal Affairs should direct the transfer of Local Government staff between Divisions, I regret that I cannot comply with his suggestion, because I do not have the legal power to do so and in any case contracts of service are between an employee and an individual council as employer. The honourable Member will, I am sure, agree that transfers of this sort are not generally popular with councils, who prefer to employ "Sons of the Soil" policy for its own sake, and my aim is to make possible the free movement of staff among councils on promotion, with the retention of continuous service and therefore of retiring benefits calculated over the whole period of an officer's service.

It is to be hoped that Councils will co-operate in employing the man best fitted for a vacant post, irrespective of the division of his origin.

### Local Government Trainees

191. **Mr J. E. Eyo** asked the Minister of Internal Affairs what arrangements Government is making to absorb all the Local Government trainees into more suitable employments than they were in before their training.

**Mr F. M. A. Saronwiyo (Parliamentary Secretary)** : In a majority of cases persons sent on the Local Government Training Course at Ibadan University College were sponsored by Councils, and on the completion of the Course they have either resumed their previous employment with the Council or been given employment. Generally speaking, it can be said that persons who have obtained satisfactory reports from the Course have advancement sooner or later after their return to work. The honourable Member may rest assured that in approving senior appointments in the employ of Local Government Councils, due weight is given to the fact that a candidate has satisfactorily completed a training course.

### PAPERS PRESENTED

(1) Sessional Paper No. 1 of 1956—Papers relating to the Instrument establishing the Onitsha Urban District Council—(The Minister of Internal Affairs).

(2) Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1956—Policy for Local Government—(The Minister of Internal Affairs).

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

### Report from the Committee of Selection

**The Premier** : Mr Speaker, I beg to make the following announcements. At a meeting of the Committee of Selection, which took place in the Committee Room of the House last Friday, the following honourable Members were appointed to the various Committees of the House :—

#### Standing Orders Committee

Mr Speaker (*Chairman*).  
The honourable B. C. Okwu.  
The honourable V. K. Onyeri.  
The honourable N. W. Abengowe.  
The honourable O. O. Ita.

#### The House Committee

The Minister of Welfare (*Chairman*).  
Chief the honourable N. N. Anyika.  
Chief the honourable G. N. Agbasiere.  
The honourable M. U. Obayi.  
The honourable N. L. P. Apreala.  
The honourable S. E. K. Iwueke.  
The honourable R. U. Umo-Inyang, M.B.E.

#### The Committee of Privileges

The Minister of Agriculture (*Chairman*).  
Chief the honourable A. N. Onyiuke.  
The honourable M. E. Ogon.  
The honourable R. O. Anoke.  
The honourable C. A. Abangwu.  
The honourable N. Nweze.  
The honourable D. O. Aligwekwe.  
The honourable N. O. Onwudiwe.  
The honourable U. A. Otop.



**The Public Petitions Committee**

The Minister of Labour (*Chairman*).  
 The honourable O. O. Ita.  
 The honourable U. Onu-Chima.  
 Dr the honourable A. N. Obonna.  
 The honourable D. A. Nnaji.  
 The honourable D. E. Akilo.  
 The honourable F. E. Ikpeme.

**The Statutory Corporations Committee**

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

**The Public Accounts Committee**

Chairman (To be nominated by Mr Speaker).  
 The honourable S. T. Akpan.  
 The honourable K. Giadom.  
 Chief the honourable M. W. Ubani.  
 The honourable E. Ashirim-Unosi.  
 The honourable C. A. Okafor.  
 The honourable A. U. A. Inyang.

**The Standing Committee on Finance**

The Minister of Finance (*Chairman*).  
 Reverend and the honourable M. N. Ibe.  
 The honourable O. U. Afiah.  
 The honourable J. O. Umolu.  
 The honourable R. O. Ukuta, M.B.E.  
 The honourable R. O. Iwuagwu.  
 The honourable K. J. N. Okpokam.  
 The honourable E. A. Chime.  
 The honourable A. J. Ekpe.

**Mr Speaker :** In accordance with Standing Orders I nominate Mr G. E. Okeke to be the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee.

**ORDER OF THE DAY**

The 1956-57 Eastern Region Appropriation Law, 1956 (3rd Alloted Day).

*Considered in Committee of Supply.*

**(Progress: Head 434—Veterinary)**

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £96,660 for Head 434—Veterinary—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Minister of Agriculture:** Mr Chairman, Section A of this Head is the integration of last year's estimates of the entire work both recurrent and the old Colonial Development and Welfare Plan of the Department. Only two sub-heads call for any comment from me since no increase whatever has been asked for beyond an increase in Establishment of seven Veterinary Assistants, so that it may now be possible to post a Veterinary Assistant to every Provincial Headquarters for work within that Province. These officers will replace those whom it has been necessary to station at the seven control posts established by the Cattle (Taxation and Control) Law.

The second sub-head is sub-head 12—Cattle Control. Honourable Members will remember the Cattle (Taxation and Control) Law, which came into operation on the 1st April, 1955. This same amount £6,100, was granted as a supplementary provision during 1955-56, and it is devoted to the recurrent charges in connection with the implementation of the Cattle (Taxation and Control) Law. This is a small outlay giving a return of an estimated £45,000 which Members have noted under the Revenue Head.

The schemes which were proposed, and which honourable Members took note of in the Session when the new Development Plan was considered, are given implementation under sections, B to G. Taking them section by section, may I remind honourable Members that the objects of each are as follows:

Section B concerns the expansion of the existing Veterinary Investigation Centre at Ezamgbo with the object of increasing the work of investigation into livestock production and disease control. This Centre is the basis of the whole plan and will form an investigation, immunisation and diagnostic Centre for the Region, and also provide facilities for refresher courses for those engaged in the livestock industry.

Section C lays the foundation for the provision of a self-contained mobile investigation unit as an adjunct to the Veterinary Investigation Centre. This unit will be used for on-the-spot investigation and treatment of outbreaks of cattle diseases.

Section D is of vast importance as a matter of research, and as a pilot scheme is part of the work of the Veterinary Investigation Centre to investigate ways and means of fattening cattle. This will be operated as an adjunct to the work that is carried on at the Veterinary Investigation Centre at Ezamgbo.

Section E provides for the provision of staff and equipment for work on the improvement of the quality of hides and skins and the development of the tanning industry to provide high-class skins for export and leather for local consumption.

Section F is a small scheme which concerns the improvement of the general Veterinary Services by means of the provision of additional drugs and equipment.

Finally, Mr Chairman, under section G we have the provision of basic facilities such as offices, stores and quarters necessary for the increased activities of this Department. I would add, as a final note, that all these schemes have received the approval of the Secretary of States for the Colonies, and will be partly reimbursed from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund.

*Question: That a sum not exceeding £96,660 for Head 434—Veterinary—stand part of the Schedule—put and agreed to.*

#### Head 435—Ministry of Development

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £14,650 for Head 435—Ministry of Development—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Minister of Development:** Mr Chairman, I have little to say upon this Head. There are only two additions to our staff.

The first addition is ten Telephone Attendants. As the House will see, only two of these are new posts, the others are transferred from other Heads. As this Ministry is the Region's agent in telephone matters, it is felt appropriate that it should control the three P.B.X. that cover the buildings of the old and new Secretariat, the Headquarters of the Public Works Department, Ministry of Development and Public Service Commission. Taken all together, these exchanges equal the provision made for Onitsha. This is a most remarkable fact. The two additional posts provide for maternity leave. As the honourable Members may know, several of the operators are girls and some are married.

We have five separate boards, three dealing with the two main Secretariat blocks with 150 lines, one in what used to be the Medical Headquarters and is now the Public Service Commission, and one in the Ministry of Development Headquarters. The Secretariat boards are full, and during the mornings require four on duty with an additional one as Supervisor and answering enquiries. Each of the others needs one person; so there must be at least six on duty at a time. Each person does six hours on duty and the Secretariat Boards are open from 7.00 in the morning until 5.00 in the evening; so there must be two shifts. However, early in the morning, and after 2 o'clock only two need be on duty. That makes eight in a day.

The other increase is for a motor driver to drive the Ministry car which I hope the House will approve.

If I am to do the requisite touring that the Rural Water Supply Scheme demands, I must be able to give my car a rest from time to time, otherwise it will break and I would either have to immobilise, or hire private cars which would be even more expensive in the end.

I may add here that arguments about all Ministries pooling their cars are untenable. This has been considered by the Executive Council and found not practicable. In other Regions Ministry cars are not only provided but Ministers are allowed 1s a mile for the mileage done on official duty, whilst the Ministers in this Eastern Region take only 4d per mile.

**Mr A. J. Ekpe (Opobo Division) :** Mr Chairman, I have one or two observations to make in respect of Head 435, Ministry of Development. Some time last week a statement escaped the honourable Minister of Development that last year when it was supposed that he went overseas in the interests of his job, he did not, in fact, do that—he went on holiday. I remember, Sir, that in the Finance Committee last year we were called upon to make available a sum of £889 for the transport and travelling expenses of the honourable Minister with the exception of two meals which he is said to have taken when he was not on official duty.

I was really shocked myself to hear that the Minister went to Europe at the expense of the poor tax-payers of this Region on holiday. I shall desire a statement from the Premier during this sitting as to the policy of this Government when Ministers go on leave. Personally, I feel that it is very wrong for a Regional Minister or Minister of State to travel to such far distances on holiday at the expense of the tax-payers. Ministers are supposed to be people who give their time and interest to assist in the orderly progress and development of the Region; they should have sympathy with the poor tax-payers. I remember, answering a question a moment ago, the Minister of Development said that it was not possible to pay allowances to members of Local Government Councils because he regarded that as an extra burden on the poor, already over-taxed peasants of the Region. I think the same answer should apply to the case of a Minister going on holiday.

Another point I want to mention, Sir, is that the Finance Committee also objected to every Ministry having a car. It was found out that if three cars were purchased for the whole of the Ministries they could be used as occasions arose. The Finance Committee actually made it a point to the Executive Council that they did not agree with the policy of every Ministry having a Ministerial car, because it was too much for the Region to bear. Yet it is surprising that in nearly all the Ministries, with the exception of the Ministry of Land, you have the Ministers asking for money to buy motor cars for their Ministry.

I hope, Sir, that the Minister of Development, in conjunction with the Premier, will issue a statement as to how much money was actually used during the tour, and whether it is the policy of this Government that Ministers should travel to any part of the world at the expense of the people.

**Mr M. E. Ogon (Ikom Division) :** Mr Chairman, I want to say one or two words about the policy of this Ministry as regards contracts,

Sir, for years, since 1952, there has been a litany of "no staff, no staff, no staff" in this Ministry, and as such, Members appealed that works should be given out on contract whenever competent contractors could be found. I am glad that in its Policy Paper for Development the Ministry has publicised the policy on contracts as follows:

"That contracts for the construction of offices, quarters and other buildings shall be awarded by the Tenders Board purely and strictly on merit. That in awarding contracts, there shall be no discrimination based on monopoly, race, nepotism, religion, politics, favouritism, bribery or corruption".

This is a very sound policy, but we want the Minister to answer to charges of monopoly and favouritism and, perhaps discrimination based on race. There were certain types of houses awarded on contract, where Parliamentary Secretaries live now. I am not a technician, but they call them Type E.3 or E.3A. Several of these houses were awarded to certain European firms at the price of £4,500. Now, Sir, after some time the contracts for these houses were advertised for African contractors only. Immediately this advertisement appeared they raised the specification and lowered the price from £4,500 to £3,050. Why is there this discrimination of race?

I will tell you what happened. The Ministry came out with a publication that by giving these houses at £3,050 they have made savings. But, Sir, I am told that these contracts were advertised in 1954; that nothing was done until November, 1954; that these contracts were not given out until April, 1955; and that by the time actual construction began it was August to September, 1955. At that time prices of materials and labour had risen and we had thought that these contractors, in view of circumstances beyond their control, should have been offered fresh prices.

My contention is that there is no justice in this treatment meted to African contractors. There is something definitely wrong in the policy that leaves a section of our community at the mercy of moneylenders. I am informed that all the African contractors are in debt for the sake of saving £17,000. It is unfair to give an Italian a contract for £24,500 and an African for £3,050, and make him run into debt. I feel there is something wrong with a Government that has a policy that puts these African contractors at the mercy of moneylenders. The only way they can save themselves from embarrassment and make themselves secure is to make the moneylenders fatter. We are told in the Bible that Christ ruled moneylenders out of the temple and here we see a Ministry putting the moneylender behind the altar. We would like to see that this injustice on the part of the Ministry is corrected.

I am now going to discuss the policy on major contracts which is not mentioned in the Policy Paper. By major contracts one should understand contracts involving more than £50,000; £10,000 and £4,000 contracts should not be termed major contracts beyond the scope of African contractors.

There is such a thing as selective tenders. It is not down in the Policy Paper, and I would define selective tendering as a sort of philanthropy for the favoured few. It only means that if Government has certain work to do, it is not advertised to the Public. The Ministry of Development gives invitation to somebody in Umuahia or Port Harcourt or Lagos, perhaps not wanting to do the job, to "come along and take this job".

There is nothing bad in this, Sir, if the philanthropy is pure. What makes a firm entitled to selective tender? There ought to be certain qualifications in order to get selective tenders. What we have now is that instead of basing awards purely and strictly on merit certain firms are chosen and favoured with these selective tenders. We are a Government that believes in fair justice, and in a democracy, justice implies opportunity for everybody to compete,

Recently, a circular went from the Ministry of Development to nearly all local government bodies stating that ten contractors have been chosen by this Ministry to undertake work—capital work—between £10,000 and £15,000. This means that a local government council cannot give a contract outside these people; they are the people the Ministry of Development prefer. We say, Sir, that the Ministry has turned itself into a campaign agent on behalf of these ten contractors.

What are their qualifications? Some of them have been lorry drivers and tailors, who have combined together to call themselves contractors. In one firm—the Nigerian Construction Engineering Company—the man at the head is a wealthy motor magnate. What qualifications has he for selective tender? I am not opposed to the question of selective tender on major work but I think it cannot be undertaken without high technical advice. There are certain engineers trained in this country who have put in a number of years with P.W.D. They should be given a fair chance along with all the others to compete in this job. We ask for a full statement because our policy does not allow discrimination in race or favouritism or nepotism. I say, Sir, that this policy of selective tenders should be gone into.

There is another policy, Sir, in this Ministry, about which somebody made the following remarks:

“The honourable Minister of Development—why is there no water supply in Nsukka? There are no Engineers. Why is there no water supply in Awgu Division? There are no Engineers. Why is there no water supply in Udi? There are no Engineers. Why is there no water supply in Ahoada? There are no Engineers. Why is there not a single bore-hole in Ogoja Province? Because, as a rule, I do not cater for them.”

That is the trick with which Ogoja Province has been treated. We have been treated to a policy that excludes us from the whole rural water supply scheme. We want the Minister to make a statement on that.

This policy of no engineers makes me very sad because we are returned to power with every responsibility concentrated in us. A party like ours should implement its policy of meeting problems as they arise, and to administer the Region widely and fairly. We floor Members will not be satisfied with the argument that the whole water supply scheme cannot move because there are no engineers. Because there are no engineers, it means the people should go without water.

Take, for instance, the noble and praiseworthy effort of the people of Ogidi to provide water supply by themselves. How did they produce Engineers? If community effort can go all out to produce Engineers, why cannot this Government do the same. This policy is becoming stale and year in year out we come and talk of water supply and nothing is done about it.

So, Sir, there are four points I have made:—

1. System of selective tenders.
2. System of discrimination in race.
3. Unfair treatment of African contractors.
4. Demand from the Minister of Development that if this circular to Local Government Councils emanated from his office, it be withdrawn.

A Ministry should exist on the basis of fair treatment for everybody. What explanation has the Minister for restricting Councils to award contracts to these ten contractors? It seems there is a tacit understanding to favour these few. We want this circular withdrawn, because this list was sent not only to Local Government Councils but also to the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The position therefore is this. No Council can award contracts above £300 without referring to the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Supposing a Local Council knows an efficient

contracting firm—a very efficient firm with all necessary staff. It chooses this firm and recommends it to the Ministry of Internal Affairs for a job to be done. The Council is then told that this firm cannot do the job because it does not appear on the list from the Ministry of Development, that these ten firms ought to have top priority and that it either works within the list or the scheme in question will not be approved.

There is a case of a rural hospital in Awka Division where the people had to send a delegation to the Ministry to approve a contractor of their own choice who was more efficient than the others. They advertised for this work and made their choice on merit, but the Ministry turned it down in favour of a favoured few. This is unfair, and we are asking that if this system is not abolished, we are going to seek for amendment to reduce this Ministry; otherwise we do not feel of what benefit it will be to our people.

Finally, my plea is this—If this Ministry has not got people to carry through its job—there can be no hospital in Ikom because there is no staff, there can be no Post Office at Okigwi because there is no staff—then what we should do is to create an office, recall all the money under this Head leaving only item one, and advertise for a young man with intelligence who will man this Ministry.

**Mr C. A. Abangwu (Nsukka Division):** Mr Chairman, I wish to make a few observations on Head 435—Ministry of Development. This concerns, particularly, the plight of African contractors. It appears there is a tacit discrimination as far as African contractors are concerned, not in the awarding of contracts, but in their execution in the first place. I would like the Minister of Development to tell this House how many Africans—qualified Africans—are members of the Tenders Board.

Secondly, Sir, when these contracts are awarded to African contractors, if they eventually get them, they are usually on a lower financial basis. In other words, Mr Chairman, as the honourable Member who has just spoken said, if a contract which would ordinarily have been awarded to expatriate contractors for £500 is going to be awarded to the African, the specification is usually heightened and the cost lowered. This is one aspect of discrimination we do not want at all.

Another point is the execution of the job. If a job is given, first of all you sign the contract. I find from some of these contracts which I have personally read that the contract itself is very one-sided. The Public Works Department, as the employers, gets all the conditions to their advantage. In fact most of the conditions put down there are in no way favourable to the contractors. It is so worded that this man has little or no remedy if the whole job is taken away from him at any time.

If these African contractors are to be protected, who by right should be protected by this Department which is essentially African, the contract form should be redrawn in such a way as to give Africans adequate protection.

In this particular connection I refer to inspection of the work done. It is put down that the Director of Public Works or his representative, who is usually the Divisional Engineer or it may be an Inspector of Works, is the person who is to inspect the work before payments are made in series. Payments will only be made if he is satisfied that a particular job has been done well. This puts the African in a difficult position. How are you going to satisfy this man?

As I said earlier, I have had a number of cases where a man started work on building a house—say, a T8 type—up to the roof level and because a series of payments have not been made this man continues to do the work, borrowing from moneylenders. You find that after he has got to the roof suddenly the Inspector of Works or the Divisional Engineer comes and says all the doors have not been properly put up, the roofing was not done well, and the house has to be pulled down,

The position then is that the technical man who is expected to tell the contractor what to do when he comes to the wall plate level, and to point out defects before he goes to the level will, at the end, turn round and say the job has been unsatisfactorily done and you are not going to be given any contracts. This is very hard on the contractors as most of them have explained that their main difficulty is that they have no engineers behind them to inspect their work. If the P.W.D. are going to supply inspection they ought to point out all the defects so that the men can have those things corrected before allowing them to expend their money, only to turn round and say that they are not going to be paid anything. Most of the contractors are now in debt and it will be to the interest of the people of this country if something is done to remedy the situation.

I feel, Sir, that this is designed purposely to discredit some of these African contractors so that they will not have a chance of getting higher contracts. If you build one house and they say it is condemned, if you build another and it is condemned, when a higher contract is put forward you cannot come forward. It goes to the bigger contractors, and we all know the big contractors—Costain, Taylor Woodrow, etc.

I maintain that at this stage we have to encourage the small contractors from the start. If you want to insist that they must have engineers before they apply for any contract, then it follows that if a man has no engineer you do not award him any contract at all.

Another point, Sir, which I would dwell on, is the development of our roads. (*Shouts of "This is for the Minister of Transport"*). I agree it is for the Minister of Transport.

These are my observations on the subject.

**Rev. M. D. Opara (Owerri Division):** Mr Chairman, Sir, I wish to speak on the policy of the Ministry of Development with regard to rural water supply. I was surprised when, during the debate on the Motion of Thanks to His Excellency for his Speech from the Throne, the Minister of Development said there had not been engineers for the rural water supply scheme. Water is one of the necessities of life, and I do not know then what the Ministry of Development is for if after more than a year in office by this Minister there has not been any arrangements or plans for having some engineers for rural water supply.

The majority of the people in this Region live in the rural areas, and in many parts of this Region you do not have water throughout the whole year, and in other places where you have water, the water might be bad. The Minister himself, as far as I know, does not even travel about. If he travels at all it might be to certain places where he has certain preferences.

I say this, Sir, because last time I was shocked when the Minister visited our area. The people of my own town had had a bore hole for water; they bought and installed the engine. The engine had been working for some time before it went bad. We showed it to the Minister who said he would do all he could about it. I was surprised myself when he told me that the engineer of the Balakhany Oil Company said that we did not pay him in time the first time he did the work and therefore he was not going to repair the engine. I asked the Minister of Development to do all he could to see that the engine was repaired so that our people would have water because at this time—the dry season—our own stream used to dry up and we depended solely on the supply of water from that bore hole. Up to the moment there had not been anything done for us.

The people, Sir, collected money by themselves, installed the engine and have been running it. The Minister of Development by chance saw it as he was passing for he did not come purposely for it. I am sure what I am saying about this village is what obtains everywhere. As we go all over the Region people complain of water supply. If the Minister of Development will not give us water or even plan how the Region's rural areas will have water we begin to wonder what he is developing. I would solicit that the Minister would do all he could to see that my village in particular and other places in the Region in general have water. That is the most essential thing that the rural people require mostly in the dry season.

One of the speakers before me has talked about this question of contractors. I have to add that, in my own opinion, the Minister has no right to select a few people to be the sole contractors who will have to do work in the Region. As we look through the list of these contractors we cannot see anything to show us that they are the best. We see no reason why a few people should be recommended by the Minister to be the sole people to do the work in the Region—major work I mean. I do not know how the Minister or Ministry has come to the conclusion that these firms are the best in the Region. I think the Minister himself might have to explain that here to us afterwards.

I would also ask that the Ministry should take steps to see that something is done for the people in Enugu who have been crying and the contractors who have been duped. These contractors, whether expatriates or not, whether they know or not, are trying, and we should encourage them. If there is work for somebody to do at a gain, no person will do it at a loss, otherwise his zeal will be killed. I am soliciting that the Minister should consider helping these people to redeem themselves from their debts.

I now come to the other point about engineers. Procrastination is always, as you know, the lazy man's apology. If we continue saying there are no engineers it means that next year about this same time, when we come to the House, we will repeat the same statement of no engineers. I am very much ashamed myself that a Minister of State will go to the United Kingdom, even on leave, where he might have contracted people to come to work here, then he comes back to say, "I went to England on leave". I do not see any reason why if somebody is charged with responsibility for something he will not try to make things work well.

The Ministry of Development is one of the great Ministries in every government. If there are no engineers, why then does this Development exist? To develop water you must have engineers, to develop roads you must have engineers, to develop any industry you must have engineers. If the Minister says, "I cannot get engineers overseas not only in England," let him tell the people this Ministry cannot function. And then we will merge that Ministry with the Ministry of Transport or Agriculture. This Ministry could be split and joined to other Ministries.

I would like it myself if the Minister could make a categorical statement that from today he will embark on helping the Region. After the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Finance the Ministry of Development comes third. We look on the Minister to do something for the Region. If he does not, I think some of us will not be pleased.

**Mr R. O. Ukuta, M.B.E. (Nsukka Division):** Mr Chairman, this is a strange Ministry indeed, and I hope the Ministry will be prepared to receive the bullets in this session. Mr Chairman, it will be news to this House that the Minister has no sympathy for the people in rural areas. Look at the people of Nsukka Division. Work on the improvement of existing springs stopped on 24th of this month because the Inspector of Works went home on leave. What did the Minister do?

The Minister has toured the Division, yet he lacks sympathy for the people of Nsukka Division. To give out a contract for one bore-hole takes over six months to accomplish. This means, Mr Chairman, that the people of Nsukka Division will never have water in our life time. It looks as if each time this Ministry is criticised the Minister himself will be very happy and rejoice over the whole show. If his Department cannot secure expatriates because there is not sufficient inducement allowance, he should try to give more inducement allowance and pay them well to come to the aid of the people of my Division. If the West gets more expatriates and Engineers, well it is something for this Region to ponder over and know what is wrong. Something is fishy somewhere.



Why should the people of my Division suffer because an expatriate officer is going on leave and there is no person to relieve him. Will the Minister tell this House that no African in the Eastern Region can hold the post of Inspector of Works? During the last time we debated the White Paper on Development I said that Engineers should be provided before money is voted. Still nothing is done. I am suggesting, Mr Chairman, freezing most items under this Head. They are of no benefit to the people of the rural areas.

I am craving that the Minister should see that the drilling of bore-holes in my Division is continued. Only then will I regard him as a better Minister.

**Mr N. W. Abengowe (Aba Division):** I wish to say, Sir, how disappointed I was with the reply given by the Minister of Development when I raised the matter of water supply in Aba Township. In Aba the population is 67,000, but the quantity of water supplied to the people is only 200 gallons per day. I repeat, 200 gallons of water a day. The Minister told us, Sir, that more pipes will be laid, but unfortunately nothing has been done about this. His explanation was that there were no engineers.

Sir, I think that if the people pay water rates then they should enjoy what they pay for. The people in Aba township have been paying their water rate. As I said earlier, they threatened to stop payment of water rate, but we consoled them and added that the Ministry was going to do something. Unfortunately, up to this moment, nothing has been done to ameliorate the situation.

Coming to the question of rural water supply, in Aba Division we have an acute shortage of water. There is a bore hole at Omoba, in Aba Division. The engine got bad and could not be repaired locally. When the Aba-Ngwa County Council complained to the P.W.D., the latter referred the Council to the only Water Engineer in the Region, at Nsukka. When the services of this Engineer were most required, he was said to be going on leave. That was the end of the plight of the whole Omoba population in the supply of water. We certainly need many more of Water Engineers.

I suggest the Minister should try as much as possible to do some detailed touring of places like Aba Division, because of the importance of the area and the population. He should also try to serve the rural areas, otherwise I am afraid we will criticise this Ministry far beyond what we are expected to do.

**Mr R. U. Umo-Inyang, M.B.E. (Ikot Ekpene Division):** Mr Chairman, Sir, I very much regretted the failure of this Minister to visit my area. Just after the visit of the Queen I had a notice that he will be visiting my area, and we got ourselves ready in order that we might take him around the Division and show him the different things that should be done. Two days before the day he should have visited us the visit was cancelled—as usual. We were very much disappointed.

I want to ask this Minister to explain to me and to this House what happened to the Ikot Ekpene new Post Office. I remember our former Minister of Works visited Ikot Ekpene very near to the close to 1954, and said that in 1953 the Federal Government provided money to build that Post Office, and that as the agent of the Federal Government it was his responsibility to implement this project. He said that before the 31st March, 1955, that Post Office would be completed, and we were earnestly looking for work on the construction of the Post Office to begin. The site was selected. But not long ago we were told that that site was not suitable. Therefore we arranged with the District Officer and another site was selected. We were then told that the Post Office would be built. Up to the moment of speaking we have not got the Post Office work started.

*Sitting suspended at 11.30 a.m.*

*Sitting resumed at 12 noon.*

**Mr R. U. Umo-Inyang, M.B.E.:** Mr Chairman, I was trying to make a point regarding the building of the Post Office at Ikot Ekpene which, I think, has been unduly delayed.

In answer to a question which I had put in recently on the matter, I was told this was due to the shortage of staff to carry on the work, but I wonder where Government has found the technicians to work on the Post Offices in other Divisions of the Region. The Government has kept on delaying, and since 1952 the post office at Ikot Ekpene has not been built. I hope it is not the intention of this Government to use dilatory tactics in not building this post office in time.

I come, Sir, to another point—water supply. I have more than once made it clear on the floor of this House that Ikot Ekpene has only one stream with few points from which the people draw their water. Large crowds of people, both from the interior and the station, come to draw water from these points and are kept waiting from morning until late at night. School children, who should spend all their energy in their studies to become useful members of the community, spend the whole time looking for water and so do not go to school in time.

Another point, Mr Chairman, is that Ikot Ekpene's economy depends on the palm produce industry and we all know that the processing of palm oil cannot be facilitated if there is no good water supply. Women use their hands in making the oil—most of the Ikot Ekpene oil, as we know, is Grade One, and these women have got to go about either to draw the water themselves or to buy it. The cost of a kerosene tin of water ranges from 2d to 4d. I think that if a few water stand pipes were erected in different parts of the rural areas, it will greatly help the production of palm oil.

I consider, also, that deep wells should have been supplied to the people in the rural areas. A few of the deep wells in my division have been closed up by mud and the County Council had to borrow a machine from the P.W.D. Uyo, and had someone trained to operate this machine in order that water may continue to flow.

I would like the Minister of Development to see that the machine, which has already been applied for by the Ikot Ekpene County Council for the maintenance of these wells, is given in order to help the existing wells to flow well. A report was made to me by one Idio Udo Ukana that he had applied to this Ministry for the loan of this machine. I must say that he is trained and knows how to dig wells, and there is no doubt that the loan of this machine will greatly help in the maintenance of these wells. The fact that the Minister has not visited these areas makes it impossible for us to know what to do to help this man. I would strongly appeal to the Minister to put up a scheme showing definitely the order of priority, taking into consideration the population of the people in the area, and their needs with regard to water supplies. If this is done, we should be able to see from the scheme when to expect these developments.

**Mr J. O. Umolu (Port Harcourt):** Mr Chairman, I am really in sympathy with the Minister of Development, and I would appeal to him to realise that whatever may be the hard knocks from the floor of this House, his is a department on which everybody has something to say regarding the welfare of the people of this Region. We have listened to many speakers putting the case of those living in the rural areas, especially those in up-country districts where it is almost impossible to get drinking water. I may add, Mr Chairman, that a man living on the sea is like a man who lives in the desert. The only difference is that the man in the sea is surrounded by water which is undrinkable. That is exactly the position we find ourselves in Port Harcourt.

Two years ago, Mr Chairman, I had the opportunity of mentioning something about Port Harcourt drinking water in this House. Ever since, nothing seems to have been done. I must, however, congratulate the Minister because I have recently seen some pipes which have landed, in preparation for the scheme. But I happen to make enquiries before coming to this Session, and was told that the work had been held up because of lack of technical experts, and what is more, Mr Chairman, it was a shock to me when the Minister replied in answer to a question, that he did not go to the United Kingdom to recruit staff but was there on leave. We admit that there is a shortage of engineers all over the world, but for us to rest ourselves and sleep, and say nothing can be done, leaves much to be desired.

In the previous House, this Department was described as a 'department of waste' and I think it was honourable Nnaji who christened it the 'public works delay'. Since then, there has been a departure from the old policy of leaving all the jobs to the P.W.D. only, which means that the Executive Council had been advised that works which need to be done urgently, should be advertised to local and foreign firms of contractors.

This brings me to the award of contracts. I have said earlier that I am in sympathy with the Minister but I do not see how he can escape the shots. On this question of Tenders Board, we all agree with the section of the Local Government Law, 1955, which states that tenders above £100 should not be undertaken by local government bodies but by the Tenders Board. We quite agree also that the Minister has not got any hand in the composition of the Tenders Board, but he is directly in charge, and that is why he cannot escape blame. Whatever the members of the Board have done, he is the man to give an explanation as far as this House is concerned. We do not charge him directly for doing those things, but we say there is need for scrutiny into the affairs of the Region's Tender Board, because if all the schemes must be carried out tenders must be invited and works must be given out on contract. Mr Chairman, I must say that the activities of the present Tenders Board leaves much to be desired.

Earlier, Mr Ogon spoke on the question of the recommendation of ten contractors in the Region who could undertake capital works of over £10,000. I do not know how the Tenders Board got these names, or who was responsible for that list, or whether it was the Director of Public Works who made these recommendations and whether he was guided by the qualifications of these men. We know many engineers who have worked in the P.W.D. for years. Some had qualified in the old Yaba Higher College and when one realises that some of these contractors have no qualified engineers to handle works of about £50,000, one is left in doubt as to what is really happening.

The other time I attended a meeting of the Finance Committee, the question of the Cottage Hospital at Aro came before us. We minuted to the Ministry of Development that we would like the work to be completed before the 1st of April, 1956, because we knew that the P.W.D. would not be able to do it. We further gave a directive that if the P.W.D. could not complete the job, the work should be given out on contract.

This brings me to the question of how the selection is arrived at. I remember this matter was given much publicity. Immediately this Government came into power, all the contractors in the Region were invited to register with the P.W.D. and a list was compiled. I was thinking that the Minister responsible for this policy would devise ways and means of dividing the contractors of the Region into groups on provincial basis, so that as work occurred they should take it up immediately. This should have provided a channel whereby the Government could hold any contractor responsible for any bad work done, because if the Minister negotiates with the African contractors through their union then a contractor who executes any capital work wrongly can be held responsible through the Union. This, I think, is the purpose of Trade Unions. But what do we find now? We find that the very people who have formed this Union are not given any consideration. It is those who do not belong to the Union—those who go by the back-door—that are getting jobs in the Region. Something must be done to mend this state of affairs.

We want the Minister to investigate the working of the Tender Board of this Region. It will be suicidal for European firms to be given capital works at the expense of the Africans. We hear of Development grants. We shall soon begin to implement some projects under the Development Schemes for which the grants were made. How are we going to benefit from that money when the execution of these projects is given to European contractors whose profits are not subject to taxation under the new Tax Law. Our African contractors should be made to keep account books so that Government can get its due tax from the profits they make.

We want the Minister, after this session, to visit Port Harcourt to see how far the Port Harcourt water supply scheme can still be tackled. This matter is urgent.

**Mr G. I. Oko, M.B.E. (Awgu Division):** Speaking to this Head, I must associate myself with those honourable Members who feel that this Ministry should be severely criticised.

Take as an instance the case of the Post Office for Awgu. Some time ago a question was asked in this House regarding this Post Office and the Minister replied that preparations were in hand for building this Post Office and that work would commence before September, 1955. You will like to hear, Sir, that although the Site Board had submitted its recommendation long ago, work on this Post Office has not started. From time to time the Awgu County Council kept writing this Ministry on the matter, and although money for this Post Office has been included in the Estimates for three years running, nothing has been done.

I need not say anything about water supplies regarding which we have been made many promises.

I agree with those honourable Members who say that this Ministry is weaker than the Public Works Department of old. I charge the Minister of inability to administer the Ministry of Development because he does nothing to benefit the people in the rural areas. Even the people of Uwani, in the very capital of this Region, where the Minister himself lives, suffer from scarcity of water supply. What is he developing then?

Further I charge him of squandermania in that he went to the United Kingdom to spend his leave and this Region was charged £800 on the pretext that he went to recruit engineers and technicians. Where are these engineers and technicians, Mr Minister?

Mr Chairman, I dare say that this Minister should also be charged with partiality in the way he makes his tours of the Region. He visits only the favourite places. He has never set his feet in Awgu and the neighbouring rural communities. This Minister is not active, and I am appealing to the Eastern Regional Government to reshuffle that Ministry. The speeches made in this House so far are enough to make that Minister ashamed and resign from the Ministry.

He is the Minister of Development. Therefore, he should go all out to plan the development of the Region. If he has no technicians and no engineers then the provisions made in the Estimates for various development schemes should be deleted. We have in the Estimates the salaries of the Minister himself, his Parliamentary Secretary, a Permanent Secretary Group 7, an Assistant Secretary and Secretary-Typist. What are all of them doing for us? We have heard the Minister say this morning that he wants the Region to provide him a special car. What is he going to do with this car? I would like to say, Sir, that he is not entitled to any special car. He wants to increase his car allowance from four pence to one shilling per mile. May I know, Sir, where he tours with his car and what work he does.

Before I take my seat I would like to ask the Minister to make a categorical statement to show the public tax-payers of this Region what he did during his tour of the United Kingdom whereby over £800 was spent in recruiting technicians and engineers to this Region. If this Minister is to remain in this Ministry he must be shown what the people of this Region expect of him.

**Mr B. C. Okwu (Awgu Division):** Mr Chairman, my attitude towards this Ministry is based on the fact that the Ministry is responsible for the execution of all works of all the Ministries of the Government. The Ministry is an agent of the Federal Government for all matters requiring construction other than roads. The Ministry, too, unfortunately, harbours within its bosom the Public Works Department which has been the target of adverse criticisms for many years. My feeling is that the Ministry has not fulfilled the promises contained in its Policy Paper.

This Ministry requires all encouragement and assistance to ensure that it has got all the materials it requires to do its work. I say this because there is no doubt that the success of Government and its popularity depend, on a large measure, on what happens within the Ministry of Development.

We want the Government to be keenly interested in this Ministry for besides being the agent of the Federal Government this Ministry is responsible for water supply schemes. Because we do not pay for water people are prone to dismiss, with a snap of the finger, the importance of water. It has, however, been said that water is the second necessity of life.

One can see from the Policy Paper of this particular Ministry the degree of importance which the Government attaches to what happens within the Ministry. It is said that it is not a policy-making department. Its importance, however, stems from the fact that it has to implement Government policies and programmes, which involve planning, designing, costing, construction and maintenance of buildings, and water supplies. To this end the Ministry has got a programme which is embodied in its Policy Paper.

The first aspect of the work of this Ministry on which I want to make a few remarks is water supply. It is very interesting that when this Minister returned from his leave, or tour (I do not know which) he did make an official statement to this Region, and this statement, besides being handed to the N.B.S. was also publicised in the national papers. In this statement we were given to understand that a team of engineers, water engineers and other sorts of engineers, were to be expected in the Eastern Region as a result of that tour.

It is true that the Minister cannot do the impossible. We do not expect him to do that. We realise, too, there is a shortage of engineers. But the fact is that the moment you make one to expect, you raise one's hopes, and if you fail to satisfy that hope, it is a very bad thing. If it is impossible to get the engineers which this particular Ministry requires, since the Ministry is essentially a Ministry of engineers, it simply means that the Ministry will cease to exist. My contention on this score therefore is that everything possible must be done to get the engineers. We must have the engineers because if we do not have the engineers the Ministry cannot function. That is clear.

Sir, it is stated in the Policy Paper on the subject of water supplies:—

"We now turn to the proposals for Water Supplies. It cannot be stressed too strongly that there is a most urgent and crying need from every town and village in this Region for an adequate and pure water supply.

The need is known, and the reasons are:— Firstly, to ensure as unpolluted a supply as possible, and thus to reduce the enormous risk of water-borne diseases of every kind, e.g., dysentery and typhoid, hookworm and ear and eye troubles which are so prevalent in our land. Secondly, to reduce the terrific waste of human effort spent daily in drawing water from long distances and remote places. Thirdly to develop industry."

And the Minister went on to point out that there are certain polluted water sources where people queue up—children and men—to draw water. There is no one in this House who can improve on this very pious attitude towards our need for water, but I have to say that I am particularly worried because in my own part of the country, the need for water is very, very acute. In some parts, such as Otume, Ndeaboh and Lengwe, pure water supply is so scarce that the vitality and the productivity of the people have been very much affected. If we can get this problem solved, I think the Government will have reduced our problem by fifty per cent. I am sure, too, that this very need is also the need of many other parts.

The next matter I want to mention is that although since 1953, the Federal Government has been voting money to provide us with a Post Office we have not had one up to this day. There is not a single Post Office in Awgu Division and I am wondering whether there is any other Division which has not got one not to mention telephone and telegraphic facilities. If

this Ministry is the agent of the Federal Government and it finds it cannot do the work the Awgu District County Council is prepared to do it. After all, did we not construct our hospital. If only the Minister will hand the contract to us we will do it.

The next point, Sir, is about contracts. I will say this, that he is a strong man and it is a strong Ministry that has to do with the awarding of contracts. I have nothing specific to charge this Ministry, but I will say that it is very essential to have the requisite thickness of skin to resist the influence of contractors. When it comes to the question of complaints about contracts in this Region the argument is not that more contracts go to foreign firms. My complaint is that among both foreign firms and African firms there seems to be some sort of privileged class, and we have not been told what special qualifications they have that make them always the "go-getter". Now, if the Ministry wants certain qualifications to entitle a group, a person or a firm to get contracts they should be widely publicised. If this is done the Ministry would have eliminated one of the prolific sources of complaint.

Highly technical works have been reserved for the bigger firms because they have the technical "know-how", and the finance to carry out these big schemes. I think it will be stupidity for anyone to expect two Africans who have combined as a contracting association to be able to handle works costing half a million or a quarter of a million pounds if they have not got the machinery, the money, and the men with the requisite technical knowledge. However, if it is fair to reserve these highly technical projects for the big firms, then in all fairness Government, as it did in 1954, should make it a policy to reserve certain minor works exclusively for Africans until they reach such a stage where they can combine and get the men, the machinery, and the necessary finance to do big jobs. If you allow the big, the well-financed firms to contest for the big works and also for the small ones it means that the small groups have practically no chance of getting contracts.

I understand there are what are known as selective tender and open tender. I have been questioning the prudence of this selective tender. I have a list here which shows some contracts given out at a particular time of the year. Looking through this list, you will find, Sir, that most of the works were given out on selective tender. In that case I do not think it is the Tenders Board that handles or distributes the contracts. I am sure every Minister knows something about it. They ought to investigate and explain to those who may want further information why those whose names are on this list were chosen amongst others to be the best qualified to be considered in a selective tender.

At one time a type of house called E.6 or something like that was given out on contract at a cost of £4,500. There was another type, T.3, costing £3,500. In 1954, it became the policy of the Government that these T.3s should be reserved for the African. What shocked me was that the technical section of this Ministry immediately revised the specifications for these houses; they wanted deeper foundations, higher quality mixture of cement, rods for the walls, iron doors and windows; and they told the Region that the aim was to reduce housing costs. Obviously when you demand a higher quality one would expect the cost to rise. Instead of this, Sir, they reduced £4,500 to £3,500. Unfortunately, at this time, things happened overseas which made the cost of foreign materials to rise tremendously. Cement at the time when this contract was given was selling at 7s 6d a bag. Before the thorough execution of the work it had risen to 18s 6d, and this involved these African contractors in a heavy burden.

I am informed that a number of Ministers had an interview with the contractors and promised that the thing would be readjusted, that these contractors went to the extent of asking the Minister to appoint an expert to evaluate the cost of these buildings in order to justify their claim for the adjustment of the price.

If that is not done my conclusion would be that it was a subtle attempt to drive these African contractors out of the market, otherwise how can you make the conditions impossible when you come to their case, and when you come to the privileged few and the big firms you become generous. We are not happy about that. I am not advocating the complete exclusion of the foreign firms from contracts or anything of that sort, but I want the Government to be fair both to the Africans and to Europeans too.

The last point, Sir, is that I would like the Minister to have serious consideration over what is happening in the rural areas. This means that he should tour and see the conditions for himself. We do not intend to annoy him, or embarrass him, or criticise him adversely, but we want to tell him that we will continue ever embittered until the problem of water supply and engineers is satisfactorily solved.

**The Minister of Development:** Mr Chairman, I rise first of all to thank the honourable Members for the way they have approached such a serious matter. I do regard my Ministry as one of the most important in the whole set-up. It is also one of the most difficult, if not the most difficult.

Mr Chairman, you will realise that fire came from every side and that it is really difficult to know where to start. Honourable Mr Ekpe started by accusing the Minister of globe-trotting and charging the Government with an amount of little over £800. As a member of the Finance Committee he should have at least told the whole truth to the House, that the Finance Committee was told the purposes of the visits by the Minister and his Regional Water Engineer respectively. Therefore, they wanted to know how much on behalf of the Minister and how much on behalf of the Regional Water Engineer. Mr Chairman, this information is expected from the Eastern Nigeria Commissioner in London, who kept the account.

The honourable Ogon with other honourable Members held briefs for contractors. Thank God, he only charged me of monopoly and favouritism. I am very glad he did not talk of bribery and corruption.

There is one thing I must emphasise all over again, and that is, that the moment this House or this Region rules, or makes it easy for a Minister to go and interfere with the award of contracts then this Region will be nowhere. It is known, that this is practised in other Regions, but it is the policy of this Government that no Minister should interfere. What the Minister of Development does is to decide on policy. Where a particular job is to be done my advisers advise me on the complexity of the work, the amount to be spent and the urgency attending the matter. Then I approach, as a rule, the Executive Council for permission to ask my Director or adviser to go on selective tendering.

There is one fact that is not generally known, and that is, that as soon as the former Minister of Works invited people to come and register, more than 500 people registered as contractors. They ranged from house-boys and stewards who had just left their masters, to big contracting firms like Micheletti, Costains, Taylor Woodrow and others.

We want to do our work quickly and well. Honourable Members may not know, and I do not blame them for not knowing, that one contract document, be it just for an ordinary house costing £500, will take anything up to 10 to 15 pages, for specification and drawings and everything. So that if every work is to be done on contract and if that is going to be open to tender, which shows in the long run the big house costing £16,000, only one of the few who are known by their past performance will get it. You will go and use fifteen pages and multiply by 500—mathematicians know what this amounts to—then you send to them, you gazette it, which takes three weeks, it takes one and half weeks to collect the tender before the Tender Board meets. Naturally, it will go to one of the people who are capable of doing the same work. It is on this principle that the selective tender works. The Minister does not decide on himself that this work must go to selective tender, it first of all goes to the Executive Council for a decision to do so.

There is one very serious charge and that is that certain houses were awarded to expatriate firms at £4,500 each and when it came to African contractors it was reduced. This is not true. If Mr Ogon were here the first time that I explained it, a week and a half ago, he would have learnt from me that there are two types of houses, one is the one known as T 63, which contains more rooms and is a larger house, bigger in all respects and therefore it carried more money. The other one to which you refer is the type known as E. 3—not D. 3—and E. 3A. They are smaller in compartments and contain less number of rooms. Naturally, the contract price is less.

When I replied to these same points a week and a half ago, I did stress one fact, that my job there is to defend the Government all round. Specifications are there. It is up to the contractors to take the contract document, go and study it before submitting their tenders.

One point is very funny which I must mention here. I did say the other day that most of our contractors have no engineers attached to them. They only rely on masons who have had twenty-five years experience in the Public Works Department, and carpenters who have had experience in the Public Works Department to do their work for them. How on earth do you expect such people to read contract documents properly !

Being conscious of this disability on the part of their experts, they hang around the office of the Public Works Department and scout around the junior clerks to find out how much money is allocated to this project. One way or the other they get the price—"I think the Government is going to spend £3,200 or so". If they get the wrong information they have had it; if they get the right information, there you are. They will then go and cook up the figures. How on earth could you expect the people to consider such tenders.

Well, I do not know, but it is true that some have so cooked it that more often than not they get the real price allotted to it, but then you could see that the amount the experts could put down only for foundation is quite different, and he tells you "I offered £3,200 and he has offered £3,400 and he is given". This question of lowest tender is not always considered. It is because in most cases people do not know what they are talking about.

I come now to Tenders Board. I think it was the honourable Abangwu, who has now decamped, who made the allegations. I do not know why some make allegations and then disappear. This is one of the most annoying things. The main point is that he has asked me how many Africans are there. My answer is that there is no African as far as I know. I cannot even tell him who the members of the Tenders Board are. I do not know. I am not supposed to know. The policy was changed by the Executive Council some time last year when it was felt that certain members, namely, the Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Finance, the Permanent Secretary to the Premier's office and the Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Development were more or less permanent, that they might have fixed ideas. In that case they might say "Oh, well, this man is never good, strike him out". Government met and decided that a senior official of the Premier's office, a senior official of the Ministry of Finance and a senior official of the Ministry of Development will attend.

Now, honourable Members, what else do you expect me to do ? I do not give any directive whatsoever, I am not supposed to. I am not supposed to interest myself with how they do their jobs. My Department only gives advice, only when called upon to do so, and that is the Director of Public Works, only when called upon to do so. Report on so-and-so, of what type of man he is, not whether he is an African. We cannot report on a fellow we do not know, then he gives unbiased report, on the activities of the man, if he had done work before for the Government he says so.

Honourable G. I. Oko made no point at all, so he does not need any reply, he only repeated what others had said.



The honourable B. C. Okwu did say that I made a statement in the papers and asked that Engineers be expected. I want to say here, Sir, that I only said in my broadcast that I made contacts. When I come to this tour of the United Kingdom you will have everything which is the truth and nothing but the whole truth. Mr Chairman, I said before, I do not bear anybody any grudge at all. There is no need to do that but I felt, Sir, that some of those who criticised had the impression that my recent leave tour of the United Kingdom and Germany was a joy ride, that is not true.

There are others who seem to imagine that I went with a bundle of contract documents and only had to walk up to a man in the street, or even in the factory, and say "Hello, you are an Engineer, are you not? Then sign this contract, follow me to Nigeria tomorrow". I repeat what I said before, Mr Chairman, that was not what I went for. Quite frankly, it is very difficult for me to believe that utter ignorance of the complexities of administering seven million people exists in this honourable House. I am deeply in sympathy. I repeat again that I am deeply in sympathy with those who spoke, but I believe that the honourable Member can get all the information he likes on the floor of this House without false accusations and without imputing improper motives.

*Sitting suspended at 1 p.m.*

*Sitting resumed at 3 p.m.*

**The Chairman :** Before the Minister continues with his speech, I would like to point out that we only have three days in which to debate and report to the House, and that is, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. If necessary, Government will consider suspending Standing Orders on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday to enable Members to speak as long as they wish to and to enable the business to be concluded.

I therefore think it is necessary to advise that unnecessary repetition is not welcomed while speaking. The Clerk of the House has pointed out to me that Friday is a Public Holiday and naturally Members would like to get away on Thursday. So far as I am concerned they need not get away before Friday; it all depends on what Government intends to do, and I am willing to abide by the decision the Government takes in the matter.

**The Minister of Development :** This morning I was commenting on the allegations made against my Ministry. When the honourable Member from Aba Division said that only 200 gallons are given to Aba community of over 60,000 people, I am quite sure, Mr Chairman, that he did not deliberately want to mislead the House. I believe that he is grossly uninformed and I can tell the House now that Aba township receives at the moment between 250,000 and 280,000 gallons per day. It is impossible for any community of 60,000 people to live on 200 gallons a day.

To those honourable Members who stressed about Post Offices I want to assure them that they have my sympathy, and I have done everything I could to get the Federal Government to do something. Post Offices are a Federal responsibility. They call the tenders, they award the tenders the money belongs to the Federal Government and there you are. All I have to do is to press on them the necessity for getting them built. The honourable Members from Ikot Ekpene, Awgu, and Ogoni were all in the same difficulty. So, honourable Members, it is not my fault. I will not stop worrying them. Even the Central Minister of Communications and Aviation has come to my office and he raised the same question. I told him that I am prepared at the expense of Regional buildings to make Inspectors of Works available. That was the advise I received from my Director. Up to now, nothing has been done.

Mr Chairman, with reference to my visit overseas, I was away for only three months. I worked on behalf of this Government for seventeen days and on those days I claimed the allowances approved for a Minister of State on duty abroad. On the remaining days in England, Scotland and France, I was on leave at my own expense.

Soon after taking over from the former Minister of Works I noticed that there were a lot of delays in the urban water supply scheme. There was considerable agitation of water supplies in these areas that were formerly known as townships. And the scheme involved the use of pumps, pipes, filters, stop corks and so on. When it became known to me that as much as eighteen months were overdue and that there was no sign of the order arriving I decided to follow things up myself. Normally all our indents are sent to the Crown Agents. So, when I got there I decided to call on them first. I travelled with the Regional Water Engineers who is my technical adviser and who is mostly responsible for all those things. We carried our office copies of the indents and when we got there we were amazed to hear that it took as much as four to six months for our order to go from our office here in Enugu to the Agents. Apparently the delay is in Lagos with the Federal Public Works. But I can assure honourable Members here that steps have already been taken on my return to correct this anomaly.

The Crown Agents is a vast organisation which buys not only for our country but for all countries of the Commonwealth and for other countries such as Iraq and Persia. It employs over 100 engineers whose duties are to chase up manufacturers, test the articles after completion and give certificates. Where materials are found defective they are rejected and disabilities remedied. There is one aspect which the honourable Members do not know and that is that most of our materials are not stock items. In other words, they are not materials which you can go into a shop and walk out with them. You cannot do that. Most of them are made according to specification. The orders get there first before whoever signs the contract there and starts to design the materials, and I am afraid that it takes up a lot of time and there is nothing we can do to shorten that delay.

I am quite convinced, honourable Members, that no other commercial agency could give the same service or produce more expeditious results than the Crown Agents. At this moment, generally speaking, it is not standard equipment. As I said before they are specially designed for the job. Another reason for the delay in the arrival of our stores is the failure of manufacturers to keep to the delivery times promised by them. There is even a penalty clause in the contract but it is almost impossible to enforce in the Law Court. The manufacturers can always say and prove that delay was caused by circumstances not under their control. Aba urban water supply schemes is a case in point. Two years, honourable Members, have elapsed since the order was placed. That shows you that the order was placed before I assumed office in that Ministry and still the pumps have not arrived, but I think they will soon arrive. And why? Just because I went personally to the firm and expressed our grave concern to the Managing Director. Even if my interview shortened the time of delivery by one month, I am quite sure at least honourable Members from Aba should thoroughly approve of my visit to England.

Another matter which has caused a great deal of concern is the training of our young men in the technical walks of life. Our urban water schemes are becoming more complex and in the immediate future there will be many pieces of mechanical equipment added about the rural areas. We need the mechanics and the technicians who operate all these equipments and there are neither sufficient men available nor sufficient facilities for training them. We shall need a large number by 1960. That is, by the time we have done our plan, but thereafter our needs will be much less.

Consideration has been given in the abstract to placing our boys in British factories for training. I decided to pass out of the abstract and to ask the firms, and as I toured round I asked them whether they would be prepared to help. At least two agreed, and the Director of Recruitment and Training is now pursuing the matter. It is worth all the money that my visit cost, and I am certain so much could not have been accomplished without personal contact. We are all inclined to say that this is Africa, England is England and what happens in

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England will not happen in Africa. After some time I was able to visit water installations in rural parts in England directly comparable to Nigerian conditions. That was a most valuable experience for me. It enabled me to believe in the proposals made to me by my advisers.

For example, I visited a water undertaking in Sussex. That undertaking cost not more than £60,000. Not more indeed than we shall need to spend in places like Abakaliki, Nnewi, Owerri, etc. I gained a similar experience in Germany. If this House wished to restrict its Ministers from gaining knowledge that would directly influence the administration of the Region then it must accept the consequences.

Now, Mr Chairman, let me deal with this burning question of rural water supplies and the recruitment of staff. I must say, Sir, that I was not only surprised, but I was disappointed when the honourable Member for Nsukka Division got up and charged me with lack of sympathy. I think it was most unfair and unjust. Honourable Members will be surprised to hear that Nsukka Division is the only division I could claim to have toured thoroughly in company of the honourable Member. It is most unfair then for him to charge me with lack of sympathy.

Another point, Sir, is that on the advice of my office the Secretary of State permitted us to anticipate his approval of the Rural Water Scheme to enable the work on Nsukka Water Supply Scheme to go on. That was preferential treatment for Nsukka. It was done to the knowledge of the honourable Members from Nsukka Division, yet the honourable Members got up to charge me with lack of sympathy. It was done because the work was actually in hand and everything was being done to see that the work does not stop.

Now, Sir, honourable Members will be surprised to hear that even though my Rural Water Supply Scheme was approved in its outline by this House in May, 1955, it did not get to the Secretary of State for approval until 6th September, 1955, and that was a few minutes after my Regional Water Engineer and myself had walked into the office of the Director of Recruitment in the Colonial Office. The formal approval of Her Majesty reached my Ministry during the last few days of February, 1956. Honourable Members do realise that not one penny out of the £1,750,000 could be touched before the approval of the Secretary of State. In other words, before the end of February, 1956 nobody could have touched it before the approval except where we had permission to anticipate the approval. We have now only four years for the Rural Water Scheme between now and 1960.

Now, Mr Chairman, tell me how machines, pumps, pipes, etc. necessary for the Rural Water Supply Scheme could have been ordered and purchased before now. It is all very well, Mr Chairman, for some honourable Members to go to their Local Councils and shout "Be it resolved, and it is resolved that the Honourable the Minister of Development be told that we are dying from thirst". Why do they not explain the position to the councillors? I am telling them now that the Scheme had never been approved before last week.

Mr Chairman, until today, not one honourable Member has called at my office to ask me whether the Secretary of State has approved the Scheme and when. To refresh your memory, honourable Members, approval only came on the 27th February, 1956.

Now, Mr Chairman, I can almost hear some Members say, "Now, we have had enough of that, tell us why the staff are not here and when they will be here". That is what you want, is it not? My first answer to that is that the office of the Director of Recruitment is responsible to the Governor and not to the Minister of Development. On enquiry, however, during my visit to Crown Agents, the Senior Crown Agent, who is responsible for recruiting Inspector of Works, informed me—that was on the 6th September—that he had only one on indent. When I discussed with the Director of Recruitment, Colonial Office, I discovered, to my utter disappointment, that we were offering lower salaries for Engineers than the Federal and the Northern Regional Governments. Under those circumstances, he was unable to advertise our posts. Within twenty-four hours, I contacted my office in Enugu,

and I am glad to say that that anomaly has since been corrected. After this, Mr Chairman, I arranged for a Press Conference and, with your permission, Sir, I would like the honourable Members to hear what the British Press said about it. This is the *Surveyor* published in Mid-Sussex:—

“Nigeria Wants British Engineers for Water.—Dr Walter Onubogu, the Minister of Development for the Eastern Region of Nigeria, arrived in London this week for consultations with the Colonial Office regarding the recruitment of engineers and architects to carry out a survey of water supplies and to implement rural water supply schemes in his country.

The Colonial Development and Welfare Funds have allocated £1½ million for rural water supplies in the Eastern Region of Nigeria and Dr Onubogu wants British Engineers to carry out the work.

At present less than a third of the territory's population of 7,330,000 have a regular water supply laid on”,

and so on.

That was the *Surveyor* from Mid-Sussex. There is another one, an extract from *The Glasgow Bulletin* :—

“Nigeria needs the help, advice and co-operation of British experts declared Dr Walter Onubogu, Minister of Development for Eastern Nigeria, in London yesterday.

He said—I am anxious to impress on the Colonial Government and in particular the British people, that our door is still open as ever for people to come to the Eastern Region of Nigeria. We shall need experts for years yet.

Dr Onubogu is here to examine schemes for development projects in Eastern Nigeria, particularly rural and urban water supply schemes.”

Now, Sir, for the *Glasgow Herald* :—

“Nigeria's need for . . . ”

**The Chairman:** I would like to interrupt. Are you reading any more after this?

**The Minister of Development:** After this, I will stop, but I want the honourable Members to know that even if I had not a bundle of contract documents to meet people in the street or in the office and ask them to sign, I realise the situation and I am more worried by it than anybody because I am the Head of the Ministry, and that I did something for them. If I had not read this, they would not appreciate what was involved in my answer to which they referred.

**The Chairman:** I should think you have made the point.

**The Minister of Development:** Have I? All right, I will continue.

I also visited the school of Military Engineering at Chatham, and I believe that I interested several officers who are shortly to retire in coming to Nigeria. I was able to survey the whole machinery of staff procurement in the U.K. In the light of what I discovered there and of my further examination of the problem after my return to Nigeria, Mr Chairman, I believe that there are bottle-necks in this matter of recruitment, but I believe that the bottle-necks can be widened. I am glad to announce to this House that the Government has accepted the recommendations included in my report and that as soon as the House rises we hope to bring into operation a stream-lined plan of recruitment which we hope will bring the men we want very soon. In this connection, I should add that we intend to make all practicable use of the office of our Commissioner in London to enable us to recruit not only from the British Isles, but also from Germany, Italy and the U.S.A.

Finally, Sir, I obtained a piece of information which may be of incalculable value to the industrial development of our Region. Messrs Stewarts and Lloyds are world-famous manufacturers of steel tubes for water works, and it was in this connection that I paid them a visit, but I discovered that they not only make tubes, they also make the iron and steel for them. They have their own factory where they convert iron ore into iron. You may say that there is nothing wonderful about that, but their iron ore is of a poorer quality than the one we have in the Eastern Region. The Management expressed a great interest in coming to this country—to the Eastern Region—to help establish a pig-iron industry. There is a world-wide shortage of pig-iron and we could build up a useful export trade if we could exploit our iron deposits. I have already passed this information to my colleague, the Minister of Industries, who is, I am certain, examining it attentively.

I trust, honourable Members, that all that I have said will dispel from my critics' minds that I was merely wining and dining at the expense account.

**The Chairman :** I am now dealing with the Notices, Amendments or otherwise. The first one appears in the Head, sub-head 1, item 8.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E. :** I had listed this particular Amendment to sub-head 1, item 8, Telephone Attendants, more or less to elicit information, because the Estimates before us have an additional ten Telephone Attendants. That would appear to me to be abnormally high, and I am glad to say that I was quite satisfied with the explanation the honourable Minister of Development gave this morning, and I do not intend to move.

**The Minister of Development :** Mr Chairman, Sir, I beg to move, with His Excellency's assent, that sub-head 3 be increased by £25. This is a consequential amendment to all Ministries' local transport and travelling sub-heads resulting from the proposed increase in the Chauffeurs' allowances paid to Parliamentary Secretaries from £75 to £100.

In the Ministry of Development, there is only one Parliamentary Secretary, and the consequential increase is therefore £25.

Sir, I beg to move.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Question: That the sum of £14,675 for Head 435—Ministry of Development—be inserted in the Schedule put and agreed to.*

#### Head 436—Public Works

*Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £218,130 for Head 436—Public Works—stand part of the Schedule.*

*Sub-head 1, item (1).*

**The Minister of Development :** Sir, I beg to move the deletion of the words "Group 5" under Item (1) of Sub-head 1, and the insertion of the words "Group 4".

Honourable Members may know that the Director of Public Works in this Region has been graded Group 5 whilst his opposite numbers in the other Regions are graded Group 4. This has been the cause of a certain amount of dissatisfaction, and it is considered to be a contributory factor to the difficulty that the Region is experiencing in the recruitment of Engineers for its development projects.

Government has, therefore, decided that the grading of the Eastern Regional Director of Public Works shall be the same as that obtaining in the other Regions, namely Group 4.

Sir, I beg to move.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Minister of Development :** Mr Chairman, I beg to move, with His Excellency's assent, to increase Sub-head 1, Item (1) by £240. Honourable Members have accepted my previous motion by which the grading of the Director of Public Works has been raised to Group 4. This necessitates a consequential amendment of the provision under this item, the salary of Group 4 being £2,640.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Sub-head 1, item (11).*

**The Minister of Development:** Sir, I beg to move that sub-head 1, item (11) be increased by £3,780 and the establishment by 7.

This amendment is moved in response to a long felt need for Provincial and District Engineers in the large towns to have an Administrative Assistant each, who will be in a position to take over from them the burden of routine work, and thus free those highly-qualified men for concentration on the professional and technical work for which they have been recruited.

The proposal is, I submit, non-contentious, and I am sure all honourable Members will favour it. Sir, I beg to move.

*Question proposed*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Sub-head 1, item (14).*

**Mr D. A. Nnaji (Udi Division):** Mr Chairman, I rise to move this motion asking the House to approve the deletion of the provision for 1 Chief Accountant from the Estimates.

I am moving this motion, Sir, because I see no reason why there should be a Chief Accountant in the Public Works Department whereas in the Accountant-General's office, where people devote all their time to accounting work, we have only Accountants and Senior Accountants. Last year the post of Senior Accountant was created in this department. This year it has jumped to Chief Accountant. Assuming that this is all right what of the other two posts? One of them should have been similarly upgraded to Senior Accountant, whilst the other remains ordinary accountant, if fairness was aimed at when this post was being created.

**The Chairman:** There appears to be some confusion in this matter. We are dealing with the post of Chief Accountant. Are you saying that this post should have been a Senior Accountant post?

**Mr D. A. Nnaji:** What I am after is this. There are only two Accountants here. There is going to be created the post of Chief Accountant. Then one of the two Accountants should be a Senior Accountant to take over from the Chief Accountant, assuming that this is correct.

**The Minister of Development:** Mr Chairman, I am glad that you saw the confusion yourself. He did not read it properly. I am also glad that you have allowed me to make comparisons. The Public Works Department is responsible for 18.697 per cent of the total Regional expenditure as compared with Education, which is 26.715 per cent and Medical, which is 12.51 per cent. The education percentage is larger than that of the P.W.D., but the bulk of this expenditure is made up of grants. The accounting is, therefore, relatively simple—the grant is approved and is paid out, and that is the end of the matter.

The P.W.D. expenditure is very diverse, ranging from small items like repairing a window to interim payments on large contracts. Because the people who do the accounts cover such a wide range it is felt necessary to have a total staff of seven Accountants as compared with two in each of the other two departments mentioned. The senior man should be a Chief not only because of the staff he has to control but also because of the size of the financial responsibility. Two of the Accountants are specifically employed in the Rural Water Supply schemes and one is for my colleague the honourable Minister of Transport's road schemes.

There is not a separate accountant for the department of which I am responsible and another for the Ministry of Transport. This most necessary step will cost the Region only £120 in 1956-57 because the Senior Accountant post has been eliminated. You will note that the Senior Accountant post which disappears is shown to have a salary of £1,210. This was pre-Gorsuch salary. On conversion it became £1,380, which is £120 less than that of Chief Accountant of £1,500 now proposed.

I fail to see the honourable Member's argument that because the Accountant-General's staff does not include a Chief Accountant why should the staff of the P.W.D. include one. Mr Chairman, the honourable Member seems to forget that the Accountant-General himself has a Deputy and each of them is a senior post to that of Chief Accountant. Why then compare two unidentical things?

**The Chairman:** (To Mr Nnaji) Are you satisfied now?

**Mr D. A. Nnaji:** I am not, Sir. I move that this item be deleted from the Estimates.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr E. O. Eyo (Uyo Division):** If I may add to what the Minister has said I would like honourable Members of the House to understand that if there is any item to defend in our Estimates it should be that of an Accountant. The whole machinery of Government will break down without Accountant, Sir, and the first cry that we will hear in the Eastern Region is that Government accounts are in a mess.

I happen to have had some experience in this matter over the past fourteen months. It is only here that Government is offering a Chief Accountant the salary of £1,500 a year. In the commercial world you cannot think of a Chief Accountant, say a Chartered Accountant, who is prepared to come to this country on anything less than £2,500 a year. These people are so short in the world market that they are in a position to dictate terms. If you advertise for a Chartered Accountant, which is quite different from a professional Accountant, you will find that these people are bold enough to write back to ask you whether you are in a position to offer £3,000, and if you say no they say, go away with your job.

Members should realise that if you are going to run a successful Government then every penny you have must be properly accounted for. At the end of the financial year, the accounts of the Region are submitted to the Public Accounts Committee. It would be unworthy for that Committee to report to the House that our account is not straight, and I would like Members to bear this in mind that if you accept responsibility for any Department of Government particularly a department of this nature handling funds and being accountable not only to the Government but also to this House, the first thing that should be uppermost in your mind should be to make provision to ensure that there is proper accounting. I think all that Government has done is to up-grade somebody who previously was a Senior Accountant on Scale B4 to become a Chief Accountant on Group 8 on a salary of £1,500. My only quarrel is that if this man is worthy of the name of Senior Accountant he is worth more than £2,500.

I would like the honourable Member who moved this amendment to consider what the position would be. This Public Works Department has been under fire and will continue to be under fire and they will be worse still, Sir, if rather than criticising the award of contracts and other discrimination we come back to this House and say that all the money which was voted was not properly accounted for. I am bound to oppose the amendment.

**The Chairman:** (To Mr Nnaji):—Do you wish to change your mind? ]

**Mr D. A. Nnaji:** I do not wish to change my mind, Sir.

*Question put and negatived.*

*Question, That an increased sum of £222,150 for Head 436—Public Works—be inserted in the Schedule, put and agreed to.*

**Head 437—Public Works Extraordinary**

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £234,185 for Head 437—Public Works Extraordinary—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Minister of Development:** I have nothing else to say. I have said all I want to on this matter.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** Mr Chairman, I have a quarrel with sub-head 6—Installation of fans and water heaters in the Onitsha Catering Rest House. My quarrel centres around the lack of amenities in other Rest Houses as well. In Enugu here, to start from home, we are grateful for the telephones we have, but they are not enough. Some chalets have not telephones, and those that have telephones do not all have directories and I think that is a matter that might very easily be remedied.

In the Calabar Rest House—I happened to be there a little over a week ago—only the Marketing Board chalets have heaters. The other chalets that actually belong to this Head of the Estimates have no heaters at all. I think, Sir, that we cannot regard heaters as an amenity in a place like Calabar. In Calabar they have fans in some of the Rest Houses. I do not challenge the expert knowledge of those who installed them but it is rather curious that they are only installed in the bedrooms and not in the sitting room. Why exactly, I do not know. But all of us know, Sir, from ordinary experience, that if people care to look you up and you sit down in the the sitting room, you like the fan overhead. In Calabar, if you switch on the fans, it keeps fanning your bed and leaves those you want to fan unfanned. I do not want to make a formal motion, Sir. I think I might call the attention of the Minister and of the House to what I consider to be very necessary amenities for all the Rest Houses. I have not been to Port Harcourt recently and to others. If I had, I would include them in my plea.

**The Minister of Development:** I have noted what the honourable Member has said and I can only assure him that I will look into those matters. But it is a matter of opinion whether people would like to keep cool at night or by day. Some people like to keep cool when they are in bed.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** The matter I want to raise under sub-head 7 is a very serious one. I want to call attention, if I may, to something more serious than fans and heaters. Anybody who takes up this Estimate will find Enugu Division so much. I take item 7—Quarters and Offices—as an example. Year in and year out we come here and we get things voted for Enugu and go home with the bad impression that so much has been done for Enugu.

I think, Sir, if I may respectfully suggest, that the House would like to know how much of what is set down for Enugu is for the Regional Headquarters and how much is for the actual people of Udi—Udi Division and the Urban District area and all the rest of it. I do not think that we are getting anything comparable with what others might get because a glance at the estimate will give the impression that they are getting much. I think, at least one honourable Member, when we were discussing the Appropriation Bill in general spotlighted the fact that Udi Division is not getting its share. Those of us who do not come from Udi have to go to the Estimates to find out for ourselves if that is true, and we find that the Estimates as they stand are apt to be misleading. I would like to suggest that in future, what is done for Enugu Regional Headquarters should not be lumped together with what is done for Udi.

**The Minister of Development:** There is no intention to make what is spent in Enugu look as if it is spent on Udi Division. When we talk of quarters and offices in Enugu, we mean the Regional Headquarters.

What you are asked to approve here under sub-head 7 in the main—£19,960—is only required to pay retention money which, as this House will no doubt be aware, becomes payable six months after the building has been completed.



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Honourable Members may know that this is one of the quarrels between the Ministry and the contractors—this retention. They want all the money paid to them so that if they did a bad job, and the house collapses, then we have nothing at all. We have a certain percentage of money left behind so that if there is no damage, no crack, no leakage, the money can be paid. That is what is provided here.

**The Chairman (To Mr Ikoku):** I expect that what you want is a break-down of those figures.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** No, Sir.

**The Chairman:** Then what is it that you want ?

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** That in future Estimates, it might help honourable Members to appreciate more fully what is being done for Udi Division, if what is done for Udi Division is distinct from what is done for the Regional Headquarters.

**The Chairman:** That is, a break-down of what is done for offices and what is done for Udi.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** I hope Mr Chairman will bear with me. Take, for instance, Item 3, Sub-head (3)—Theatre Block, General Hospital, Ogoja. Everybody imagines that that goes to Ogoja Province; and Water Supply Extension, Afikpo—people naturally say it goes to Ogoja Province, that is, to benefit the people generally. But when we come to Enugu Division and they set down all these figures, it does mislead the unwary because as a matter of fact all of us are benefiting thereby—not just Udi, and we are not experts in reading Estimates.

**The Minister of Development:** Next time we will call it Headquarters, and the other Udi Division.

*Question, That the sum of £234,185 for Head 437—Public Works Extraordinary—stand part of the Schedule, put and agreed to.*

#### Head 438—Public Works Recurrent—Maintenance Services

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £44,200 for Head 438—Public Works Recurrent—Maintenance Services—stand part of the Schedule.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### Head 439—Public Works Recurrent—Maintenance Works

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £258,810 for Head 439—Public Works Recurrent—Maintenance Works—stand part of the Schedule.*

**Mr B. C. Okwu:** I beg to move to reduce Sub-head 10 by 1d. The provision under this sub-head appears rather excessive.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and negatived.*

*Original Question again proposed.*

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** Mr Chairman, may I call attention to Sub-head 14—Leave and Holiday Pay to daily paid employees. If the Minister so wishes, Sir, he might give this House an explanation because we are under the impression that these daily paid employees are a thing of the past and you have translated them now to permanent employment and you are even arranging for them a system of superannuation. One is therefore surprised to find so heavy a vote as £15,700—Leave and Holiday Pay for Daily Paid Employees. My query relates to the term “daily paid”. Perhaps the Minister has an explanation to offer to me.

**The Chairman:** Do you object to the words ?

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** No, Sir. I want an explanation because they are not daily paid. If they are, why are they?

**Mr V. A. Nwankwo (Abakaliki Division):** Point of Order, Sir. Sub-head 10. Amendment 14.

**The Chairman:** Are you seriously amending? You just want to open the discussion? Before I allow you to do that—it might raise Constitutional issues. You talk about motor vehicles, what motor vehicles? Does that include cars driven by Civil Servants? I must know that. Are you thinking of cars driven by Civil Servants?

**Mr V. A. Nwankwo:** I am talking about lorries. I only want to draw the attention of the Ministry and the Government as a whole to the fact that we have got the impression that since the money which is used for buying lorries for use by the Department is public money, care is not taken in the economic buying of second-hand lorries. Government has the habit of buying cheap lorries which the ordinary lorry users find useless. And these lorries are bought, and nobody wants them. Government uses money to buy these types of cheap and useless lorries and they quickly go bad. New ones should be bought. We want to see Government buy lorries of first class quality so that they can be used for a long time to the benefit of the Region. I am sure if the Government will give us a guarantee that they will exercise care in the buying of lorries then . . .

**The Chairman:** Order! Order!

*Question again proposed.*

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** May I just venture to say what I have said earlier?

**The Chairman:** (*To the Minister of Development*). You have taken note of what he said?

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** It is a little more serious than that. We have been given an assurance in this House that these employees are now permanent and if Government gives that assurance, should Government go back on its word? We want an explanation.

**The Minister of Development:** Government is not going back on its word. It is the Government's aim, and it has been announced here, to place on the established staff all those daily paid employees who are engaged on maintenance works. It had been hoped to present to this House today a new Sub-head for established labour. However, this is a matter of the very greatest complexity. There are over 3,000 labourers in the P.W.D. alone, Sir, some of whom are employed on maintenance of buildings and some of whom are employed on the maintenance of roads. Their division is not easy and the process has not yet been completed. When this has been done the present sub-head will entirely disappear.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** As far back as 1955 the Government came to this House and tabled a White Paper telling us that the way out of the problem of daily paid workers are to convert them to the permanent establishment. It is amazing that after a lapse of so many months the matter is still being considered.

**The Chairman:** Do you move formally?

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** No, Sir. I want to leave on record the fact that our confidence in this pronouncement has been shaken.

**The Chairman:** It is on record.

*Question: That the sum of £258,810 for Head 439—Public Works Recurrent—Maintenance Works—stand part of the Schedule put and agreed to.*

#### Head 440—Rural Water Supply

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £434,570 for Head 440—Rural Water Supply—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Minister of Development:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to leave out Group 5 in item (1) of sub-head 1 and insert Group 6. This is a typographical error. Group 6 is the Gorsuch Grading, and this amendment does not alter the financial provision.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Mr M. E. Ogon:** I do not want to argue on the question of rural water supplies, but I want to know what is the Government's programme in these matters, because I am told that by their neglect one million people . . .

**The Chairman:** Your Amendment relates to the whole of Head 440 ?

**Mr M. E. Ogon:** Yes, Sir.

**The Chairman:** Which Head may obviously include the reduction of salaries of Civil Servants who are engaged under that Head ?

**Mr M. E. Ogon:** I do not think so, Sir.

**The Chairman:** I am not a mathematician. You have given me no breakdown of these figures and I rule the motion on the Amendment out of order.

*(To the Minister of Development):* There is no reduction in salaries? The figures are the same.

**The Minister of Development:** Yes, Sir.

*Question, That the sum of £434,570 for Head 440—Rural Water Supply—stand part of the Schedule, put and agreed to.*

#### Head 441—Ministry of Education

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £188,280 for Head 441—Ministry of Education—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Minister of Education:** Mr Chairman before the Education Estimates are considered in detail, I should like to say a word of explanation on the proposals which have been made. To deal first with Head 441, Ministry of Education, honourable Members will notice that the estimates of Personal Emoluments are grouped in two parts—first, the main part of the Ministry and, secondly, the Students Division. In the first place it is proposed to have a small increase of staff to deal with the increased work of the Ministry which is thrown upon it by the general expansion of education and by the heavier responsibilities placed upon the Ministry as a result of the new Education Bill. The work of the Ministry has increased very considerably and it is considered that the additional staff represents the barest minimum requirements.

As regards the Students Division, the work falls into two sections, the Scholarship Board and the Students Advisory Committee, which deals with the affairs of private students. The work of both is increasing as the number of Government scholars abroad, the Ibadan University and the Nigerian College of Technology is built up, and as the number of private students applying to go overseas increases.

As regards the latter, honourable Members will be aware that only a year ago the affairs of private students were dealt with by the Central Students Advisory Committee in Lagos. The Regional Committee has now been set up and it has gradually assumed responsibility for the affairs of all students from this Region who are already abroad, as well as those now seeking to go there. It is essential that the affairs of both students and scholars are handled with efficiency and despatch, and it is considered that this can best be done if both branches are controlled by a Senior Assistant Secretary who will be responsible to the Permanent Secretary, but will handle all affairs of students and scholars. This will take the day-to-day responsibility from the Permanent Secretary and will enable him to devote more time to the other additional responsibilities which are falling upon the Ministry.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Mr Chairman, I have to attack the Nigerianisation policy of this Ministry. I have taken the trouble, Sir, to bring down the Staff List and also the Office and Quarters List in Enugu, to prove to you, Sir, that even though there is a Nigerian in this Department who joined it as far back (I am referring to the Revised Staff List as at the 1st of September, 1955) as 1937, up to now there is no Nigerian in that Department who has risen to any height. I do not know whether that Ministry regards the mere appointment of Nigerians as being the implementation of the Nigerianisation Policy.

If you look at page 7, Sir, in the Staff List you will find:—

- Acting Director of Education—Expatriate.
- Acting Deputy Director of Education—Expatriate.
- Acting Inspector Secondary—Expatriate.
- Acting Inspector Primary—Expatriate.
- Acting Inspector Teacher Training—Expatriate.
- Chief Woman Education Officer—Expatriate.
- Organiser of Domestic Science—Expatriate.
- Senior Education Officer, Technical—Expatriate.
- Education Officer in charge of examinations—Expatriate.
- Senior Accountant—Expatriate,

so that even though you have in the whole Department somebody who has been in that Department as far back as 1937, you still do not have any evidence of any Nigerian being considered to hold any of these acting appointments.

The qualification that this Nigerian holds is an M.A. Honours degree of London University and also a Diploma of London University. When will this Department promote a Nigerian to any of these posts? The qualifications are different, I know the difficulty in that, but I have always held this view that even though the question of promotions, appointments and postings is the prerogative of the Governor, the Executive Council, under the Constitution, is charged with policy. Having laid down this policy, the Executive Council must go on pressing for the implementation of the policy.

I find it very difficult to understand why a Nigerian with the highest qualifications, I say the highest qualification, in that Department and who joined it as far back as 1937 is not even considered to be an acting inspector of either Teacher Training or Secondary.

When we were agitating last year, this chap was brought over here to act in one of the posts. He has now gone home on leave, but the moment his leave expires he goes back to the province. The highest appointment he holds is that of Education Officer. Does it mean that at this stage, when we are nearing self-government as a Region, we cannot think of a Nigerian to head that Department?

I really do not know what type of self-government we are going to get if we cannot get a Nigerian to head the Education Department. You want to see this chap with Master of Arts Degree, the highest you can get. Even though we are told he must produce a Master of Arts Degree of London University and then a chap who has been there since 1937 is not fit. My suggestion is that an approach should be made to the expatriates of that Department to take advantage of the lump sum compensation and go. If by next year we are not going to produce a Nigerian to head that Department then, of course, I do not know. There is too much criticism about educational system in this country and I have always held the view that this is because we have not got a qualified Nigerian at the top. But we all come here every year to debate about the standard of education in the primary and secondary schools going down.

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I have just one other case about a Nigerian lady who had to resign from the Women's Training College at Umuahia to join the Government service. What terms did she get? She was offered over £100 less than her salary in the Mission. This Nigerian lady has a Certificate of the Ministry of Education in England and because of the shortage of staff in her Department she resigned from the Women's Training College at Umuahia in order to join Government. She was given an agreement to sign and offered £200 which is over £100 less than she desired. She left Umuahia hoping to get a better job under the Government.

I am sure Members are not laying down a policy of remaining where you are for ever. Here is a Nigerian lady who thought that she could transfer from the Mission, which had no prospect. She was earning over £325 and when she resigned and went to join Government she was offered little over £200. My suggestion is that there was an attempt to discourage this Nigerian lady. I am tired of coming every year to attack the policy of this Ministry and it is the duty of the Executive Council to decide once and for all whether we are going to have a Nigerian to head it and also the question of postings to secondary schools.

In my division there is a Teacher Training College and for the past three or four years a Nigerian has been posted for the first time. Judging from the report check up from the Ministry, I think he is doing very well. But in the past it was said that no Nigerian could head the Training College at Uyo, and I am glad to report that over the last three or four years a Nigerian who has been to England has been heading that College creditably. He is not a graduate, anyway.

The point I want to make here is that a Nigerian who is not a graduate has been heading the Teacher Training College for the last three to four years and I think he is doing very well. That comes to reinforce my argument that even if you pick up any of these people, close your eyes and appoint any of these people to be either Deputy Director or the Director; they will acquit themselves well.

I really thought, when we made this provision in the Constitution in 1956, that some expatriate officers might want to retire on a lump sum compensation. I thought so many of them who were not very happy in that particular Department would take advantage of this lump sum compensation. I would advise them to do so because unless they do, I do not see any chances for a chap who has been in that Department as far back as 1937. If you understand the mentality of the Africans when they keep on in this Department for all these years—and I am saying they are better than expatriate staff—the effect is that chaps who have M.A. honours degree from London University will begin to lose interest in their work and when you come to tell them that we are winning, we are scoring and doing everything in order to implement this Nigerianisation, they quote themselves as instances and the whole thing seems to be a failure indeed.

So I am appealing to the Minister of Education to make an approach to some of the expatriate staff in his Department and suggest it would be very generous of them if they would not mind giving way in order to allow some of these Nigerians to have a chance. It is a very serious matter. I regard it as very serious. I do not know what we should do, nobody knows the end. Right down at the bottom of the list and all you call them is Education Officers. Ten vacancies still exist and I imagine you start to recruit them as Education Officers.

**Chief A. N. Onyike (Awka Division):** I hereby register my congratulations to the Minister of Education for assuring this House that he will convert five existing primary schools to secondary schools and also for presenting us the Education Bill to enable us to remove those clauses in the present Education code that cause impediment to the educational progress of our children.

There are two Government schools in Awka Division, one in each District Council of Awka and Ajali. They are the Awka and Ajali Government schools respectively. I am appealing to the Minister of Education to raise these two primary schools to full secondary school standard. I can assure you, Sir, that six colleges cannot absorb the children of secondary school age in the Division.

I would also ask the Minister of Education to please raise the P.T.C. at Nimo to E.T.C.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

**Mr K. Giadom (Ogoni Division):** Mr Chairman, I have two observations to make on the Government policy on education in the Region.

The first is this. I have observed that it seems more emphasis is placed on education of our men than our women. I think it is about time Government changed its policy to place more emphasis on the women. I have always said, and still maintain, that as a growing nation we cannot progress with only our men marching ahead, leaving our women behind. It is a fact—a social axiom that cannot be disproved here—that unless men and women march abreast, we shall not attain the height we want to attain among the nations of the world. For example, the honourable Members here have their children and their wives. If their wives have no education to educate their children how are you going to get better citizens?

Our girls and boys are being made to develop an inferiority complex by this policy of separation of our boys from the girls in our school system. We have to get together; after all the women are the neck of the family and the men are the head and it is the neck that wheels the head anywhere it wants to turn. This has got to be done and unless we get our boys and girls to understand this there will be no better human relations to make ourselves good citizens.

Mr Chairman, the second point I want to raise is this. The existing only girls school in Ogoni should be encouraged to be expanded into a Teacher Training Centre for the women. I do realise, as you all do, that this Division is one of the most neglected Divisions in the Region and in the whole Division there is only one girls' school and this girls' school should be encouraged.

Now the existing St. Pius X Secondary School in the Division, even though that name may imply that it is a Catholic project, is in fact a joint project, a Community Development project. It is a project between the people of Bodo town and the Catholic Mission. As the Government has committed itself to a fifty-fifty policy, I would suggest and urge the Government not to delay in coming to fulfil its promise as far as this secondary school is concerned.

**Mr C. A. Abangwu:** Mr Chairman, I shall first start by thanking the Minister of Education for a particular project which I think is worthy of that Ministry. That is the new system of establishing girls Teachers Colleges in many parts of the Region.

Recently I had been in two or three of these Women's Training Colleges and what I find there is that African girls who have been to England for training were made to head these schools and it is just pleasing to see what amount of effort these girls are putting forward in order to justify the fact that they too can head schools. I was very much impressed and I think the Minister of Education will continue to build more of these Teacher Training Colleges, and put our girls at the top. That comes, incidentally, to what my honourable Friend, Mr Eyo, had said earlier. If you do not put these people right at the head and see how they fair, you will not be able to judge right or wrong. I think that has been a success so far and the Ministry of Education has my thanks for that.

The next point is scholarships. At one time in this House there was a question put up and I put up a supplementary to the effect that scholarships were awarded mainly to the United Kingdom. All too often we hear there are no spaces in these Colleges—no space here, no space there. Why is it necessary that the Ministry of Education always directs applications for space, first of all to the United Kingdom and when told there is no space they seem to rest?

I think the United States of America, Canada, many parts of Europe, India and other places are avenues whereby we could train our boys; and particularly a place like India is one of the best places where you can send our boys to study, especially Engineering and rural development and things like that. I am urging the Ministry to take courage and look for places in Universities, not only in the United Kingdom, but also in other parts of the world. Since we are really going to have self-Government we must have people who have been in the Colleges in various parts of the world so that, coming back to Nigeria, you have variegated knowledge. You have experience coming from various parts.

*Sitting suspended at 4.30 p.m.*

*Sitting resumed at 5 p.m.*

**Mr C. A. Abangwu:** Mr Chairman, Sir, I was on the point of scholarships outside this country. I shall end up this talk, Sir, by asking the Minister of Education to find out the means of getting places for students in the University College of the Gold Coast, in Sierra Leone and also at the University College of Ibadan. These places are obviously much cheaper for our students than America or any other place outside this country, and are also nearer home.

I think that all possible avenues should be explored in order to make our students benefit from their scholarship awards. At the present time, there are only about eleven scholars at the University College of Ibadan. I think this number should be much more for the reasons that have already been given earlier. It is cheaper, it is nearer home and there are many other reasons why we should take advantage of that place.

The next point, Sir, is the drive for mass education and adult education. I find that in many parts of the rural areas, illiteracy is as rampant as it has been from the days of old. At one time or the other one hears that something is being done to decrease mass illiteracy but it seems to me not much has been done in this field. In my own constituency nothing has been done to improve as much as possible the number of people that can read and write. The Minister might consider increasing these votes, instead of others, in the near future.

The next point, Sir, is the erection of five secondary schools which the Minister announced earlier, by converting five existing primary schools into secondary schools. I would say, Sir, that in some of these places where you have Government Primary Schools, there are at present adequate secondary schools to cater at least better for that area than another area. In my own constituency, there is no Government Primary school at all, so that the conversion of one does not arise at all. There are at present over twenty classes of Standard VI boys and girls in my constituency. There is only one secondary school which takes in about thirty students a year. Now, Sir, what we have is twenty times thirty—that is the number of boys who come out of primary schools each year, but there is only one secondary school that will take in about thirty. It will be for the Government to consider what the House should do with these extra boys.

In my own opinion, instead of converting some of those primary schools in places where you have at present a number of secondary schools already, the Minister should consider leaving some of these places and going to certain areas where there are none at all to establish one of these secondary schools. I think that if this is done the rural areas might benefit from such a plan.

With these few remarks, Mr Chairman, Sir, I beg to sit down.

**Mr J. H. E. Nwuke (Ahoada Division):** Mr Chairman, Sir, I just want to say that this Ministry has not been treating the Ahoada Division fairly. Just for quite a very long time the people of Ahoada Division have been asking for just one secondary school, but Government has done nothing until last year when the people of Ahoada Division taxed themselves to have some money to build secondary schools. And for this, I understand only £3,000 was given by Government whereas the policy of the Ministry of Education is to give assistance on a

fifty-fifty basis. I would like to know whether that £3,000 is 50 per cent of the £30,000 raised by the people of Ahoada Division. At the moment, Government is intending to convert five primary schools to secondary schools but in Ahoada Division we have a primary school and we have for a long time been praying that that one should be converted, but nothing has been done.

Another point, I want to take up is the Regional Scholarship award. Ahoada has a very large population of 310,000. But it will interest you, Mr Chairman, to know that we had nothing in that whole award. We have nothing at all and even if a boy from Ahoada is awarded such a scholarship it does not benefit him when he returns. I have two cases where boys were awarded scholarships. When they returned they were called for an appointment and the Civil Service Commission said they were not suitable.

Last time I raised the question of the Minister considering Ahoada for secondary school awards. But only four boys were awarded these scholarships and the other divisions had the benefit of a university education and had the majority share. So, I feel, Mr Chairman, that Ahoada is not fairly treated.

Another point I want to discuss is about what I read in the paper yesterday that Government will only give free education to Class I next year. But, in Ahoada Division Sir, . . .

**The Chairman:** I think you misunderstand this debate at this stage. The question relates to the policy of the Department and certainly this is not the occasion to fight for your division or for any other province. You should appreciate what the issue is.

**Mr J. H. E. Nwuke:** I was going to point out, Sir. . .

**The Chairman:** That Ahoada is neglected?

**Mr J. H. E. Nwuke:** Yes.

**The Chairman:** And suggesting things to the Minister and his Department on what it ought to do.

**Mr J. H. E. Nwuke:** Well, I just want to suggest that in Rivers Province or in the other five provinces of the Region, Government should establish five technical schools. I think if these are established they will enable school-leavers to get something to do. If Government is catering for the benefit of all, Government should try to do something to enable its children to be absorbed in one industry or another. With these few words, Mr Chairman, I beg to take my seat.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** Mr Chairman, with your permission, I would like to speak for some time because the debate on this Head naturally gives us an opportunity to examine the policy of the Department.

I want to say, right at the outset, that I have tabled a number of amendments both under this Head and the Head following to elicit information when the time comes.

I think we are all agreed that Education is the one service in the country where we should not drag politics in. By this I mean that we should make quite certain that our educational system, whatever educational system is approved by this House from time to time, is a system approved by both sides of the House, and a system that will endure when any Government comes and goes. That is the British system because a mistake in the matter of an educational system of any nation might be very disastrous.

The nation as a nation should agree on the educational policy, and a change of Government should mean merely a change of people to give the national directive to put into effect the decisions of that nature. Education should be completely non-partisan, or as others say, it should be dual partisan. If you think of the Government and the Opposition than Education should bring them in formal agreement with previous educational proposals. If you do that then you can explore the necessary confidence in the breasts of the nation to allow this system to go on without a serious shock when the Government fails. I think that this is of extreme importance.



Again we have been told that five Government primary schools will be converted to secondary schools. In Abakaliki we have no Government primary school; therefore, there is no hope of our benefiting from this proposal. In that case, Sir, I think the Government should consider converting some of the Voluntary Agency schools to secondary schools because Government primary schools are not evenly distributed in the Region.

I like to speak on the question of centres for sitting entrance examinations to secondary schools, particularly in areas where there are no means of communication. I suggest that Government should devise a means whereby there will be a centre in every Division. In Obubra, for example, we have a very big school, but we have not got roads. Government should, in such a case, make arrangements to give every senior primary school a chance of taking these entrance examinations in their Divisions, instead of requiring the boys to travel from such a place on bicycle to Abakaliki and then motoring to Enugu where the centre is usually fixed.

This question of creating a separate state is partly the result of uneven attention to the needs of the various sections of the Region. I come from a province which is regarded as the most backward in the Region, but the Government is not taking any serious step to see that we have secondary schools to cater for our boys. It is something to note that in the Eastern Region I will not say at a glance that there is any one man from Abakaliki who is in the civil service. This shows that we are not yet educated, and Government should, therefore, encourage us so that we may march abreast with the other Divisions.

We should be given the chance to meet the other provinces. For example, in Onitsha Province there are now about thirty secondary schools, whereas in Ogoja Province there are only two secondary schools, I think. Yet we are the second largest province in this Region.

Mr Chairman, if our province will only be used as a tool for money making by the Government without regard to our enjoying amenities like secondary schools, is it fair? Some honourable Members here have just mentioned that we have cement industry in my Division. May I remind them that this is no amenity. On the contrary, Government is tapping money from us without compensating us by way of providing amenities.

I do not want to comment on the question of the University of Nigeria. My people are not very keen on a University because we have not got sufficient boys in secondary schools. Rather than shout for a university we are thinking in terms of secondary schools. I do not quarrel with the proposal to establish a university, and if it is sited in Abakaliki, I will not quarrel either, but Government should see that we are given sufficient secondary schools in Ogoja Province as a whole.

With these few words I take my seat.

**Mr P. N. Okeke (Onitsha Division):** Mr Chairman, before I make any comments, I like to invite the attention of the Minister of Education to a recent publication in the *Daily Times* concerning the free primary education which will be introduced next year.

After the passage of the Finance Law the strongest argument we employed to convince our people is that they were not going to pay school fees in 1957, but immediately this publication was made all further arguments proved abortive. They would not believe us when we told them that it was not what we decided. Some of them even said that we did not know what was decided in the House, because they take whatever is published in the newspaper as gospel truth. I think sufficient information is not coming from the Ministry of Education to dispel the false news in the newspaper.

People believe that in 1957 there will be free primary education for boys in Class 1 only. This will make it difficult to explain to the people the implications of the Tax Law. Today, I have seen another publication in the newspaper, but that did not seem to me to emanate from the Ministry. I think it is time the Minister made a statement both in the newspapers and in the N.B.S. (Nigerian Broadcasting Service).

indent for an Expatriate to come along and teach in your school, teacher training or secondary school, at a much smaller cost to yourself than if you apply for local Africans. That will come as a surprise to you, but it is true. If you employ a local African graduate, the Government grant covers his salary and you pay back to Government assumed local contribution. If you employ an Expatriate, his salary, his travelling expenses, his allowances, are all taken into account in assessing grants. The resulting effect is that if you have not got money, you look for a white man to take the post because if you take a man from Gold Coast or from Sierra Leone you have to provide for his expenses in coming and Government takes no notice of it. If you take a man from London or Exeter, Government will take notice of that. We fought that in the old Code and lost and I sincerely hope that the Minister will listen to that matter when the new Code comes in.

Another point which I think, when the Minister comes to look into the Code, he might take to his colleagues in the Executive Council in this—You cannot as a Government stand for representation and then as a Ministry, part of that Government, talk about nomination. The present Code talks about the Minister being given power to nominate who shall represent, for instance, the Christian Council, the Catholic Mission, the N.U.T., and the Local Government bodies. That of course is out-moded. The N.C.N.C. Government does not stand for that and I sincerely hope they will not condone nomination by their Minister.

Before I take my seat, there is one last point I would like to make. The Minister will certainly be disposed to make sure that some small points, like the definition in the present Code of the pivotal teacher, will be revised. The present definition is completely erroneous. It leaves us with the anomaly of two boys equally qualified, going into the teaching field with the School Certificate and the Grade II Teachers' Certificate, receiving different rates of pay, one being better paid than the other merely because he obtained the School Certificate by passing through a school and the other not. This is a condition that calls for reconsideration.

Finally, Sir, we should encourage teachers generally to improve their knowledge. Training colleges are springing up here and there these days for which we are grateful. Among the recent passes are school teachers who had been uncertificated teachers for eight to ten years before they had the opportunity to go into training. In the past it was laid down that teachers who go into training and fail to qualify should, when they come out, get increments on the basis of one increment for every year of training, and then move on to the top of whatever scale they were running. But a circular has been passed round—and the Catholic Manager of Schools in Owerri showed me a copy of this circular recently—saying that teachers who go into training and fail to obtain a certificate must be on the "fail" scale, and at the bottom of that scale—a scale most of them who did not go into training in time had long gone over before going into training. In simple language you are saying that uncertificated teachers who go into training must pass their final examination; otherwise when they come back they not only lose the salary they had before going into training but they begin at the bottom of a lower scale.

In other words, a teacher, say, on £144 per annum who goes into training and fails to obtain a certificate, comes back and begins on £72 or £56 per annum. Are you encouraging him to move forward or to move backward? You are turning teacher training into a sweepstake. He must either obtain his certificate or be done for.

As I said earlier I do not think that any one of these anomalies is of the Minister's creation. On the contrary it is the creation of the department. But these anomalies are there, and I do sincerely hope that the Minister will look into them in re-assessing the work and responsibilities for the coming financial year.

**Mr S. N. Alo (Abakaliki Division):** Mr Chairman, I rise to make some points in regard to this Head. We have been told that backward areas will be encouraged to get secondary schools. It is very surprising that there are some Divisions where there are no secondary schools, for example, Obubra and Abakaliki Divisions,

consultation; and, of course, needless to say, my Union is amazed and shocked that a Bill should be tabled without consulting those who, at least, have a right to say they know what the Bill is all about.

I think that during the Minister's tour abroad with the honourable Premier, his barge has been allowed to get into bad water, and I can never forgive the tactlessness, the well-nigh stupidity, with which the ex-Minister of Finance nearly wrecked the Education Ministry and the Finance Ministry all at once. (*Cries of "This is unfair"*). It may not be fair, but it is a fact. I said the same thing when he was here, and you can go to blazes and tell him.

**The Chairman:** Order! Order!

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** Mr Chairman, I cannot forgive the stupidity with which the ex-Minister of Finance rolled into one Ministry like a balloon, rolled into another as acting Premier and everything. Thank God the balloon burst. So I will not say more. He nearly wrecked the Department of Education and I cannot forgive a Minister of State who stoops to intrigue to break a Trade Union, nor can I say what it cost us in money and in blood to tour the whole Region last year to tell the people that the N.U.T. was never partisan in Education and that we call upon everybody of all political views to combine and concentrate on education and not drag their politics in. For twenty-five years, the N.U.T. has gone on and politics are not allowed in our Union, and a Minister of State stooped to intrigue to break the Union. (*Shouts of, "You are saying this because he is not here" from Government Bench*). And when you say that he is not here, who sent him away? He has run away like all cowards do. (*Retorts of "He is coming back"*). Well, let him come quickly and hear me talking. (*Retorts of "He will answer you back"*). Of course he will—he never lacks words. Mr Chairman, I am very glad that the present Minister and the Premier are sensitive to what I am saying. There is a change of heart. If you went the way of your private friend, this Government would be heading for trouble. You just cannot do that. (*Interruptions*). Mr Chairman, we are discussing policy—may I continue?

**The Chairman:** You may.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** Mr Chairman, I do not think it makes for healthy educational progress if you try to insulate adults from influences right and wrong. Recently, Sir, principals received a circular from the Ministry saying that we must not, on pains of school grants being withdrawn, have anything to do with the Conference of Principals in the West. That is beyond understanding!

For many years, the Principals of schools in the West have organised themselves into a conference and only last December, I think, the Principal of the D.M.G.S. was invited and he attended as an observer. I was invited. I did not attend. I had not the time. But round has come a circular telling us, as principals of schools, that we dare not have anything to do with the Principals' Conference in the West. What sort of state are we building up? This is a Gestapo kind of thing! We must stop this—you haunt this and you haunt that. I cannot believe that that kind of attitude can come from any one Minister. Must the Government censor all the books we read and all the conversations we hold? And for a simple Principals' Conference (organised by Voluntary Agencies in the West—Miss Webber was Chairman at the last meeting and retains that chairmanship every year—at which Principals of grammar schools, teacher training colleges, and so on, meet together to discuss matters purely educational) our own Ministry had to issue a directive that we dare not cross the Niger—for fear of infection I suppose. That kind of thing can only lead to trouble. You trouble the Principals when they do not trouble you. You should not antagonise teachers unnecessarily; they will not be small boys for ever.

Mr Chairman, I am glad a new Education Bill is coming. I hope the Minister will do his best to remove once and for all the discriminative clauses in the existing Code under which we are working. I will cite examples. The existing Code makes it easier financially and less expensive to any Voluntary Agency to import an Expatriate to teach in his school. You can

[1956-57 E.R. Appropriation  
Law, 1956]

26th March, 1956

[Committee]

Speaking about the scholarship system, Sir, some while ago, I did say that our scholarships should be taken away from the hands of the Ministers and set on their own legs as a non-partisan service for the Region. We never can tell—not the wisest of us can tell—if his own son will follow his politics or the contrary. What you want is a system of education that is free and unfettered for all, and the scholarship system should not be left to the Party in Opposition, or in Government, nor left to the Party of our friends today, but made a system sacred and sacrosanct, completely insulated from the vagaries of politics. That I advocated some while ago, when the House was more or less suffering from the fever of the last elections, and I do sincerely hope that temperatures have gone down and that people will examine that proposition a little more objectively.

Education, to succeed in this country, must be based on consultation. Over 90 per cent of the schools in this Region, and indeed of the country—we confine ourselves naturally to our Region—are in the hands of the Voluntary Agencies, and Government cannot hope to succeed with any educational system, however good, without co-operation with these Voluntary Agencies. They were in the field before Government, and Government would be doing very well if they see to the over-all regulations, secure justice for all, provide the funds and supervise what is going on. I allow all that to Government. I do not want to whittle down the powers of Government at all. But you cannot hope to carry the big Voluntary Agencies with you—or the small ones for that matter—without adequate consultation. I submit very respectfully that the Department and the Ministry should underline that.

Now, nothing destroys confidence like secrecy. If you close your fist and go about the House, you raise the questions, "What is in your hand?" People will be inquisitive and curious to know what you hold, and the tighter your fist, the more suspicion arises, and it might be in the end you open your hand and there is nothing there, and they all laugh, and say, "Oh, you raised our suspicions all along." There may be nothing to hide in the Department, but so long as you do not consult people, you make them naturally inquisitive and perhaps you find it very difficult in the end to solicit their co-operation. I think all that should be regarded as a thing of the past.

I can say this much: The present Minister of Education, if I am allowed a personal comment, has shown himself abundantly amenable to friendly discussion and advice and able to hold his ground when he does not agree with you, which makes me love him all the more; and he is quite willing to give way and say, "I never thought of that, you know". It is not derogatory from the status and standing of a Minister if he admits that he is human, and so I think we are heading a very auspicious wind with the person we have. I do sincerely hope that whatever re-shuffling you do, you leave our Minister of Education for us quietly because he has shown himself great—he never at any time in his life claimed infallibility and I love him the more!

He has always shown readiness to co-operate but that is not the same as saying that the Department, in the nine months or so, has done the co-operating that they should have done. I only hope there is a change of heart. The Voluntary Agencies, take the Christian Council, for instance, or the Nigeria Union of Teachers, have both been shocked, shocked to the very depth, to see that an Education Code is being sponsored into this House without consultation. It has been our tradition that whenever a new Code is coming out, the Voluntary Agencies are given an advance copy to study, and the Nigeria Union of Teachers who, after all, are the people on whom you depend to carry out whatever you decide, are given copies to study and then all their views are collated.

And the Education Board, itself, has not met for more than a year which is, by the way, a breach of the Ordinance. The Board must meet at least once a year, but the Board, so far as my information goes, has been pushed out and everything is going on purely on the Ministerial level. I do not think that that makes for a healthy Educational democracy, and, so, the Christian Council, it will interest you to know, have asked me to put in a word about this question of

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E. (Enyong Division):** I rise on point of explanation. I was talking about an unofficial Principals' Conference, not Government's in any way at all and I would be grateful if the honourable Minister can give an answer.

**The Minister of Education:** You see, the reason was that it was referred to me. If it was unofficial it would not have been referred to me. It was referred to me through the backdoor. Another thing I want this House to know is that I will always object when any education matter whether from Eng'land or other Regions is brought to this Region educationally through the backdoor. I have a Permanent Secretary. In England it is the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry who receives all communications and refers to all Departments concerned but what happens here is that that has not been carried on; they would like to contact inferior officers—not me—and they will know everything before referring to me. I refuse to take dictation.

Now I come to what honourable Okeke said. He is under a misapprehension about the closing of P.T.Cs.—(Preliminary Training Centres). It is Government's policy to convert as many as possible and not to allow the opening of new P.T.Cs. because of these inferior certificates from P.T.Cs. We want to work towards something. It is considered that they are not economical. You know what happens when they return from the one year training—they are not teachers; if they fail they are sent away. It is a waste of time and we feel that the present P.T.Cs. should be converted to teacher training so that we have enough teachers in 1957. None will be closed at all unless the Agencies say that they have no teachers. I think the Department has written a letter to that effect.

As regards the position of Senior Members of Voluntary Agency Service, I must refer the honourable Member to the statement on teachers' salary in the Gorsuch Report, which has already been stated in this House. The report of the Joint Negotiating Committee is under active consideration and I hope to make a statement in the near future.

Now I would like to come to what the honourable Ogon said here. I am very sorry that he said that I had gone round Ogoja Divisions begging them to take advantage of the Government's pronouncements. And I would like to add that when I was in Ogoja I happened to meet honourable Ogon—I think it was at Abakaliki—and I am very very glad that he was useful to me because through my contact with him that day, when I went to Ogoja I spoke to the people and they were enthusiastic, and glad to have Teacher Training and when I asked them, "what do you feel," the District Officer said "What do you want them to answer you, they have a school here," and so I turned to him and told the District Officer I was not speaking to him. I want them to tell me what they feel about it. They came that day and told me they wanted a school and told me the amount subscribed and as far as I am concerned I would be the last person to discourage them.

One thing I can advise honourable Members is that you people must help us to implement our policy. When a Minister has spoken in your division, it would be your duty to come to the Ministry if you know that things do not come on well, not to leave everything in the hands of the District Officer. Not many of them go with us and so it is left to you to come to the Ministry to discuss the problem with the Ministers.

*Sub-head 3—Local Transport and Travelling.*

**The Minister of Education:** Sir, I beg to move, with His Excellency's assent, that sub-head 3 be increased by £25. It is a consequential amendment to all Ministries Local Transport and Travelling vote. It is caused by the proposed increase in the chauffeurs' allowance paid to Parliamentary Secretaries from £75 to £100. In the Ministry of Education, there is one Parliamentary Secretary and the consequential increase is therefore £25. Sir, I beg to move.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Sub-head 11—Eastern Region Scholarship Scheme.*

**The Minister of Education:** I beg to move, with His Excellency's assent, that sub-head 11 be increased by £13,000. The Government has recently, with the approval of the Standing Committee on Finance, approved an increase of approximately 8 per cent in the allowances paid to its scholarship holders in the United Kingdom. This step, Sir, was taken in accordance with the advice of the Secretary of State that the cost of living in the United Kingdom has so risen that the former allowance had become inadequate. I am sure that honourable Members will agree that Government was right to increase the allowances at an estimated cost of £13,000 in the coming financial year.

Sir, I beg to move.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Question: That an increased sum of £201,305 for Head 441—The Ministry of Education—be inserted in the Schedule—put and agreed to.*

**Head 442.—Education**

*Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £3,158,880 for Head 442—Education—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Minister of Education:** Mr Chairman, I would like to say a word on Head 442, Education. In general there are few increases of note on last year's estimates. There is an increase in Grants-in-Aid, made necessary by the increased assistance due under the old regulations for schools on the assisted list or to be taken on. Provision is also being made for the cost of the revision of Voluntary Agency teachers' salaries but this is still under negotiation, although the report has been received by Government and is under consideration and a final decision will soon be reached. The figure of £350,000 is therefore a token one which may well be exceeded.

To meet the increased duties and responsibilities placed upon the Education Department additional staff will be required and will be the subject of application for additional provision. It will be necessary to re-organise the department to some extent and what appears in these estimates is the beginning of this re-organisation. Honourable Members will be aware that under the Education Bill powers are vested in the Minister. They will also recall that in my policy paper it was foreshadowed that the administrative section of the department would be separated from the inspectorate, so that the latter may be free to devote adequate time to inspection. It is therefore proposed, as soon as may be, to divide the Department into two parts—the Inspectorate to be under a Chief Inspector and the Administrative side to be under a Chief Executive Officer. The posts of Director and Deputy Director as such would disappear.

It had been hoped, Sir, that proposals for staff re-organisation and increases would have been placed before you now, but Government has decided that they should be considered along with proposals for the implementation of universal primary education, the precise cost of which cannot yet be estimated. In fact, the precise cost cannot be known until after the registration of school children, which it is intended shall take place in May. Application will be made as soon as possible for additional funds both for staff and for the general implementation of the primary education programme, the planning of which is being pressed forward with all possible speed.

Honourable Members will appreciate that we are doing our best to satisfy all the divisions, but I may say that some fail to help this Ministry in the implementation of the programme. In some areas where token grants have been paid to Local Government Councils for the building and expansion of teachers' centres or secondary schools, nothing has yet been done. It is up to the people to take advantage of what has been given to them.

With regard to sections (b) and (c) of the Estimates, Sir, I should say that the scheme has not yet been approved by the Secretary of State. Correspondence is being conducted on certain points and further details are being worked out. I should prefer, therefore, not to go into details now about any particular sub-heads as I shall move certain amendments to sub-heads as we proceed.

*Sitting suspended at 11.30 a.m.*

*Sitting resumed at 12 noon.*

*Sub-head 1, Item (1)—Senior Chief Inspector.*

**The Minister of Education:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to leave out under sub-head 1 Item (1) the word "Senior". You will observe, Sir, from the Draft Estimates before the House, that it is proposed to reorganise the Education Department to conform more accurately than before to the chain of responsibility under the Ministerial system. To this end, the posts of Director and Deputy Director of Education are to be replaced by two posts with more suitable titles. The new Head of the Department was originally to be known as the "Senior Chief Inspector", but it has now been decided that the word "Senior" is redundant.

Sir, I beg to move.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Sub-head 1, Item (11).*

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** Mr Chairman, I listed this amendment to call attention to what I consider to be a question of abuse of our administrative powers to defeat the intention and spirit of the Education Code. I do not, of course, attach blame to the particular holder of the office as the matter I am complaining of may not have been done by him, but I attach blame to the administration as such.

The Senior Teachers' Certificate, variously called Grade I, is by regulation issuable only to Grade II Certificate holders, that is the Higher Elementary Teachers who have, subsequent to obtaining their Grade II, put in five years of satisfactory service and have, in addition, passed in two subjects in the Old Senior Teachers Examination or, under the present arrangement, two subjects in G.C.E. (Advanced Level) provided, of course, that these two subjects are among the listed subjects for that award.

It has come to the notice of my Union that the Education Department has, as a matter of fact, been awarding the Senior Certificate, that is Grade I, to teachers who have not fulfilled all those conditions laid down by the Code. In particular, they have taken uncertificated teachers into the Rural Science Training Centre at Umuahia and the successful candidates have been obtaining Grade I Certificates. My Union feels that this is a method by which, through administrative action, the value of the certificate is cheapened.

This is a very delicate motion. If the honourable Minister offers an explanation, Sir, then I will not formally move; but if not satisfactory, probably I shall move.

**Mr E. O. Eyo (Uyo Division):** Mr Chairman, I just want to ask the Minister of Education whether, before the House rises, he will be in a position to make a statement on this vexed question of teachers' salaries?

**The Minister of Education:** Well, regarding what honourable Eyo said, I have already made a statement that the matter is under active consideration. In moving this Head, I made mention of the fact that we have inserted the sum of £350,000 in the Estimates as a token figure for the payment of arrears of salaries to the Voluntary Agency teachers.

Regarding what the honourable Ikoku said about senior teachers entering into the Rural Science course at Umuahia . . .

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** No, I said teachers who went into the Rural Science Centre without a certificate, and who came out and were awarded Grade I Certificates.

**The Minister of Education:** Well, I am not aware of that.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** Will the honourable Minister be good enough to give an undertaking that he will investigate the matter?

**Mr Chairman:** I assume he will. He has said so.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** Thank you. Therefore, I do not move.

*Sub-head 1, Item (11)—Education Officer.*

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** Here again my motion was not meant to relate to any particular officer, but I wish to draw attention to the fact that if the Standard 6 Examination is to be taken by all Primary schools, then it is essential that the results should be out well in time for the following year's arrangements to be made.

As the honourable Ogon very ably underlined, there has been confusion as to what to do with the 70,000 children thrown out, and my quarrel is that the results take too long coming out. They are published in March and this really dislocates a lot of things—appointments to Primary Schools of boys whom you imagine, might pass, and intake into Teacher Training of boys whom everybody feels might pass.

My other quarrel is that some teachers were accepted as markers of scripts and told that the scripts would come to them by the 15th December but these scripts never came. I know certain teachers who had to forgo the whole of the Christmas holiday waiting for scripts. The Department had accepted their names, after invitation by tenders, if I might use a Ministry of Works term, and had written back to say that the scripts would come to them not later than 15th December. They waited until Christmas. Nothing came and then they went away in January for holidays. I consider this a very shabby treatment. Those teachers are very annoyed about this, and I think it is my business to point out that the proper thing has not been done.

Regarding results (the Minister of Health wants me to talk about the results—thank you very much) I cannot include the bad results in a motion or preparation for a motion of censure because I do not think that the examinations section had anything to do with the bad results. If they assessed everybody correctly and equitably, the poor results cannot be blamed on them. We all deprecate the bad results and somebody in an undertone—I took it for a joke—was inclined to blame teachers and the N.U.T. to make the matter worse. The N. U.T. stands for standard and we will certainly do all we can to underline the bad results, but I think if you push that kind of thing too far you might as well blame all the doctors for the deaths in hospitals and Health Centres.

**The Minister of Education:** Regarding the examination results coming late this year, the decision to hold that examination was taken during the year and it was impossible to finish all the work involved in time. This year the examination will be held earlier, probably in August and the results will be published before the end of the year.

The other matter raised will be looked into.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** Thank you very much. Therefore I do not move, Sir.

*Sub-head 33—Voluntary Agency Teachers Revised Salaries.*

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** Mr Chairman, so much has been said about this matter by kind voices on both sides of the House, that I do not want to add to what has been said. I had listed this amendment merely to get from the Minister a categorical statement that £350,000 is a token head because that money will not go round. He has said so this morning.



With your permission, Mr Chairman, might I ask the Ministry to do everything possible to put the money into the hands of the teachers in April. If we did that, we would be allaying a great deal of incipient discontent, and whether the scales we pay to the teachers are adequate or not, they should get their Gorsuch in April. If they want to continue the debate on the adequacy of the figures, that will be a different matter. Further-more, I do sincerely hope that the arrears will date from 1st October, 1954, and finally that Government will find the whole money and not the Voluntary Agencies.

*Sub-head 34—Special Purposes Grants.*

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** Mr Chairman, this is a serious one. I do not think that most honourable Members are aware of the system of grants-in-aid to Secondary Schools. One or two have pointed out, Sir, that the formula for aiding secondary schools is in two parts. A number of schools are aided 100 per cent of budget—they are called the Development Schools. The last Inspector-General, Mr Davidson, chose twenty-two schools throughout Nigeria and put their names up to the Colonial Office for this type of assistance. That was during the Ten Year Development Plan. I suppose all the reasons for the discrimination are gone and we can now talk about one formula.

I am glad that the Minister gave an undertaking to go into the matter, but grants-in-aid are worked out on a formula from which you cannot deviate. It is different from Special Purposes Grants. These grants are made at the Minister's, formerly the Director's, unfettered discretion, and I have a quarrel with the use of that discretion—a quarrel which is not new. I have quarrelled in this House all along, so that I do not attach blame to the Minister at the moment.

But I think, Sir, that Special Purposes Grants should be regularised. Special Purposes Grants are grants that are made to schools for buildings, laboratory equipment, *et cetera*, and if schools are at the mercy of whoever makes them, then it is quite easy to see that many schools will be stunted and will not grow, and can only lay claim to the statutory grant under formula for recurring maintenance subsistence. Year in and year out, you write to the department, listing your programmes, and sometimes as late as January of the financial year you are told, "We regret there are no grants". That is not fair, Sir.

A few days ago, the honourable Premier told the House that in the last six years, Aggrey Memorial College had £33,000 grant. The honourable gentleman was not informed that that was maintenance grant for the payment of teachers' salaries and that we paid assumed local contribution. That was a statutory grant and £33,000 in six years works out at a little over £5,000 a year—just about what Government College pays its cooks.

To give the House the proper picture, we should ask, within the same period what did D.M.G.S., or Uzuakoli or Hope Waddell get? It is only by such a comparison that the House will understand that there has been no error of generosity at all. The Special Purposes Grants are, as I said, purely and simply at the discretion of whoever makes them and schools are being starved there. It is possible to victimise a school by the withdrawal of Special Purposes grants. You can say to a school, "You get your grants according to statute but that grant which comes to me by virtue of generosity, you will not get," and that drags the school back to the whirlpool of politics.

I would like that Special Purposes grants should be regulated. I have a letter here from the Principals and Proprietors of African Secondary Schools saying precisely the same thing. They would like to know what to expect—so much for building, so much for laboratory equipment, every year. They are calling for a formula to regulate Special Purposes grants.

If the Minister is minded to allay my fears, I will not move. But if not, I take the risk of moving this, even if I have to lose. Then the House will have committed itself to a policy of discrimination.

**The Minister of Education :** Mr Chairman, I object to the honourable Member's statement about our policy of discrimination. Since I assumed work in the Ministry I have been fighting really hard to see that every Secondary School received this Special Purposes grant. Where a school has not received such grant, we look into it to find out whether the particular school received a grant during the previous year. When the money available is very small, I always like to see that the money goes round instead of dumping the money into one particular school. This applies to both Voluntary Agency and Private Schools. I think these schools should be grateful, for during the past two years they have seen what they had not seen before. I can say that more than half their number have received grants for the first time. I assure the honourable Member that we shall take all steps to divide the small we have to go round.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** Mr Chairman, I must thank the Minister. I do not grudge the new schools, I am happy they are receiving grants but he has not touched my point. You do not expand education by stultifying the development of the schools that be. You should move on. Education is a very revenue consuming business. If you ask a school to put up a Science Department and they put it in the hope that you will aid them, it is very little comfort to tell them that the money has gone to new schools.

**Mr Chairman :** (*To the Minister of Education*) Are you in a position to give him any guarantee ?

**The Minister of Education :** I have said all I have to say.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** I think, Sir, that a policy of a definite sum, however, small, to all schools to develop a certain aspect of Education regularly for a number of years should be a little more fixed and firm, so that schools will know what they should expect. I have that from the African Proprietors. They have even gone to the extent of suggesting that instead of giving a secondary school £3,000 a year, each school should be given £500 a year for building and development. They will have to cut their coat according to the length of cloth. They will then know what to expect every year. If a sort of formula is agreed upon for the expansion of new schools and for the maintenance of standards in schools, I think the whole Region will benefit.

**The Minister of Education :** I would like to say that I have here with me a chart, and before I began work in this Ministry I saw that every school in the Region received Special Purposes grants, whether big or small. For instance, in the case of Aggrey Memorial College Arochuku, I know it received a small grant in 1949. In 1950-51—£2,000; 1952-53—£1,000, 1953-54—£1,000, totalling £5,457.

**Mr Chairman :** I understand from the Minister that he is unwilling to commit himself on the lines required.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** I am sorry to be long on this, Mr Chairman. I am not blaming the Minister at all. In fact he has inherited a system he is trying to break away from. What I am saying is that since on his own evidence, I was careful not to mention Aggrey Memorial College, this College has received £5,000 in grants for building in the last six or seven years, honourable gentlemen can understand what the position is. This amount is not enough for putting up one wing in a Government College. My point is that not only the old schools but the new ones should know what to expect.

**Mr Chairman :** I think the House is aware of the points which the honourable Member seeks to impress on Education. I think also that it is quite clear from the manner in which the Minister has answered that he is definitely unwilling to commit himself. May I know whether the honourable mover wishes to move or to withdraw ?

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** The Minister does not appear to be antagonistic. I therefore, will not move.

*Sub-head 55—Equipment—Secondary Modern.*

*Sub-head 83—C. Commercial, Industrial, etc.*

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** Mr Chairman, I do not know if it is out of order to take Sub-heads 55 and 83 together. With your permission, I wish to do so.

I have no quarrel with all these sub-heads. What I wanted to know was where the schools are going to be sited. It is a significant information withheld from this House. I am used to a tradition whereby new institutions to be built are discussed with respect to siting and agreed upon.

I welcome all these sub-heads with my whole heart, but there is this significant omission—where are you going to site them? A similar thing happened when we were discussing the Five Years Development Plan which came to the House last year. I warned honourable Members that that Policy Paper should have gone a step further and should have told us where the projects listed should be. Honourable Members did not see the significance of that then, but sitting down and listening to speeches on this Appropriation Bill, you can see Member after another standing up to query Government and complain that his division has not been given this or that, and Government, through one Minister after another, making quite the right answer, that they have no say. They have not told you they will site this here and that there, and so long as they have not told you, you cannot really sustain an accusation that they have not put this and that in your division.

I think, Sir, that these new schools should be sited with the approval of the Executive Council and the concurrence of the House. We should know. For large sums of money to be given to the Minister to build schools wherever he likes is, I think, not good. I am quarrelling with the lack of information on the question of where these schools will be sited. I approve of the schools in principle.

**The Minister of Education:** I think the honourable Member should be informed that the work of a Minister is that of collective responsibility. I cannot by myself tell you where the schools will be built until I have referred to my colleagues.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** I have already made that point, that it required the approval of the Executive Council and the concurrence of this House. I respectfully submit, Sir, that the Minister has not answered the question.

**Mr Chairman:** The Minister is not in a position to commit the rest of the Cabinet in a matter that has not been decided.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** Therefore, I move that this House should be informed as to the siting of these schools, and for lack of that information I move to reduce sub-head 55 by 1d.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and negatived.*

*Question: That the sum not exceeding £3,158,880 for Head 442—Education—stand part of the Schedule, put and agreed to.*

#### Head 443—Ministry of Finance

*Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £31,340 for Head 443—The Ministry of Finance—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Minister of Finance:** Mr Chairman, I rise to move the adoption of Head 443 of the Draft Estimates before the House. The detailed increases have been fully explained in paragraph 43 of the Memorandum on the Draft Estimates. I think that all I need say in support is that I consider that the requirements of my Ministry as compared with the total of some £24.5m. combined revenue and expenditure which it is called upon to control cannot be considered as excessive.

Sir, I beg to move.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Mr Chairman, I wish to draw your attention to the issue of postings of staff under this Ministry. You will remember that last year I had occasion to quarrel when the post of Principal Assistant Secretary was created and an expatriate officer was posted over the head of a Nigerian who had been in that Ministry since its establishment.

This year, Sir, something new has happened. The former Permanent Secretary has now retired and a new Permanent Secretary has been appointed, I understand, direct from the Colonial Office (or is it the Colonial Treasury?).

You will agree, Sir, that the Ministry of Finance is highly political in that it sort of controls the Treasury and all other establishments under the Government. My question is, why has it been necessary this year for the Colonial Office in London to arrange to post somebody to the Eastern Region to occupy the post of Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Finance? It has not been done in the West or in the North; neither do we hear of it in the Federation. It is only in the Eastern Region that an entirely new hand has been posted to fill the vacant post of Permanent Secretary.

I know that the Minister of Finance may not be in a position to tell you, but I submit that it is the duty of the Executive Council to find out from the Governor what are the extraordinary qualifications of this new man to warrant his being drafted all the way from London to Enugu to occupy this new post.

I have my suspicion, Sir, which is based on the happenings in the past. I have always regarded most of these Permanent Secretaries as a sort of—I hope you do not mind, Sir—detectives, and my suspicion is that this new man has been posted to embarrass either the Ministry of Finance or the Executive Council in forming their financial policy. If this is not the case, let the Executive Council tell us why it is necessary to bring this new man from London . . .

**Mr Chairman:** I think, as we are all aware, the question of the appointment and posting of civil servants is in the hands of His Excellency the Governor. Under the present Constitution His Excellency has no seat in this House and is represented by his Ministers who really are not responsible for that part of the activities relating to Government.

It seems to me unfair that such an issue should be debated at length in this House. We might, if necessary, find other avenues of getting the information from His Excellency direct. He has no seat here; he cannot, therefore, reply; and it will be unfair to ascribe any motives or irregularity to what he has done.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Mr Chairman, would I take that as inferring that I cannot exercise my privilege to attack the policy in relation to recruitment?

**Mr Chairman:** I do not say so. All I have said is that in this particular instance the honourable Member himself has indicated that the Minister in charge is probably not in a position to answer the question. If he is not in a position that question obviously cannot be properly directed against the Ministry. It, therefore, follows that the only person whose conduct the honourable Member is seeking to bring before this House is the person responsible. He has no seat here, and I think it is unfair to continue this matter.

**Mr D. A. Nnaji (Udi Division):** Mr Chairman, my own contribution to the discussions on the policy of this Ministry is to congratulate the Minister himself. The Minister has shown cool-headedness and gentility in handling everything concerning his Ministry. When this Minister was the Minister of Labour everybody was pleased with his activities. I want to seize this opportunity to ask the Executive Council that should there be any reshuffling of Ministries he should be left to continue to handle our money.

Honourable Members of this House will remember that in previous years when we had other Ministers of Finance they always refused applications from honourable Members for advances to purchase cars. Now everybody has seen that the Minister has devised another means of getting money to the Region by giving advances to honourable Members to purchase cars, because the advance is repaid with interest. He has also helped the Members of this House. I congratulate him and I wish him success in the Ministry.

*Sub-head 3.*

**The Minister of Finance:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move, with His Excellency's assent, that sub-head 3 be increased by £25. It is an amendment common to the Local Transport and Travelling sub-heads of all Ministries necessitated by the proposed increase in the chauffeur's allowance paid to Parliamentary Secretaries from £75 to £100. In the Ministry of Finance there is one Parliamentary Secretary and the consequential increase is, therefore, £25.

Sir, I beg to move.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Question, That an increased sum of £31,365 for Head 443—The Ministry of Finance—be inserted in the Schedule, put and agreed to.*

**Head 444—Audit**

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £34,990 for Head 444—Audit—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Minister of Finance:** Mr Chairman, I rise to move the adoption of Head 444 of the Draft Estimates before this House, in connection with which I refer honourable Members to paragraph 44 of the Memorandum which accompanied the Estimates. The need for adequate training facilities within the Region and for a continued supply of Nigerian auditors needs little stressing. It is in keeping with our policy of Nigerianisation.

I think it will be accepted that these requirements are non-contentious. Sir, I beg to move.

*Question: That a sum not exceeding £34,990 for Head 444—Audit—stand part of the Schedule, put and agreed to.*

**Head 445—Pensions and Gratuities**

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £2,200 for Head 445—Pensions and Gratuities—stand part of the Schedule.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Head 446—Public Debt Charges**

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £55,050 for Head 446—Public Debt Charges—stand part of the Schedule.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Head 447—Accountant-General**

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £433,820 for Head 447—Accountant-General—stand part of the Schedule.*

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Mr Chairman, I would just like to know from the Minister the Government policy with regard to insurance. Under sub-head 8 there is an item, Commission and Insurance—£8,000. Over the past few months we of the E.R.D.C. have been trying to get in touch with Government to find out to what extent Government undertakes insurance. The E.R.D.C. has just been appointed agent of the Pearl Assurance Company for the whole country and we have established an office here in Enugu. It is our intention to underwrite Government

but we do not know to what extent the Government undertakes its insurance. The sum of £8,000 seems very attractive. But, as I said, we do not know what Government is doing in regard to insurance.

**The Minister of Finance:** Mr Chairman, I think I would require time to deal with this question.

**The Chairman:** He will discuss it with you some time.

*Question: That a sum not exceeding £433,820 for Head 447—Accountant-General—stand part of the Schedule—put and agreed to.*

#### Head 448—Board of Regional Revenue

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £271,970 for Head 448—Board of Regional Revenue—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Minister of Finance:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to delete the word "Regional" from the title of this Head and to insert in its place the word "Internal".

Honourable Members are aware that this is a new Head, and after further consideration since the Estimates were printed it has been decided that the restrictions upon the activity of the new Department as imposed by the Finance Law made it preferable for its title to be "Board of Internal Revenue" and not as was formerly proposed "Board of Regional Revenue."

Sir, I beg to move.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Mr Chairman, I am just wondering why the Governor has decided on the salary of the Commissioner. The Minister should know that that will also read "Commissioner of Internal Revenue." We made a point while discussing the Finance Bill. My views are that the success of the Finance Bill with regard to the collection of all revenue under this Head is dependent on the activities of this Board. We would like to see all officers appointed to this Board to be on a full time basis. I cannot think of any Commissioner of Internal Revenue who will be charged with other responsibilities and who will be expected to do this work properly. My suggestion is that this post of Commissioner of Internal Revenue be filled and that all appointments to this Board should be full time appointments.

I observe that there is provision for six Senior Book-keepers. I am not sure whether those people should be called Senior Book-keepers or not. It sounds as if we are referring to book-keepers of U.A.C. or John Holts. I think the Minister would be well advised to call these six Other Officers. I want to repeat again that the success of that Finance Bill, when implemented, with regard to the collection of this Revenue will be dependent on the activities of this Board and we must be very careful about the people we appoint to this Board. I am told it is to be the duty of the Governor. What if the Governor decides to appoint anyone he likes to this job? These people may not be interested in the collection. I think this is a special case where His Excellency should consult with Executive Council in order to ensure that the people on this Board are really very keen, that they believe in the Finance Bill, and that they will help the Region to collect this Revenue.

**Mr R. O. Ukuta, M.B.E. (Nsukka Division):** This is a new Department and appointments there should be properly scrutinised. Only the best people, who know how to collect revenue, should be placed there and the people to man this office should be proud of their job because I do not think that any new man can help us in this new Department. This is only my advice of warning to the Government.

**The Chairman:** Does any other Member wish to speak? It is a new Department and a very important one. Perhaps you may like to make some contribution.

**The Minister of Finance:** Mr Chairman, the criticism on this sub-head 1 (1) is well taken by Government and I am moving that the note at the foot of this Head be deleted and that sub-head 1 (1) should read 'Group 5'.

**The Chairman:** Perhaps it is a welcome amendment, but I am bound by Standing Orders and I am afraid much as I would like to put the question I am precluded from doing so as you have not given notice of this amendment. I am afraid your good intentions will have to wait.

**The Minister of Finance:** Mr Chairman, I will give notice of this amendment and may require your goodwill to recommit if we pass this Head.

**The Chairman:** But I require two days' notice. Are you going to sit until Friday or Saturday? I think you will have to go back to His Excellency and get the usual warrant. This will satisfy the honourable Members.

**The Premier:** I am not as sure, Sir, that the problem can be solved by warrant because the Ministers are in favour of having an entirely different person as Commissioner of Internal Revenue under Group 5. That is the case in the West where there is a Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Finance and a Commissioner of Inland Revenue. If, therefore, we have to abide by the Standing Orders it means giving two clear days' notice, and if we have to adjourn tomorrow or the day after, I am not so sure that it will be possible to get the special warrant because His Excellency has his own opinion on this particular item.

**The Chairman:** Mr Premier, I was considering the possibility of suspension of Standing Orders to enable your wishes to be met, but there is this added difficulty. The post which you create is obviously one which can be filled by Civil Servants. While this House or the Council of Ministers in the capacity of Executive Council is entitled to fix the salaries of servants, it is my considered opinion that His Excellency should take particular note of those deliberations and it is one of those things about which I think you will have to go back to Executive Council and thrash out the matter in the usual way.

**The Premier:** Very well, Sir. We are having a meeting of Executive Council tonight and we shall assess this particular point. Tomorrow my honourable Friend will move for the suspension of this particular Standing Order and by then we will have arrived at a decision.

*Head 448 postponed.*

#### Head 449.—Ministry of Health

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £11,810 for Head 449—The Ministry of Health—stand part of the Schedule.*

*Sitting suspended at 1 p.m.*

*Sitting resumed at 3 p.m.*

*Sub-head 3.*

**The Minister of Health:** Mr Chairman, Sir, I beg to move, with His Excellency's assent, that Sub-head 3 be increased by £25. It is a consequential amendment to all Ministry Local Transport and Travelling Sub-heads necessitated by the proposed increase in the chauffeur's allowance paid to Parliamentary Secretaries from £75 to £100. The Ministry of Health has one Parliamentary Secretary and the consequential increase is, therefore, £25.

Sir, I beg to move.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Dr A. N. Obonna (Owerri Division):** Mr Chairman, Sir, I think I must begin by congratulating the Minister for the way his Ministry has carried out the work throughout the year. In fact I, personally, was impressed.

I would like to comment on two incidents which have been as it were consequential upon the passing of the Hospital Law. Honourable Members will remember that as a result of the Hospital Law Government doctors were barred from participating in private practice. As a result of that Law much work has been thrown on to the hospitals. As you are aware, doctors have practised during their private hours. Now they are not allowed to do so and many more patients are sent to the hospitals. You also have a few other cases of men who as a result of their business cannot go to the hospital during the hospital hours, and resorted to private treatment. Now they resort to hospitals.

Much work is, therefore, thrown on the hospitals and this extra work has not been met by increased staff. As a result of the passing of this Law, as honourable Members are aware, doctors are dissatisfied and I am beginning to wonder how dissatisfied doctors can cope with the increased work without adequate increased remuneration. The result is that whilst the Minister of Health had the good intention of controlling the cost of the Budget the whole thing now has an adverse effect on the patients. What happens in the hospital today is this. A patient is sick; the doctor has gone home and has finished his normal hours; the nurse rings the doctor; you never get the doctor, and in some cases the patient dies. In fact I know of a case which happened in Enugu, the headquarters, a few weeks ago. In this particular case a woman delivered a baby. She had post-partum haemorrhage, and the nurse in charge rang the doctor. The doctor said he was coming. I am told the nurse rang the doctor on six occasions, but he never turned up. Finally the woman died. I understand the Department has taken steps to report this matter, but this is not just an isolated example because I know that is what happens. In fact I have seen cases where a private doctor took a case to hospital only to be snubbed because they know the treatment will be free, and, therefore, the doctors are no longer interested.

This state of affairs is not to the advantage of the patients and I, as a general private practitioner, know that the doctors are not adequately paid. I am asking the Minister of Health if he would consider paying the doctors an adequate sum so that they will work conscientiously, or alternatively, if he is not willing to pay the doctors a handsome salary, then steps should be taken to protect the interests of the patients. May be the hospitals might be made to be under the management of committees. I think that is the only way you can help to ameliorate the conditions.

Another aspect of Medical Service I would like to touch is the lack of provision for pathologists. As a result of increased medical facilities here our people are beginning to live longer than their normal expectation of life. Consequently you have diseases which are peculiar to old age—diseases like cancer. This disease is very common here now and in fact it is an example, just a common example, to show that the people are living longer, because it is a disease of old age.

One requires experience or specialised pathologists to deal with this type of disease and to diagnose the cases. But if you look through the Estimates you will find that there is provision for one pathologist only, and that at a salary of £1,240. I wonder what sort of pathologist you will get at that salary, because in England pathologists are paid at over £2,700 and even then they are not used as you use them here. I do not think that the salary of £1,240 is at all adequate. And what is more, we have the low quality of our technical assistants on whom much of the work falls because of the lack of pathologists. Well, it is strange to see that these people are graded as ordinary clerks whereas they should be graded as technicians of a specialised type.

It is now certain that the work in the hospitals has increased as a result of the Hospital Law. But if you look through the Estimates you will find that you had forty-four Medical Officers last year and forty-four Medical Officers this year—and you expect the doctors to put in more work and no pay!



While congratulating the Minister of Health on the good work he has done, I wish he would take steps to give more pay and increased staff so that the conditions in the hospitals will then be worthy.

**Mr O. O. Ita (Eket Division):** Mr Chairman, I have very little to say in connection with the Ministry of Health, and I have already given the Minister my congratulations on his hard work.

There seems to me to be one oversight in the Ministry of Health. That oversight is in respect of the grading of the very hard-working set of people in the Voluntary Agency Hospitals, people whom we in the Local Governments usually employ as Midwives, Grade II. I searched through the Gorsuch Report to see whether they have been given any grading at all; but it seems to me that they have not been given any grading.

I am given to understand that it has always been difficult to discuss their matters. The nurses do not seem to include them in their lot, and I do not think the chemists will ever include them in their own lot. The other midwives—those trained by the Government look down upon this set of people who, incidentally, are only just unfortunate not to have been given the same certificate. In the rural areas all maternities opened by local authorities and Local Government bodies are manned by these very hard working people, and they do practically the same kind of work as midwives working in Government hospitals do. But, unfortunately, when it comes to grading and payment they receive very inferior treatment, and, in fact, they hardly know what their maximum will be. They only know that they are given a certain amount of money. In some hospitals, however, they are given fair treatment, while in others they are not given fair treatment.

Another thing, Sir, which I think has escaped the Minister of Health is the payment of Gorsuch rates of pay to the nurses in the Voluntary Agency hospitals and the type of midwives I was describing. I do not know, but I understand that the Minister has taken every step to see that the payment of Gorsuch is made. This has not been paid, so I am bringing it to the notice of the Minister.

The next point, Sir, is the charges in Voluntary Agency hospitals. I do not know whether the Government is aware of this. It seems to me that the charges are out of proportion to the actual price of drugs. Many a time you have to provide for your own food. You have to provide for almost everything, and pay for the cost of treatment which is very high. In view of the number of poor people in the Region it almost certainly means that you are going to die because you cannot afford to pay for your treatment. I have the assurance of the Minister that fees in Voluntary Agency hospitals will come under control, but I am urging the Minister that the control should come into operation as soon as possible. After all we are being taxed to get all these things. It means that if I pay tax and I am poor I cannot afford any other money to go to the hospital and consequently I will not be treated at all. Therefore the sooner the Voluntary Agency hospitals are controlled in their charges for treatment of persons, the better it will be for the Region.

**Mr P. G. Warmate (Degema Division):** Mr Chairman, Sir, I have a few remarks to make on this head of expenditure. You all know that those of us who live in the Creek areas are neighbours of mosquitoes and that with mosquitoes we have a lot of malaria. In the hinterland we have yaws. Government is taking active steps to see that the spread of yaws is retarded and controlled to some measure, but nothing is being done for those of us in the Creeks who are suffering from attacks of malaria. I would suggest that the Minister of Health should see the World Health Organisation to see that the spread of malaria is controlled in the Creek areas.

I have discovered that, unlike the Federal or the Western Region, the Assistant Medical Officers in this Region are not very much encouraged. What I mean is that the Medical Officers trained locally in medicine should be encouraged by awarding them scholarships to

go overseas to study. We find that instead of encouraging these boys to go overseas to have some experience, those who have had the experience are getting the scholarships. If there is a shortage of Doctors for them to be sent overseas on scholarship, the best thing is to grant them study leave of two or three months so as to acquire some experience overseas. Instead we find that scholarships are awarded to those who have had experience while those who have not had the experience are not given a further opportunity to have the experience.

One very important matter which touches my mind very much is the position of pharmacists in the Medical Department. While a student I fought hard to improve the status of pharmacists as the President of their Association, and I am happy to say we have secured some improvement. But there is still room for improvement. The position of the pharmacists in the Medical Department is deplorable. We know, I do not need to tell the House, what course of study one goes through before one is a qualified pharmacist. You have to have your secondary and post secondary education before you are admitted. You study for three years before you graduate. For somebody who has gone there to study to be treated in the way pharmacists are treated in hospitals leaves very much to be desired. You know very well that if a boy obtains his School Certificate and goes overseas and does Law it takes two or three years before he comes out to be a man of society. He can join the Civil Service and receive far better pay than a pharmacist. That is why there is an exodus of pharmacists from the Civil Service. This department is still very neutral. Nothing is being done to find out the cause. It is all due to frustration. In fact, pharmacists seem to find themselves in a blind alley. This is why so many of them leave the service and go out to try their luck outside.

Going through the Policy Paper on Health I find the following in the Introduction:—

“The ultimate aim of the Ministry will be a National Health Service to bring medical facilities within the reach of all our people and to provide protection from debilitating community diseases which seriously affect production and wealth”.

“Three stages can be identified in our march towards this goal depending on the sphere of Government influence:—

- (a) The period of Urban Medical Development;
- (b) the period of Rural Medical Development; and
- (c) the period of the National Health Service after the second stage has reached a reasonable level.

Since the first stage has been fairly well developed, the present policy is to concentrate on vigorously expanding the second stage so that the final stage will be achieved in a reasonably short time”.

It is an exaggeration to say that the first stage has been fairly well developed. Let us take for instance the hospital in Aba, which is an Urban area. Can we fairly say that the service there is well developed towards the achievement of a National Health Service. It is not. You will find there very many patients awaiting all day long only to be told by the pharmacist that there are no drugs.

I would have thought that if our objective is to achieve a National Health Service, what we have to do is to co-ordinate the work of the private medical practitioners and the pharmacists, and if you see that they have a good set of drugs and their dispensaries are well equipped, then the hospitals would co-operate with the medical practitioners or the pharmacists. I know the National Health Service in England is carried out by co-ordinating the services of both the medical practitioners and pharmacists. For this Department to say the first stage has been fully well developed with a view to having a National Health Service is, I feel, not true.

Another matter which, I feel, should be taken up very seriously by this Department is the Laboratory Service. The doctor who spoke before me mentioned pathologists. No doctor can very well diagnose any disease without the service of a Laboratory. In fact it is

on page 3 of the Policy Paper that the objective is to provide every hospital with a fully equipped staff of laboratory technicians in order to carry out normal pathological investigations. But up till now you will find that there are only one or two hospitals in the Region that have laboratory services. Therefore, if this Policy Paper is to be respected for what is written there, it should be seen to that as soon as possible our hospitals are equipped with laboratory services in order to allow the doctors to do their jobs very well. One knows that in some hospitals you have cases of loss of blood in labour. If you have a department like that you could have a blood transfusion service. But without a laboratory service that is impossible and many people will die of loss of blood.

I mentioned about drugs. One finds that it is very difficult for the Government to supply all the hospitals and local Government bodies with drugs. I hear that a circular from District Officers has gone round to Local Government bodies instructing them not to buy drugs from private pharmacists. I think such a practice is very discriminatory. I found out that the District Officers said that the Medical Department from Enugu has instructed them not to buy from private pharmacists except Kingsway or such other expatriate companies. Well, if the Department cannot supply the drugs why not open the door for Local Governments to get their drugs wherever they can. To instruct a few foreign firms to sell drugs to them, I think, is quite discriminatory and I will ask the Minister to look into this matter and to make amends as soon as possible.

One very important question is the position of nursing sisters who are married. Nursing sisters who are married, I understand, are not allowed to be on the permanent establishment. I see no reason why a woman, simply because she is married, should be removed from the Service or should not enjoy all the amenities and privileges of that Service. There is no incompatibility between getting married and serving in a hospital, so I think this class of workers should be encouraged and allowed to get married and also render their service in the hospital as long as marriage does not prevent them to perform their duty. The Government should therefore, reverse their policy of preventing married women from being nurses.

I would like to speak about preventive medicine. It is the policy of this Department to educate the people in the rural areas on how to keep themselves clean, but one only needs to go about twenty miles or so from Enugu and see the conditions of our people. Everybody appears to be sick though they feel they are all right. I feel, however, that if this aspect of the Health Service is taken up very seriously it might help Government not to spend much on curative medicine. They say prevention is better than cure but one finds that the Department does not take much interest on the preventive side; rather it is mostly on the curative side.

Before I finish, Sir, I wish to bring to the notice of the Minister that it is down in the "Outline of the Development Plan, 1955-56" that three hospitals are delapidated in the Region. I have one in mind, that in my own division. Government has promised to rebuild that hospital since last year but nothing has been done. I have also discovered that, whereas the amount for these hospitals was to be £156,000, it is now £76,000. If it is £76,000, I do not know how they are going to build three half hospitals. The best thing is to build one. We want the Degema Hospital to be built so that we can see it as a full hospital. We do not want to see it half and half.

In conclusion, Mr Chairman, may I make a plea in respect of a class of workers to which honourable O. Ita referred. Some of these midwives do equally as well as other midwives in hospitals, but their condition of service is bad. They have no leave; they have no increments. They just stay like that year in year out. When I put a question to the Minister on this matter his answer was that they knew the condition of service before they applied. And so what? I ask. Many service conditions have been made better when formerly they were bad. Why should this particular class of workers not be treated properly? I hope that the Minister of Health will tell us something about the position of this class of workers.

**Mr R. O. Ukuta, M.B.E.:** Mr Chairman, this Ministry will always continue to have my praise for its activities. My only prayer is that they should try to increase the grants made to the only hospital in Nsukka Division so that the authorities there can instal an electric light plant for urgent operations in the night. At present they are using Tilley lamps which, I believe, is not good enough.

Secondly, I have to ask this department to tighten their regulations relating to the sale of dangerous drugs. Dangerous drugs are sold freely by hawkers in the rural markets and quacks go about giving injections which are having a destructive effect in the rural areas. Many lives are being wasted in the rural areas and will continue to be wasted unless this department can put a check to these practices. I do not think it is good for a man who is not a Chemist and Druggist to deal in poisonous drugs. To do so can only be likened to a man who does not know how to drive being allowed to drive a car. We all know where such a man is going to end—in a ditch or in collision with a big tree on the way.

I believe that a national health scheme is most desirable in this Region, and I suggest that this department should take up this matter.

**Mr E. U. Eronini (Owerri Division):** Mr Chairman, a doctor who spoke here asked that medical officers in Government hospitals should be given higher salary. But some of us who have been in some of these hospitals can confidently say that the doctor who spoke does more work in his private practice than two Government doctors put together, despite his political engagements. We are quite prepared to pay our doctors very well if they will give their whole attention to the practice of medicine and surgery.

In the mission hospitals you are given very good attention and you are carefully attended by nursing sisters and nurses. The only obstacle is the high fee charged in most of these mission hospitals. Some of them receive grants from Local Government Bodies and some from the Government, yet they charge very heavily for their attendance.

In mission hospitals you hardly get any African nursing sister. They will not like to employ them, and if they do at all they will not place them on the same footing as expatriate nursing sisters. Some African nursing sisters would like to work in mission hospitals, but the conditions of service are most repulsive.

The new requirement for maternity homes is driving a lot of midwives from establishing nursing homes especially in the rural areas, and because they are not allowed to open maternity homes they either conduct deliveries in the patients' homes under most nasty surroundings, or the patients themselves make deliveries in their own homes with the assistance of native midwives, which is even worse than not providing all the conditions required to be fulfilled before a maternity home is allowed to operate.

Somebody has mentioned that our hospitals should be under a committee. There is at present a Consultative Board of Management in some of our hospitals, but the trouble is that the medical officer of the hospital is in many cases the secretary or the chairman, so that you cannot criticise him or act against his wishes. Therefore if you really want these committees or boards of advisers to do their work well, medical officers in charge of hospitals should not be included in the committees or boards. The committee can then report to the medical officer whatever they think about the working of such hospitals.

It is true that most of our pathologists, even in the Federal Government, are going away. I doubt whether we have any pathologist at all in the Eastern Region. Their conditions of service must be made attractive. They are doing a lot of work even though you hardly perceive it. But the only unfortunate thing is that most of them will not do the work themselves, but will leave it to assistant technicians to do everything and they just sign the report.

I was shocked when I entered the consulting room of the government hospital in Aba a few days ago. There were three doctors and about fifty patients all in one room measuring not more than 12 feet by 14 feet. How can these doctors be said to be consulted by the patients? How can the patients be expected to tell the doctors all about their troubles. The place was just like a market. It was awful.

Something should be done about this. The time has come when the Government can even go to the length of hiring private buildings to ease such congestion, rather than harbouring everybody in a room just because it is in a hospital. Private buildings have been hired in Lagos. I do not see any reason why the dentist should be harboured in the hospital. A building can be hired for him in the town so that there will be room for him to know what he is doing and there will be space for doctors in the hospital to know what they are doing.

Why should most of our efficient doctors be confined to the office on administrative duties. The Director of Medical Services, for instance, sits in the office all day long turning files and papers. Other experienced doctors are doing one type of office work or the other. The time has come when we should train administrative officers in the Medical Department to relieve doctors to do their work. They are paid to prescribe medicines and look after patients. Some of them, like Senior Medical Officers, spend their time turning and signing vouchers and collecting hospital fees. That is the reason why you do not have good hospitals. A doctor who knows his job cannot do office work; it is the doctor who does not know his work who does office work properly. A doctor who loves his work has no time to do office work.

We are looking forward to the establishment of rural health centres, and we hope that most of our county councils will have at least one or two health centres in their areas of jurisdiction. Prevention is always better than cure. When these health centres have been established in the rural areas perhaps, as somebody has said, the health of the rural people will be improved.

Most of the girls in the Mission boarding schools are underfed. The food they take is not proper food. If you ask any doctor in charge of schools, he will tell you a lot of children come with eye trouble from these Mission schools because of poor nourishment. We, therefore, want a proper school medical service. Their food must be examined as well as the menu. It is no use leaving them to their fate. Their diet sometimes consists of garri throughout—garri with oil for breakfast, garri in the afternoon, and garri again at night.

Mr Chairman, although ordinarily I do not like to be parochial I must nevertheless speak here about the hospital we have at Owerri. I feel there is little money under this Head for the improvement of that hospital. Owerri is the largest division in the whole Region. I believe that hospital was built by the Native Administration. It has now outlived its usefulness, and we think the Medical Department should now do all they can to rebuild it and put up more buildings, and, as well, help us to build cottage hospitals in two or three places in the division.

**Mr U. A. Otop (Opobo Division):** Mr Chairman, I join the chorus of voices to congratulate the Minister of Health. I hope the Minister will take the grievances of Opobo Division with sympathy.

Opobo hospital is still on the waiting list, and we want now that that hospital be removed from this waiting list. The Minister should expedite the building of the new hospital in the proposed site to replace that ancient canopy called a hospital. Even this hospital is understaffed. About eight labourers have been dismissed, and no replacements have been made to date.

In Opobo Division the Medical Officer is often absent from his station almost for a week, and I suggest the Ministry of Health should arrange with a Private Medical Practitioner to inspect dispensaries and maternity homes.

In the rural areas you know that the lack of inspection almost for a week or more might lead the natives to superstition. In some dispensaries there are no drugs, and I wonder if the Law which was made that doctors should stop private practice is not a mere story.

Segregated centres for lepers are essential in Opobo Division because we have many lepers in that area. Local Government and Native Administrations have spent a lot of money sending these lepers to Itu and other places. Something should, therefore, be done to help these people to build segregated centres for the lepers.

Extension of maternity centres from four to eight beds should be encouraged. At times we have more than twenty expectant mothers for only four beds in the maternity.

Sanitation should be encouraged in the rural areas. Many a time only one Sanitary Overseer is appointed to inspect about five or six clans, and this will show you how the natives are suffering.

Mr Chairman, I should like the Minister of Health to note these few points and take immediate action.

**Mr M. C. Awgu (Awka Division):** I should like to speak very briefly on the policy of the Medical Department. The Minister of Health ought to be congratulated for much has been done by him in a very short space of time for the progressive running of this Ministry. But there is a point that I wish to drive home, and that is, if we wish to march abreast of other civilised nations of the world, we must not try to commercialise every aspect of our life. We must do certain things for love and service and not for money. One honourable Member said here, a few minutes ago, that we should allow doctors to do private practice. That is quite alright for money sake, but I can remember the Hospital Law received the very high commendation of the public.

The Minister of Health should be congratulated again on that score because before the Hospital Law was brought into force many doctors used to, as we were told, and as we saw ourselves, ask sick persons who came to the hospital to come to their houses thereby leaving poor and miserable patients to die some time. Since the passing of the Hospital Law, every doctor is made to visit the hospital and do his job at the proper time and go home. I think the public really commend the Hospital Law. We require in this country more Florence Nightingales whose shadows will heal the sick and relieve them of their ailments.

If we always have doctors and teachers, to work entirely because of the high salaries, we are not copying or imitating rightly other civilised nations of the world. We must take up professions or callings simply because we have love for them and not for mercenary motives. If you want to be a doctor it should be because you have sympathy and love for humanity. If you do not have the love for humanity, do not be a doctor. The time has come, and now is when our people should think properly and do their work in a proper line.

**Mr E. O. Eyo :** Mr Chairman, I wish to attack the conditions of service under the Laboratory section of the Medical Department. I intend to state a case for Laboratory Technicians. This class of workers, Sir, are claiming consideration of Government and they are entitled, I think, to that consideration. They base their claim on paragraph 140 of the Gorsuch Report. With your permission, Sir, I would like to read it to the Minister of Health:—

“The technical side will require the same kind of detailed examination, and one of the major problems will be to decide whether a particular grade is technical or not. Even though in a few cases this Report makes recommendations for changes in grading which appear to be justified, it is not possible for the Commission to make a considered recommendation in respect of every one of the grades at issue; that is a matter for detailed examination of qualifications, training (present or prospective) and duties.”

These technicians say that, at the moment, they are being graded as clerks. They maintain that formerly they were graded as technicians; that before 1956 they were placed on a higher salary than nurses and Pharmacists; and that they are graded lower in the Eastern Region than their counterparts in the Northern Region, the Western Region and the Centre. They complain that they are working in the Laboratory in the Eastern Region without any Pathologists and that the Eastern Region is the only Region in the Federation without a Laboratory Superintendent.

As regards qualifications and training, their case is that they are required to pass the London Matriculation examination and Grade A pass in the Junior Civil Service Entrance Examination; that after six months training they undergo a competitive examination; and that they are required to put in three years service, as do the nurses and the Pharmacists; yet they are not given due consideration. I should like the Minister to look into these submissions. I do not know whether it is true that in the whole of the Region we have not the services of a pathologist or whether it is also true that in the whole of the Eastern Region we are not favoured with the services of a Laboratory Superintendent, even though I see provisions being made for them in the Estimates.

Two Members have argued the case of Grade II midwives. I just want to know from the Minister whether the Government really appreciates the services of these Grade II midwives. I understand they are just there on tolerance; that they are told that if they do not like to serve they can go; that they have no leave at all, and no grading; that they are told that they are just there on temporary appointments. Even the Grade I midwives complain that they are employed on a temporary basis.

Those of us who are connected with hospitals in this Region know what amount of work these midwives—Grade I and Grade II—render in this Region, and I am appealing to the Minister to enquire into their conditions. I do not think it is fair that a class of workers who are giving very good services to the Department, should be left grumbling.

I must say I am grateful to the Minister for agreeing to review the two hospitals in Calabar Province, at Opobo and Ikot Ekpene, and I hope they will have all the equipment that is given to other hospitals in the Region.

**Mr O. C. Manu (Nsukka Division)** : I have to thank the Speaker for giving me this opportunity to speak for the first time. In the first place I have to thank the Minister of Health for the achievements in this Region since October, 1954. There is only one thing which is agitating my mind, and that is the exorbitant charge in the Voluntary Agency hospitals. I do not doubt the integrity of the missionaries, but in the hospital in Nsukka Division people pay from £12 to £15 for dead bodies.

I would like the Minister of Health to investigate the very big trouble in that hospital now about one doctor from Ireland, where the Reverend Sister comes from. The doctor had seen that the charges were very exorbitant, and had tried to reduce them, but they started to fight this doctor and have even threatened to send him away. They gave him £10 to fly home at once. The honourable Members for Nsukka Division contacted the Archbishop, the Sister Matron at Onitsha, and the Reverend Father at Nsukka but nothing was done. We want more doctors now and this doctor is being sent away from our country. When we went to one of the authorities he told us that this man was mad and I wondered why they did not examine him before sending him to this country. I regard this as a mean excuse. The people of Nsukka have even met on Sunday to agitate against this treatment.

**Mr E. O. Eyo** : Of course we do not want mad doctors.

**Mr O. C. Manu** : I do not think that he is mad. When you get somebody out to help the poor people they will say he is a mad man.

According to the policy of the Government every division in the Region will get a hospital financed by Government. Nsukka has a population of over half a million. Since the Government has been giving the people of Nsukka Division hospital grant, and they do not derive any benefit from this hospital because of exorbitant charges, I think the best thing is for the Government to take over. Let it be a joint hospital; that will help us and save the situation, I do not want to bother the House with a long speech,

**Mr Eyo Ita (Calabar Division):** The other day, when I spoke here, I mentioned the fact that the township of Calabar had grown into something about or four times what people used to think it was. The hospital that we have now in Calabar is too small for the community. If we take the census of the population we will find that the present hospital can only meet about a quarter of the needs of the people in the community. In other words, I am trying to stress to the Minister the necessity for either extending the present hospital or building another hospital two times the size of the one we have at present; otherwise we will continue to have the very long queue that we find in that hospital every morning.

This brings me to the problem of the rural areas of Akpabio Creek Town, Okoyong and Oban. I mentioned the fact that we have, especially in Oban area, a certain type of insect which has been destroying the people, and it might even be said—I hope the Minister is listening—that the population is slowly dying out as a result of this insect bite in that area. I do not know how often the Minister himself travels around to see the health problems of the people in Creek Town and Okoyong areas. May I remind him, in the first place, that this is the area from which the boxer, Hogan Kid Bassey, came. Here is a community which has done great credit to the country in producing somebody who can even punch noses off the champions of the British Empire. Who knows whether we can produce some better boxers and runners and jumpers from that area. The Minister should do something more for the health of these people.

But I am very, very particular about the health problem of Oban people because it is very serious. Anyone who goes into that area can see what happens to the limbs of the people exposed to the bite of this fly. I happened to travel through this area a number of times to Qua Falls and the Oban plantation. It is always pitiful to see the people of this area, and I think a real health crusade should be carried out in that area to save the people from complete extinction.

We have in Calabar Division, studded here and there especially around the coast, a number of fishing villages. We have this kind of mobile population in a number of places, especially along the coast in Brass and Opobo. We have quite a large number of such fishing communities. They are the non-vociferous members of our Region, and we do not hear very much about their complaints, or their demonstration, or their marching to the Premier or the Minister, but we know that they pay taxes, yet they have a very poor supply of health facilities. If nothing can be done to build permanent hospitals for them I would recommend mobile clinics for these people because they are not only citizens, they pay tax. Something should be done with their tax money to take care of their health and their families. Thank you Mr Chairman.

**Chief S. E. Onukogu (Owerri Division):** Mr Chairman, I want to remind the House of my speech here the other day about the medical staff quarters in Owerri. It is not necessary making any elaborate speech here without the Minister of Health or his representative touring the Division to see the condition of things and the nature of our complaints. The medical staff quarters in Owerri are but a disgrace and in a dilapidated condition.

**Mr Chairman:** Are you debating policy?

**Chief S. E. Onukogu:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr Chairman:** That is not policy.

**Chief S. E. Onukogu:** Somebody mentioned here that Voluntary Agency hospitals charged very exorbitant fees. I agree with him in a way, but it should be borne in mind that a Voluntary Agency receives little or no grant from the Government. Comparing the number of staff and the volume of work they do, we should be grateful to the missionaries because they do more work than anybody in Government hospitals. Any patient who wants quick and proper cure always runs to the Missionary hospitals. It is always to be grateful to anybody whom we find is doing something for the safety and welfare of this country. May I seize this opportunity to tell the Minister of Health that I join those who congratulated him for his past activities.



[1956-57 E.R. Appropriation  
Law, 1956]

27th March, 1956

[Committee]

In our division there are unqualified doctors, who are not even trained, who go round to all our rural areas giving the public injections and in several cases these result in death. I have seen a man who is not a doctor, but was a nurse in the Army, going about giving injections, as a result of which many people died. Many a time he was arrested but was never convicted. Steps must be taken to check this.

We had a telegram here last week on the bad drinking water in Owerri. I seize this opportunity to request the Health Department—the Ministry of Health—to contact the medical men in Owerri to find out why people die or become ill after drinking the water in Owerri.

Mr Chairman, I do not think it is out of place here to mention the unhealthy quarters in which the medical staff live in Owerri. We have said it many times that Government should come to see the houses in which their staff live. They are in a deplorable condition indeed. The Medical Officer himself lives in a house which was built many years ago. If the Minister of Health could spare but one hour to inspect the buildings in which his staff live he will agree with me that whenever we come here to complain of the buildings, we are really speaking the truth.

**The Minister of Health:** Thank you very much Mr Chairman, because these requests are really getting out of hand.

Dr Obonna spoke at length on the problem of private practice amongst Medical Officers of the Government. May I seize this opportunity again to clarify the position. Doctors are still allowed to do private practice. What we have prohibited is the conversion of the doctor's home into a clinic or a hospital. If any patient cares to invite a doctor to his or her home that doctor, in his spare time, is perfectly entitled to go there and treat that patient and charge whatever fees he likes. That is the extent of the private practice envisaged in the original report published in Sessional Paper No. 28 of 1949 which formed the basis of that portion of our Hospital Law. I hope there will be no further misunderstanding about this.

Before going on to the next points may I say that there is of course no private practice whatsoever in our hospitals now, with the exception of one doctor who, under his terms of service, is still allowed to do private practice. No other doctor is allowed to have private practice in hospitals.

The honourable gentleman spoke further about some malpractices in Enugu Hospital. If he will kindly give me the facts I will certainly look into the matter because I think it is serious enough. I hope however his facts are correct.

The honourable gentleman further spoke about the lack of Pathologists. I do not think there is any disgrace in our admitting that we have no Pathologists in the Eastern Region. The fault really is not our own because the old unitary Government of Nigeria built Pathology laboratories in the West and North and none whatsoever in the Eastern Region. Now we have to scrape here and there to build our own. However, I am happy to report that plans for erecting our own Pathology Laboratory are complete now. The initial delay caused by lack of supervisory staff on the part of the P.W.D. seems to have been solved, and we hope to start work any moment now. Furthermore, we have decided to train one of our own young men as a Pathologist, and I have no doubt that he will start work in a very short time. There is no disgrace about our not having a Pathologist.

I think one other honourable Member—certainly not the Doctor, I think it was the honourable Warmate—said that diagnosis without a Pathology Laboratory was guesswork. With the greatest respect I beg to differ. A Pathology Laboratory is meant to confirm the clinical diagnosis you have made. You cannot rely solely on a Pathology Laboratory. It is only the diagnostically destitute who rely solely on Pathology Laboratories and we used to crack a quip in the old Medical School of a young doctor who bottled the faeces, urine and sputum, sent them to the Laboratory and quietly waited for a diagnosis.

The honourable O. O. Ita spoke at length about Grade II midwives. There is no intention on the part of Government to forget them when the Gorsuch awards are made. I might also report that the Medical Advisory Board has made recommendations to Government about these awards and they are now being carefully studied by Government. When the awards are made the Grade II midwives in the Voluntary Agencies will certainly be included.

The honourable gentleman was also alarmed at the high cost of treatment in the Voluntary Agency hospitals. I must say here, Sir, that until the National Health Service comes there is very little hope of lowering the charges in Voluntary Agency hospitals appreciably, because honourable Members will understand that these hospitals are in point of fact private hospitals. Since they are only given some grant towards the total amount required for the complete running of the hospitals we have not really any moral right at the moment to dictate the fees in these hospitals; but we hope that with the progress we are making in our Health Service at the moment it will not be far long when we shall step into National Health Service and fees will be low and uniform throughout the Eastern Region.

Earlier on, during the second reading of the Appropriation Bill, mention was made of the menace of mosquitoes and malaria, particularly in Enyong Division, by the honourable Ikoku, and it was repeated by the honourable Warmate. Malaria campaign is a very expensive business. It will cost us millions of pounds. I think it will be nothing short of £2-3 million. However, we are in constant touch with the World Health Organisation and we hope to start a service to know exactly what is involved. In the meantime we shall look into the problems, particularly in those areas that are very badly infested. I have in mind Enyong Division, where life is, as was said, quite unbearable when these insects are about.

The honourable Warmate talked about Assistant Medical Officers. There is only one in the Region now; the rest have either been promoted or gone on scholarship, and I have no doubt if he qualifies he will be so treated. They are definitely given encouragement.

The problem of Pharmacists is very complicated. It was a relic of the old Government to equate them where they are now, and, unfortunately, though these facts were laid clearly before Mr Gorsuch, it would seem that his recommendations have not in any way solved the problem. I have no doubt we shall look into the whole matter again, as I agree that the conditions are such that we are really losing these people at an alarming rate.

The honourable Member further mentioned that there were no drugs in our hospitals. This is most untrue. I have, personally, not through files, made investigations in all the hospitals I have visited in the Eastern Region since 1954—I have seen nearly all of them—and in each one of them I have definitely enquired to find out whether there was any shortage of drugs. In each case I have been assured that there was none. (*Interruptions of "No, No"*). It is true. What I am telling you is a fact. However, since I cannot ignore entirely the public feeling in the matter the Drug Vote has been doubled in the last year and it is now £100,000 instead of £50,000. I think that is a step in the right direction.

The same honourable Member also suggested that private medical practitioners and chemists should be asked to co-operate with Government in the National Health Service. Naturally we will do that; they will be invited to help in the scheme as has been done in the other countries that have started the National Health Service.

I am not aware that Local Government bodies have been instructed not to buy drugs from private chemists, especially when we cannot supply such drugs. I am not aware of that. If the honourable Member who made this allegation can give me a specific case I will look into the matter because, after all, local government bodies are, strictly speaking, private organisations.

The problem of married women in the Service is not unique to the Medical Department. It involves the whole Governmental structure, and I do not think that the Medical Department or the Ministry can handle that alone; it requires concerted action on the part of Government. The condition that attaches to all women who are married is that the moment they marry, or if they are married before going in, they are on the temporary staff, and I think the matter should most probably be handled by the Public Service Commission. I will therefore make the honourable Member's wishes known to that body.

I think the honourable gentleman was not satisfied with the progress made in Public Health. I do not know what he wants us to do. We have not really had any epidemics in the Eastern Region. I would say that on the whole the health of the community is bouncingly good. We have new Health Centres built almost everywhere and we are training more Sanitary Inspectors and other Public Health staff. We are employing more Public Health doctors. I do not understand what he means by neglect in public health. It is erroneous. I think the reason is because the Public Health is not really so spectacular. On the contrary, if you look at the C.D. and W. scheme you will find that we have placed more emphasis on preventive medicines than on curative medicines.

Mr Ukuta wants more grants for Nsukka. I can assure him that Nsukka has definitely not been neglected. In 1954-55, they had two and a half thousand pounds, and in this present financial year, ending in about four days' time, they have had about three and a half thousand pounds. I can promise him they will get their fair share and no more.

The problem of illicit trafficking in drugs in the rural areas, I have answered in a question in this House. That is being handled now between us and the Federal Government and it is proposed to amend the Pharmacy Ordinance in such a way as to control the trafficking in drugs much more effectively.

The honourable Eronini made a point when he said that there were no African Nursing Sisters in the Voluntary Agency hospitals. That is not true. I, personally, know of at least one. There may be many more. Therefore, his contention that there were none is untrue. The honourable gentleman is suggesting that the conditions for Maternity Homes should be relaxed. I wonder whether this would be a wise step since these conditions were devised solely to protect the lives of the women and children who are born in these homes. In health matters we will not agree to a lowering of standards. If it is done it will jeopardise the lives of many people and, besides, the standards laid down are not very stringent. They are not high, or so high that they are not within the reach of many people. They are within the reach of many people.

Nor is the doctor the Chairman and Secretary of the Hospital Advisory Board, as he had suggested. He is only the Secretary. I have not received any complaints about the working of these Advisory Boards. If he has anything specific he can see me so that we may suggest ways of getting over the difficulty.

Honourable Eronini also talked of the congestion in Aba Hospital. If he had read the Estimates a little more closely he might have found that adequate provision has been made for improvements to Aba Hospital. I wonder why he should therefore mention that.

I agree with him about the question of having administrative staff to relieve the doctors of the load of the management of hospitals. We have provision for this in the estimates, and though perhaps inadequate, it is a step in the right direction. But I must say that doctors are rather touchy fellows and when it comes to disciplinary matters you must have a senior doctor to control discipline, so that we will still need (no matter how many administrative officers we have in the Medical Department) senior and more experienced doctors at least for the purpose of discipline of the Department.

On the question of school diets, I am not aware of the irregularities mentioned. We shall, especially as we now have a school health service, certainly grapple with the problem. We also have now in the Region a trained dietician.

We have made adequate provision for Owerri Hospital, both for the whole hospital and the staff quarters, and I think that answers the question that was posed by honourable Eronini and Chief Onukogu. That also goes for the Opobo Hospital, and I say here, Sir, that if the Medical Officer does a good deal of touring then he is doing a lot of good work because he is doing preventive work, seeing dispensaries that are very far away, and Maternity Homes that would not be visited by anybody.

The problem of the segregation of lepers is of course clearly the work of Local Government bodies. Of course, I should imagine that since the people in the Opobo Division do not wish to pay taxes or rates they would find that difficult to accomplish.

In answer to the points made by honourable Chief Otop, it is unlikely that at this moment we shall increase the number of maternity beds from four to eight because even the four beds you have are really sometimes too much for some of these midwives, but if you can have regular doctor's supervision then you will readily be allowed to expand.

Providing Sanitary Inspectors for the rural areas is clearly the job of the Local Government Body, and the Opobo people should learn to pay tax and provide some of these things themselves.

Honourable Eyo made a case for the laboratory technicians. He said they were being graded as clerks and were lower than their counterparts in the West, North and the Federation. The position generally of laboratory technicians is that they are due to be considered by the reviewing team to be set up by Government shortly, and when this is done it may well be that their case will be properly gone into.

On the question of paying for corpses, I rather like the comical aspect of that. Mr Manu said that people were paying as much as £15 for corpses. Well, my own view is that if you go to hospital you have to pay whether you are alive or dead. If you pay when you are alive that is all right; if you wait until you are dead, you still pay.

We cannot at the moment, as I have said earlier, interfere with the internal running of the Voluntary Agency Hospitals. I hope that we will have better control when the National Health Service commences.

There is, Sir, to answer the honourable the Leader of the Opposition, adequate provision in the Estimates over the next three years for improving Calabar Hospital. I have seen the Hospital myself when I was there—it was not crowded—but there is provision for £15,000 to rebuild it in the new C.D. and W. Scheme. Therefore, his comments are not quite necessary.

The health problems at Okoyong, and Creektown are clearly the problem for the Local Government body, but what he said about Oban we shall certainly investigate. It may well be a vicious insect. We have taken note of that and we shall look into it.

Mobile clinics will be considered for sparsely populated areas and migrant populations, but we have to go step by step. We cannot do everything at once.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E :** Gradualism.

**The Minister of Health:** That is not gradualism, I am afraid. That is hastening slowly.

During the Second Reading of the Bill other comments were made and, with the permission of the Chairman, I may as well dispose of them right now.

*Sitting suspended at 4.45 p.m.*

[1956-57 E.R. Appropriation  
Law, 1956]

27th March, 1956

[Committee]

*Sitting resumed at 5.08 p.m.*

**The Minister of Health:** Mr Chairman, before we went for the recess, I was taking up the point made by the honourable Chikwendu when he desired that Rural Health Centres should, in certain cases, be divorced from preventive work. I think the only way to do this so that private enterprise can come in and help in the building of Rural Health Centres is for any interested chemists to come to some working arrangement with the Local Government Body for the building and running of such Health Centres; otherwise we do not see how we can divorce these Health Centres entirely from preventive work, which is their main purpose.

The desire for a hospital in every Rural District Council, however laudable, is impracticable at the present time as the number of pharmacists, doctors and nurses likely to qualify in the next five years or so is likely to be insufficient for such a grand scheme.

The honourable Chime, as he has done in the past, has charged that nothing has been done for his division. We have made grants to a young private medical practitioner in Udi Division, not in Enugu. Furthermore, generous provision has been made in the C.D. and W. Scheme for re-building the Enugu Hospital.

The honourable gentleman said that healthy people who had been protected against yaws are contracting yaws. Well, this is quite strange as we did not see this phenomenon in Nsukka. The injections given for curing patients and protecting others against this disease is not an inoculation which protects for a long time. It is only to protect you for just a few weeks, and, of course, if a man exposes himself subsequently to an infected patient, he is still likely to get it. As I said, the penicillin injection which is given is not an inoculation, to give immunity. There is no inoculation for yaws and honourable Members should not expect the Medical Department to do what is, at the moment, impossible.

Honourable the Rev. Opara talked about rabies. I think he would be well advised to get his Local Government body to get the dogs in the area vaccinated. His suggestion about mobile dispensaries is very well taken and we shall be examining that problem in a very short time.

Finally, may I thank the honourable Members who have expressed appreciation for the work we have done in the Ministry so far.

*Question, That an increased sum of £11,835 for Head 449—The Ministry of Health—be inserted in the Schedule, put and agreed to.*

#### Head 450—Medical Services

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £1,479,460 for Head 450—Medical Services—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Minister of Health:** Mr Chairman, the first part of this Head, A, deals with the normal departmental estimates. In this part there is little provision for expansion. There is, however, sufficient expansion under section B, C, D, E.

Section B deals with expansion in leprosy control. Section C provides for headquarters for our Rural Health Service and for other Rural Health Service projects such as a training school at Oji River, a Rural Health Centre at Nsukka, a capital grant for rural health centres according to our usual fifty/fifty programme, and a health visitors training school at Aba.

Section D provides for the expansion of nursing training, while Section E provides for the replacement of Opobo, Ikot Ekpene and Degema hospitals. We have also provided for improvements to Okigwi and Owerri hospitals and the building of new rural hospitals according to our usual fifty/fifty programme.

**Mr A. Ikoku:** Mr Chairman, I do not know whether you want me to speak on the motion or to make observations in general.

**The Chairman:** Yes, you may make observations if you wish to.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** With reference to Section D just mentioned by the honourable Minister that provision is made for expansion of nursing training, we have got news—and I hope it is just a rumour and not news at all—that the training of midwives Grade II in the Aba Hospital is in danger of being discontinued. If that threat is carried out then the rural Local Government maternities will of course suffer in consequence, and I respectfully ask the Minister to look into the matter.

**The Minister of Health:** I shall investigate the matter.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** Thank you very much. May I in all sincerity express my appreciation and that of my whole Bench of the very business-like and able way in which the Minister has treated all the points, multifarious as they are, raised in the course of this debate and the debate on the Appropriation Bill. I think the Minister of Health is quite exemplary and no praise is too high for the masterly way in which he has handled criticisms. (*Members: Hear! Hear!*). If I may continue, Sir . . .

**The Chairman:** On that point, I would like to solicit a little explanation. I noticed that this morning and yesterday quite a number of cases made gave notice to move to reduce items. In this case, sub-head 93 (1)—Chief Pharmacist—may I know what the honourable Member's intention is.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** My intention, Sir, is to underline two quarrels I have with the pharmacy section of this Department. One of them has been disposed of very ably by the Minister, and that is the question of the salary and grading of pharmacists. He has particularly undertaken to look into that. So that is off.

The other one was that the Minister assured us that the drugs vote has been doubled. I do not quarrel so much about drugs because I do not know the state of the central store and the Minister has made a very ably qualified statement about the hospitals he visited. But I happen to know that in the Arochuku Hospital again and again the doctor has complained bitterly about the lack of supply of drugs. In some cases drugs have been made up in packages for him and he has been informed that they are lying at Port Harcourt and Aba when he has no means of transporting them to Arochuku. It is quite clear we are very short of drugs and I thought that by attacking this Head in that way we might be able to underline this matter.

**The Chairman:** When you attack a Head which relates to personal emoluments it seems to be getting dangerously near to upsetting the principle which has been formally laid—an indirect method of interfering with the conditions of service of a civil servant whether you reduce it by one penny or a shilling. It seems to me the proper method would be to raise the issue, if you wish, as a motion to reduce the salary of the Minister in charge of that Ministry. If you do, you will be able to use the usual method of bringing the matter home, if necessary, to the officer responsible for personnel.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** I am very beholden to you, Mr Chairman, for your views, but I should not think the House will accept the situation as it is. The figure is set down there for his pay and he draws it whether he is efficient for that or not. I do not think that sort of thing will gain acceptance in the House.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Is your ruling an order? Does it extend to a new creation, Sir?

**The Chairman:** My order would not relate, speaking generally, to a new order or office. If it is a new office, the Constitution enables this House to debate and, if necessary, delete it. But my point relates to quite a number of little amendments which were here made in respect of posts. I am not suggesting for one moment that a civil servant is by virtue of his position as a civil servant immune to criticisms. All I say is that criticisms should be levied in the proper

place. When you deal with a Head like that I suggest that the Minister is the proper person to represent the whole Ministry, and, therefore, every Department that is under him; and then you can base an answer on a motion directed to him of not being able to control his Department or any other method you so desire.

The position is, whenever you move to reduce any salary by one penny or one shilling, it does raise the principle that you are attempting to interfere with the conditions of service of a servant. If you did allow that, for instance a person who earns £1,920 and you reduce his salary by £1, and it is carried by this House, it means it is reduced by £1. You cannot interfere with that. That is not your responsibility. He has earned it. It is his salary. I want to make that clear because it is a point relating to the means of being able to criticise the particular officer or office held by a particular individual. All I say is that this can be done under the Head of the Ministry.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** May I draw attention to Standing Order 66 (9), Sir:—

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

**The Chairman:** That is the Standing Order which must be read with permission or in Council.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** With due reverence, Sir, I am quite prepared to abide by your ruling but I repeat that I have tabled a number of motions of a reduction of one penny and the like without making any blame attachable so far to the person or the holder of the post but to the principle and practice involved. If it becomes necessary to attack the person for inefficiency I should think we are still in order if we make such a motion.

Mr Chairman, you say the gentleman has earned the salary. This is the Estimates for the financial year to commence in April. How can he have earned the salary before it commences? If we have inefficient officers, it is the business of this House to tell the Civil Service Commission by a vote of no confidence. I maintain that this House is well able to do that within the Constitution.

**The Chairman:** I rule the point out of order.

*Question, That the sum of £1,479,460 for Head 450—Medical Services—stand part of the Schedule, put and agreed to.*

#### Head 451—The Ministry of Industries

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £11,540 for Head 451—The Ministry of Industries—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Minister of Industries:** Mr Chairman, before introducing Head 451—The Ministry of Industries—and the department within its portfolio it would be well to say a few words on what had already been achieved. My Ministry realises that in our new developing country great demands are often made on the limited revenue of the Government for essential social needs such as hospitals, education, roads, bridges and so on. But in addition this government is committed to a policy of industrialisation.

Whilst we have been concentrating on investigations and research we have not neglected to take an intimate interest in establishing public projects. Honourable Members can, if they wish, see for themselves the progress which has been made, much of it without cost to the Government. The inspiration and help has come not only from my Ministry but from my colleagues who have given worthy assistance as lay within their power. The time is not far distant when we shall be drinking beer made in our Region. Another up-to-date soap factory has now been started and this will utilise our palm oil and palm kernel oil. Our building projects will soon be supplied with cement made from our own limestone and coal. I will also mention briefly another cement manufacturing works and the tobacco factory at Port Harcourt, and then the Lead-Zinc mine near Abakaliki.

Mr Chairman, you are all aware of the promising results which have been achieved by the Shell D'Arcy Petroleum Development Company in its search for oil. Oil is one of our greatest hopes for the future, and if it is found by the Shell D'Arcy Company in commercial quantities it may well lead to big things for us. Not only is oil a valuable exportable commodity, but it may also conceivably produce all sorts of industrial possibilities.

Natural gas is also known to be in the Region in large quantities. It could be made available as a source of power, and in favourable circumstances could also be used industrially.

The numerous cottage industries covering many divisions in the Region are being nursed and encouraged, because I feel that these small industries, created as they are by individual or co-operative effort, serve two important purposes.

They are the forerunners and the foundation of our future larger industries, and these will, I hope, also serve to supply the trained or semi-trained labour force to man the up-to-date and larger factories when they become established.

Before going to the next head, the House knows that I am assuming responsibility for the Pharmaceutical Corporation. I can assure this House, Mr Chairman, that I will direct the Corporation to the same purpose and policy which have already been laid down. I will even go further to say that I will endeavour to integrate the work of the Corporation with the rest of the industrial programmes, more of which you will hear during this speech on the Ministry.

There are adjustments to sundry items of Other Charges which have been found necessary in the light of past experience. The only new items for which I seek approval are the cost and upkeep of a motor vehicle. It is intended that this vehicle will be used by overseas industrialists and their top level staff to facilitate their investigations in travelling around the Region. These industrialists will obviously need to visit many parts of the Region to determine their suitability for future activities. I consider this to be a service which Government should provide in view of its potential benefit to the economy of the Region with particular regard to the establishment of industries.

**Mr E. A. Chime (Udi Division):** Mr Chairman, I used to be sometimes confused with explanations some of our Ministers give us. Last year, when I was a Member of the House of Representatives, a firm, known as the Breda Beer Company approached me to say that if I could get them in the Eastern Region they would establish a brewery. But we have just heard the Minister of Industries mention as one of the achievements of his Ministry that they will give us beer within a short time.

The point I am making is this. Here in Udi Division we have coal, gas and iron. Why should the Minister of Industries not establish something here on his own not dependent on firms. Let the Minister establish a heavy industry here with all these materials. A railway line runs through Enugu. There is coal here. You can produce coal tar from this coal. There is iron at Nsude.

**Mr U. Onu-Chima (Afikpo Division):** The Minister of Industries has been able to outline the policy which has proved to be very unprofitable. He failed to mention the salt industry at Afikpo. If we develop this salt industry we may not need to import salt. So I would like the Minister to include in his policy the establishment of a salt industry in Afikpo.

**Dr A. N. Obonna:** I should like to congratulate the Minister for what he has already done. I can appreciate that industry is one of those things that take a lot of money. It is true that not much money has been made available to this Ministry.

As we are an agricultural country, I think the first thing this Ministry should do is to see to the preservation of our foods. As I have already told you a few minutes ago our population is increasing and our people are living longer, and the death rate of our children is now lower. As a result of all this you will find that the annual increase in our population is enormous. If there is no corresponding increase in the food supply you will find that we are doomed to a hopeless future.



[1956-57 E.R. Appropriation  
Law, 1956]

27th March, 1956

[Committee]

Another point to consider is that agriculture and industry should go hand in hand. Our industry should supplement our agricultural policy and not supplant it as is the case in England.

Many people have advocated mechanisation of our farms, but I dare say that if our Ministry supports an extensive mechanisation we will have a lot of trouble, because the problem of employment will crop up, since for every machine you have in the field more than one hundred people will be displaced.

And how are we going to produce the money? I think the right way is by the introduction of what we might call savings certificates. It is time people should be made to contribute to the development of this country. The system of savings certificates is a good thing because payment can only be made after a period of ten years. If we adopt this system we will raise money locally.

The Minister referred to cottage industries being nursed. I want to remind the Minister that if he goes to the rural areas he will find men who deal in monumental stones in bust. In fact this will provide a very good industry. I know two or three of these men in Owerri Division and they are really very good in their work. With little financial help I think these people can develop their art into a big industry.

One other advice I have to give is this. Whenever any of our Minister tours overseas they should not concentrate their attention solely on expatriate officers. I know personally two Nigerians who were sent from here to study but owing to financial difficulties they have remained in the United Kingdom for over twenty to thirty years. These men have learned some trade in one of the British industries. Some of them will make good refrigerator engineers in Gas Industries. If we can get these men to come back home, it will be a very cheap way of industrialising our country.

**Mr Eyo Ita:** Mr Chairman, speaking on the policy of industrialisation, I would like to point out that there are basic things that the Ministry must do in order to encourage industrialisation.

I think it is a mistake to say that the Ministry is to establish industries. The business of the Ministry is to encourage industrialisation in the Region, and if that can be done effectively we have no real quarrel. In other words, it is not for the Ministry to establish a cement industry or a paper industry, or any such industries, but to encourage people to establish them. On this basis I think the Minister has not done well enough.

I do think something has been done because the Minister has been accidentally moving or blundering in the right direction.

*And it being fifteen minutes to six o'clock, the Chairman left the Chair to report Progress and ask leave to sit again.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Committee report Progress; to sit again Tomorrow.*

The 1954-55 Eastern Region Supplementary Appropriation Law, 1956—Second Reading

Adjourned Debate on Question (21st March)—That the Bill be now read a Second time. *Deferred till Tomorrow.*

(3) The Recognition of Chiefs Law, 1956—Second Reading. *Further deferred till Tomorrow.*

(4) The Eastern Region Local Government (Amendment) Law, 1956—Second Reading. *Further deferred till Tomorrow.*

(5) The Education Law, 1956—Second Reading. *Further deferred till Tomorrow.*

- (6) The Customary Courts Law, 1956—Committee. *Deferred till Tomorrow.*
- (7) The Age of Marriage Law, 1956—Second Reading. *Further deferred till Tomorrow.*
- (8) The Limitation of Dowry Law, 1956—Second Reading. *Further deferred till Tomorrow.*
- (9) The Local Constabularies Law, 1956—Second Reading. *Deferred till Tomorrow.*

### ADJOURNMENT

*Motion made, and Question proposed, That this House do now adjourn.—(The Premier).*

#### **Establishment of a Motor Assembly Plant in the Eastern Region**

**The Premier:** Mr Speaker, I have good news for honourable Members and, with your permission, I would like to make the announcement. While people are sending missions to the United States of America, this Region will receive an industrial mission from the United States of America next month, from a firm which has decided to come over and set up a motor assembly plant in the Eastern Region.

Two months ago, in January, their Sales Manager for the Eastern Hemisphere visited Nigeria and, after exchanging ideas with me, returned to the United States in order to make final arrangements for this industrial mission, which is due here next month.

There are three issues which they wish to have clarified at that time—dollar availability, preferential duty rates and national distribution.

On dollar availability, they would like to know whether both the Government of the Eastern Region and the Federal Government would make it possible for them to have sufficient dollars with which to import their spares, material and machinery that would be required from time to time in order to gear up and maintain their high productivity in the typical American way. For a beginning we have agreed with them to manufacture ten motor vehicles a day. That will give us, say, 3,000 vehicles annually which will be one-third the total intake of motor vehicles by this country annually.

On preferential duty rates, they wish to be assured that Government Agencies might be willing to give preference to a Nigerian assembled production over a unit entirely built up from the mother country. In this connection I made it clear to them that tariffs are within the legislative competence of the Federal Government but I had no doubt that they might be considered as a pioneer industry, for fiscal purposes, pending the stabilisation of the constitutional fabric of the country when tariff problems can definitely be decided.

They also wanted to be assured that there would be no difficulty in their way for the national distribution of the assembled vehicles. Naturally, I could only speak for the Eastern Region, for which I gave the necessary assurance, but I have no doubt the other Regions and the Federation would be glad to purchase vehicles which are made in this country by a world-famous firm.

I appreciate that it is not their intention to obtain any kind of monopoly, but they are genuinely concerned in obtaining for their assembled plant, which will be established here, some kind of protection which will enable them to operate profitably during the early stages.

As a matter of fact, I hope to visit Lagos on Thursday by air and confer with the Federal Minister of Trade and Industry to make preparation for the reception of this American industrial mission to the Eastern Region, and I am glad of this opportunity to make this announcement. (*Cheers from Members*).

[Daily Times]

27th March, 1956

[Daily Times]

### Attitude of the 'Daily Times' to the Eastern Region

**Mr M. E. Ogon:** Mr Speaker, Members must have no doubt been reading of the truly revolting sermon of a certain Ebenezer Williams on certain aspects of the Eastern Region. I should not have bothered myself about these had they not raised three issues to which I am opposed.

First of all, he termed the Eastern Region Chiefs as *okporoko* Chiefs. I will not go into that because I am sure Chief Onu-Chima will defend the Chiefs. But there are two other statements he made. One was that bribery and corruption was an accepted thing in the Eastern Region, and the third was that this Government will collapse if Dr Zik were not in the Cabinet.

This man is my personal friend. He is clever, precocious, sophisticated, but at the same time paradoxical too.

I want to say that I have observed that this Paper has been very hostile to the Eastern Region as a whole and I ask, "What about the problems in the North, in the Cameroons, and in the West?" I maintain that this is not a purely commercial transaction but an inspired attempt to present the East in a bad light, both to the outside world and Nigeria in an election year.

What has this Newspaper to say of the West Regional Government that dragoons and persecutes its masses? What has this newspaper got to say of a Regional Government whose Acting Premier is a nominated member in twentieth century Negeria? What has this newspaper got to say of a Regional Government that inherited £34,000,000 of the farmers' money and distributed it in wasteful enterprises? Yet what editorials are written in this newspaper about any one concrete achievement of this Government? Nothing, Sir. When our Government went on a world-wide economic tour and returned with concrete achievements, as announced by the Premier today, this paper came out with sinister editorials condemning our motives. Now that we have another economic mission going out from the same country, praising editorials have come out four or five times yet they have not told us of one concrete achievement of this mission. I submit, Sir, that what this paper is trying to do is to make the people of this country think and feel what it wants them to feel.

It will be wrong for us to accept lying down, that bribery and corruption is an accepted thing in this Region. I say that in the field of bribery and corruption this Government has done what was necessary without counting the cost in popularity or electoral fortune. It went all out to set up a Commission to investigate the incidence of bribery and corruption, and the result, so far, is that very few people in the East are corrupt. When we turned round and challenged other Regions to set up a similar commission if they feel that they are not corrupt, they became cowards.

The next charge was that this Government will collapse if Zik resigns. I should not quarrel if he pays tribute to our Prime Minister. Everybody will agree that he is a fine scholar and a hard worker; in fact this is accepted all over the world. Even this morning a writer in the *Observer* speaking about world personalities, mentioned Nkrumah of the Gold Coast and Dr Zik of Nigeria.

What this paper intends to do, Sir, is to show that this is a one man's Government. In other words, we have a Cabinet of which if one man resigns it falls. This is propaganda and the type we will not allow to pass. We believe we have a team in the Cabinet that is unbeatable anywhere in the world. We believe that our record placed before the electorate will return us to power. To allow such propaganda to pass unchallenged will be closing our eyes to palpable falsehoods.

My comments are not meant to limit the freedom of this Press, but when disgraceful comments are made like those under reference, which are masterpieces of miserable journalism, it is our duty as Members of this House to spare no efforts in refuting them.

I have no doubt the chiefs in this Region will view with serious concern the fact that they were labelled miniature chiefs. It is true that the East is republican, and we do not believe in monarchy, but we do respect royalty. When I meet Chief Onu-Chima from Ogoja I do recognise him as a Chief, and I would like him to feel he is one.

I will very much appeal to the Press in this country to be fair to this section of the country and not to lose their sense of discretion as they are growing in strength.

#### **Dissolution of the Igbo Etiti Rural District Council**

**Mr C. A. Abangwu:** Mr Speaker, I wish to raise very briefly a matter dealing with the dissolution of the Igbo Etiti Rural District Council. Last year, probably in August, a Commission of Enquiry was set up by the Regional Government to enquire into and examine the affairs of that Rural District Council. The Commission carried out its assignment, and after a period of about seven months the Council was eventually dissolved. As was made clear in an answer by the Minister of Internal Affairs to my question the report of that Commission has not been published although it is hoped that Government might do so very soon.

But there is this very interesting point, that a Caretaker Council has been appointed to take over the duties of this Council. I, personally, do not quarrel with someone who exercises his right, by going to a Commissioner or to any Court, to give evidence against anybody in respect of any matter of which he has knowledge. That is a right which everybody has the right to exercise.

But there is something peculiar in the question of the Igbo Etiti Rural District Council. It is, that some people were appointed to the Caretaker Council notwithstanding the fact that they are still employees of that Council. I have not seen the like of it in the Region, and in fact Section 20 E of the Eastern Region Local Government Law prohibits an employee of the Council being appointed a Councillor.

I do not know whether the point at issue is an oversight. In this particular respect I notice that two honourable Members of this House who, incidentally, gave evidence in the Commission, and who are still employees of that Council—though they are on leave without pay now—were appointed members, and in fact one was made the Chairman of this Caretaker Council. I say, Sir, that this is, in my opinion, a legal anomaly, and I suggest the Minister concerned should look into the matter closely with a view to restoring the position as it should be.

Many people in my constituency think that it is an anomaly that an employee of a Council should be made a Councillor, in fact a Chairman of the Council itself. I think this is a matter which the Regional Government should probe into with a view to its rectification.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Adjourned accordingly at 6 o'clock p.m.*

## WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

### Rural Water Supplies

154. **Chief M. W. Ubani** asked the Minister of Development, how much of the £1,750,000 allocated for Rural Water Supply for the Eastern Region has been spent; whether he will give a list of the villages and communities and their divisions which benefited from the service, and also the amount spent for each area.

**The Minister of Development:** The answer is Nil; the scheme was only approved in February and nothing has been spent out of it.

### Scarcity of Water Supply in Aba Township

155. **Chief M. W. Ubani** asked the Minister of Development, whether he is aware of the danger in Aba Township as a result of scarcity of water supply; if so, what steps has he taken to remedy the situation and save the lives of the 65,000 inhabitants of the Township.

**The Minister of Development:** I do not think that the lives of the people of Aba stand in danger due to the shortage of water there. After all, the Eastern Region is not the Sahara Desert. But I do agree that many people are caused hardship. Tenders will be invited during the next three or four months for the laying of those pipes now in the Public Works Department Yard which have so tantalized the people of Aba. And I have already instructed that more water should be supplied to the South Eastern part of the town. The pumps are on order and I, personally, pressed the manufacturers to hurry them along.

# Eastern House of Assembly

Wednesday, 28th March, 1956

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

(Mr Speaker in the Chair)

Prayers

## ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

### Ibo Tribe in the Northern Region

118. **Mr C. A. Abangwu** asked the Minister of Internal Affairs, whether the Minister is aware that there are certain Ibo-speaking towns on the northern fringes of the Nsukka Division which are grouped with the Northern Region of the Federation of Nigeria; if so, what effort is the Government making to re-group these Ibo-speaking towns in the Northern Region with their kith and kin in the Eastern Region.

**Mr F. M. A. Saronwiyo, Parliamentary Secretary:** I am not aware that there are certain Ibo-speaking towns on the northern fringes of Nsukka which are included in the Northern Region, but there are considerable Ibo settlements, according to my information, in Igala and Awpoto towns such as Akpanya and Adupe. There are, on the other hand, perhaps as many Igala and Awpoto speaking people residing south of the Regional boundary in Nsukka Division, notably at Eteh, Ogrugru and Igga. Along the boundary many people are bi-lingual and customs have become mixed. Parts of the boundary are imperfectly demarcated and this is a cause of land disputes. The Ministry of Internal Affairs is in touch with the Government of the Northern Region about possible rectification but it is too early to say more at this stage.

### Loans

128. **Mr B. C. Okwu** asked the Premier the total amount of money that has been granted as loans by the Finance Corporation and the Eastern Region Development Corporation since their inception, the recipients of these loans, and how much each received as well as the rate of interest in each case.

**The Premier:** I am informed that, since its inception in April, 1955, the Finance Corporation has approved loans totalling £195,000 of which £180,000 has been paid out as follows:—

|        |  |           |
|--------|--|-----------|
|        |  | £         |
| (i)    | Nigerian Engineering and Manufacturing Coy. Ltd., Enugu  | 100,000   |
| (ii)   | Eastern General Contractors Ltd., Enugu ... ..           | 25,000    |
| (iii)  | F. O. Mbadiwe and Sons Ltd., Enugu ... ..                | 5,000     |
| (iv)   | E. C. I. Onuigbo, Sons and Co. Ltd., Aba ... ..          | 10,000    |
| (v)    | L. O. Okoro and Co. Ltd., Aba ... ..                     | 10,000    |
| (vi)   | African Pioneer Co., Ltd., Oguta ... ..                  | 10,000    |
| (vii)  | Jinco and Brothers Ltd., Calabar ... ..                  | 3,000     |
| (viii) | Eastern Produce and Transport Co. Limited, Port Harcourt | 10,000    |
| (ix)   | Z. C. Obi, Sons and Co. Ltd., Port Harcourt ... ..       | 7,000     |
|        |  | <hr/>     |
|        |  | £ 180,000 |
|        |  | <hr/>     |

[*Oral Answers*]

28th March, 1956

[*Oral Answers*]

The following loans have been approved and payment will be made as soon as formalities are completed:—

|       |   |     |     |     |     |          |
|-------|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|----------|
|       |   |     |     |     |     | £        |
| (i)   | African Tailoring Company Ltd., Port Harcourt | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2,000    |
| (ii)  | Okereke Brothers Ltd., Port Harcourt          | ... | ... | ... | ... | 10,000   |
| (iii) | Affa Local Government Council, Udi            | ... | ... | ... | ... | 3,000    |
|       |   |     |     |     |     | <hr/>    |
|       |   |     |     |     |     | £ 15,000 |

The rate of interest on all these loans is 6 per cent except the loan to the Affa Local Government Council which is 3 per cent. In addition, loans totalling £550,000 have been approved for five statutory corporations, grants of £35,000 and £50,000 have been made to the Library Board and Sports Commission respectively.

Since the 1st of February, 1955, the Eastern Region Development Corporation has approved loans totalling £158,520. In all cases, the rate of interest is 5 per cent. The recipients are too numerous to detail severally, and a schedule showing the number and total of such loans in each Division will be made available to honourable Members in the Official Report.

**Schedule of Amount and number of Loans Approved by the  
Eastern Region Development Corporation since 1st February, 1955**

|               |     |     |     |     |     |     | No. of<br>loans<br>approved | Amount<br>approved<br>£ |
|---------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Aba           | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 13                          | 16,125                  |
| Bende         | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 18                          | 17,550                  |
| Owerri        | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 10                          | 12,000                  |
| Orlu          | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 3                           | 15,250                  |
| Okigwi        | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 7                           | 5,450                   |
| Ahoada        | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 10                          | 16,075                  |
| Abakaliki     | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2                           | 4,250                   |
| Ogoja         | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 3                           | 5,800                   |
| Afikpo        | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 7                           | 7,450                   |
| Onitsha       | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 5                           | 2,450                   |
| Awka          | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 4                           | 3,420                   |
| Udi           | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 9                           | 13,300                  |
| Opobo         | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 6                           | 1,500                   |
| Abak          | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 6                           | 3,300                   |
| Calabar       | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2                           | 15,000                  |
| Enyong        | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 4                           | 3,650                   |
| Eket          | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1                           | 500                     |
| Degema        | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1                           | 100                     |
| Ikom          | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 6                           | 3,650                   |
| Nsukka        | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 3                           | 1,450                   |
| Ogoni         | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 2                           | 5,500                   |
| Port Harcourt | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1                           | 3,000                   |
| Brass         | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 3                           | 750                     |
| Awgu          | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1                           | 1,000                   |
|               |     |     |     |     |     |     | <hr/>                       | <hr/>                   |
|               |     |     |     |     |     |     | 127                         | £ 158,520               |

### Conditions of Service: E.R.D.C.

132. **Mr B. C. Okwu** asked the Premier the service conditions which an expatriate senior service employee of the Eastern Region Development Corporation enjoys; how do these compare with those of the Africans in the senior service in the Corporation; and whether it is a fact that senior service Africans under the Corporation are denied car, children and other allowances enjoyed by their expatriate colleagues.

**The Premier:** The conditions of service of E.R.D.C. employees are set out in a standard form of Agreement into which every employee on appointment is required to enter. In brief, these conditions are generally comparable with the conditions of service of Government officers of equivalent status. Employees of the Corporation are entitled to rent-free quarters, free medical treatment and may contribute to a Provident Fund. Contracts of service are normally for a period of two 18-months tours of service but are determinable on three months' notice.

In so far as Senior Service African Staff of the Corporation are concerned, I am informed that, for the supply of a car, the same conditions apply to Africans as to expatriates. Neither children's allowances nor outfit allowances are normally given to staff recruited in Nigeria.

**Mr M. E. Ogon:** Is it a fact that children's allowances given to Europeans in the Corporation are not given to Africans. This shows discrimination against African employees of the Corporation.

**The Premier:** Yes, it is a fact.

### Installation of a Pioneer Oil Mill in Awgu Division

180. **Mr B. C. Okwu** asked the Premier whether the Eastern Region Development Corporation will consider establishing a Pioneer Oil Mill in Awgu Division in view of the heavy palm oil production in Achi-Inyi-Awlaw and Lengwe zones of that Division.

**Mr U. U. Eko (Parliamentary Secretary):** I am informed that the correct procedure for the establishment of a Pioneer Oil Mill in any Division is for an application in writing to be made to the Principal Manager, Pioneer Oil Mill Scheme, Aba. The proposed site will then be inspected and the following conditions must be satisfied:—

- (i) that there is an adequate supply of fruit in the vicinity;
- (ii) that the water supply is adequate; and
- (iii) that there is evidence that the local people will support the Mill.

At present all available Pioneer Oil Mills have already been allocated. The question of future policy for the purchase and erection of further Mills is presently under consideration by the Eastern Region Development Corporation.

### AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF PUBLIC BUSINESS BUSINESS MOTIONS

**The Premier:** Mr Speaker, I beg to move that all proceedings on Government Business at Today's Sitting be exempted from the provisions of Standing Order 4—Sittings of the House. This is to enable us to complete the business on the Order Paper.

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Health:** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Premier:** Mr Speaker, I beg to move that this House at its rising today do adjourn *sine die*.



Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Health:** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

The 1956-57 Eastern Region Appropriation Law, 1956 (5th Allotted Day).  
*Considered in Committee of Supply* (Progress—Head 451: The Ministry of Industries).

**The Chairman:** In view of the motions which have been passed this morning it is clear that unless steps are taken to reduce the amount of debates, this House will virtually sit all night.

We shall sit as usual with the following exception: At fifteen minutes to six o'clock business shall not be interrupted. On the contrary, the House will continue to sit until seven. At seven o'clock sitting will be suspended to enable Members to go out and have their dinner. The House shall resume at 9 p.m. At 12 midnight sitting will again be suspended for half an hour to enable Members to have their coffee. At 12.30 a.m. the sitting shall resume and there shall be no further interruptions.

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £11,540 for Head 451—Ministry of Industries—stand part of the Schedule.*

**Mr Eyo Ita (Calabar Division):** Mr Chairman, in view of the warning that you have just given, I want to be very brief in what I started to say yesterday about the policy of industrialisation.

I would like to remind the Minister that we on this side of the House will always give our blessing to any policy or measure which is taking us forward, that we can give our sympathy where the Minister or Ministry is blundering in the right direction, but that we can never waste our sympathy where a fumbling is taking us backwards. For instance, the Minister, in giving us what was the basic policy of his Ministry, said that there was the hope that the cottage industries, or village industries, will ultimately give place to big industries; that what we know now as cottage industries are only for a moment; and that as soon as possible we hope that they will cease to exist.

I believe very profoundly that this is wrong, Mr Chairman. I hope the time will never come when we want to wipe out folk arts like raffia weaving, the carvings on calabash and such other things. These things give the villagers something creative to do in their leisure hours and hours of relaxation. Therefore I would hate to see the day in which such creative activities no longer exist—it would mean destroying the simple creative life of the people in the villages. We already know the disaster caused by the efforts of a tactless District Officer to make the raffia industry at Ikot Ekpene a big business.

Turning to the encouragement of industrialisation, I would like to remind the Minister that there are certain measures that can help to encourage industries, that they are not what some Members recommend, such as the Minister of Industry starting industries. If Government can encourage making the sources of power cheap and plentiful, then such can help the citizens to develop industry. For instance, we have petrol and coal—other people have mentioned natural gas, water and man power. Well, we know already that Government has gone the wrong way by putting a heavy tax on petrol. Petrol is a great source of power. It is probably the main one now. When this is taxed, and the tax itself is raised by about 16 or 17 per cent as we have already seen, that is not encouraging industry. Regarding water power we have water, plenty of it, in the country, but I am afraid that Government is not making enough use of the available sources of power from water. For, instance we have Qua Falls and other falls in the country, yet untapped.

Now, taking labour we find that in this Region, as well as in other Regions, but particularly in this Region, labour is flowing where it is attracted, mainly to Fernando Po. So we are having man power scarce and expensive. We are having it not only limited but expensive. In the third place, it is unformed. An ignorant type of labour is not only expensive but dangerous. When we have to use people who are completely ignorant in mills, we run the risk of losses and dangers of people wounding or hurting themselves in one way or another.

Let us take raw materials. It is true in this Region that we have plenty of raw materials for industrial development, but it must be remembered that the collection of raw materials and their transportation are things which can be so expensive as to discourage the development of industry. And again, when we impose tax on petrol and such things we suddenly make transportation expensive and difficult. Even in the collection and transportation of raw materials we have difficulty.

The third inducement is possession of the ability and the technical "know-how"—whether we can get industrial technical experts at the mills. In this respect there is frustration whenever the Minister tells us how long it is going to take the country to possess these, that we have to send people overseas to train them, and wait for a millenium before we have industrial experts. If we are really serious and really earnest it is quite possible to train experts locally at the industries or industrial centres. Honourable Members will remember the story of Friday in Robinson Crusoe. It may take a long time for illiterate Africans to learn to pronounce "water, water" in the same way as a Britisher pronounces the word or an American "warrer, warrer", but it does not take Friday in Robinson Crusoe a long time to know how to manage a gun, which is something mechanical. In other words, we can acquire mechanical experience more quickly, much faster than people seem to believe.

The fourth point, Mr Chairman is the establishment of laboratories. We are encouraged by what the Ministry is doing now to get a laboratory established, like the chemical laboratory we have in Aba where a chemical expert is working. Unfortunately, I have just learned that this splendid dye chemist is leaving the East and going to the Centre. This is a great disadvantage because I know this particular expert to be not only a real expert, not only experienced in what he does, but greatly interested in the work he does. Once we have this kind of experts we should make every effort to keep them.

The fifth inducement is the credit system. I have already mentioned in this House the happy feeling we have of the help that the African Continental Bank is going to give, and the loans system that we are going to have now that the two Corporations, the Finance Corporation and the Development Corporation will be merged together.

Yesterday we received with joy the news given by the honourable the Premier that we are going to have some American Company expert come here to encourage development, for instance, of vehicle assembling in the area. I would say that this is blundering in the right direction that there we fumble forward and not backwards. But I do hope, Sir, that the day will not come when American big business will stultify our efforts in the way, for instance, the Volkswagen from Germany costing £100 is costing £500 now because it is connected with American big business one way or another. I would suggest to the Premier that the same encouragement might also be given to British and European concerns who can help us to assemble simple machine tools in Nigeria like brick presses and simple lathes and drills and saws and planes and some simple machinery of this kind. I am sure if we produce these in this country in a simple way it will help us.

I remember my experience on going to Europe and meeting some of the big firms. One of the things they encouraged me to do at that time was to have designed machine assembled in this country. It has been found that the dismantling and transportation of big machines takes up as much as two-thirds of the total cost. Production locally will reduce the cost and will certainly act as an encouragement to our people to embark upon industrial projects.

Mr Chairman, I do not want to take more of the time of this House.

**The Minister of Industries :** Mr Chairman, I would like first of all to start with honourable Onu-Chima's point. He wanted to know about the Uburu salt-ponds. Unfortunately he was not in the House the other day when a question relating to that matter was answered. If he were in the House, he would have known what we are undertaking to do at Uburu. For his information, it will be necessary for me to tell him that it was just before yesterday that I detailed one chemist to go to Uburu to collect samples of the salt there and to test them in order to see whether it will be worth while starting to mine the salt.

Honourable Chime said that a certain firm approached him with a view to establishing a brewery industry and that he did not know why it had not been done in Enugu. I would have liked the honourable gentleman to refer to me if he failed to negotiate with that particular firm, because I would be in a position . . .

**Mr E. A. Chime (Udi Division):** I did not say that, Sir. I said the Minister has given us as a part of what he has achieved, the brewery at Aba, and I mentioned that that was not enough. The firm had approached me about the question of land for the establishment of a brewery in Enugu. I argued that instead of paying attention to breweries we should do something with our coal for the production of coal tar, iron and oil.

**The Minister of Industries :** Thank you very much for saying that it is not necessary for us to establish breweries here and there. I must have understood you wrongly. On the point of establishing an iron industry in the country, it will interest you to know that we have been doing a lot to see that we establish an iron industry. We have invited experts to investigate the deposits, so as to ascertain the quantity of iron content in it, and I can assure the honourable Member that the report will be examined carefully. Although it may appear that we have no great quantity of iron in the country, we have not given up hope about establishing this industry.

At the moment we are negotiating with certain firms through the Federal Government to come to the Region to examine the iron still more. It will interest Members to know that the honourable Minister of Development, during his recent tour, approached a certain firm in England. This firm is getting a bit interested and we are now trying to do something to invite them in order to see what they can do in this line.

Dr Obenna suggested that it would be wise for us to start the preservation of food. He wanted us to start a method of saving for the people and the encouragement of local crafts by giving financial aid, and also referred to the stone monument industry in his area.

On the preservation of food, I would inform the honourable Member that this is in my policy paper. If he reads it, he will find that we have something like a canning industry, which we contemplate establishing. But he ought to understand that it is not enough simply to get a small quantity of this and that and set up a canning industry. We want an adequate supply of raw materials. At the same time, much as it is possible to try to do something, it is understood that the quantity of surplus material which we have in regard to canning will not be sufficient to carry on the plan from year to year. It is therefore my intention to consult the Agricultural Department in some respects so that it will help to see that we have an adequate supply of raw materials for the starting of the industry.

I now come to savings. It is very wise indeed for us to encourage Savings, because I admit that it is the means whereby we will be able to make our people start on something tangible in the line of industry, and that without savings it will be impossible to embark upon any large scale enterprise. I assure honourable Members that we are not walking away from this path because we have already started co-operative societies here and there, and the object of these co-operative societies is to encourage savings. I will not rule out his suggestion that it would be a good advice to start such things as Savings Certificates. I will put this matter to the Government so that it will be considered in time to come.

With regard to the monument industry and his desire for financial aid to such like industries, I will tell him in that particular respect, that I understand that the man in charge of that industry has applied for a loan. I do not know if the loan has been granted but if it has, it is possible that he has not received the money. May I point out that Government is prepared to help any industrialist who shows a great interest in his work but the Government will not throw money here and there to anybody who pretends to be an industrialist or one sponsoring cottage industries. The Government must be sure that the applicant is an expert or that he will profit by the venture.

The honourable Professor Ita has said that it is not the business of Government to establish industries in the country. I have to thank him very much for that remark. It might be strange news to many of the Members because they have been thinking that it is the duty of Government to establish industries in every village and town. The purpose of the Government is to encourage industries in the Region by encouraging the people to embark upon establishing industries of different kinds and at the same time to present a favourable climate for any foreign investors to come into the country in such a way that both the investor and the Region profit therefrom. What the Government does is to start pilot industries which act as examples for the people to imitate.

Lastly, I come to the allegation made by the honourable Member that the increase of the tax on petroleum may be the cause of any industries not being started. This is wrong. In the first place, before the coming of this petrol tax there has not been anywhere where the people have undertaken the establishment of industries through the medium of petroleum. I quite agree that petrol is necessary to industrialisation but I do not agree that the imposition of tax on petrol is a deterrent to it.

#### *Sub-head 3.*

**The Minister of Industries:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move, with His Excellency's assent, that sub-head 3 be increased by £25.

It is a consequential amendment to all Ministries' local transport and travelling sub-heads necessitated by the proposed increase in the chauffeur's allowances paid to Parliamentary Secretaries from £75 to £100.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Question, That an increased sum of £11,565 for Head 451—Ministry of Industries—be inserted in the Schedule, put and agreed to.*

#### **Head 452—Heavy Industries**

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £49,350 for Head 452—Heavy Industries—stand part of the Schedule.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### **Head 453—Secondary Industries**

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £27,580 for Head 453—Secondary Industries—stand part of the Schedule.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### **Head 454—The Ministry of Internal Affairs**

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £108,880 for Head 454—The Ministry of Internal Affairs—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I have not very much to add except to say that I shall move later on a number of amendments which are consequential on the changes brought about by the internal arrangement whereby Residents' posts were abolished.

**Mr E. O. Eyo (Uyo Division):** Mr Chairman, I would like the Government to realise that our people come to know what the Government is doing as the result of the relationship between this Ministry and the various Local Government Councils.

There is, however, this complaint: that it takes too long a time for the District Councils or the County Councils to transact business with this Ministry, and my view is that the Ministry is under-staffed. And here may I draw your attention to the comments on page 14 of the Report of an Inquiry into the Affairs of the Eastern Ngwa District Council which, with your permission, reads: "The final difficulty to be mentioned is the Ministry's failure to answer all of the Council's letters especially those seeking approval for supplementary estimates. The Ministry was under-staffed and over-worked". My opinion is that the failure of the Ministry to deal with all matters from the District Councils and County Councils is due to the fact that the Ministry is under-staffed.

Before going on to criticise the working of the Ministry I would like to pay tribute to the Permanent Secretary of this Ministry. I happened to know him in the early thirties when he was an Assistant District Officer in my Division. Those who know him will join me in paying tribute to him. He is the only one in that Ministry to whom I could pay tribute.

Besides this Permanent Secretary the other expatriate officers there do not know anything about local government procedure and practice. The three Nigerians who helped to open that Ministry have been removed. It is this fact that accounts for the delays in answering correspondence from the Local Government Councils.

It will interest you to know that the Government of the Eastern Region trained three Nigerians abroad and they were regarded as experts in Local Government affairs. These three Nigerians helped the former Permanent Secretary to open the Ministry of Local Government in 1952. May I then ask why have these people been removed from this Ministry. One has been posted to Ibadan. If a Nigerian is good enough to go to lecture at Ibadan one would imagine that it is here that we need him most. One of those Nigerians who qualified in Local Government is at the moment working in the Deputy Governor's Office as Registrar to the Privy Council.

Under the proposed reorganisation we are going to have three Principal Assistant Secretaries. My information is that already District Officers from the Divisions have been drafted into Enugu and earmarked for these posts.

One of the Principal Assistant Secretaries will deal with the political schedule of the Ministry. If an expatriate officer is going to handle the political schedule I have my doubts as to its success. I ask the House to support me in my contention that at this stage, when the whole administration in the Region is involved in politics, it would be better if one of these Nigerians who had been handling the political schedule of this Ministry in the past be allowed to continue in office. As I said earlier, I have my doubts as to the success of any District Officer drafted from the Divisions being charged with the entire responsibility for that very important schedule, which is going to be highly political.

Now that provincial administration is going to be abolished, I imagine this Ministry will require at least three times the existing strength, because it will deal directly with every District and County Council in the Region. We would love to see this House being called upon to vote more money for this increase because the people in the Region cannot understand why a letter will take the Ministry twelve to eighteen months to reply, and why the supplementary estimates from District and County Councils will be held up indefinitely without approval.

**Mr M. E. Ogon (Ikom Division):** Mr Chairman, I congratulate the Minister of Internal Affairs for his recent Policy Paper on Local Government, and also for the bold and brave way in which he is dealing with the Local Government problems in Onitsha. He also deserves the congratulations of this House for making it possible that as from the 4th of April this year Local Government Councils will have been established all over the Region.

In the words of the Premier himself, the problem in Onitsha is sociological, and I would add that it is both sociological and national. I say so, Sir, because this House has been called upon every session to amend one aspect or the other of the Local Government Law because of the trouble in the very place. I would suggest to the Government that the best way to solve all Local Government problems is to find out from the people what exactly they want and to make that policy uniform throughout the Region.

In the Local Government set-up there are those who believe in tradition; others argue that the majority should have greater representation. They forget the alderman system in England. There are some places in the Region where it will be very difficult to nominate a chief; where tradition is such that you cannot nominate one chief at the expense of the others without causing considerable confusion. Government should empower Mr Jones to ascertain from each Division what they would want the position of the chiefs to be in their council. When he submits his report it will give us a policy which will solve this problem once and for all, because I think that the problem is being used by certain politicians to embarrass the Government Party. The trouble in Onitsha is a family problem and should have been solved if the motives of the contending parties were pure. The Minister has done all in his power to solve it.

The second appeal I wish to make is in connection with secretaries of Local Government Councils. They are very few in the Region compared with the entire posts. But they occupy executive positions in Local Government Bodies and if you make it a policy of leaving them in one place for twenty to thirty years they become tyrants, and get such power that they can even dictate to the Local Government Councils themselves. There are instances of these men becoming so powerful that either the councillors have to agree with their views or they will make it impossible for them to come back in the following election.

But if the Minister of Local Government can undertake to arrange that these secretaries go on transfer from time to time they will not wield power that is tantamount to local dictatorship because they are not sure how long they are remaining in a place.

I support the Chief Whip in his comments regarding the delays in answering correspondence from Local Government Councils. This delay can lead to disastrous results. Take for example education rating. It ought to be approved by the 31st of March; but if approval does not come it means that teachers in the schools will have to wait until approval comes, which may be in April or May. The Managers of schools will then turn round and say the money is there but we cannot pay as the Local Government education scheme has not been approved.

Now that the Government has taken over responsibility for the approval of contracts for Local Government Bodies they should make sure that they have adequate staff. If money has been provided for the building of a teacher training college and you advertise for tenders which come in, say in June, if the Ministry has not got sufficient staff to see about the approval it may well take up to October to get this approval, when the college is expected to open in January. How will it be possible for the college to open? If this Ministry wants to control Local Government Councils effectively then there should be no such delays.

**Mr P. N. Okeke (Onitsha Division):** Mr Chairman, I will seize this opportunity to criticise the policy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

I think this is a Ministry without a policy. We received a copy of the policy for the Ministry just two days ago, and it seems that all these months this Ministry has been drifting without a policy. And it is for this reason that the policy adopted by the Ministry of Local Government needs some clarification because we fail to see the principle of it in Local Government all over the Region.

Take for example what is happening in Onitsha. Yesterday, some Members might have noticed in the Order Paper an amendment to preclude traditional members from taking an oath. Already, Sir, in nearly all our Onitsha Division all traditional members have taken an oath according to the law. In Onitsha township the Obi of Onitsha refused to take an oath and a week after an amendment was brought into this House to preclude traditional members from taking an oath.

It beats my imagination to see that a law can be made to suit the whims and caprices of either individuals or villages. I have taken this opportunity to speak on this item because we have tried to be silent in order to give Government a chance. In many cases it is said that we generally approve these laws and amendments in this House and go back to complain. I think that I should take this opportunity of criticising these amendments and the policy of Local Government right here in this House.

**The Chairman :** On a point of order is this an amendment ?

**Mr P. N. Okeke :** It is policy. I am criticising the policy of the Government.

**The Chairman :** I want to know, does this matter to which you refer form the basis of any amendment which is before this House ?

**Mr P. N. Okeke :** I do not know yet.

**The Chairman :** Is it on the Order Paper ?

**Mr P. N. Okeke :** I am referring to the Order Paper of yesterday, not to the one of today, Sir.

**The Chairman :** Would the honourable Member concentrate on the general principle, and if any Member seeks an amendment, it is desirable to make it at the appropriate time. This will save all of us a lot of time.

Please deal with the general broad principles.

**Mr P. N. Okeke :** Let us take another example of the proportion of traditional members to the elected members in the Local Government Councils. Up till now, Sir, I fail to know the Party's policy in this matter.

**The Chairman :** Order ! Order ! I am not interested in party politics here.

**Mr Okeke :** I am talking on Government policy, Sir. It is time Government defined once and for all what is its policy in the Local Government set up all over the Region.

This brings me to another point—the position of our Chiefs. As already said by my honourable friend, M. E. Ogon, I think it would be necessary for Government to look into the Anthropological Reports and Intelligence Reports of every town in the Eastern Region and then help Professor Jones to enquire into the position and status of all Chiefs in the Eastern Region. That would help the Local Government policy to work well all over the Region.

The other day I criticised Government for the endless amendments to the Local Government Law. I used the word "perennial" and that was criticised. Already within this Session two amendments have been made to the Local Government Law. Some of these amendments are responsible for the troubles at Onitsha. It would have been possible for the two factions in Onitsha to come together and reach an agreement, but just when they are on the point of agreement one or other of them gets an amendment from Enugu and the whole thing is shattered.

**The Chairman :** Would you like to address the House on this issue when the amendments come to be debated ? I am afraid I must restrict you to policy.

**Mr P. N. Okeke :** It affects the Ministry of Local Government.

**The Chairman :** It does not.

**Mr P. N. Okeke:** I think then I should wait until the amendments are debated if you will give me the opportunity.

**The Chairman :** I will give you the opportunity.

**Mr N. L. P. Apreala (Brass Division):** During the debate on the Customary Courts Law I made it known that in Brass Division there are about five or six clans that will form a district. At the moment each clan has a Native Court of its own and when these courts are removed to the district headquarters it will bring unforeseen difficulties to my people. Therefore I expect a statement from the Minister of Internal Affairs covering this point. I know many of the Court Clerks and Court Members who have this question burning in their minds will want clarification from me when I return home which I will find it difficult to give. I therefore require clarification of this matter from the Minister of Internal Affairs having given him the implications or difficulties in Brass Division.

**Mr O. O. Ita (Eket Division):** Mr Chairman, I think the Ministry is really very difficult to criticise because it seems to me that it has no policy at all. The policy is not carried out by the Minister himself since the Minister had confessed that he had not the control of staff. This Ministry, according to what the honourable Chief Whip of the Government said, fights shy of retaining the trained African personnel who were actually trained to take over from those who were said to be leaving this country this year, the Year of Destiny. But, instead of that, Sir, you have more and more of the people, who were to be leaving, coming to administer the internal affairs. One would have thought that at this time, when we are looking forwards to taking over the administration, we would have got our own people put into all the secrets of these things, so that in the course of time the Minister of Internal Affairs would be able to say he is actually executing the policy of his own Government.

What would happen if the Minister of Internal Affairs wanted to carry out his own policy and he is faced with the difficulty of, perhaps, the Permanent Secretary or the Principal Secretary not being in favour of that particular policy? They would have to carry on a policy that would suit them and so the executive will be pulling one way and the administration will be pulling the other way. My view is that the Minister of Internal Affairs should settle down to train the personnel that will man this particular Ministry. Those people who are going to be trained will be those on whom we will build our hopes for the future when we take over, and who will be able to carry on and do this job properly. At the moment what guarantee have we that if we have self-government tomorrow the Ministry of Internal Affairs will not collapse?

It is really strange that instead of starting with training, we say we are taking over and we take over with the very people who say they are going away, and will go at any time. Supposing they leave us today, where shall we be? I think it is time that the real policy of the Government is pursued, not merely telling us that this policy and that policy have not been pursued.

I am suggesting that we create facilities for training in Local Government in a place like Umuahia, and from time to time, say, once a year get some three or four experts on the subject to lecture to councillors or executives so that they will be able to understand their job. In fact this will be even better than sending people abroad. I know that for six months in England, especially in London, you hardly know your way about. You have no time to study, so that when our people go there, for probably the first six months they are trying to learn how to go to the tailors and how to buy meat. Yet the Government tells us they are experts on the subject. They are neither experts nor good enough to be secretaries in Local Government. How often do I see these secretaries propounding theories which you would never find in any text books in your life, and they say they are experts and are teaching our people.



I have very great respect for the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The handling of that office is not an easy job. I know the amount of queries that go to that office, and for him to be able to stand all the queries I think he is a marvellous person. I feel that such a person, apart from doing that job, should have been retained to teach and train our own Local Government staff rather than waste him there in the routine work. Now he is reaching his retiring age and he might go away, and it is always difficult to find an expert. When we get an expert instead of using him to the fullest we allow him to sit down and turn papers and answer queries. My suggestion to the Minister of Internal Affairs is to pay more attention to training at the moment than to pursuing anything else on this policy about staff.

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I thank the honourable Members who made commentaries on the problems confronting the Ministry for their frankness. As a matter of fact I think this House is unique because here we actually have in practice parliamentary democracy. We welcome it; otherwise it would be quite anomalous elsewhere to have a Chief Whip of a Government attacking that Government, or to have a back bencher attacking that Government. It is welcome. In point of fact this Government has made it quite clear, times without number, that it is good to let off steam, and of course, I notice very few speakers from the Opposition side have contributed to this debate because of the activities of the Government Party.

What I will say is that the Government Chief Whip should know that postings in any Government Department are usually handled by the Governor; so that if he has any criticism, and I have no doubt that he is justified in some of the statements he made, those criticisms are better reserved for the individual who makes the postings.

It is a fact that we did train these young men in Local Government and they were posted to the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the first instance, and they did their work well. It is also a fact that the officer constitutionally charged with the responsibility of postings decided to post them elsewhere, against which neither this side of the House nor anybody else, can do anything. It is the right of the Governor to post any officer anywhere, and the Ministers are helpless. Until your Constitution is so amended, although control of the Civil Service is kept outside the periphery of politics, I am afraid you will always have to criticise here.

The Chief Whip also questioned whether District Officers would be capable of doing their work efficiently in the Political Branch of the Ministry. I am surprised that he raised that question, because District Officers are best suited for this type of job because of their training and professional temperament—they are Administrative Officers. I therefore thank the Chief Whip for his criticisms but assure him that so far as we are concerned in the Ministry, the shortage of staff necessitated the changes envisaged in the administration which we placed before you and which you approved. You will have noticed there are a number of amendments to transfer staff from the administration to the Ministry, and to reduce the staff in the Administration correspondingly. I am quite sure that when this is done it will enhance efficiency considerably.

Mr Okeke was kind enough—he tried to land his blows but could not keep them above the belt. I can understand his position, but he says the Ministry has no policy. I want to remind my honourable Friend that the reason why no Policy Paper was presented until last week was that there was a Policy Paper prepared by the former administration, and it is on the policy formulated by that former administration, based on the memorandum of that Committee which recommended the enacting of the Local Government Ordinance of 1950, that this Ministry has been working. When this former Government was here, my honourable predecessor was Mr Oli, and if he would care to check up from the Library to see that Policy Paper on Local Government he will find that the only thing we have been doing is to so modify that Policy Paper as to harmonise it with the policy of the present Government.

When we succeeded in doing that, just on the eve of our coming to you and saying, by 1st April, 1956, all the Native Authorities would have had Local Government in their areas, that was the time we thought it appropriate to submit our Policy Paper. Therefore, if the honourable Gentleman comes here to say that the Ministry is without a policy, I am afraid he is misinformed and the statement is not true to fact.

The honourable Gentleman also mentioned about traditional Members being exempted from taking oath. It is true that such an amendment was published on the Order Paper yesterday, but it is not on the Order Paper today. I want to make it clear to him, as I have done to other people before, that why he complains about amendments is that between the decisions of the Executive Council and publication of a Bill, something generally happens—the usual process—it goes to the Government Printer, is printed and brought here. Unfortunately, last time when we amended the Local Government Law the question of making any one section of the Law retrospective was inserted in error, not by any member of this Government, and that is what we are seeking to regularise.

Yesterday a similar thing happened again. Government opposed it on another issue entirely. Yesterday some unauthorised statement appeared on the Order Paper; it was spotted; and the Executive Council met over it last night. As a matter of fact it was the Chief Whip who called my attention to it, and I told him that that decision was never taken. For your information, that is why it is not on today's Order Paper and because the issue is not before the House I do not propose to stress it.

Honourable Okeke made another allegation which I feel is wild. He says the Ministry has not determined the proportion of traditional members in a Local Government Council. May be, he has not heard me say so, both in private and public; but I have made it quite clear that it is laid down as a matter of policy that one-third of the members of Local Government bodies should be traditional members where such tradition exists. Furthermore, I made it clear in this House during the debate on the Second Reading of the Bill that some areas, like Okrika, prefer to have less than one-third and they were allowed to do what they liked, whilst some areas decided that they preferred to have their one-third quota. In Degema Division and Brass Division this is the rule, as in the case of Onitsha, but I have pointed out times without number that that of Calabar is under active consideration because we have asked the Local Government Commissioner there to ascertain the Chiefs who should be made traditional members. The Ntuls of Ogoja will be borne in mind when Professor Jones visits that area.

My honourable Friend also mentioned about perennial amendments. The word perennial is quite clear, if anybody should check up in the dictionary. This is the second amendment we are making to the Local Government Law. How two amending Laws and two amending Bills can be regarded as perennial is beyond my imagination. However, I am grateful to him for his criticism because it enables me to point out to him what he may not have known. Naturally, he made his criticisms in good faith.

The honourable Ita spoke at length on policy and I am very grateful to the honourable and learned Member, because he hit the nail on the head. Where one arm of the Government formulates policy and a machinery of the Government is to implement it, it is genuinely assumed that according to the highest traditions in Britain—it makes no difference what political party is in power—the Civil Servants serve in-going and out-going politicians. I do say that this is the case here. It will enable most of the policy formulated by this Government to be implemented, and it is possible, if that was the case, that may be there would be criticism about this dualism in the formulation of policy with respect to the Civil Servants. I am, however, happy to hear the honourable Ogon, and also the honourable and learned Member for Eket, pay due praise to the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, and I am glad all sides of the House supported them in doing so. It just shows that this Government has no animosity or prejudice against any civil servant, so long as the civil servants do their work conscientiously.

I appreciate the relationship between civil servants and the Minister. The civil servant gives the advice, shows all possible sides of the problem leaving to the Minister to take the responsibility. So long as this is done, I think there will be no difficulty with this Government. It is only when the civil servants attempt to play politics or knock heads together that we have difficulty, and I am glad that this has been pointed out that the Permanent Secretary of my Ministry is no party to such an insidious practice.

The honourable Ita also suggests not having faculties at Umuahia and I am grateful to him for it. As he knows, we contemplate having an institute of public administration when the University is established and we have been sending our students to the University College at Ibadan to be trained but, as he rightly pointed out, what is the use of having them trained if they come and are posted elsewhere? Unless we can have a guarantee that those who are trained for a particular job will be allowed to do their job, you could see how vitiating it could be.

I think I have disposed of most of the criticisms on this Head and I want to thank the honourable Members for the contributions they have made to the debate and I can assure them that we welcome such criticisms because Local Government, as someone rightly pointed out, affects every facet of our lives here and it is also a training ground for greater things, politically speaking.

*Sub-head 1, Item (4)—Principal Assistant Secretary.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to increase Item (4) by £4,080 and establishment by two.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Sub-head 1, Item (5)—Assistant Secretaries.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** I beg to move to increase Item (5) by £2,790 and the establishment by three. This increase has the assent of His Excellency.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Sub-head 1, Item (10)—Staff Officers.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move, with His Excellency's assent, to increase Item (10) by £440 and the establishment by one.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Sub-head 1, Item (11)—First-class Clerks.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move, with His Excellency's assent, to increase Item (11) by £1,270 and the establishment by four.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Sub-head 1, Item (12)—Second and Third-class Clerks.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move with His Excellency's assent, to increase Item (12) by £1,080 and the establishment by six.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

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*Sub-head 1, Item (15)—Messengers.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move, with His Excellency's assent, to increase Item (15) by £460 and the establishment by four.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Sub-head 1, Item (18)—Acting Allowance.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move, with His Excellency's assent, to increase Item (18) by £600.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Sub-head 1, Item (20)—Inducement Addition.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move, with His Excellency's assent, to increase Item (20) by £720.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to include the following new provision.

One Deputy Permanent Secretary, Group 6—£2,220. It is a new item.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Sub-head 3—Transport and Travelling.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move, with His Excellency's assent, to increase sub-head 3 by the sum of £25. This is an amendment common to all Ministries' Local Transport and Travelling vote.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Sub-head 6—Special Grants to Local Government Bodies.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move, with His Excellency's assent, to increase sub-head 6 by £45,000. This is based on the attempt of the Ministry to encourage capital works in under-developed areas.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Question, That an increased sum of £167,565 for Head 454—Ministry of Internal Affairs—be inserted in the Schedule put and agreed to.*

#### Head 455—Administration

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £317,630 for Head 455—Administration—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, earlier in this meeting of the House I made a statement outlining the Government's plans for the re-organisation of the Administration and for increasing the establishment of the under-staffed Ministry of Internal Affairs. I

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explained that for the proper staffing of my Ministry it would be necessary to have a Deputy Permanent Secretary, two extra Principal Assistant Secretaries and three additional Assistant Secretaries together with the necessary clerical staff. I made it clear that these posts would be filled by correspondingly reducing the establishment of the Administration. I described the Government's plans for complying with the wishes of this House by abolishing the system of Provincial Administration and organising a system whereby officers in charge of Divisions dealt directly with the Ministries, and I explained the change of organisation of the functions of senior officers.

I explained also that it was not constitutionally impossible to abolish the posts of Resident as long as they are filled by the Governor. I outlined an organisation whereby senior officers in salary scale Group 6 would be placed in charge of the most important administrative divisions and also charged with the responsibility of ensuring that Government's policy was carried out in neighbouring divisions which might be in the charge of more junior and less experienced officers. The amendments that I shall move when I am permitted to do so, Mr Chairman, under Head 455, are consequent upon the re-organisation of the Administration and the expansion of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

**Mr E. U. Eronini (Owerri Division):** Mr Chairman in 1952, I spoke in this House to the effect that the position and status of Residents of Provinces has become obsolete. It happened that there were some Residents in this House then. They thought I was talking out of sense. But as time goes on we have seen that they are redundant.

I want to pay tribute to the work they have done. In the early days, there were Residents representing each of the Provinces in the Legislative House in Lagos. They did some work to help and swell the votes of the official side, and in many cases they helped to bring up the needs of our own provinces. Now the elected members have taken their places. When you come into the Administration you will find that it is so interwoven with Local Government that Residents have no part to play in our day to day administrative functions. They sat on appeal courts and review courts but in my Province there are appeals to the Resident's Court that have been outstanding for over ten years. We are happy now that their judicial function has been abolished, and we want to pay tribute to those of them who gave yeoman service.

*Sub-head 1, Item (1)—Administrative Officers, Staff Grade and Class I.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to leave out Item (1).

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Sub-head 1 Item (2)—Administrative Officers, Classes II-IV.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to leave out Item (2).

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Sub-head 1, Item (5)—Staff Officers.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to reduce item 5 by £440 and the establishment by one.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Sub-head 1, Item 6—First-class Clerks.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to reduce Item 6 by £1,590 and the establishment by five.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Sub-head 1, Item (7)—Second and Third-class Clerks.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to reduce Item 7 by £1,800 and the establishment by ten.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Sub-head 1, Item (15)—Messengers.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to reduce Item 15 by £460 and the establishment by four.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Sub-head 1, Item (20)—Acting Allowance.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move, with His Excellency's assent, to increase item 20 by £900.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Sub-head 1, Item (21)—Inducement Addition.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to reduce Item 21 by £720.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to include with His Excellency assent the following provisions: 106 Administrative Officers: five Group 6 (two with personal salaries Group 5), eleven Class II, Group 7, ninety Classes III and IV, District Officers and Assistant District Officers and Cadets, Scale A—£115,840.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Question, That an increased sum of £303,680, for Head 455—Administration—be inserted in the Schedule put and agreed to.*

#### **Head 456—Grants to Local Government Bodies in respect of Grant-Earning Services**

*Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £1,900,000 for Head 456—Grants to Local Government Bodies in respect of Grant Earning Services—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, in my speech in support of the Appropriation Bill I went very fully into the Government's policy for the making of Grants-in-Aid to Local Government Bodies. I pointed out that it was generally held in authoritative circles that the fundamental problem of Local Government finance is how to provide the money necessary to meet the cost of the services carried out without imposing an intolerable burden on the tax-payers and without the local authorities becoming unduly dependent upon assistance from the central exchequer.

The explanatory details of sub-heads, printed as an addendum to Head 456 in the Draft Estimates 1956-57 as originally published, were based on a specific system of percentage grants. A more detailed examination of the problem showed that even grants of that nature would in certain areas still leave what might be called an intolerable burden on the rate-payers. Government, therefore, decided that for the coming year grants would be made to Local Government Councils on the basis of 100 per cent of the approved estimated expenditure for the year 1955-56 less revenue available to Local Councils from other sources such as licences, court revenue, income tax, etc. To give effect to these decisions it is proposed to pay grants on the basis of the revised explanatory details which have been circulated to honourable Members already.

My attention has been drawn to the fact that there are one or two anomalies in one or two areas. Thus it appears that a sum of £11,041 has been voted for the grants payable to the Northern and Southern Ijaw District Councils which come into being on 1st April, 1956. This sum represents the amount paid by the present Eastern Ijaw Native Authority by way of grant-in-aid to primary schools. This omission was discovered too late for it to be included in the explanatory details and in the amendment that I will soon move. But step will be taken by way of approach to the Finance Committee to ensure that the error is rectified.

It is possible that there may be a few other anomalies. If they are substantiated they will be examined with a view to similar steps being taken, but I think the list of the grants now proposed is based on the approved estimates of all councils for 1955-56 less revenue from their own sources.

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to leave out "in Respect of Grant-Earning Services" in the Title.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to leave out Sub-heads 1-5 and insert a new sub-head 1—Grants to Local Government Bodies £1,930,000.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Question, That an increased sum of £1,930,000 for Head 456—Grants to Local Government Bodies—be inserted in the Schedule put and agreed to.*

#### Head 457—Ministry of Labour

*Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £13,990 for Head 457—The Ministry of Labour—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Minister of Labour:** Mr Chairman, I have not much to talk about this Head which remains what it was during the current year. I would like here to express my appreciation of the work of the former Minister of Labour who brought calm to the Labour Front in the Eastern Region.

The only matters which require comment are sub-heads 8 and 9—Provision for books, library and trade union education. This is in accordance with the Ministry of Labour Policy Paper, paragraph 8. It is proposed to organise short residential courses in the Principal Industrial Centres in the Region and to provide Trade Union literature for the furtherance of democratic trade unions. The amount asked for is modest and will replace some of the facilities that were provided by the Federal Department of Labour before the present Constitution. Short residential courses have been successfully undertaken by the Extra Mural Department of Ibadan University. In addition, it is hoped to organise short residential courses in this Region. It is further hoped to assist Trade Unions through books and library equipment so that Trade Union leaders can educate themselves in trade union ideology.

Regarding sub-head 9—Office Equipment—a duplicating machine and other equipment are needed for the Ministry of Labour and that sub-head is therefore increased.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Mr Chairman, during the debate on the Governor's Speech, I made the suggestion that the Ministry of Labour might consider negotiating with the Federal Government over the question of an Agent for the Anglo-Spanish recruitment. It would interest you to realise that the bulk of the recruitment to Fernando Po is from the Eastern Region and the position at the moment is that the Spanish Authorities appoint their own agent direct to Calabar. I do not see why that should happen now. My suggestion is that the Ministry might consider having an agent, say a corporation, in the Eastern Region representing the Regional Government, to act as an Agent for this recruitment.

**The Minister of Labour:** I thank the Chief Whip for his suggestion. This activity of the Anglo-Spanish Agency is receiving the attention of this Ministry. Even this morning I discussed this matter with my officers, and I do not think it would be possible that the Spanish Government will give in there because they have got their own consulate in Calabar, where they have their own man, and they provide the accommodation where these labourers rest and are examined before they proceed to the Spanish territory.

I think I know what Mr Eyo is after. He feels that this officer from the Spanish territory is receiving an allowance per head of recruited labour and that that money should be earned by this Government by the Government appointing its own agent. I am afraid, however, it simply will not work. The Spanish Government like to have their own man here.

*Sub-head 3.*

**The Minister of Labour:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move, with His Excellency's assent, that sub-head 3 be increased by £25.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Question, That an increased sum of £14,015 for Head 457—Ministry of Labour—be inserted in the Schedule, put and agreed to.*

#### Head 458—Ministry of Land

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £37,120 for Head 458—Ministry of Land—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Minister of Land:** Mr Chairman, in speaking on this head, the only item which calls for my comment is sub-head 8 which used to appear under the Head for the Ministry of Internal Affairs. However, since the work of Town Planning Authorities is most intimately connected with development of Crown Land, it was felt necessary to transfer the responsibilities and duties from the portfolio of the Minister of Internal Affairs to the Minister of Land. This was done by Eastern Regional Notice No. 585 published in the *Gazette* of 15th, August.

The money asked for here is given to Planning Authorities as a kitty from which they pay for the development and the lay-out of planning areas under their control. The amount of money given to any Planning Authority is based on the policy of past performance coupled with future indications and the ability to execute the plans. All this money is recoverable, as the cost of developing any area by Planning Authorities is met by levying a planning rate. Planning Authorities to whom subventions are given, when their work is complete, render to the Government such money as remains with them. I can assure honourable Members that I keep the closest watch on the expenditure of Planning Authorities.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** Mr Chairman, I wish to raise again the complaint regarding surveyors, under this Ministry. In the Survey Department there is only one Expatriate officer and he is the head of that Department. All the others are Nigerians. The post of Senior Surveyor has been vacant for a number of years. My information is that that post has been reserved exclusively for an expatriate. The Minister, while replying the other day, made an attempt to explain that away by saying that it was the duty of the Governor-General in the Centre to fill that post—that is if I got him right. If you will have a look at the Staff List, at page 35, you will see that the Director of Survey joined this Department in the year 1928 and, of course, he started as a surveyor and climbed up to the post of Director. There is a Nigerian who joined a year later—in 1929—as at page 36, and he is still a surveyor. Now, Sir, my quarrel is on the question of policy.

I do not know whether, when it comes to advertising, it is the head of a department who goes to advertise just anything he likes because my contention is that the advertisement in the *Gazette* should reflect the policy of that Department. With your permission, Sir, I draw the attention of the Minister to a curious advertisement published in *Gazette* No. 35, Vol. 4, of 14th July, 1955. The Notice is number 493. Here we have an advertisement for a surveyor—just an ordinary surveyor—and it reads:—

“Applications are invited from suitably qualified candidates for appointment as Surveyor in the Survey Department of the Eastern Region.”

It then goes on to state the qualifications:—

“Either (a) a University degree in Engineering, Geography or Mathematics, or (b) the Intermediate Examination of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors in Land Surveying or exemption therefrom, or full Corporate Membership of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, or a Licence to practise as a Surveyor in Canada, Australia, New Zealand or South Africa.”



My belief is that that was inserted in the advertisement to disqualify all the existing Nigerian surveyors that applied. They were called for interview before the Public Service Commission and they were asked, "Have you a licence to practise in Canada?"—"No"; "Have you a licence to practise in Australia?"—"No"; "Have you a licence to practise in New Zealand?"—"No"; "Have you a licence to practise in South Africa?"—"No".

I just want anybody to defend it. Why is it necessary to call for a licence to practise in Canada, Australia, New Zealand or South Africa as a qualification?

Mr Chairman, it will interest you to know that in the West—I have got all the papers here—a Nigerian is holding the post of Deputy Director and this Nigerian, Sir, did not go beyond the usual course at Uyo. He is now holding the post of Deputy Director of Survey.

If you look at the staff list, you will see that the highest Nigerian is one who is regarded as a Provincial Surveyor. This Nigerian also applied for a vacant post of Senior Surveyor. He appeared for interview before the Public Service Commission but was turned down. This Nigerian did his course locally and then went abroad. His complaint is that the other three Nigerians who came from the West and did this course in 1949 with him and who failed in four subjects are now occupying posts of Senior Surveyor. He was only referred in one subject. My information is that the Public Service Commission relies on the recommendation of the Head of Department. Here is a Head of Department who will not recommend any Nigerian. Has the Executive Council laid down this policy for the Public Service Commission—that no Nigerian who is not recommended by his Head of Department should be considered?

I understand, Sir, that the present Director is retiring, and that attempts are being made to find from other Regions one who should come here to be the Director. But if you look at the Estimates under Survey, you will see Director of Surveys, Group 6, Senior Surveyor, five Surveyors, one Surveyor, Grade I, two Surveyors, Grade II and then you have the juniors. My criticism is, why do you grade these Surveyors? You have a Surveyor, Grade I and a Surveyor, Grade II. I think that if you are a Surveyor, you are a Surveyor.

My complaint is that those of them who have been on Grade I should be promoted. It will interest you to know that a chap who is on Grade I joined the Department in the year 1930 as a Surveyor and up to now, he is just a Surveyor, Grade I. I understand that the old normal course of three years in Oyo or Ibadan has been stopped and if you want to enter the Survey Department after passing your matriculation you have to do a nine months' course, but you will never be called a Surveyor. All you can aspire to is to become a J.T.S. Grade II, then J.T.S. Grade I; Senior Technical Staff, Grade II and eventually Senior Technical Staff, Grade I. In other words the policy of the department is not to train any more Surveyors for the Eastern Region. I must say, Sir, that unless Executive Council is very firm on this question of the Public Service Commission, to lay down a strict policy to be adhered to by it, I do not know what to expect.

In the Northern Region, Sir, a Nigerian holds the post of Senior Surveyor and also the post of Surveyor. In the Western Region, as I have already indicated, a Nigerian is the Deputy Director of Surveys. This man did not go to England—he only became a Surveyor locally.

There are three Nigerians in the West holding the posts of Senior Surveyor. You can, therefore, understand the plight of these surveyors, especially those who went to England for this course in 1949. One of them has stated that he was the first and the best during this course, but on returning to the Eastern Region he was made a Surveyor and he still is a Surveyor.

I want the Minister in charge to explain to us whether it is the policy of his Department to look for people before they come to the Eastern Region to work as surveyors.

**Mr E. Chidolue (Onitsha Division):** Mr Chairman, during my Budget Speech, I referred to departmental policy and organisation. It is interesting to note that while the House was sitting the offices of the Survey Department had shifted to the Queen's School. I do not know whether they are going to survey the girls there! It would appear that the policy of the department is to have no buildings of their own, and during every Budget Session, we find that there is no provision made for buildings for the Survey Department,

The Government Chief Whip has exhausted all I wanted to say but I wish to add that he knows very little because I have been in that department. I know there is an Easterner who has not been to England and who has not passed the test for a surveyors' licence but who has been promoted a Senior Surveyor in the Western Region.

Another point is that some of these surveyors joined the survey units during the war and travelled to many parts of the world. Their counterparts in the Western Region have been promoted, but two of them in the Eastern Region have not been encouraged. I think the position is really deplorable.

Before I go further, I would like to point out that I have nothing against the present Director of Surveys. I met him in the service and I have never had cause for disagreement with him on any matter. I have had no trouble with him for the eleven years I have been on my own, but it would appear that because he is retiring he does not seek the progress of the Department. If these surveyors are discouraged, they will certainly find means of living elsewhere.

As one honourable Member pointed out, those of them who took a nine months' course are not capable of holding any office or of passing the surveyors' licence examination. Most of them can only be used under strict supervision. For that reason, I feel that those with the qualifications should be promoted. One of them has been on the nine months' course in England and the other joined the service in 1927. The latter, I think, is now a Provincial Surveyor in Calabar.

I think that this matter requires the attention of the Minister of Land because these people have done their best and passed the highest diploma in the country.

I wish to mention, Sir, that some time last week a Member asked a question about the professional qualifications of the present Director of Surveys. As far as I am aware, this question has not been answered. I understand, however, that the only diploma he had was an award and not by an examination. I am asking the Minister to see that these people are encouraged, so that when the present Director retires there will be some people left to carry on the work of the Department. It is good to talk of development but in all works of development you need the service of surveyors.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

**Mr E. A. Chime:** Mr Chairman, I want to say that members have been confused about these surveyors. Because somebody is a Surveyor, Grade I . . .

**The Chairman:** How does it affect policy? You want information, do you?

**Mr E. A. Chime:** I do not, Sir. I want to explain the policy of the Department of Land. A Surveyor Grade I is not a Surveyor in the strict sense of the word. He is not a Senior Service man—he is in the junior service. May I ask whether the Minister was consulted when making these appointments.

**The Chairman:** Appointments are exclusively a matter for the Governor.

**The Minister of Land:** Mr Chairman, you have made it easy. I pointed this out during the debate on the Speech from the Throne and I am surprised that honourable Members and the Chief Whip should raise it again. He has perhaps done so for the purpose of rubbing it in.

As Mr Chairman has pointed out the question of appointment to the Public Service is not within my authority—I cannot appoint anybody. What I am concerned with is the policy of the Ministry and, in fairness, I would like to throw some light on a certain number of points raised by a previous speaker.

The Chief Whip has mentioned a man who entered the service in 1927 as a surveyor in the junior grade. The other point is about an advertisement in the *Gazette*. These are quite true, but this matter is in the hands of the Public Service Commission and not myself.

**Mr E. O. Eyo:** It is all very well to say that, but the main point I am driving is that now that I have brought the anomaly to the notice of the Minister will he go back to his department and say this is not the policy of the Government?

**The Minister of Land:** It is not the policy of the Government to discriminate. The points raised will be investigated fully.

*Sub-head 3.*

**The Minister of Land:** Sir, I beg to move, with His Excellency's assent that Sub-head 3 be increased by £25.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Question, That an increased sum of £37,145 for Head 458—The Ministry of Land—be inserted in the Schedule put and agreed to.*

#### Head 459—Land

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £58,710 for Head 459—Land—stand part of the Schedule.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### Head 460—Survey

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £47,290 for Head 460—Survey—stand part of the Schedule.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### Head 461—The Ministry of Trade

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £13,230 for Head 461—The Ministry of Trade—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Minister of Trade:** Mr Chairman, this Ministry now contains three main departments—Produce Inspection Service, Co-operative Department and the Department of Trade. In addition I am responsible for the Eastern Regional Marketing Board—a very important Board—and the Tourist Corporation. I will deal briefly with each department in turn when the Chairman proposes the question of each head.

I would like to say a word or two about the Eastern Regional Marketing Board. As honourable Members are well aware the Board's main functions are to cushion the prices of palm produce and cocoa and to employ some of its reserves in research work as well as in any other project which, in the opinion of the Government, is worthy of support. The most important, during the financial year 1955-56, was to use some of the reserves to start the University of Nigeria. I need not tell honourable Members how glad I was to be in the position of directing this Board to supply the necessary funds. But, Mr Chairman, I will say without fear, that throughout the debates praises were poured on the Education Department, and while I do not quarrel with the Education Department I think it is unfair—very unfair—for Members to forget entirely the Eastern Regional Marketing Board which makes available this fund.

The Tourist Corporation has had its first meeting, and Members would have seen from the Press that the Corporation will have a great task providing amenities not only to visitors but also to those of us who live in this Region to make their stay more comfortable and interesting. It is hoped to appoint the General Manager later this year. The Corporation will have a capital of £100,000 and I can assure honourable Members that the members of the Corporation feel confident, after an initial period of settling down, of showing profit.

**Mr B. C. Okwu (Awgu Division):** Mr Chairman, I would like to start by congratulating the Minister of Trade. It is but natural for one to expect some words of thanks after one has done a good work.

There is, however, one aspect of the policy of the Ministry of Trade in which I am interested and on which I wish to make a few observations. You will observe, Sir, that I have some amendments down. It is not, however, my intention to move them. The value of this Ministry has been under-rated in the past. It is as important to us in the rural areas as the Ministries of Transport, Development, Health and Education. Very few people realise that on the Co-operative section of this Ministry alone depends very much the success of our economic and social programmes.

I wish, therefore, to point out to the Government by way of very strong protest, that the Co-operative section of this Ministry is very much under-staffed and that the Africans who work here have no prospects whatsoever. Disgruntled and dissatisfied, they either seek for employment in other Regions or enter more lucrative departments of this Government. Until conditions are made attractive you will get second-class men in this section.

It appears that the Government is paying less attention than other Governments of the Federation to the Co-operative Movement. Both the West and the North have voted more money for the use of the Co-operative Department than the East. The sum we find in the Estimates now under consideration is very small, and we would not quarrel with Government if it comes forward with a demand for a vote four times as much, because much depends on the expansion of the Co-operative Movement.

I suggest that the Minister himself should pay a visit to India. India, we are told, is making tremendous progress although it is a very poor and thickly populated sub-continent. The tremendous progress made under India's Five-Year Development Plans—the first of which has expired and the second about to begin—is based on the expansion of Indian cottage industries which are run on Co-operative lines. Money spent on such a visit to India is an expenditure worth making. But for the troubles in Cyprus I would have suggested that the Minister should also visit that island.

It will become much easier to raise local capital for our various industrial projects by teaching our people thrift habits. This will have the added advantage of sometimes saving the common people from the tyranny of money-lenders. I think that if the Minister embarks on a comprehensive development of the Co-operative Movement the benefits that will accrue to the Region will be enormous.

There seems to be very little attention paid by this Ministry to the Co-operative Movement in Onitsha, Ogoja and Rivers Provinces. This is quite true. I am not even satisfied that enough has been done in Calabar and Owerri Provinces where more expansion has taken place. While the Minister should see to further expansion of the Co-operative Movement in these two provinces he should see to it that the other three Provinces lagging behind are brought to the same level.

It will interest you to know that whereas in Calabar Province you have 721 Credit Co-operative and Thrift Credit Societies you have only 12 in the Onitsha Province, 7 in Ogoja, 21 in Rivers and 98 in Owerri. These figures are not encouraging. There is not one single Provincial Bank in the Onitsha Province. I hope that one should be established very shortly in a central place. There are only two Provincial Banks in the Region—one in Calabar and the other in Owerri Province. The other Provinces of the Region have none.

*Sub-head 3.*

**The Minister of Trade:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move, with His Excellency's consent, that sub-head 3 be increased by £25.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Question, That an increased sum of £13,255 for Head 461—The Ministry of Trade—be inserted in the Schedule put and agreed to.*

*Sitting suspended at 1 p.m.*

*Sitting resumed at 3 p.m.*

#### **Head 462—Co-operative Societies**

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £33,440 for Head 462—Co-operative Societies—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Minister of Trade:** Honourable Members will observe an increase in the Junior Service establishment under this Head, though that is not enough for expansion. It is now known that we have 1,000 Societies in the Region, a greater number than anywhere else of comparable size in Africa. The rate of expansion at present outstrips the ability of the Department to deal with new registrations. Consideration was recently given to a proposal to stop further registrations for a period so as to afford a breathing space during which time the Co-operative Department might consolidate rather than expand.

It is believed, Sir, that the proposed addition of two Senior Inspectors, two Inspectors Grade I, and three Inspectors Grades II and III will afford a little relief to the Department and avoid having to stop registration entirely. Honourable Members will be glad to learn of this, for Co-operation is regarded as an important pillar of our economic policy. Co-operative Societies and Limited Companies express the same urge—the urge for individuals to progress by co-operation with others. Co-operation has proved to be conducive to better conditions for the Co-operatives and higher standards of living for the community. Accordingly it gives me very great pleasure to see the rapid development of Co-operative Societies in this Region, for it provides yet further evidence of the foresight and intelligence of our people in choosing the surest and shortest road to progress. We should therefore aim to see every Society working successfully and then proceed to expansion and amalgamation. We should like to see co-operation in every aspect of our economic life—to the wholesale and retail trade, produce buying, banking, industries, transport, *et cetera*.

While dealing with this Head some time last week the honourable Ekpe remarked that co-operative farming should be encouraged. This is an interesting suggestion, Mr Chairman. May I inform honourable Members that we already have a few Co-operative Farming Societies here and there in the Region. We have two Co-operative Farming Societies in Obubra Division two in Onitsha Division, one in Nsukka, and one in Uyo Division; but there are two big problems hindering the progress of these Societies—land acquisition and finance.

Mr B. C. Okwu made a remark that Co-operative Societies are understaffed. My Ministry is well aware of this but our hope is on the Finance Bill being a success when the increased staff may be sought for.

It was also remarked by Mr B. C. Okwu that the expansion of this Department is not as expected in Onitsha, Ogoja and Rivers Provinces. I can adduce two reasons for this. One is that the people in these Provinces did not at the outset embrace Co-operative Societies as other Provinces, and the second reason is the lack of sufficient staff. I advised that expansion should be held up because the Department has already bitten off more than it can chew.

It is a fact that two Banks exist at the moment, but the Department is satisfied with the operation of these Banks until the need for research arises.

**Mr E. U. Eronini:** Mr Chairman, listening to the Minister of Trade explaining the theories in co-operation, I seem to doubt, looking through the Estimates, that anything much has been done for co-operation in this Region. It is true as one honourable Member mentioned in

the morning that in Aba Division we have about 744 Co-operative Societies and in Owerri about ninety-eight. The reason for this is mostly that these co-operatives were already there; they are thrift societies which the people have been used to for centuries. What happened was that these were asked to license as Co-operative Societies in the new state of things and that is why you have Co-operative Societies established so well in Owerri and Aba Divisions.

The Eastern Region, Sir, due to our democratic outlook and socialist tendencies is prone to co-operative movements and it is inborn in us. Our mode of living is more or less linked with co-operation. Our farming in the olden days was co-operative in outlook. In sanitation people clean their surroundings and streets together, one time or the other. So, co-operation in this Region will come to stay and help in our economic move provided more attention is given to the personnel of this Department and what they are doing.

It seems to me that up to the present time the Co-operative Department is only concerned with registration of co-operative movements. It is not set upon organising co-operative societies and co-operative work amongst the people. For instance, in the export of cash crops I am surprised to note that there are only about two or three co-operative movements in farming in the Onitsha Province, or perhaps in the other Provinces, and I am looking for the day when almost in every division or county there will be an Assistant Co-operative Officer who will help to organise food movements, Co-operative Societies in farming—yam farming, in vegetables, in cassava, in rice and palm oil—so that when you come to a district you will have at least not less than ten to fifteen Co-operative Societies, and in this way the people will produce more to eat and more for the market. It will also be easier to control food profiteering because you are dealing with a group of people you can easily handle.

I look forward to the time when we shall have organising staff, not only inspectors, but organisers from industry—those who understand a little of craftsmanship—who will organise people in the way of light industry and heavy industry.

From the Ministry of Agriculture we can get men versed in Agriculture who will come into the Co-operative Society as Agricultural Assistants helping to organise farmers to cultivate cash crops, export crops and food crops.

I am looking forward, Sir, to the time when most of our transport will be formed into Co-operative Societies—our truck transport and lorry transport.

Here, in future, we shall have our co-operative societies in sugar, fish and meat moving forward. We need to think in a co-operative way. One of our troubles in this country is that we think very much in an individualistic way and by so doing everybody is looking only after himself. For this reason there is not much done for the whole general nation. We are looking forward to seeing the Co-operative Society helping in the progress of this country.

**The Chairman:** I have received notices to move the reduction of Head 462 in one case by £20 and in the other by £10. In view of my ruling yesterday naturally the movers will wish to withdraw.

*Question, That the sum of £33,440 for Head 462—Co-operative Societies—stand part of the Schedule put and agreed to.*

#### **Head 463—Produce Inspection Service**

*Question proposed, That the sum of £102,760 for Head 463—Produce Inspection Service—stand part of the Schedule.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### **Head 464—Trade**

*Question proposed, That the sum of £7,900 for Head 464—Trade—stand part of the Schedule.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

### Head 465—The Ministry of Transport

*Question proposed, That a sum not exceeding £103,680 for Head 465—The Ministry of Transport—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Minister of Transport:** Mr Chairman, I do not think that the House needs any explanation from me regarding Sub-head 1, Personal Emoluments, which is self-explanatory. The only increase is a driver which links with the proposal to buy a Ministerial car, sub-head 12. It is intended to facilitate the extensive touring which is necessary and which is essential if I am to prosecute my official duties efficiently.

I am responsible for roads, but while my concern for these is great I am equally concerned for the needs of those of our people who have to depend on our creeks and inland waterways. In that connection I invite attention to sub-heads 8, 9 and 10. Sub-head 8 provides £8,600 for inland waterways clearance. The importance of clearing our waterways, which are the roads of our riverine people, cannot be over-emphasised. This work is done for us by the Ports Authority. Sub-heads 9 and 10 should be taken together. The first, £65,240, is the price we must pay to the Ports Authority for operating our launches while the second, £14,370, is the year's contribution to the Renewals Fund. Every year something is set aside so that in the end when a launch becomes unserviceable money is available to buy a new one.

The Federal Government has allocated to this Region fifteen launches. In allocating these vessels to us the House will note that the Federal Government also paid £123,000 for the appropriate balance to the Marine Renewals Fund. This sum includes the total paid up contribution for 2 vessels which have become obsolete and have been broken up, and which we now propose to replace.

In addition to operating touring launches for the use of Government, there are at present two creek mail services and I have every hope of obtaining an additional vessel for the service from Port Harcourt to Kaiama. These vessels are operated on our behalf by the Federal Ports Authority.

Before going over to dry land, I would like the House to remember that many of the most important waterways in the Region are Federal. The Niger itself, the main creek route from the Western boundary to Eket, all other tidal waters, the Cross River and the creek route to the Cameroons are all Federal responsibility. When people ask me to do something about any bit of these, I can only represent their case to the Federal Government.

It would seem appropriate to discuss the overall policy of my Ministry at this point. The honourable the Minister of Development has aggressively dealt with the question of sources of tax so I will not go into it very much, but I would like to say this, that I would have been very happy if the staff shown in my heads of the Estimates could be wholly devoted to road and aerodrome work. It is, however, an unfortunate reflection that taking all the activities of the Public Works Department, we have only 50 per cent of our establishment. When the vacancies under Head 436—Public Works, and Head 467—Road construction, have been filled, then my Ministry will be self-sufficient so far as the projects shown under Head 467 and the maintenance of Trunk Roads A, Trunk Roads B and aerodromes are concerned.

The maintenance of Trunk Roads A forms a not inconsiderable portion of the activities of the Public Works, amounting as it does to no less than £202,000 compared with £144,000 spent on Trunk Roads B inclusive of reimbursement to Local Government Bodies. The House will appreciate that this work on Trunk Roads A is not only vital to the development of the Region but also it is revenue earning in that the Federal Government pays to this Government agency fees for work undertaken on its behalf.

The principal policy of my Ministry is to build roads, and to implement this policy I have decided to employ Consultant Engineers for survey and design work and I will move to provide £40,000 for this purpose. I intend, first of all, to employ them on selected projects

in the Development Plan and then, as these get finished, on other projects, so that we will have a series of contract documents ready the moment there is money. Indeed, the bridges on the Oko-Ufuma Road, the survey of the Awka-Orlu-Owerri Road tarring projects and the survey of the road from Obudu to Ikom have all been put in the hands of private firms. I will also consider employing consultants to supervise the works if we fail to overcome our staff difficulties.

I propose, during the year, to press on with Road Safety Measures. Some £15,000, which does not appear in the Estimates owing to its late approval by Executive Council and by the Standing Committee on Finance, will be spent on painting white lines down the centres of all the tarred roads in the Region. I also intend to continue with the felling of trees which constitute such ever present danger to the users of our roads. To this effect the Government has voted the sum of £5,000 for the felling of trees between Owerri and Port Harcourt. The House will also not fail to have noticed that I have caused to be put up Notice Boards cautioning drivers against excessive speed through our villages.

Road Safety, indeed, occupies a permanent place in my mind. I never fail to be shocked whenever I hear of a fatal accident on our roads. To this end I have during the year invited the public's attention to its rights under the Compulsory Third Party Insurance Ordinance and I have no intention of diminishing these rights. And we have now passed into law a Fatal Accidents Law which places beyond doubt the civil rights of the bereaved. I am also happy to say that considerable interest has been aroused by my proposal for road safety weeks.

I know that the House eyed critically the progress revealed by the Estimates on the project that I initiated in the 1955-56 Estimates. Speaking broadly, just over a quarter of the money voted for 1955-56 has been spent, but this shortfall between the legislators' hope as expressed in money and the Government's power of execution obscures the very great strides that have been made. Now, of the programmes listed in our 1955-56 printed Estimates there were new items which had not been earlier considered by anybody, yet before this House rises work to the value of not less than £268,000 will probably be in hand. Of this only the Etinan Bridge, costing £14,510, will not have been designed and set in motion by the Public Works Department. 103 miles of road, that is, road from Aba to Opobo and the road from Umu-koroshe to Kono, and the Ibagwa bridge now await the deliberations of the Tenders Board.

I am fully aware of my responsibility to the people of the Eastern Region and so, in August, when it became clear that the speed of the Public Works Department was rather slow because of the acute shortage of staff, I decided to approach consultants. In my rush, and it was a mad rush after all, to get things done, I instructed my Permanent Secretary to write to different contractors asking them whether they would be interested in a single contract embracing the survey, design and execution of the projects. That was done but unfortunately the contractors said it was not done that way. It was done like that because I was in so much of a hurry to get things done in August. As I said earlier, the Public Works Department could not cope because of the acute shortage of staff and I had to resort to consultants, as a result of which, as I have mentioned before, private firms are surveying the Awka-Owerri Road, the Obudu-Ikom Road and the Etinan Bridge. This is just to tell you that I am alive to my responsibility to the people of the Eastern Region.

Now, one other thing I want to tell you which I have done in connection with the new projects found in the Estimates. Some people say, well, we can probably do without surveying but I think the honourable Chidolue said that we cannot do without surveying roads. If we want to get the work properly done it must be surveyed properly and proper documents written, otherwise we cannot get that work done. In other words we are just throwing our money into the river. To get our work done, I am personally convinced that surveying, designing and writing of documents will take a lot of time, and so I feel that something must be done earlier. Therefore, when I got to know the new projects that would be included in the 1956-57 Estimates, I instructed that surveys should start immediately, and I instructed



in November before you people came here that surveying should start at once so that by April or May we could start work, after you have given me your blessing to the projects. I gave those instructions to my Permanent Secretary and he also passed them on to the Director and the Director also passed on the instructions to the Provincial Engineers, but unfortunately these people are very busy on other things and so these have not been done.

That being the case, I can assure you, although you have not passed the Estimates yet, that my Director has already written to Travers Morgan, that is, the engineering side—Consultants to undertake the survey of the new projects which we now find in our Estimates. This is done to expedite action to see that something is done. Mr Chairman, before people begin to criticise I have just told them a little of what I have done. I do not think there will be much difficulty because they have already exhausted themselves during the debate and also the debate on the Appropriation Bill.

**Mr B. C. Okwu:** Mr Chairman, here is a Ministry that has told this Region that it has addressed itself to a policy of vigorous road development. It is said that much of the agricultural, industrial, and commercial development of this Region depends on the back-bone of a good road system and it is also admitted that the Department is the agency of the Federal Government in matters of Trunk Roads A and that it has promised this Region that more and more roads will be taken over from the Local Government Bodies, and that the Local Government bridges will be taken over, some of these, and turned into concrete bridges in order to avoid the constant closing of roads due to these bridges falling or getting damaged, and also to enable the local councils to face some other aspects of their development.

I would also like to add that in the policy paper you will find that on the last page it gives you a schedule Appendix A, of Trunk Roads B in the Eastern Region. I have checked up and found out that this Ministry is maintaining 259 miles of road in the Calabar Province and that most of these roads are on 100 per cent reimbursement basis, for Ogoja Province we have 234 miles of road, and for Onitsha Province, and this is very pertinent, the Regional Government is maintaining only 163 miles of road.

This is a fact and I ask the Minister to rebuke me. When it comes to the mileage of roads maintained by the Federal Government, Onitsha Province is not in the list. It is also very interesting that in Onitsha Province itself, we have County Councils in all parts of the Division and the only one missing there is my own Division, Awgu. Sir, we come to Owerri Province. Here we have 354 miles of road, in very poor condition and in Rivers Province 188. Onitsha Province comes last. I have drawn the attention of the House to this fact because again and again we have been told that Onitsha Province is receiving more than its due share.

I want to draw the attention of the House to the new works and new roads which the Regional Government wants to undertake and I am protesting that in the case of roads to be tarred you find that they are concentrated in a circle. You find, for instance, Awka-Orlu-Owerri Road tarring, costing many thousands of pounds, and you find elsewhere Akorkwa-Okigwi tarring and bridges. My complaint is that if you take your road map you will find that those roads cover certain areas, and I would ask the Government their justification on economic grounds or on the ground that these roads lead to important markets or produce centres. Then will the Minister convince me that he is justified in concentrating all these big schemes on tarring and bridges in this particular area without paying attention to many other parts of the Region.

I wish to point out, Sir, that the policy paper itself gives the basis on which the priority of these roads is determined. Before the Ministry of Works was split into Development and Transport a road survey was undertaken and in that road survey my own Division was the only one omitted. But I am telling this Minister that the decision as to which roads he has to get tarred and which bridges you are going to leave and which roads you are to take over should be based on that survey.

Another point on which I want to lay particular emphasis is the giving of road work on contract. I warn and protest against selective tendering. All roads given out on contract must be on open tenders, not on selective. Do not invite only those that you think are deserving and then give them contracts, but do it by open tender in which all can compete.

The last point I wish to make, Sir, is that the Minister himself, if he wants to be fair to all parts of the Region, must have time set apart to look into the whole question of roads in all parts of the Region so as to ascertain whether it is justifiable for one particular area or particular areas to be the first to receive consideration. We cannot continue to accept that when it comes to roads we do not qualify, when it comes to scholarships we do not qualify, when it comes to secondary schools we do not qualify. Is there anything for which we can qualify? So I am saying that the Minister ought to sit down and go into the whole question. I am not prepared to go out and blame him 100 per cent and say you have not done this. I am prepared to accept that you have not got yourself completely acquainted with this Ministry and the sooner you do that the better it will be.

**Mr M. E. Ogon:** Mr Chairman, I must first of all congratulate the Minister for voting the sum of £30,000 for the Ogoja-Ikom Road. The same amount was voted for this road last year as well as two years ago. What guarantee have I that work on this road will be undertaken? I think the trouble with the Ministry is that it is very anxious to get everything done but the real drawback is that the whole Ministry is weakening and the civil servants under the Minister are weakening. I think we should know where to direct our attacks; otherwise how else can we understand that of all the money voted last year nothing was done except to give one quarter of the entire work on contract. I should have given all the work out on contract so that by this time work should be done or by the time I come to the House work is in progress and there will be no excuse of having no staff.

You say you were very anxious in November last. Well, what happened between April 1st and November 1st last year? Why not tell us why all this was not on contract? We are charging that this Ministry is weakening. I say so, Sir, because as the first speaker has said if you take a map of this Region and ask the Minister where are these roads you have recommended leading, you will find he cannot trace them on the map. Let me tell you, Sir, that your tours have been to the Rivers Province. It is unfair to us that nothing has been done to improve the roads in our area. When the former Minister of Works was in office he made an extensive tour of the whole Region as a result of which he drew up a priority list of roads requiring attention.

If we want to construct a road it should be given priority from the economic point of view of the Region. The fact that one man who comes from a village owns a Chevrolet car does not make the construction of a road to his village a top priority. If you take this list of roads you will find that they are all village roads.

The first Member for Awgu, when speaking about the number of roads in Ogoja, failed to tell us how many miles of these roads are tarred. The real issue is, are these roads in use for most of the year? They are not in use. In fact they are the worst roads in the whole country, and for the greater part of the year they are not in use. The pity of it is that the Parliamentary Secretary to this Ministry comes from our Province.

The Minister has told us that he plans to take over some roads from Local Government Councils. How many Native Administration roads has he taken over in the current year in Ogoja Province? Even the Enugu-Abakaliki road which was tarred only recently is now full of pot-holes. When a road is being constructed it should be done properly.

The Cross River, I agree, is a Federal subject, but he should not lie low. He should take the initiative to ask the Federal Government to undertake works on this river.

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If I may have the last word on this selective tendering, we wanted the Government through the Minister of Development to make a statement on this selective tendering, but it was cleverly evaded. The whole thing is discriminatory. Let everybody be given a fair chance. Selective tendering gives room for innocent people to be unnecessarily persecuted and victimised. Let Government leave all tenders under the Ministry of Finance, or rule that all contracts should be openly tendered for.

I want to remind the Minister that the rainy season is coming when the cost of road construction is very high. The Minister should go all out now to survey the roads before the rains come; otherwise we shall have to go without tarred roads.

I hear that civil servants are reluctant to go to Ogoja for fear of damaging their cars. It is a fact that any car put on Ogoja roads does not last more than six months. And this is an important Trunk A road leading to the Cameroons and to East Africa. We are asking that the Minister of Transport should press the Federal Government to give him money to start tarring the road.

If the road between Ikom and Obudu is not completed this year it will leave a bad impression with the people. Last year I was challenged by a political opponent that we would not be able to complete this road, but I bragged that the road would be completed within the year. In February when I went again on another tour there, I met this same man and he laughed at me saying, is the road finished now? I did not reply; I was embarrassed. Many of these works can be done by African contractors. Tarring is a technical job. We are not against your going out to Italy to look for contractors to tar our roads, but we do insist that when you go on official duty you should report the results to us.

**Mr S. T. Akpan (Eket Division):** The Minister of Transport has recently seen to the construction of bridges in my Division and for that I have to congratulate him and his staff.

I am now chiefly concerned with roads. The Minister has told us the different plans which he intends to carry out in order to encourage greater safety on the road. But he has failed to mention the much needed Drivers' School. I think our trouble is not so much bad roads, particularly in my own area, but reckless driving. Much as it is good to clear the trees along the roadside, unless competent and reliable drivers are produced we must continue to have fatal accidents every now and then.

It is very important that the Minister should do everything in his power to see that a Drivers' School, as mentioned in his Policy Paper, is established soon to set a standard of training for these drivers and also a standard of test. It might become necessary for drivers to be tested for their licence by the staff of this Drivers' School. What obtains at the moment is that some drivers just take two or three months' practice without mastering the job; they then go in for testing, and God knows how many of them really used to pass the test; but they will pass quite all right and obtain licence. On the strength of these licences they begin to drive lorries and cause accidents here and there.

It is for this Ministry to establish a standard for other voluntary agencies. For example, the Motor Union Drivers' School is being run by the Union on its own. This is Government's responsibility instead of merely congratulating the Union as it has done in the past. Government should now face its responsibility, and if it shows the people what should be done I am perfectly sure, Mr Chairman, that those people will be prepared to adjust their standards.

When we people living along the sea are coming to Enugu we have to go all the way to Onitsha and thence to Enugu—a very tedious and circuitous journey. I think the time has come when this Ministry, which is charged with the sole responsibility of developing the road system of the Region, will think of shortening that journey by constructing a road from Enugu to Aba through Umuahia,

**Mr S. E. K. Iwueke (Okigwi Division):** Mr Chairman, if there is anything for which I can congratulate the Ministry of Transport it is the introduction of the Fatal Accidents Law. This Fatal Accidents Law provides us with an opportunity of checking accidents and saving lives. The Minister forgets to give us an assurance on checking night traffic, which is the main cause of these fatal accidents in most of the rural areas.

Many evils are attendant on this night traffic. We talk of burglary being committed in the whole Eastern Region today. The other day I was trying to inform the House of the incident of burglary which occurred in Etiti and several other District Council Treasuries in the Region. These crimes were committed in the night. Such habitual criminals travel in the night under the protection of night traffic. I was trying to tell the House the most significant thing about that, which was that the people who came to Etiti Treasury came along with women. I think the intention was to confuse any person who might meet them on the road from identifying them. If the Government were to take steps to check night traffic they would go half way to controlling many evils along with these fatal accidents.

The importance of roads in this Region cannot be over-emphasised. There is no way we can give the poor tax-payers assurance that they are getting a fair return for the taxes they pay except by providing them with roads. Year in and year out we come to discuss and make plans on policy and all those things which to my own conviction are paper plans and policy. There are no visible signs of achievement under this Ministry to assure us that effective steps are taken to implement what we come here to discuss.

Whenever anybody stands up to speak he must make mention of the Division from where he comes. I am telling you here and now that there are people who suffer the brunt of this lack of roads more than the rest—people from Okigwi and Bende Divisions for instance. These places have seasonal roads—roads that are impassable at one time of the year. Most of the Members who have visited these Divisions in the rainy season can bear me out. The Minister of Welfare got stuck one day on one of these roads, if he remembers. He could not get in because of bad road. So that when we from Okigwi come here to talk of bad roads Members should not think that we are exaggerating matters.

I next come to the question of the Federal roads. Of course we do not want to bother the Minister in that respect, but as the Regional agency for that matter, the tarring of the Owerinta-Umuahia-Orji road is a serious challenge to this Government. We have been promised everything. This road is not only a Regional road, it is more than a Regional road. It shortens the distance from here to Owerinta for that matter. We expect the Minister to make a definite statement about his transactions with the Federal Minister responsible for this road.

Another point is the bridging of rivers. As a matter of fact, we do not come here to ask the Minister to bridge some brooks or streams for us, but rivers. Equally we do not expect the County Council for that matter to bridge a river like Imo. We have one connecting Okigwi and Umuahia; it gives us the shortest possible distance. Every year we come to this House, we ask the Government to take up this responsibility. It is too much for us to bear.

I thank the Minister for the gesture he made in giving us a little sum of £3,750 for this project, but this is not enough. We cannot do anything with it at all. At Okigwi we forgo every service in the interest of roads. All that we should have taken to foster other services we concentrate on the maintenance of roads, and yet we do not get through during the rainy season because of the nature of the soil. This is why when we come here we stress the importance of this matter to the Ministers concerned. Bridging of this Imo river is overdue and we are pressing the Minister of Transport to make a definite statement about this.

**Mr A. J. Ekpe (Opobo Division):** Mr Chairman, I do not like the way very important pieces of legislation are being rushed through this House.

**The Chairman:** Which legislation?

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**Mr A. J. Ekpe:** What we are considering now, Sir. I like the policy of the Regional Government in respect of road development. Certainly there is not a vigorous Minister to put these programmes into execution. We must not come here and take decisions when we have no one to carry these decisions out. The Minister has just stated in this House that of the money voted to him during the current year to carry out the programme of road development, he only spent one quarter. That is an acknowledgement of inefficiency.

Another charge on this Minister, Sir, is he treads on very soft ground that angels really dread. The Federal Government was approached on the matter of painting white lines on the tarred road and the Federal Government said that they could not do it because it was too expensive and it would be unnecessary, except near very large townships where these white lines could be painted on the centre of the road. But we have just been told by the Minister, as if it were priority, that he has voted to undertake painting of white lines on the roads. Who has asked him to do that? The roads are very narrow, Sir. Take the road from here to Onitsha or from Onitsha to Aba. Look at the width of the road. If you divide the road into two and ask each driver to keep to his side, you will send people to the gutters. Do not divide the roads and draw white lines on the narrow roads we have in the Region. I take a very serious exception to that.

The Federal Government was approached to state whether they would reimburse the Regional Government if it undertook to fell trees along Trunk "A" roads, which is a Federal responsibility and the Federal Government wrote to say that they were considering the matter. They were not sure that they would do it and we have now been told by the Minister that that is a priority. Who is going to do that? Who has told him to undertake the felling of trees on Federal roads which are their responsibility without an assurance from the Federal Government that whatever amount of money he spends will be reimbursable.

I am very sorry, Sir, to be so hard on the Minister but believe me honestly, it is a position like this that makes me regret sending very efficient people out of the Ministry, no matter what the reason. I know very well that if the former Minister of Finance was in charge of this Ministry, certainly results would have been got. I revere efficiency wherever it comes from. I hope the Premier, when he reshuffles his Cabinet, will see to it that a very dynamic and vigorous Minister is in charge of Transport Ministry.

The question of road development should receive all consideration, in fact priority consideration in the Region, because, after all, our development programme and economic development all hinge on the road development programme. If there are no roads, we cannot carry on trade. If we have no good roads, we cannot evacuate produce. We cannot move people and articles from place to place quickly and safely, and I want to say that though the programme is very fine on paper, I have no confidence that the man who is carrying it out is pulling his weight really. Take for instance, this House decided last year to tar only 66 miles of road from Aba, a very big commercial centre, to Opofo and various other places. Up till now, after eleven months, the Minister can only come to state in the House that he has undertaken the survey. It takes the Minister a whole year to do a survey, and he grinned when he said that. I am really very serious when I say that I want a dynamic man to do that job. I have my respect for the man personally; the trouble is that he is a teacher. He is not made for this type of job and being a Rivers man it is difficult for him to be keenly interested with such affairs. That is by the by, Sir.

Another point I want to make, Sir, is River transport. The Minister has just told us that River transport and creek transport are a Federal responsibility but certainly he acts as the Agent of the Federal Government in respect of this matter. I was waiting to hear of the representations he had made to the Federal Government for clearing up all these Riverine routes for the internal water transport system, but he has mentioned nothing about that. I must say that he is not impressive at all. The sum of £839,670 has been voted for road development in the Region. That is quite a princely sum of money and certainly we are expecting something real to come out of it. However, at the rate things are going, certainly there is no hope—no hope at all.

**Mr C. A. Okafor (Orlu Division):** Mr Chairman, if there is any Minister who needs to do more tours, it is the Minister of Transport. When he tours he knows the routes about which he is Minister. I would refer to him as "The god of the roads" and I told him this. As we say in our prayers, "Give us this day our daily bread," so we say, "give us this day our daily good roads". The roads in Orlu Division are very bad.

**The Chairman:** I am afraid I must direct your attention to the fact that we are discussing policy in a general sense and we are not interested in any particular division. He wants to be guided in the formulation of policy and he wants you to air your views on the matter.

**Mr C. A. Okafor:** Some time last year, Sir, I told the Minister that I would like him to do an extensive tour of the Region so that by the time he comes to our own division I shall know what roads he takes as important. He told me that he might not be able to come by that time. I therefore, was surprised how some roads got first consideration whereas some roads were totally forgotten not minding that they appear in the policy paper as the first roads to be considered. Everybody going to the Rivers, Calabar or Owerri Province, from here takes all the way to Onitsha and then down the Onitsha-Owerri road passing Njaba Bridge. Many times this bridge gets bad and there is diversion through certain roads. These roads are not in any way considered in these Estimates and the reason I do not know. There are many roads connecting the Divisional Headquarters in the Region, but they are not considered in any way. Sir, it is my wish that when it comes to my turn to move some amendments I will continue the other aspect of my speech which does not touch the general policy.

**Mr P. G. Warmate (Degema Division):** Mr Chairman, Sir, I am very grateful to the Minister of Transport for the effort he is making to improve our Inland Waterways. You will appreciate, Sir, that we have not many roads, so we go by water. But there is one point of which I wish to remind him and that is that most of our creeks have over-hanging mango trees. These over-hanging trees have caused many accidents and I would prefer that he should see that the Federal Government takes up the cutting down of these trees. I would also suggest that there should be some signboards leading to towns and villages as you have on dry land. That is important because if you are going to some areas—say to Brass from Abonema—you will not be able to find your way except you have a guide to take you there. I am suggesting that the Minister of Transport should take this into consideration very seriously so that if people are travelling along the creeks they know exactly in which village and town they are. If you do not know which way you are going in the creeks you can travel for days on end. I am appealing to the Minister to see that you have signboards posted along the creeks to tell us where we are going.

Another point, Sir, is about jetties and piers. There are so many towns in the creek areas where you find difficulty in getting ashore. Most people have to wait there for hours on end for the tide to ebb to be able to go ashore. So if they are provided with piers to enable them to land ashore easily, I think it will be doing them great favour.

There is another point, which I wish the Minister of Transport to note because I think he has not seen things for himself. I happened to be at Nsukka last Sunday and had a very nice time with some of the Members from Nsukka. Then I discovered I never realised their difficulties. Every time Chief Ukuta and some other Members from there have been stressing about the ninth mile corner road, I never realised how bad that road is until last Sunday. In fact, if anybody comes to look at my car he will see that I have lost parts of it because of the bad road. I learnt a lesson the day I travelled that bad road. It is an important road and Nsukka is a very nice place for us to spend some week-ends when we have long sessions here. I am appealing to the Minister that, as soon as possible, he should see that something is done about that road.

**The Minister of Transport:** Mr Chairman, before I reply to many of the points raised by the people, I would say that it is all well and good for people to come to this House and abuse. (*Interruption: No, no—some of us were not even allowed to speak.*) But I am not annoyed. I just want to reply to some of the points raised by some of the Members who spoke.

Mr B. C. Okwu stated that he is opposed to selective tendering. That is very good, but as far as roads and bridges are concerned, not all the contractors we have in the Region have got the necessary plant to do the job. For instance, take the Aba to Opobo road. If we had gone by way of selective tendering, perhaps there would not have, by this time, been any need for a contractor. I allowed it to go by open tender and only five contractors applied—people who have really got the plant, the instrument and the people to do the job. Those who have not got the plant did not apply at all. Only five people applied, I emphasise. But if we had gone by way of selective tendering perhaps by this time at least we would have known the contractor who is to do the job.

**Mr A. J. Ekpe:** I am not impressed.

**The Minister of Transport:** I do not want to impress you either. Mr Ogon stated that money was voted for the Obudu to Ikom road for more than two to three years now but nothing has been done at all. In fact the money was voted just last year not two to three years ago as Mr Ogon said. In connection with this road, I have to say that it has to be surveyed; it is a new road, it is bush—and I wonder whether anybody can construct a road without first surveying it unless that person is a fool. You cannot go and construct a new road without first of all surveying it. I wanted this road to be surveyed by contractors. At first, all the contractors refused to survey the road. No contractor volunteered to survey this although he will be paid for the job. After that, however, I managed somehow to get somebody who volunteered and the person is now surveying the road, yet Mr Ogon comes here to say nothing is being done on that road. I was told that Mr Ogon has in fact not even been to his area for a very long time now, because I was told that the people of Ikom saw the man surveying the road and presented him with fowls and other things. The people were very happy. Honourable Ogon does not know what is happening there.

Do you know that the surveyor said he will take at least seven months to survey the road? He wants to do the job as quickly as possible; he pays his workmen and wants the job to finish in time. But he cannot do it in less than seven months. What do you expect me to do?

The other day Mr Ogon came to my office as a friend and we discussed the matter together. We are doing the work, at least the survey of the work is now on. If I were an Engineer I would have gone to the field myself. Since I am not an Engineer, what do you expect me to do? Can the man do it in one day or two weeks? Of course not? Or shall I now substitute the man doing the job and do it in a lesser period myself?

**The Minister of Transport:** As I was saying before we recessed, I am of the opinion that Mr Ogon is not aware of what is happening in Ikom Division seeing he came here to criticise the matter in the way he did.

It was Mr Ogon who stated that all my tours were to the Rivers Province. This is false—a hundred per cent false. I have not done much touring yet to be frank, but I have been to other Provinces not the Rivers alone. It is not true for him to say that all the touring is to the Rivers Province.

Mr Ogon also stated that surveys should be done before the rains. It is not possible at all for anybody to do that, but it does not mean that surveys are done only in the dry season. The people are still carrying on with the surveys.

I come to Mr Akpan. He said that schools for training drivers should be established, and that I did not mention that in my speech. The suggestion is well taken. The only thing I can tell him now is that the question of establishing drivers' schools is under examination and I hope that they will be established some time.

Honourable Akpan also stated that he congratulated me on the construction of the Eket-Oron road. I am mentioning this because somebody from the same Division stated just the week before last that nothing is going on there.

Honourable O. O. Ita stated that the road is still closed. I say in this connection that this information is out of date because the road was opened on the 28th of February. I think perhaps he came here to say this because he does not visit his Constituency and does not know what is happening. He came here in March to say that the road is still closed because the bridges have not been constructed. I would advise him to visit his Constituency sometimes.

Regarding the tarring of the Eket-Oron road, I would like to tell Mr Akpan that it is in the C.D. & W. programme, and it will be done some time. He wanted me to start tarring before April. It is not in the Estimates, and it cannot be done, for Heaven's sake, if it is not in the Estimates.

Now I come to the honourable Ekpe. I would like to tell him that my love for Opobo Division is greater than his love for Opobo Division. He came here to talk about Opobo Division. When I visited Opobo Division I sent him a telegram, but on the very day of the visit I only saw him standing akimbo in one of the villages. He did not show up at all. He did not know the Minister was visiting the Division, and he is the man who claims to love that Division.

Now he also said that it is a bad policy to mark white lines on the road and he stated that our roads are so narrow that our lorries could not keep to one side alone. I think he said that out of ignorance. The idea is that when you put your car on the road you do not keep to one side throughout; it is only when you meet a car or lorry coming in the other direction that you keep to one side.

The trouble is that vehicles collide frequently and without the white lines the Police would not know who was at fault, but if you have the white lines you are forced by law to keep to your own side. He said the Federal Government did not like the idea, yet the Federal Government are carrying out tests. They will do it, because they like the idea. I am fully aware of the fact that they like the idea and so they are carrying out these tests.

Of course I do not want to reply to all the points raised because some of them are frivolous and it will be a waste of time talking about them. (*Interruption—"Defend yourself"*) I am defending myself ably.

Honourable Members are fully aware of the fact that the Minister of Development was under fire like this some time ago and I am suffering the same fate only because we are heading the Department of P.W.D. My Ministry is a Ministry that has to do with professional men—engineers. It is they who do the work and it is I who give them the policy and the directions to carry out. There is a great difficulty in getting engineers. Engineers are wanted all over the world not only in the Eastern Region, and wherever there are no engineers you cannot get things done because the layman cannot do it. It is work for the professional men. So I think the only difficulty is this question of getting engineers. Once the Engineers are here I think the work will be done. But the difficulty is the question of shortage of engineers and I can assure this House that I will make every effort to get more engineers. When that is done I think all the fears will disappear.

Just one more point. I think there is confusion somewhere. Mr Ihekwoaba the other day made one statement and it shocked me. I was very surprised and shocked when he said I did not mention Orlu Division. People just make difficulties. Perhaps the honourable Member was distracted because if he refers to the *Hansards* he will certainly see the word 'Orlu'. I was unable to understand fully his next point (it is a pity he is not here today). I believe he alleged that if I as Minister of Transport could possibly leap-frog over Orlu and omit it from consideration I would. How can anybody come into the House and make such a statement?—as if it is possible when I am tarring a road to jump over that portion passing through Orlu Division and then continue again.



*Sub-head 3—Local Transport and Travelling.*

**The Minister of Transport:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move, with His Excellency's assent, that sub-head 3 be increased by £25.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E. (Enyong Division):** Speaking generally on the Appropriation Bill I did call for a vigorous road policy. I have mercy on the Minister, who has been struggling, so I will not move.

*Question, That an increased sum of £103,705 for Head 465—The Ministry of Transport—be inserted in the Schedule, put and agreed to.*

**Head 466—Government Coastal Agency**

*Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £2,630 for Head 466—Government Coastal Agency—stand part of the Schedule.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Head 467—Road Construction**

*Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £839,670 for Head 467—Road Construction—stand part of the Schedule.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Head 468—Road Maintenance**

*Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £181,720 for Head 468—Road Maintenance—stand part of the Schedule.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Head 469—The Ministry of Welfare**

*Question proposed: That a sum not exceeding £46,530 for Head 469—The Ministry of Welfare—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Minister of Welfare:** Mr Chairman, I have dealt with this already, but I have one or two points which I would like to make. Under sub-head (1) there is provision for a Station Wagon—this is allowed to all the Ministries.

*Sub-head (6)—Catering Rest Houses—Running Costs:* The increase of £12,230 is due to the increased use of catering rest houses and the greater number of visitors. There will be a considerable increase in revenue under Head 406, sub-head (1) and my view is that the increase in revenue has been greatly under-estimated by the Residents and will be more than that shown. The management of all Catering Rest Houses will be handed over to the Tourist Corporation in about four months' time and in fact only a very small part of the provision shown under this head of the Estimates will actually be spent this year. The Government will hand over the Rest Houses, having spent about £10,000, and receive revenue of about the same amount.

*Sub-head (8)—Bounty for Triplets:* Provision for no less than £900 is necessary since the number of triplets reported now that the Government is paying a bounty of £30 a year for three years far exceeds the number reported under the old Queen's bounty.

Under Community Development Head 470, you will see there is an expatriate who is the Principal of the Awgu Training Centre. It is my intention that in due course an African shall be trained to take over that post so that I have made provision for a post of Deputy Principal of the Community Development Centre at Awgu.

*Sub-head 12—Recreational Facilities:* £20,000 is shown, as last year. This sum, or most of it, will be put at the disposal of the Sports Commission to spend as part of their planned programme of development throughout the Region.

*Sub-head 16—Boy Scouts:* This is the only body which has received an increase in subvention in the coming year. The Boy Scout Association has been especially selected both because of their urgent need, as I said the other time, and also because of the very special contribution which they can make to the Region at this time in the training of good citizens. With a little extra money they can get extra equipment to enable them to carry out their work.

*Sub-head 18:* Everyone will be delighted that there is an increase of £5,000 under Assistance to Community Development Projects. That will bring it in all to £27,000. Of course, Community Development is going on and spreading very rapidly throughout all villages in the Eastern Region. As a matter of fact, as I said the other day, the amount of work, material and time, that the people of the Eastern Region put into helping themselves is tremendous, and it is only a pity that there is not enough money in our coffers to encourage them as much as we should. However, the Government is doing its best to encourage Community Development in this part of the country.

*Head 471—Sub-head 2—Social Welfare—Women's Home at Calabar:* The lady in charge there—the Social Welfare Officer—spends most of her time in administration work and does not tour as much as she should do, going right across from Calabar to Oron and then Ikot Ekpene and Aba and so on. Unfortunately, we have not the money to afford Women's Homes at places like Aba and at Onitsha especially which demand these services, but to relieve her from routine work, I propose to appoint a Warden for the Home; so there is an increase there.

That is all I have to point out.

**Mr A. Ikoku, O.B.E.:** Mr Chairman, you will notice that I have listed two amendment here and I would rather love to speak at this stage, with your permission, and not press the amendments. First of all, the Catering Rest Houses. Personally, I am happy that we are handing the Rest Houses over to the Tourist Corporation, but I do hope that improvements in equipment of the Rest Houses, with fans, telephones and if telephones, for goodness' sake, directories as well, will be taken in hand.

Quite a number of us, including myself, are lovers of these Catering Rest Houses. They are extremely useful; they are truly Rest Houses and the services we get in most of them are very praiseworthy. I understand that even people who ought to know about such things at least as well as we, perhaps better (I have in mind the team of press men that visited the country when Her Majesty was graciously pleased to come to see us) were very satisfied with the handling of the Catering Rest House at Enugu here. I think a word of congratulation should go to the Minister and to the Supervisor and her staff. It is very easy for a little mismanagement in things like that to give the country a bad name, and so, if the country wins a good name by proper management, we should all be rightly proud of the achievement.

I think, Sir, that the Catering Rest Houses are getting a little expensive. I have never been able to convince myself as to why the Catering Rest Houses in the East should be more expensive than those in the West. It costs 13s 6d a night per head at Enugu and 5s per head per night at Benin. That is a little difficult to understand and perhaps somebody will look into it and put things right. It must not be forgotten that those in the Government do not really pay the full value of the Rest House charges. A good deal of what they pay is remitted back to them by regulations, so that the burden of keeping the Rest Houses going and perhaps of making an appreciable margin of profit falls upon those of us who have the "bad luck" to serve the country outside Government. I should like the words "bad luck" in this put in inverted commas for there are those of us who would not give up our service outside Government for service inside Government.

Before I finish with the Rest Houses, I do sincerely hope that the traditions attached to the Enugu Catering Rest House will not be over-looked when the Tourist Corporation takes over. I have made that point here a year or two ago. The Catering Rest House in Enugu, like other Rest Houses, began small, and, no doubt, the Enugu one would have grown in time perhaps to a dimension commensurate with the growth of the type of population that use it in Enugu. But historically, Sir, the House of Assembly was to have its own chalets around it and Members were supposed to use them exclusively for themselves. It was a Committee of the old House of Assembly that suggested to Sir Bernard that it would be a waste of revenue to have chalets around this House to be used only when the House was in session and no more. Therefore, we surrendered our right to what we might call our 'House chalets' and the money was expended in extending the site of the Rest House at Enugu subject to one proviso—that when the House is in Session, Members should have precedence of occupation over all others. By that wise arrangement, it has been possible throughout the years for the Enugu Catering Rest House to serve both Members during Sessions and non-members when the Sessions are not on. I think it has had a healthy effect on revenue generally.

If, therefore, we want to hand them over to the Tourist Corporation, with which I have no quarrel, I sincerely hope that whoever or whichever Minister is in charge, will remember to invite the attention of the Corporation to this tradition and perhaps to instruct them to maintain it, namely, that priority in the Rest House should be given to Members while the House is in session. I have no quarrel with the request of the Rest House authorities during the Royal Visit that Members should find other places in town and that the entire Rest House should be surrendered to the visiting team. That is in high African tradition and all of us will undergo the inconvenience if only it helped to make our visitors comfortable. While on that, I want to say how grateful I am—and I believe many on both sides of the House will join me in expressing this gratitude—to Members, Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries and floor Members, and people not connected with the legislature at all in Enugu who went to every length to billet us, and who underwent untold hardships to make us who came from outside happy and comfortable.

About recreational facilities, Sir, there was a time when the Administration which the present Government inherited, gave grants to encourage sports and the like in teacher training institutions and secondary schools. I would like, in the name of those institutions, respectfully to ask the Honourable the Minister, in discussing the grants under sub-head 12 of Head 470, to remember to assist training colleges and secondary schools in the matter of recreational facilities—tennis courts, badminton courts, football fields and so on. I know what it has cost the National High School at Ndizuogu, for instance, to hire a caterpillar to try to hammer their field on a very rugged site. They have spent hundreds of pounds, literally, to hammer their field into shape merely to provide the boys with a football pitch, and, for that matter, practically every school can do with a couple of scores of pounds to improve all their recreational facilities. The Minister will be the first to agree with me, Sir, that it is the game we foster in our big public schools that lays the foundations for the sort of recreations we want to foster after school life. Of course, I do not want to discuss an educational thesis, but everybody knows that old saying that "the battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton". Develop facilities for games and sports generally among the youth and you are laying the foundations for more things in the State than you can really reckon. I am quite sure, Sir, that if the Minister of Welfare would ask advice from the honourable Premier he will agree with everything I have said except that he will want to say it better and with more experience and more zest and enthusiasm than myself, being himself a first-class sportsman.

I do not know whether it will be ruled out of order if I say at this juncture that it is worthwhile saying a word of thanks to the authority, whatever authority it is, that has made it possible to present us with the beautiful Elizabeth II mugs, that have been going round since we came, in commemoration of the Queen's Visit. I think it is the gentleman of Industry, but I would also like to say Welfare and let them fight it over as I do not want to be ruled out of order. Thank you very much, Mr Chairman,

**The Minister of Welfare:** I am grateful for the suggestions put forward by the honourable Ikoku and the expression of appreciation to the management of the Catering Rest Houses. The improvement he asked for will be looked into and those responsible will be asked to attend to it.

Besides, we have paid our Gorsuch and Catering Rest House has got to pay its way or it will be in trouble. Unless this Government is prepared to subsidise it, it is impossible to cut down the price.

I come to recreational facilities. He has asked that a grant be given to the teacher training centres and secondary schools. I am glad the Executive, the Government of the Eastern Region, has laid aside the sum of £15,000 for the encouragement of sports in the Eastern Region. As you said, the battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton and this Government is very much concerned in the training of our youths in secondary schools. The Premier, above everyone else, is very keen on sports and he has helped me in many ways to get the money from Government. In fact it is his suggestion that we should have the £15,000 for this. So, I will approach the Sports Commission to see what can be done for secondary schools.

*Sub-head 3:*

**The Minister of Welfare:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move, with His Excellency's assent, to increase Sub-head 3 by £25.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Question, That an increased sum of £46,555 for Head 469—The Ministry of Welfare—be inserted in the Schedule put and agreed to.*

#### **Head 470—Community Development**

£65,070 for Head 470—Community Development—agreed to.

#### **Head 471—Social Welfare**

£10,910 for Head 471—Social Welfare—agreed to.

*And it being 5.45 p.m. the Chairman left the Chair to report Progress, and ask leave to sit again.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Committee report Progress: to sit again, Today.*

*Motion made, and Question proposed, That Head 467—Road Construction—be recommitted to the Committee of Supply.—(The Minister of Finance).*

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### **Head 467—Road Construction**

*Considered in Committee.*

*Question again proposed, That a sum not exceeding £839,670 for Head 467—Road Construction—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Minister of Transport:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to include provision under Sub-head 1 for one Chief Engineer, Group 6, £2,220.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Minister of Transport:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move the insertion under the Other Charges section of Head 467 of provision for £40,000 for the payment of consultants' fees.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Question, That an increased sum of £881,890 for Head 467—Road Construction—be inserted in the Schedule put and agreed to.*

*Postponed Head.*

#### Head 448—Board of Regional Revenue

*Question again proposed, That a sum not exceeding £271,970 for Head 448—Board of Regional Revenue—stand part of the Schedule.*

**The Minister of Finance:** Mr Chairman, I beg to report that His Excellency has given his assent to move the amendment to Head 448 on account of which it was necessary to suspend this Head in the Committee of Supply yesterday.

I beg leave also to take this opportunity of saying that yesterday, while debating the policy of this Ministry, the Chief Whip made certain remarks about the newly-appointed Permanent Secretary which, to say the least, were most discouraging to the individual concerned and quite uncalled for. It was, Sir, a direct hit below the belt.

I am not rising now to defend the individual concerned, nor the Public Service Commission, nor His Excellency the Governor who arranged the appointment direct from the Colonial Office, but I must say I was disappointed myself on meeting this person for the first time after having been told that arrangements had been made with the Secretary of State to find someone to take the place of Mr Cook, the former Permanent Secretary. I was disappointed because I expected an older man, since experience usually goes with age. I was also in sympathy with the man he relieved who acted as Permanent Secretary for a short time in my Ministry. So far as I was concerned, I was impressed with him as being capable, Sir.

We are quite entitled to pick up quarrels about this appointment for it does look strange, but the point I want to make, Sir, is that a remark like that the Chief Whip made yesterday directed at a completely new individual, who did not appoint himself into the service of this Region, and who has not been out long enough to be sized up, can never make for good human relationships.

*Title.*

**The Minister of Finance:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to leave out the word "Regional" in the Title and insert the word "Internal".

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Sub-head 1, Item (1)—Commissioner of Regional Revenue.*

**The Minister of Finance:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to leave out the word "Regional" and insert "Internal".

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Minister of Finance:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to insert Group 5 under Sub-head 1, Item (1)—£2,400.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Minister of Finance:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to leave out the footnote under Head 448.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Minister of Finance:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to include the following provision:—

6 Revenue Inspectors, Scale B 1, 2, 3—£3,600.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Minister of Finance:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to include the following provision:—

One Secretary-Typist, Scale D 5A, Scale C (E) Contract, or Temporary Secretary-Typist at £594 - £600.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Question, That an increased sum of £278,570 for Head 448—Board of Internal Revenue—be inserted in the Schedule put and agreed to.*

*Postponed Clauses.*

*Clause 1 agreed to.*

*Clause 2.*

**The Minister of Finance:** Sir, I beg to move that the sum of £11,786,945 be deleted and £11,931,275 inserted.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 2 as amended agreed to.*

*Clause 3 agreed to.*

*Clause 4.*

**The Minister of Finance:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move that the words "Eleven million, seven hundred and eighty-six thousand, nine hundred and forty-five pounds" be deleted and "Eleven million, nine hundred and thirty-one thousand, two hundred and seventy-five pounds" be inserted.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Question, That the Schedule as amended stand part of the Bill put and agreed to.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported with Amendments: Read the Third time and passed.*

**The 1954-55 Eastern Region Supplementary Appropriation Law, 1956**

*Order for Second Reading read.*

(First and Only Allotted day)

Motion made, and Question proposed, That the Bill be now read a Second time—(*The Minister of Finance*).

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*

*Committed to a Committee of the Whole House.*

*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee.)

*Clauses 1 and 2 postponed.*

**Head 441—Land**

£29,569 for Head 441—Land—agreed to.

**Head 452—Public Works Recurrent: Maintenance Works**

£14,267 for Head 452—Public Works Recurrent: Maintenance Works—agreed to.

**Head 453—Public Works Recurrent: Maintenance Services**

£1,913 for Head 453—Public Works Recurrent: Maintenance Services—agreed to.

**Head 454—Public Works Extraordinary**

£103,799 for Head 454—Public Works Extraordinary—agreed to.

**Head 457—Ministry of Development**

£169 for Head 457—Ministry of Development—agreed to.

**Head 463—Secondary Industries**

£1,178 for Head 463—Secondary Industries—agreed to.

**Head 470—Building Staff, Plant and Vehicles**

£560 for Head 470—Building Staff, Plant and Vehicles—agreed to.

**Head 483—Urban Water Supplies**

£14,104 for Head 483—Urban Water Supplies—agreed to.

**Head 484—Coastal Agency**

£1,030 for Head 484—Coastal Agency—agreed to.

Postponed Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.

Preamble agreed to.

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

Bill reported without Amendment: Read the Third time and passed.

**The Recognition of Chiefs Law, 1956**

Order for Second Reading read.

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Speaker, I beg to move that a Bill for a law to provide for the recognition of Chiefs within the Eastern Region in certain circumstances, to preclude the hearing and determination of chieftaincy disputes from the courts, both in original and appellate, jurisdictions, and for matters connected therewith, be now read a Second time.

The main object of this Bill is to empower the Government to recognise persons to be Chiefs and to withdraw such recognition in the interests of peace or order or good government. In view of the events of the last eighteen months in this Region, I do not think that any Member of this House will question the *raison d'etre* of this Bill. It is generally known that certain persons who style themselves, or who are styled, Chiefs, in this Region are now organised into various bodies seeking to protect their interests as a special class. It is for information that some responsible members of this House have criticised this Government unfairly for what they regard as its failure to accord due official recognition to the existence of Chiefs in this Region.

On behalf of the Government, I submit that we have been acting in good faith all along. We were fully aware that there exists in this Region a large number of persons who are respected or regarded as Chiefs, but the Government has never denied their existence. So far, what the

Government has done is to devise a workable machinery of administration, and in the light of history and experience gained by trial and error methods, discovered the basis of inherent or traditional authorities for gearing such a machinery to positive action and constructive ends. I make this statement, bearing in mind the historic significance of the various Amayanabo of Degema and Brass Divisions, the Obi, Igwe, Ese, Eze Ani, Ndi Oji Oha, Ndichie and Onyisi, of Onitsha, Awka, Udi, Ahoada, Owerri, Okigwi, Aba and Enyong Divisions, the various Obong, Isong, Idong, Ntoe and Muri of the Efik and Ibibio speaking peoples of Calabar Province, not to overlook the numerous Ntuls and various grades of Chiefs who rule the Ekoi and other peoples inhabiting Ogoja Province.

Thirty years ago, Dr P. Amaury Talbot gave a lot of reliable information about the Aro theocracy and the spiritual potentates of Agukwu-Nri whose civil supremacy was acknowledged in Awka and Udi Divisions, and which was a holy city that was comparable to Ile Ife in its hey day. From this remarkable ethnographer, we glean authoritative data about kings and chiefs who exercised spiritual and temporal powers throughout the Eastern Region, just as their opposite numbers did in the North and the West. It is remarkable that whilst the Oni of Ife was recognised as the spiritual head of the Yoruba-speaking peoples, and the Sultan of Sokoto was highly respected among the Muslims of the North, the role of the Eze Nri was not only minimised but was officially ignored. Therefore, the present Government cannot be blamed for snubbing the Chiefs of the East. The saving grace is that we are now engaged in the task of restoring the prestige and dignity of our Chiefs, wherever such tradition exists, and we hope that we shall be given a fair chance to find a satisfactory solution.

The stand of this Government was very much embarrassed by the opinion which was expressed by a Select Committee of this House in 1949, when it was commissioned to make a survey of the political institutions of the people of the Eastern Region. This Select Committee numbered among its membership such honourable and well-informed gentlemen as the Member for Enyong Division (the honourable Alvan Ikoku), the Member for Aba-Ngwa Division (Chief the honourable Marcus W. Ubani), the Member for Uyo Division and Deputy Speaker of this House (Chief the honourable Nyong Essien), Rev. Okon Effiong, Chief J. Manga Williams, the Fon of Bali, Mr P. E. Chukurah, Sir Francis Ibiam, Mr Asuquo Okon, Chief H. Buowari Brown, Mr D. N. Achara, the late L. R. Potts-Johnson, the late D. H. H. O'Dwyer, Mr C. D. Onyeama and Mr Speaker. The Chairman was Commander S. E. Johnson, Secretary, Eastern Provinces.

The Select Committee was charged, "To review the existing system of Local Government in the Eastern Provinces and to formulate general principles for the reform of that system." In its report, which was apparently unanimous, the Select Committee concluded that the theory of Native Administration presupposed the existence of a degree of inherent authority capable of development to such an extent that it can provide for effective and efficient administration of the people at all stages of progress. "After twenty years' experience", the report contended, "it is evident that inherent authority in the Eastern Provinces, extending as it does but little beyond the confines of the family, is incapable of such development".

On discussing the elective principle, the Select Committee observed that "there is little or no traditional or inherent authority in the Eastern Region and is of the opinion that, particularly in the light of the essentially democratic nature of the people, the elective principle should as far as is possible, be followed throughout the Region for the formation of Local Government Councils". I think that I can safely say that this categorically expressed view has been largely responsible for the prevailing notion in the outside world that, politically speaking, Paramount Chiefs do not exist as such in the Eastern Region, as they do in the other Regions. It must be said, however, that whilst this view may be correct, in certain respects, yet it cannot be applied wholesale to the Region. To that extent, it is misleading, in view of the widespread prevalence of Paramount Chiefs and other categories of Chiefs throughout the Eastern Region. The sociocentric nature of Easterners must have misled many observers. In order to be fair to the honourable gentlemen whose names I have mentioned earlier on, may



I say, on their behalf, that during the ensuing debate on the report of this Select Committee most of them did not obstruct the inclusion of maintenance of traditional authorities in what has evolved to be our Local Government Law today as I shall soon show.

On 15th July, 1949, during a debate in this House on the motion of the Secretary, Eastern Provinces, for submission of the Memorandum on Local Government Policy in the Eastern Provinces to the Governor, several honourable Members expressed critical opinion on certain aspects of the memorandum. Rev. Efiang and Chief Essien attacked the idea of there being no traditional or inherent authority in the East, and an official Member explained the stand of Government on this issue. Rev. Efiang said that the subject of Local Government reform in the East struck directly into the whole fabric of Nigerian political and constitutional life and was therefore a matter of paramount concern. Since it affected every inhabitant in the Region, any reform should be clearly understood, as upon such knowledge and understanding depended mutual confidence and co-operation. Then he discussed the traditional authority as follows:—

With your permission, Sir, I am reading from the *Hansard* of the 14th–16th July, 1949—the *Hansard* of this House:—

“In the original report of the Select Committee for Local Government, it was indicated that there was little or no Traditional or Inherent Authority in the East, as if the presence of such an authority automatically means conservatism, retrogression and autocracy, as if Inherent Authority cannot passionately seek the good of the people. Wherever we went, we discovered that what we place so little importance in was the centre of consuming interest and the object of great veneration, for the people almost said to us, ‘If your Local Government reform means the sweeping away of tradition, then keep it to yourselves’. Sir Bernard Carr, your predecessor, Sir, in introducing this subject, did mention that Calabar and Onitsha, were from time immemorial, known to have traditional authority.

One reads in the history of Calabar of King Eyamba V, King Archibong, King Eyo II, who ruled vast territories covering the extent of their tribes. They were not mere heads of families. Although they maintained no regular armies, yet they made wars on and subdued marauding and warlike tribes surrounding them—near or distant.

“I just wish to sound a warning note that in the legislation to be drafted ample place should be given to tradition. I refer to constitutional and democratic traditional authority. It is easier, and more effective, to rule the people, especially at this stage of our evolution, through their own institutions, however modified, than to impose on them a government from without. I would only urge one safeguard, and that is in no way must we suffer inherent authority to circumscribe or infringe upon democracy, and that wherever tradition clashed with democracy and progress, we must always choose democracy”.

Chief Essien spoke in support of the Reverend and honourable gentleman and was outspoken in dissociating himself from the view that “there was nothing like traditional rulers” in the East. He maintained that there were kings in his area, as were borne out in the folk lore of his people. He argued that “these are definite indications that we had kings in our country and we do not want to do away with such natural authorities.” He held that the Government of his people was a mixture of rank and democracy and he emphasised that certain national land marks should not be described because, he concluded, it is a tradition of which we are proud.

Speaking for the Government, Mr S. P. L. Beaumont, Senior District Officer, assured honourable Members that provision had been made in the memorandum for the applied recognition of traditional authority. He admitted that when the members of the Select Committee visited every provincial headquarters in the Region they were impressed by the fact that the traditional authorities in the Region were the basis of misunderstanding found in feeling. The memorandum, he thought, had made it possible for each area, after due enquiry had been

made, to put forward its own proposals for the application of the legislation within the area and this would give an opportunity for recognition of traditional authority in the manner in which the people of that area so desired. He insisted, however, that where tradition clashed with democracy the latter must prevail.

In reply to a question put by the first Provincial Member for Onitsha Province, Mr Chukwurah, as to what Councils would it appoint under an instrument, Mr Beaumont said that since there was variety in the composition of Councils, it might be found in certain areas after enquiries had been made before the introduction of Local Government there, that we have traditional heads who may be required to sit as a right as members of Councils, in which case they have to be appointed as distinct from elected members. When asked if he was satisfied with the reply, Mr Chukwurah answered in the affirmative.

Then came the issue about the maintenance of traditional authorities and it was the honourable Member for educational interests, the honourable Ikoku, who suggested that the memorandum should be amended so that the maintenance of any traditional authority or customary title shall be recognised by the Regional Authority and not by the Resident, as was suggested in the memorandum. He pressed this point by saying at this time that it was the Chief Commissioner who should have such power of recognition, presumably under the Native Authority Ordinance.

Supporting this point, Chief Essien held that since traditional office or customary title was connected in many instances with religious rites and had everything to do with the natural dignity of Africans, the Resident should not be vested with powers of recognition. This debate became rather involved and it was necessary for Chief Essien to express what he called the feelings of his people in connection with traditional office or customary title. According to what we envisaged he concluded that the Local Government is the people's government and the people demand that traditional office and customary title should have a place in it.

This gave an opportunity for Mr Chukwurah and Chief Ubani to sum up the argument which led to the closing up of the debate. In view of the importance of their announcement I crave the indulgence of the House, Mr Speaker, to quote them at length, and thus end this discussion into the debates of this House which are now six years and eight months old:—

“Mr Chukwurah, of Onitsha Province, said there are places where traditional native authorities or customary titles exist. The people occupying this office might not be members of Local Government councils and the people may wish to maintain them and give them some allowance. I think this clause is for the maintenance of such traditional authorities who are not necessarily members of the Council. I do not see why we should not give the people some latitude to maintain the traditional authority of their choice, especially where they have learned to respect and maintain such authorities. There are places where these authorities do not exist and the matter might not crop up in such areas.

“The first provincial member for Owerri Province, Chief Ubani, took up the argument on behalf of his brother chiefs and said definitely the people feel that having lost a certain prestige it was for that reason that the local government system would mean a restoration of their dignity and prestige which they had in the past, and that would mean the maintenance of traditional authorities in certain areas. I fully agree that in every area where the people have agreed, and there is fully recognised traditional authority, in so far as they appear to maintain it, there should be no interference whatsoever. It is only where it is requested that traditional authorities should be supported from money from outside that such interference should be possible.

“Chief Essien had advocated that a traditional authority was not an authority over a local government council but over the people of the area concerned.

The Crown Counsel, Mr G. G. Briggs, reminded him that there was nothing in the memorandum affecting in any way traditional authority that existed at that moment. If any traditional authority was in respect of such maintenance it could not be affected in any way.

Here, Chief Essien held that since traditional authority was the authority of the people and not of the Council so long as he is recognised as their head, the people should maintain him from some fund of the local government council. Mr Agbasiere reminded the House that we were dealing with well known titles such as the Obi of Onitsha or whoever held this office and not with lesser men who are just a little more important in the village than the others. He said it must be an officer sufficiently strong to be recognised in the area as such.

A compromise was then reached and Mr Ikoku moved the amendment to the amendment which was ultimately accepted and written under the memorandum on the debate.

A compromise of Mr Ikoku was then read as follows:—

‘A council may provide for the maintenance of any traditional office or customary title which is at present receiving such maintenance or which is recognised by vote of three quarters of the total membership of the Local Government of that area.’ But when the question was put it was resolved unanimously in the affirmative. This tradition was incorporated in the Local Government law of 1950, subject to the approval of the Regional Authority, and it is at present incorporated in the Local Government Law of 1955, subject to the approval of the Minister.’

Mr Speaker, I have spoken at length in explaining to the House the background attempt to recognise traditional authority or customary title in this Region because this Bill ventures to express in more great form what is at present a little nebulous. What this Bill seeks to do is not only to recognise traditional authority or customary title but to accord official recognition to chiefs and to withdraw such recognition when it is considered necessary to do so in the interest of peace, good order and good Government. In other words, recognition was first accorded to the Chiefs in this Region by providing in the law for local government councils to maintain traditional authorities where they are recognised and have been maintained. The present stage is political recognition by the Government. It is not my intention to labour honourable Members with the critical enquiry into the existence of Chiefs with social or political power in this Region. Eminent orators like Thomas, Talbot, Barnsley, Meek, Jeffries, Jones and others have given this subject critical study and have produced works of literary merit and first-class academic work.

As I am speaking to you today, a scholar of anthropology, who is a former colonial administrator with many years experience in Nigeria, has been officially constituted into a one-man commission of inquiry to investigate the issue of chieftaincy in this Region.

This Bill does not conflict with the terms of reference of the Jones Commission. It merely seeks to accord official recognition to chiefs and to withdraw same at the pleasure of the Government. It is devised to minimize chieftaincy disputes and to preclude the hearing and determination of such cases from any court of the Region. It defines “Chief” in an amended form to mean any member of a tribe or clan or a local community whose authority and control in that behalf is recognised by such tribe, clan or local community. After due inquiry and consultation with certain persons, the Governor in Council may recognise the person to be a chief and such recognition shall be final until it is officially withdrawn.

Finally, may I draw the attention of the House to the fact that at the instance of the Royal Institute of Public Administration a conference was held at King’s College, Cambridge, last September and the discussion on the development of local government in the colonies brought out the following suggestion on traditional authority. With your permission, Sir, I will read:

“The position of the chief is undergoing a change due to the growing complexity of modern local government, the assumption by the chief and council of collective responsibility and the realisation that the responsibility of the traditional council is to the public rather than to the chiefs. The position of chiefs and other authority holding office based on custom depends largely on the historical background of the country, on religious factors and on the feelings of the local population. Where such chief has traditionally played an important part in local affairs, he should occupy a prominent position on the appropriate local authority so long as public opinion approves it.”

Pending the report of the Jones Commission, the Government intends to exercise the power conferred by this law in order to demonstrate to the people of this Region that this Government is not necessarily opposed to chieftaincy as some people have deceived the chiefs and their followers to believe. After studying the findings and recommendations of the Jones Commission, Government will be in a better position to make a statement of policy which will be a straw in the wind, to indicate what will be its stand at the next Constitutional Conference in connection with the establishment of a House of Chiefs for the Eastern Region.

The Bill is an assurance to the chiefs of this Region and in other parts of the country that this Government is not antagonistic to the institutions of chieftaincy where it is the established tradition and custom of the people. Where the role of chiefs is practised by elders or whatever names they are called, Government will give due consideration to the findings and recommendations of the Jones Commission of Inquiry which is now being conducted into the status of chiefs in this Region. I, therefore, commend this Bill to the House.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Health:** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

**Chief G. N. Agbasiere (Orlu Division):** Mr Speaker, I rise to thank Government for the recognition of chiefs in the Eastern Region. This announcement is like the announcement of the birth of Jesus Christ. We, the chiefs, were surprised when we learned, sometime ago, that there were no chiefs in the Eastern Region. It is some comfort to learn from the Premier that we are now going to be recognised. I have to express my appreciation of this move on behalf of all the chiefs in this Region. We are going to co-operate with the Government and I am saying, Sir, that the present Government will come into power again.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**Chief I. I. Morphy (Ogoja Division):** Mr Speaker, I will say, Sir, that this Bill is untimely. I will support this by drawing your attention to the heading of the Bill which is "A law to provide for the recognition of chiefs within the Eastern Region in certain circumstances." Now, Sir, I am not a lawyer; but I will here say that in law we do not deal in probabilities; we deal in things specific. The Premier has not showed us the circumstances under which chiefs will be recognised. In section 3 (2) it is only stated that:—

"Upon reference being made under the provisions of this section the Governor in Council may, after consulting with such persons as he shall think fit, and in such manner as he shall think fit recognise a person to be a chief."

Now, if the Governor in Council thinks fit that somebody in Ogoja is to be recognised as a chief, I do not think that the real customs and history of the people will be taken into consideration for I do not believe that anybody who sits in Enugu will really know the customs of the people in Ogoja or Onitsha.

In another section it is said that when such trouble exists, it shall not be taken to court, and determination of who is going to be the right chief rests with the Minister. It is in keeping with the tradition of the people of Ogoja to go to court to prove who is the chief. People go all out to prove which of the constestants to a stool is the rightful chief. We have been having courts before the white man came into this country and chiefs have always gone to court. I refer to the Laws of Nigeria, 1948, Cap 12. When this law was brought up, we named it "Richards Constitution." It is this very party in power and the Premier himself who led a delegation to London and toured the whole country to oppose the deposition of chiefs one of the four obnoxious Bills. In this Bill it is stated that when a chief does not satisfy the Governor in Council, or when there is any trouble in any area, the Governor in Council shall declare that he is not a chief. This is equal to being deposed.

Here I will like to quote from the Laws of Nigeria 1948, Cap. 12, Volume I:—

“2. (1) Upon the death, resignation or deposition of any chief or of any head chief the Lieutenant Governor of the Region concerned may approve as the successor of such chief or head chief, as the case may be, any person appointed in that behalf by those entitled by native law and custom so to appoint in accordance with native law and custom; and if no appointment is made before the expiration of such interval as is usual under native law and custom, the Lieutenant-Governor of the Region concerned may himself appoint such person as he may deem fit and proper to carry out such duties incidental to the chieftaincy as it may be necessary to perform.”

The law here says that the Lieutenant-Governor will recognise a person as a chief in accordance with native law and custom, but the Law of today says that no court shall have jurisdiction over chieftaincy disputes. It means that if two people are contesting any chieftaincy title, once the Governor in Council has taken a decision the dissatisfied party cannot take the matter to court. You will see, then, that anybody who pleases this Government will be appointed even though he is not the rightful man, and the person who does not please the Government will not be appointed although he may be the rightful person.

The Premier of this Government has at one time opposed this very law, but here we have another one which is even worse than the Richard's Law of 1948.

I have made mention of the deposition of chiefs. It is clearly stated in clause 5 of this Bill that “The Governor in Council may withdraw recognition from any chief recognised under the provisions of section 3 if after inquiry it is shown that such deposition is required by local customary law or is necessary in the interests of peace or order or good Government.” Let me point out here that if you really want to maintain the proper custom of the people, it is not in keeping with local custom for an outside body to decide for a people who should be their chief or head chief. It is for the people themselves to decide.

Freedom of action is not even allowed. The people are not free to go to Court to determine who is a chief. Clause 6 of the Bill states:—

“6. Notwithstanding anything in any written law contained whereby or whereunder jurisdiction is conferred upon a Court, whether such jurisdiction is original, appellate or by way of transfer, a Court shall not have jurisdiction to entertain any civil cause or matter instituted for—

- (a) the determination of any question relating to the selection, appointment, installation, deposition or abdication of a chief; or
- (b) the recovery or delivery up of any property in connection with the selection, appointment, installation, deposition or abdication of a chief.”

I wish to emphasise that this is not in keeping with the custom of my own people, and I feel that in places where people are recognised as chiefs it is in keeping with custom that anybody who fights to be recognised as a chief should be allowed to go to court to contest that post of a chief.

Clause 7 of the Bill states that, “The Appointment and Deposition of Chiefs Ordinance shall cease to apply in the Eastern Region.” But I maintain that it has not ceased to apply. This is just a device of entering the same place through another door. If you study Cap. 12 of the Laws of Nigeria 1948, you will find that both laws are the same.

A Commission has been appointed to investigate the position of chiefs in the Eastern Region. Why bring this Bill before the House now? I expected that the Report of the Commission would have been studied before this Bill came to this honourable House.

Mr Speaker, I beg to say that this Bill is untimely.

**Mr C. A. Abangwu (Nsukka Division):** Mr Speaker, I think we should congratulate the Government for having the bold mind to bring up this matter. I know a time when the Party, which forms the Government at the moment, was not all out to uphold the prestige and traditions of chiefs as such in this Region. Experience has shown that we were mistaken in those days. I said in my speech some time ago that we from the Eastern Region used to be abused when some people from other Regions of Nigeria tell us: "You say you have no custom; you have no chiefs." Government, in deciding to bring up this Bill, should be congratulated.

But, Mr Speaker, Government has appointed a Commission of Inquiry, which is at the moment undertaking the task of inquiring closely into the position, status and relation of chiefs to the people of the Eastern Region. I should, therefore, have thought that it is after this Commission has completed its findings and reported to the Government that the Government will be in a position to make certain decisions which might well be incorporated into this Bill now before this House. I feel, Sir, that it is this type of thing which perhaps may result, as an honourable Member said, to perennial amendments. If, for example, the Jones Commission of Inquiry recommends certain things which are found necessary to be incorporated into this Law we shall find ourselves coming here within the next twelve months to get this law altered again.

I say, Sir, that if it were passed, Government has already indicated that it was going to recognise Chiefs. It would not in that case do anything if it waived this Bill until the appropriate time. When the facts are before Government then Government will be in a position strongly to bring forward this Bill which I as a Member of the House will support.

I will go into particulars. If Government is bent on going on with this Bill I would say if you look into the old law, that is Appointments and Depositions of Chiefs Ordinance which this one is going to abrogate, you will find that there is more safety for Chiefs in the old Law than in the present one, and I shall proceed to tell the House why I feel there is more safety. In the old Appointments and Depositions Ordinance you will find that although the Governor has the right to appoint or recognise as the case may be, he can only do so having considered certain native laws and customs.

I feel, Sir, if it is right and necessary to appoint a Chief at all, it must be in accordance with the native law and customs of the particular area, and if anybody is going to appoint anybody he must be bound by the laws and traditions and customs of the people. In the interests of the Chiefs themselves, therefore, I am suggesting that Government might consider putting down this clause that if it is the Governor who is going to recognise he must do so in accordance with native law and custom.

The second question is the question of Courts. I will make it clear. I am going to define the type of Court this case should go to. First of all, it must be held that it is the Law of the Medes and Persians that Chieftaincy or traditional disputes must not go to Court. I think the present District Court is going to be composed of people versed in native customs. The County Court which will be the Court of Appeal for those courts will also be composed of people versed in native laws and customs. I am suggesting, therefore, that if we are going to have these Customary Courts, in the case of a dispute over the appointment of a Chief or the recognition of a Chief, this dispute should first of all go to the District, and if one of the parties is not satisfied let him make an appeal to the County Court. The County Court is also composed of people who are versed in native law and custom. If any party is still dissatisfied we might provide a law that an appeal can be referred to the Governor, who, having collated all the evidence which has gone through these Courts, would be in a better position to be able to make a final decision.

Sir, the next point is that in the old law, the Law we are now seeking to abrogate, there is provision for classification of Chiefs. Mr Speaker, I refer to section 3 of the Appointmer and Depositions of Chiefs Ordinance which says that:—

"The Governor may create Chiefs as First, Second, Third, Fourth or Fifth Class according to their importance."

If the Jones Commission of Inquiry really does its work this might be one aspect of his recommendations and, if that is so, it might recommend the creation of Chiefs in their various grades. If this is so I am sure that this Government will give it a legal footing and that is why I felt that if it is left early and we find it is necessary to classify these Chiefs we can come in and put it right in the law here.

These are a few observations which I want to make on this Bill. I am saying we welcome it but the time is very inopportune in that we have a Commission of Inquiry at the moment. After the Commissioner has completed his investigations Government will be in a position to do things right. But particularly in regard to the appointment and deposition of Chiefs the Governor must do so in accordance with native law and custom.

**Mr E. Chidolue:** Mr Speaker, I wish to congratulate the Government not only for bringing up this Bill but also for appointing a sole Commissioner to go into the burning question of recognition of Chiefs. I have to say that I support the idea of postponing this Bill until the Report of the Sole Commissioner is out. This matter has been under consideration for a long time and I feel that just at the tail end we should not rush like this. We all know the amount of trouble that Chieftaincy disputes can bring to a community and I think we should lay a solid foundation so as to avoid trouble in future. It is a pity indeed that in the past the Chiefs in the Eastern Region have been misrepresented and I congratulate Government for making the effort to bring them into their proper position.

I have to say that in my own particular area, Onitsha Division, we have Chiefs with inherent authorities and in my own particular town, Nnewi, there are Chiefs who have hereditary rights. In no case do we have Chieftaincy disputes. We have other places like Ukpok, Ozubulu, Orifite, Ichi, Lilo and many other places in the southern district, and we have other places like Obosi, Ogidi and Nnobi in the Northern district, so that the idea of saying that there are no chiefs is not true in the case of many towns in the Onitsha Division.

I would like to make reference to the Laws of Nigeria of 1948 which have been mentioned by some of my honourable Friends. There are certain points we emphasise, one of them being that there are Head Chiefs and Chiefs, and again there are those entitled by native law and custom to appoint Chiefs and Head Chiefs in accordance with native law and custom. I think this is a very important point because the idea of Government appointing somebody to be a Chief over a local community or town is far fetched. There are also in the old Laws of Nigeria provision for grade of Chiefs. We have first class, second class, third class, fourth class and fifth class Chiefs according to their importance. This is why it is that in the Western Region only first class Chiefs are made Members of the Western House of Chiefs.

*Sitting suspended at 7 p.m.*

*Sitting resumed at 9 p.m.*

**Mr E. Chidolue:** Mr Speaker, I mentioned grades of head chiefs. I think this is where the Eastern Government will find some difficulty because whereas in the Western and Northern Regions the chieftaincy system has taken such a long time, it is not so in the East. It is often said that most of the chiefs in the Eastern Region have no authority or influence outside their own town and, at the start, if we are not careful we might involve ourselves in complications.

But I think that if we have to march forward, since there was no House of Chiefs in the East, and we have a House of Chiefs in the West and in the North which we are trying to imitate, we have to go forward in some other aspects. In doing so, I think, we should not be in a rush because. . .

**Mr Speaker:** What you wish to say is that consideration of this Bill should be deferred.

**Mr E. Chidolue:** That is the point I have made in the first place.

Another point, Mr Speaker, is that I notice that an amendment has been put up in respect of paragraph 3, sub-section 2, Chieftaincy Disputes, and I welcome that amendment. I would also like to refer to some other points. I think that provision should be made for what should be the position, status and influence of a Chief before he is recognised as a head chief or Grade I, II, or III. How should the number of chiefs be limited so that all chiefs, all people in a local community will not claim to become chiefs. You may find that in a small town with a population of 10,000 people you get about ten people or more claiming to be chiefs. The problem then would be, how should the number of chiefs be limited so that all people in a local community should not claim to be chiefs? Should it be on the basis of one chief per town or on a population basis?

There is one other point. It is the question of deposition. I think it should be made clear in the principal law for what offences a chief should be deposed.

**Mr Speaker:** Is there any reference to deposition there?

**Mr E. Chidolue:** I am saying that such provision should be made.

**Mr Speaker:** That provision should be made for deposition of a chief?

**Mr E. Chidolue:** Well, the title says "Appointment, recognition and deposition of Chiefs." Well, if you read the terms of reference given to Mr Jones, it has something to do with this law if I am not mistaken. Mr Speaker, with your permission . . .

**Mr Speaker:** If I may interrupt a moment, I think we are confusing the issues. While debating this you are thinking of the Jones Enquiry. I am not concerned with that. The Bill is not concerned with that. I would request you to relate all your references to the Bill which is before this House.

**Mr E. Chidolue:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, I will confine myself to that. In winding up I like to refer to paragraph 4 of the new Bill which says:—

"Notwithstanding the provisions of this Law, any other written law or any Local customary law the recognition of the Chief by the Governor in Council shall be final as to such recognition and not subject to question in any court of law and no petition relating to such recognition shall be entertained by any authority."

I think that provision should be made, as somebody has suggested here, that the customary courts or district courts, where there is a dispute,—since this is being arranged under native law and custom—should have something to do with this recognition before it goes to the Governor in Council because in a place where a political party is in power it may be that such power may be abused.

Section 5 says:—

"The Governor in Council may withdraw recognition from any chief recognised under the provisions of section 3 if after inquiry it is shown that such deposition is required." Here I am referring to deposition.

**Mr Speaker:** This has been amended.

**Mr E. Chidolue:** Well, Mr, Speaker, the only point I am referring to is that before a chief is deposed he should be given an opportunity.

**Mr Speaker:** You are using the wrong word.

**Mr E. Chidolue:** In winding up, all I have got to say is that this Bill should be deferred until after the commission.



**The Minister of Internal Affairs :** Mr Speaker, I would like to say a few words in connection with the criticisms levelled on this Bill by the previous speakers.

Chief the honourable Morphy mentioned that the Bill was not timely and implied that I was inconsistent because in 1949 I was a member of the delegation to London for the repeal of the Appointment and Deposition of Chiefs Ordinance. I would like to point out to him that one reason for that delegation was to oppose the appointment of Chiefs by the Governor as contained in that Law, but this Bill is concerned with official recognition of Chiefs. There is a lot of difference between appointment of a Chief and recognition of a Chief.

Then there is the criticism that this Bill ignores local opinion. With respect, I beg to differ because if the honourable Member had checked up on the amendment, which is on the Order Paper, he will notice that it is clearly stated there (sub-clause 2 of clause 3) that "upon reference being made under the provision of this section the Governor in Council may, after due enquiry and consultation with the persons concerned in the selection of such chiefs, recognise the person to be a Chief." In other words, there is provision that the Governor in Council will consult local opinion before according official recognition to a Chief.

Honourable Abangwu also questioned the wisdom of preventing chieftaincy disputes from being tried in the Courts. That is also the view given by Chief Morphy. In connection with Chief Morphy, I am surprised to hear him say that because it is the cardinal principal of the Bible of the Action Group that questions relating to chieftaincy should be kept out of the Court. I happened to be a Member of the Legislative Council in 1949 when a motion was tabled in the Legislative Council at Ibadan to make it an executive act, and since it has been part of the Law of the Land, leaving it to the Regions concerned to decide where they want it, with the Constitution the West incorporated it in their Law. We are incorporating it in order to prevent a spate of chieftaincy disputes finding their ways to our Courts and delaying the administration of justice.

It was also suggested, in view of the Jones Enquiry, that this Bill should be postponed. Again I am afraid we cannot accept this suggestion because the terms of reference of the Jones Commission of Enquiry are quite clear. This is to enquire into the position, status and influence of Chiefs and Natural Rulers in the Eastern Region, and to advise the machinery for regulating the appointment and deposition of Chiefs.

This is in general terms but this Bill is introduced in connection with those areas where there is a recognised tradition of Chiefs from an historical point of view or religious point of view. The two therefore, are quite different. If, for example, the Jones Commission recommends certain areas where we have elders that they should also be accorded recognition as Chiefs, as I said, when I was introducing the Second reading of the Bill, naturally that will be given due consideration.

I notice that there is a general mix-up about deposition. It is unfortunate that that word found its way in print. It has been amended. It is not intended at all to depose any Chief, it is rather intended to withdraw recognition. The Governor in Council accords recognition and the Governor in Council withdraws that recognition but does not depose. We do not intend to interfere with the Native Laws and Customs of the people of this Region.

Another mix-up is in the use of the word "recognition." Honourable Chidolue showed that when he was contributing to this debate. It is only a matter of official recognition not general recognition. It makes no difference whether a Chief exists in different parts of the Region or not. The local community may recognise such a Chief; that is different from official recognition and of course, the Bill is quite clear in the circumstances where such recognition given.

...ts. I am afraid this Government resists the suggestion to defer co-  
... It is very important that this Bill should receive the blessing of this  
... in common with the Jones Commission will supplement what Govern-  
... I am surprised that a suggestion has come from one side of the  
... I am surprised that a suggestion has come from one side of the  
... I realise it is not from the Opposition proper,  
... the Bill should receive the favourable

... have been carrying out propaganda against the Government for not recog-  
... Now that the Government has decided to recognise the Chiefs they are  
... to defer such recognition. I realise it is not from the Opposition proper,  
... I am suggesting, Sir, that the Bill should receive the favourable

... the outer fringe of the Opposition. I realise it is not from the Opposition proper,  
... I am suggesting, Sir, that the Bill should receive the favourable

... on of the House.  
... Bill accordingly read a Second time.  
... Bill immediately considered in Committee.

(In the Committee)

**Clause 1 agreed to.**

**Clause 2.**  
**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to delete sub-clause 2 and 3, to leave out "Chief means any person whose authority and control in that behalf is recognised by any tribe, clan or local community", and insert "Chief means any member of a tribe or clan or local community whose authority and control in that behalf is recognised by such tribe or clan or local community". Some of the recommendations by that deputation by such tribe or clan or local community whose authority and control in that behalf is recognised by such tribe or clan or local community.

This amendment arises from the exchange of views which we had with the deputation of certain Bonny chiefs led by Chief Green. Some of the recommendations by that deputation are acceptable to Government.

*Question proposed.*  
*Question put and agreed to.*  
**Clause 2 as amended agreed to.**

**Clause 3.**

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to delete sub-clause 2 of Clause 3 and insert "(2) Upon reference being made under the provisions of this section the Governor in Council may after due inquiry and consultation with the persons concerned in the selection of such chief recognise a person to be a chief".

*Question proposed.*  
*Question put and agreed to.*

**Mr. P. G. Warmate:** Mr Chairman, Sir, I feel that there ought to be a clause before this one. As the Bill stands now the chiefs are not recognised yet except those there should be something like this. . .

**Mr. P. G. Warmate:** I am not against it, I am supporting it. But I feel that a new clause ought to come before this one. As it stands the chiefs are not recognised yet except those who are recognised on dispute. But those who are existing are not recognised yet. What I mean, Sir, is that

**The Chairman:** Are you supporting this amendment or are you against the amendment?  
**Mr. P. G. Warmate:** I am not against it, I am supporting it. But I feel that a new clause ought to come before this one. As it stands the chiefs are not recognised yet except those who are recognised on dispute. But those who are existing are not recognised yet. What I mean, Sir, is that

**The Chairman:** Are you going to give me notice of amendment to add a new clause to make it possible for you to move it? Meanwhile we can dispose of this clause.  
*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 3 as amended agreed to.*

*Clauses 4 and 5 agreed to.*

*Clause 6.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs :** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to add the following Proviso to paragraph (b) of Clause 6—"Provided that any chief who has been recognised under the provisions of this Law shall not be precluded from taking action in a court of competent jurisdiction for the recovery or delivery of such property and related damages".

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 6 as amended agreed to.*

*Clause 7.*

*Question proposed.*

**Mr P. G. Warmate :** Mr Chairman, my amendment seeks to recognise the chiefs already chiefs and who are recognised by their people . . .

**The Chairman :** If I may dispose of that clause first you may have a new clause if you like.

**Mr P. G. Warmate :** Mr Chairman, Sir, my amendment seeks to recognise the Chiefs already chiefs and who are recognised by their people, but as the Law stands, Sir, it is only in circumstances of a disputed case . . .

**The Chairman :** Will you give me the terms of the new clause you wish to add?

**Mr Warmate :** Yes, Sir, at the commencement of this Law the chiefs of the Eastern Region shall be recognised by the Governor in Council. But as it stands at the moment it is only in cases there is a dispute that Government steps in to recognise one, but what of the chiefs who are already existing? There is no clause here to say that . . .

**The Chairman :** For the benefit of honourable Members the Mover seeks to add a new clause as follows: "At the commencement of this Law the chiefs of this Region shall be recognised by the Governor in Council".

**Mr P. G. Warmate :** What I seek to bring to the Government is that it is already defined that a Chief means any Member of a tribe or clan or local community whose authority and control in that behalf is recognised by such local community tribe or clan. That is an existing Chief—a Chief who is there—he is known by his people—so Government recognises him as such—so the title of this Bill is "Recognition of Chiefs". But there is nothing to show that those chiefs who are already existing are recognised by Government. The only thing is that according to Clause 3 (2) it is only when there is a dispute and the Government steps into the matter that the Governor in Council may recognise a person to be a Chief. What of those Chiefs who are made Chiefs without dispute?

**Mr Chairman :** If I may interrupt, I have reason to believe that this particular law was drafted by the Region's Attorney-General. What you seek to do now is to interpret this Law, and may be, as you say, from the layman's point of view, it is difficult to accept this interpretation.

**Mr P. G. Warmate :** What I mean, Sir, is . . .

**The Chairman :** I do not know what you propose to do about it, but if I might advise, I think it is absolutely unnecessary.

**Mr P. G. Warmate:** I do not agree, Sir, I know I am a layman, but I am here to interpret. Commonsense tells me that, as it stands now, the Chiefs who are in existence are not recognised by Government . . .

**The Chairman:** Have you any more argument to advance in support of the amendment apart from the commonsense reason you have given?

**Mr P. G. Warmate:** If I may, Sir—if the Minister of Internal Affairs can answer this—What is the position now of those Chiefs who are known by their people without dispute? That is what I want to know, Sir.

*Question proposed.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I am afraid I will be bound to resist this amendment because it is quite clear from the title that the aim of the Bill is to provide for the recognition of Chiefs in certain circumstances, that is, when you have a dispute. What you are suggesting is fundamentally at variance with the aim and objects of the Bill. You ask the question, what becomes of the Chiefs who exist at present? That Chief may be generally recognised by the local community, but if tomorrow another individual claims to be a Chief, or that particular Chief, who is already recognised, is challenged, and it may lead to a breach of the peace, that is where the Government steps in and, after consultation with the people, decides on whom to accord official recognition. I feel that this will help to strengthen your case. If, for example, you come from a place where a Chief is generally recognised for so many years and then suddenly something happens—he is no longer recognised—Government feels in such circumstances that one of the claimants should be recognised. That is why this Bill is drafted and I think it will meet your wishes as well as the wishes of other Members.

*Question put and negatived.*

*Original Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 7 agreed to.*

(Mr Speaker resumes the Chair)

*Bill reported with Amendments; Read the Third time and passed.*

### **The Eastern Region Local Government (Amendment) Law, 1956**

*Order for Second Reading read.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Speaker, I beg to move that a Bill for a law to amend the Eastern Region Local Government Law, 1955, be now read a Second time.

This Bill contains amendments which have arisen as a result of certain legal measures which have attracted public opinion. Honourable Members will recall that during the last meeting of the House in December, an amendment to the Eastern Region Local Government Law was enacted to debar a person from membership of more than one Council except in the same area of authority. This change was introduced at the instance of the majority of the Members of this Legislature and Government was obliged to lay the Bill on the Table of this House with a Certificate of Urgency, for which it was criticised by the Opposition. It has now been found that in practice the operation of this amending law has embarrassed a considerable number of councillors in many parts of the Region. Since it was not the original intention of Government to pass a Law deliberately aimed at any section of the community or to plan to victimise any particular person, Government has decided to make this amendment and allow those councillors concerned an option of choice in deciding in which of any two councils they would prefer to retain their membership.

The attention of Government has been drawn also to the body of opinion which is in favour of making traditional rulers presidents instead of chairmen of Local Government Councils. It is maintained that such persons should not interfere in the humdrum affairs of local Government and administration. Their function should be formal and ceremonial. Government is disposed to accept this suggestion and has committed itself to introducing this amendment with a view to bringing about a healthier relationship between traditional rulers and elected councillors. Government has also taken into consideration the possibility of a clash of authority within the functions of the President of a Council and those of its Chairman and provisions have been made to eliminate same.

Representations have been made to Government about the provision of the Local Government Law which empowers Councils to order strangers to leave their areas. It has been pointed out that the objectives sought by making such provision in the Law cannot materialise because of their ambiguous nature. Mr Speaker, may I be permitted to refresh the minds of honourable Members. Section 71 of the Eastern Region Local Government Law reads as follows:

"The Council may order any person who is not a member of the native community, living in the area of its authority, and who fails, when so required by the Council, to produce reasonable proof to the Council that his means and legitimate labour are sufficient for the adequate support of himself and his dependents, to leave such area within such time after the order has been communicated to him, not being less than fourteen days, as the Council may direct, provided that any person so ordered to leave such area may within fourteen days of the order being communicated to him appeal against the order to a Magistrate's Court, but the Court shall not set aside the Order unless such person satisfies the Court that his means and legitimate labour are sufficient for the adequate support of himself and his dependents.

(2) Any person who fails to obey an order made under this section or who having left the area which he was directed by the Order to leave, returns to such area without the consent of the Council, shall be liable to a fine of £25 or to imprisonment for six months."

In other words, so long as a person can prove that he is not a public charge, he cannot be removed from one Council area to another. Besides, the whole procedure becomes ridiculous because the so-called stranger can be removed to another area and can be just as socially undesirable as in the previous area. Government feels that since this regime has tabooed the idea of deportation and has successfully expunged it from our statute book, we should be consistent and do the same thing in respect of our Local Government practice. If certain members of the community are undesirable characters, it should be left to the agencies of the Ministry of Welfare to reclaim them and where their behaviour is illegitimate, then the due process of the law should be allowed to run its course.

Clause 2 of the Bill provides for the appointment of a President of a Council by the Minister. His function will be formal, but he shall preside over and act as Chairman of his Standing Committee on Land Tenure, Customs and Traditions of the area of authority of such council.

Clause 8 defines the role of the president of a council and provides that in a municipality he shall be entitled the Mayor. The chairman of such a council shall be entitled Deputy Mayor, but he shall have and exercise all the powers of Chairman under the provisions of the Law, notwithstanding anything therein contained to the contrary. This proviso is necessary in order to emphasise the difference between the President, whose function normally is ceremonial, and a chairman whose function is usually administrative.

Provision has been made as usual for the remuneration and allowances of the president, and these shall be a charge on the revenue of the council over which he presides. As soon as the president has been appointed, he shall preside and open every meeting of the council at which he is present and may address the council at such opening, but he shall not take part further in the proceedings of the meeting of the Council unless it is a meeting of the Standing Committee on Land Tenure, Customs and Traditions, in which case he shall preside and also act as chairman.

I hope that honourable Members will appreciate this honest effort to constitutionalise our local government wherever there is an established traditional institution. This practice is in vogue in the Gold Coast and in the Western Region and we have borrowed this part of the law from their laws.

Clause 6 of the Bill provides that if a person who is a member of a Council is elected, co-opted or appointed to be a member of another council, he shall within 14 days of such election, co-optation or appointment resign from one or other of the two councils of which he is a member. If he fails to do so, then he shall be disqualified for both councils. In order for the resignation

to be valid, they shall be delivered to the chairman of the Council concerned. The proviso is that no person shall be disqualified simply because he is a member of both a district and local council or both a county and district council of his respective areas of authority.

As I said earlier on, it has never been the intention of Government deliberately to victimise any person in the operation of this law, in spite of what other people might say to the contrary. Because some people were affected by this law in certain council areas, Government has decided as a sign of good faith, to introduce a traditional provision to this law so as to safeguard those who have been embarrassed or inconvenienced by the operation of a well intentioned law.

Clause 7 of the Bill therefore provides that any person who on the date of coming into operation of this law, which is deemed to be 1st July, 1955, is a member of more than one council shall still have 14 days of grace to exercise an option of choice and to decide on which of the two councils of which he is a member he would continue to retain his membership.

Honourable Members will agree that the Government has been fair and considerate to those concerned, in view of the extenuating circumstances. After all, when the House enacted the amendment which has offended certain people, we all acted in good faith, and according to our *Hansard* the law was enacted unanimously without any discordant voice.

Clauses 10, 11 and 12 are three amendments which have been included in this law consequent upon the proposed enactment of the Finance Law.

Clause 10 deals with the approval of local government estimates beyond the usual date by one month to enable the machinery envisaged under the new Finance Law to operate smoothly. The other two clauses mentioned are intended to delete references to the Direct Taxation Ordinance, and the substitution of the Finance Law therefor.

This Bill is an opportunity for honourable Members of this House and the people of this Region to appreciate the workings of representative democracy in action. Here is a Government which was popularly elected to carry out its mandate to the electorate. The accredited representatives of the electorate instructed that Government, through the usual channels of parliamentary Government, to carry on certain legitimate measures. This was done in the operation of such a law which was found to affect certain citizens in a way which made them to doubt the good faith of their Government. Moreover, it was clear that the effect of the Law which was a source of complaint was neither contemplated nor was it deliberately devised by the makers of the amending law. Instead of obstinately refusing to budge, the Government decided to introduce another amending legislation not only to remove the complaint but also to regularise the irregularity which was the original cause of misgiving. I have gone to this length because I am not so sure that honourable Members appreciate this process of a representative democracy in action. In addition, what have we received? We have received criticism of perennial amendments to the local government law.

I hope that no responsible Member of this House will think that these changes have been introduced because of the activities of certain pressure groups, no matter how influential they may appear to be. In any democracy, you must recognise the existence of pressure groups because there are advantages and disadvantages in such lobbying activities. Their central aim is to exploit the trend of public opinion, but the taste of good government is not so much in allowing its policies to be influenced by groups which may have axes to grind, as to whether any measure will conduce to the welfare of the people no matter if such a measure adversely affects a few. Judged by this criterion, this Government believes that the changes envisaged in this amending law, whilst benefiting only a few individuals, will in the long run make for a more stable society in the Eastern Region and at the same time will inspire confidence in the security and integrity of those who hold the reins of Government,

During the Committee Stage, I shall move an amendment to vest the Minister with the power to establish a Board of Market Control in respect of a municipality or an urban district council. Honourable Members will perhaps remember that that suggestion was made on the floor of this House and it received the general assent of the House. The aim is to enhance the efficiency in the administration and management of markets as a revenue earning ancillary to local government bodies. It is not intended to hamstring the control of markets by local government bodies.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Health:** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr P. N. Okeke:** Mr Speaker, I think it is an opportunity for me to say a few words and to congratulate the Government on its suggestion in making these amendments. I must say that it is a bit too late for the benefit of the people at Onitsha because already the members are being returned to the Council unopposed. However, I am grateful to the Minister of Internal Affairs for this gesture because we realised that it affected a few people outside Onitsha and that the confusion in Onitsha also affected a large number of Councils. This stopped the working of the council for three months. As we go on to the Committee Stage, I expect to make a number of amendments which I expect the Minister will accept.

I hope, Sir, that in future, in places like Onitsha where education is high, before amendments are made in such cases, it will be better for the Minister to investigate properly and find out local feeling instead of rushing amendments immediately he feels they should be made. Again I thank the Minister for the gesture he has made, and I think it is appreciated.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*

*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

**The Chairman:** Honourable P. N. Okeke, when we come to a stage where you think your amendment should come, will you please stand up so that I know?

*Clauses 1-8 agreed to.*

*Clause 9.*

**Mr P. N. Okeke:** Mr Chairman, I rise to amend Section 23D and to make subsection (3) read as follows:

**The Chairman:** You rise to amend Clause 9 of this Bill?

**Mr P. N. Okeke:** Yes, by inserting the following:

“Where a person is appointed to be the President of a municipality the council shall elect a Mayor or Deputy Mayor in accordance with the provision of Section 24 who shall have and exercise all the powers of Chairman and Vice Chairman under the provisions of this Law and notwithstanding anything therein contained to the contrary”.

The object of this Amendment, Sir, is that we feel the dignity of an Obi, or a King or a Natural Ruler demands that they do not lose that dignity by accepting a lower status. A King should be satisfied with his status as a King. Where a Council becomes a municipality a King should still not condescend to take a lower position. A Mayor could then be elected, whilst he still retains his title as King with all the remuneration due to him when he was

President of the Council. In this way he would not be drawn into any Council details, but would be regarded by all the people of the community as part of them. It is lower in status for a King to be addressed as a Mayor. I think it is consistent with what we have been saying in this House that it is a degradation for an African King to take up the title of Mayor, important as it is, since it is not as high as the title of a Natural Ruler.

*Question proposed.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** I appreciate the integrity of my honourable Friend in trying to point out why a Natural Ruler should not aim at being a Mayor. I appreciate the force of his argument but unfortunately I disagree with him because within the history of mayoralty itself, it is based on ceremonial functions. The Mayor is head of the city but the main task is purely ceremonial. As you notice most of the Mayors of English cities, you see them in their ceremonial robes of office so my point is that I agree with him that it is not wise for an African paramount ruler or King to degrade himself by being identified with a public title or a title which is lower. But the point here is where such a paramount ruler is a member of a local government council and his office in that council is purely ceremonial, certainly the trend of opinion now among those who have given this subject of local government thought is that such a ruler should be a Mayor and especially in view of the fact that the term of Mayor is honorific. He goes in there and presides, maybe gives an address or so and takes no further part in the proceedings and goes right away. That is why the practice in the Gold Coast has the provision in the Law that wherever you have a natural ruler he becomes President of the Council.

For this reason, I regret I must oppose the amendment.

**Mr C. A. Abangwu:** Mr Chairman, Sir, I think two issues are involved in this amendment. Government has tried at one breath to bring two traditions together and have attempted to merge the two into one.

The first one is the recognition of traditional rulers and incorporating them into Councils. I think the House is agreed on that.

The second is the fixture of a foreign title in addition to that of a local title. A good specific case is that of the Obi of Onitsha. He might be nominated or appointed by the Regional Government to be the President of the Onitsha Town Council. Now he is the Obi, the recognised title by which he is known under native law and custom. When he gets into the council, because he is the President of the Council, he is also the Mayor of the place. There is no provision to recognise him as the Obi in the Council. In other words if you give him the name of Mayor it immediately displaces that of Obi. The position then will be that while outside he is the Obi of Onitsha inside the council he is the Mayor. In keeping with the preservation of our traditional councils let him remain the President and not the Mayor.

I think that this befits his prestige more than calling him a Mayor. This is exactly the position in Lagos. The Chief is the Oba Adele of Lagos. He is not the Mayor but the President of the Council. It is inconsistent joining the two things together. In this respect I support the amendment that the Obi, if he is to be the President of the Council, should remain the President and not the Mayor. The Government might consider that in such special cases the question of Mayoralty should not come in at all.

In other cases they might go with the name of Mayor as in the Enugu Council where there is no specific title given to the king of the area. The same remarks apply to Calabar where, I think, it will be awkward to call the Obong a Mayor.

In that respect I support the amendment.

*Amendment by leave, withdrawn.*

*Clauses 9-13 agreed to.*



*New Clauses.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move that the following subsection be inserted immediately after subsection (5) of section 9 of the principal Law:

“(6) Any Enquiry held under the provisions of section 15 of the Eastern Region Local Government Ordinance, 1950, shall for all purposes be deemed to have been held under the provisions of section 13 of this Law”.

The object of this amendment is to enable the Ministry to apply the provisions of section 16 of the Ordinance and to enable us to make it applicable not with retrospective effect but concurrently.

*Clause read the Second and Third time.*

*New Clause agreed to and added to the Bill.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move that the following section be inserted in the principal Law immediately after section 80:—

“80 A (1) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Law the Minister may appoint a Board of Market Control for the area of the authority of any Municipality or Urban District Council.”

(2) A Board of Market Control shall consist of a Chairman and two members.

(3) It shall be the duty of a Board of Market Control to exercise the following functions in respect of the area for which it is appointed:—

(a) to build, equip, open, close and maintain markets and prohibit the erection of stalls in places other than markets;

(b) to regulate and control markets including the collection of stallages, rents and tolls; and

(c) to fix the days and hours during each day on which a market may be held and prevent the sale and purchase of goods in markets on any day or at any hours except those fixed.

(4) Where a Board of Market Control is appointed under the provisions of this section the Municipality or Urban District Council of the area concerned shall be responsible for the fixing of the stallages, rents and tolls within the market.

(5) Any sums of money collected by the Board of Market Control as stallages, rents or tolls from the market shall be paid to and form part of the revenues of the Municipality or Urban District Council concerned.

(6) A Board of Market Control may make bye-laws for the carrying into effect and the purposes of any function conferred upon it by subsection (3).

(7) Bye-laws made under the provisions of this section shall not have effect until they are approved by the Minister.

(8) The Minister shall have power to amend any bye-laws submitted to him for approval before he approves such bye-law.

(9) The Minister may approve or refuse to approve any bye-law submitted and may fix the date on which the bye-law is to come into operation.

(10) The Minister may at any time make or amend any bye-laws which a Board of Market Control is empowered to make under the provisions of this section or revoke any bye-law made by such Board.

(11) Subject to the approval by the Minister of any estimates submitted by a Board of Market Control, a Board of Market Control may incur all expenditure necessary for and incidental to the carrying out of any functions conferred upon it by this section.

(12) Such expenditure shall be charged on and payable out of the revenues of the Municipality or Urban District Council in the area of the authority of which the Board of Market Control operates.

(13) The Minister may make regulations for the purposes of this section and in particular may provide by such regulations for:—

- (a) The appointment, tenure of office and terms of service of members of a Board of Market Control;
- (b) the organisation of the work of a Board and the manner in which it shall perform its functions;
- (c) consultations by a Board with persons other than the members of a Board; and
- (d) the appointment, tenure of office, and terms of service of staff to assist a Board in the performance of its functions; and
- (e) for the method of making and publishing bye-laws made by a Board under the provisions of this section”—

As a result of suggestions made from the floor of this House and the experience gained by the Ministry during the last six years on the workings of the Local Government Ordinance, we are forced to conclude that at the bottom of most of the difficulties experienced by local government bodies is the allocation of market stalls.

It is felt, therefore, that the suggestion made from the floor of this House should form the basis of this amendment, so as to enable the small body, to be known as the Board of Market Control, to work with those Local Government Bodies, particularly in urban districts or municipalities and assist in the efficient working of markets. It is not intended to divest control from the local Government Bodies, but it is only to increase efficiency in the administration of markets, especially in the bigger towns and possibly reduce opportunities for corruption.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr E. Chidolue:** Mr Chairman, I am opposed to this new clause. I am one of those who subscribed to the idea of a measure to tighten control over the allocation of market stalls, award of contracts and scholarships and employment of staff in our Local Government Councils. I am referring to the speech in this honourable House some time last year, but it would appear that this Ministry of Internal Affairs is taking all the powers to itself and the Local Government Councils are being deprived of their power.

Now the Councils cannot employ or dismiss even a messenger and they cannot award a contract above £100. It is true that some of the councillors have been found guilty of bribery and corruption, but that is no reason why all the Councils in the Eastern Region should be condemned. It is also true that the present Minister of Internal Affairs is a man of high integrity and we have a very high regard for him; but at present we do not know who would be the Minister of Internal Affairs tomorrow or in a few years' time. For that reason we feel that all the powers should not be taken up by the Minister of Internal Affairs.

In Onitsha, where I live, people are prejudiced about this sort of amendment and already we hear that out of three persons the Acting Senior D.O., who happens to be an indigene of Onitsha, may be the Chairman and then you have two other members, perhaps one of them may be from one section of the community and the other from the remaining section, so that it is an indirect way of controlling . . .

**The Chairman:** If I may interrupt you, I think on amendments, we should confine ourselves to the principle which the amendment seeks and possibly not relate them to any particular township of any group of persons.

**Mr E. Chidolue:** I think I am here as a representative of my people.

**The Chairman:** Except this, that we must follow the rules of debate.

**Mr E. Chidolue:** Thank you, Sir. The point I was trying to make is this. If we set up a Board of Control and I must mention an example—in a place like Onitsha where we have got a loan of half a million pounds for the construction of the Market, this loan is not a dash, it is not a grant. . .

**The Chairman:** Out of Order.

You can deal with anywhere but not your own Township or where you represent.

**Mr E. Chidolue:** I think you will give me a hearing ?

**The Chairman:** I will if you will follow discussion principles.

**Mr E. Chidolue:** The point I was trying to make is that all the Councils in the Eastern Region have been stripped of all the powers they had. It seems to me that Local Government is nothing but a muddle. I do not know where we are heading to, but I cannot understand it because it is said that the Local Council is the foundation for the self-government for which we are striving. If the Local Councils will not have any powers at all, I do not know how we can aspire to Self-Government in 1956. We have only a few months to go. That is my point, Mr Chairman.

**Mr R. O. Ukuta, M.B.E. (Nsukka Division):** Mr Chairman, there is nothing wrong with this Board of Market Control. I see no reason why people should travel forward and backward at the same time. If you want one thing and that thing is desired you will be intent on getting it. The Local Government Ordinance, 1950, left the Local Government Bodies free—but what do we see, bribery and corruption and now it is corrected and people try to demand to leave us free. We are ashamed of it. If particular people who reside in townships do not know what is happening to our people in the rural areas, we are ashamed of what is happening. I am a councillor myself but I do not support back-hand or anything like corruption. If a Law is made and it fails to suit particular persons why try to outdo it blindly. Mr Chairman, there is nothing wrong with this Board of Control. I support it wholeheartedly.

**Mr V. A. Nwankwo (Abakaliki Division):** Mr Chairman, I support the amendment, but there is one thing I would ask the Minister in charge of this amendment to reconsider. If he does not reconsider it now, within six months he will. I am advising him to see that the Council is not corrupted. We are going to appoint three persons to form the Board but there is nothing to tighten them up. I do not know whether we should not consider a way of inserting a recent amendment about Councillors the other time, Sir. That is, the amendment was left there when it was Amendment 35A, subsection 5 down to 7, that is where it made it an offence to have somebody who is a Councillor demanding money in any form, and if he is found guilty he will be punished. Members of these Boards should be made to swear an oath, because even if Councillors are found guilty of corruption, the Board members can still be found innocent of complicity with the Councillors as they have sworn an Oath to be honest. If Board members do not swear an Oath, Councillors may be in fear that these Board members might be guilty of dishonest practices in the allocation of market stalls, since they have sworn no Oath to bind them to honesty. I suggest that a clause should be inserted to bind Board members as well as Councillors to honesty. We must make it an offence for these three people who constitute a Board to yield to bribery. There should be something in law to cover this point. For instance, there is nothing to stop me from putting up an application for a stall and bribing friends among the Councillors and beg persons in the area to give me a plot. But if the Board members are under Oath to be honest in their dealings, then there is an additional safeguard against corruption. It is better to leave the work of the Councillors—that is, they should take an Oath and be punished by imprisonment.

Mr Chairman, that is my view.

**Mr C. A. Okafor (Orlu Division):** Mr Chairman, Sir, I do not see that it is worthwhile to appoint only three people because the three people can be easily corrupted. If they are up to about seven or nine, there will be nobody who will succeed in getting them together to agree to be corrupted so that if we have more people in this Board there will be less chances of corruption. That is what I suggest.

**Mr Chairman:** Do you wish to make an amendment?

**Mr C. A. Okafor:** I am only suggesting.

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** I rise to allay the fears of my honourable Friends who may feel that this Ministry is introducing this amendment in order to make it impossible for the Councils to function well. I would like to make it quite clear that had things gone on smoothly as was intended when the Local Government Ordinance was enacted in 1950, the Ministry would have been happy to continue to allow matters to go as they were but, unfortunately, the revelations of the Floyer Commission of Inquiry in Port Harcourt, that of Grant in Aba and Gunning of Onitsha, showed that in the allocation of market stalls, there was organised conspiracy to deprive Councils of revenue and also to corrupt the Councils.

I would like my friends to appreciate that the Ministry is determined to tighten up but not necessarily to divest Councillors of their powers, so that I hope that my friend Chidolue will notice that even in the amendment suggested, it is permissible. We say notwithstanding any other provision of this law, the Minister *may* appoint. It is not *shall*. It is not *obligatory* so that if Onitsha—to mention his constituency, should behave well, it is possible that the Minister may not decide to appoint a Board of Market Control there, but it is necessary to have an enabling act so that in these ten Urban Districts that we have, if it becomes necessary to do so, a Board of Market Control could be appointed. I just wish to emphasise the permissive nature of the amendment.

Fear was also expressed that it is possible that a native of the particular place may be appointed. It is true that Africans, or Nigerians, are appointed Administrative Officers and so naturally they become Local Government Commissioners but we are complaining here that we want to Nigerianise the Civil Service. Certainly, if Europeans as Administrative Officers are persons of integrity, I think that it is fair to expect Africans or Nigerians who are appointed Administrative Officers to be persons of integrity until they have proved to the contrary. And not only that, my Ministry naturally will not appoint junior Administrative Officers as Local Government Commissioners but in the new scheme of things, naturally, we have to give preference to those who hitherto have risen to high positions in the Civil Service, or Senior District Officers, to be members of such Boards so that they will be able to inspire the confidence which is so necessary for administering such a Board successfully.

Honourable Nwankwo suggests that Members of such a Board should also be required to take oaths and also to be responsible as Councillors. I agree, and if I may ask for time, we are trying to draft an amendment to comply with the wishes of the honourable Member so that Members of Boards of Control are also expected, like Caesar's wife, to be above suspicion.

Honourable Mr Okafor suggests that the number, three, is too small. I am afraid I disagree with my friend. They say 'the more the merrier'. We want to keep it small because if it is large it is unwieldy; then there is no reason why we should deprive Councillors of the former Market Committee of these rights. We want to keep it small and have a senior official as Chairman and want also say two permanent members of the community there, to work with him to see that the allocation of market stalls is done efficiently and honestly so that—take Onitsha again for example—where they have borrowed such a large sum of money for the market, it will yield profit to enable them to pay their debts and not necessarily to run up the pockets of certain Councillors who may have other views about the allocation of market stalls.

[Local Government (Amendment)  
Law, 1956—3R]

28th March, 1956

[Customary Courts Law,  
1956—Committee]

**Mr Chairman:** Have you finished? At any rate, we will put the question while awaiting your amendment.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*New Clause read the First and Second time and added to the Bill.*

**Mr Chairman:** We will now wait for the amendment.

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Sir, I beg to move that the words "or a member of a Board of Market Control" be inserted after the words "Member of a Council" in line 3 of Section 35A of the Principal Law.

The object of this amendment is to incorporate in the amending Law the suggestion of the honourable Member for Abakaliki Division so that Members of a Board of Market Control will also be subject to the requirements expected of Members of the Council, as provided in the Eastern Region Local Government Law.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*New Clause read the First and Second time and added to the Bill.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move that the words "Member of a Board of Market Control" be inserted after the words "Member of a Council" in Section 38 (A) (1) and (2) of the principal law.

Again the object of this amendment is to bring Members of the Board of Market Control to the requirements of the substantive Law just as Members of the Council. The first is in respect of oath taking and the second is in respect of corrupt practice.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*New Clause read the First and Second time and added to the Bill.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

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

### The Customary Courts Law, 1956

*Considered in Committee.*

*Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to.*

*Clause 3.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, Sir, I beg to move to insert in clause 3, sub-clause (2), at the end of line 2, "be courts of appeal which shall".

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 3 as amended agreed to.*

*Clause 4.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to leave out, sub-clause (5) and insert:—

"(5) Before making an appointment under this section the Minister shall consult the inhabitants of the area concerned and shall consider any advice or recommendation made to him by the Customary Courts Adviser".

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to add a new sub-clause (6) after sub-clause (5) as follows:—

"(6) A person appointed under the provisions of this section shall hold office for such time as shall be stated in the instrument by which he is appointed".

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 4 as amended agreed to.*

*Clause 5.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to leave out in Clause 5, sub-clause (1) lines 1 and 2 "(who may include persons who are not Nigerians)".

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**Mr Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move in clause 5, sub-clause (2), line 2, to leave out the full stop after "Court" and insert "who shall be literate in the English language".

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 5 as amended agreed to.*

*Clauses 6 and 7 agreed to.*

*Clause 8.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move in Clause 8, sub-clause (1), line 3, after "Law" to insert "or Ordinance".

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 8 as amended agreed to.*

*Clauses 9-16 agreed to.*

*Clause 17.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, Sir, I beg to move to leave out Clause 17 and insert:—

"17. All persons shall be subject to the jurisdiction of Customary Courts".

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 17 as amended agreed to.*

*Clause 18.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, Sir, I beg to move to delete Clause 18.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 19 agreed to.*

*Clause 20.*

**Mr C. A. Abangwu (Nsukka Division):** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to add the following proviso to the sub-clause:—

"Provided that where a customary court has jurisdiction in causes or matters concerning land, and land the subject-matter of any proceeding is situated partly within the area of the jurisdiction of two or more customary courts, the Customary Courts Adviser, if all such courts are within the area under the jurisdiction of one Customary Courts Adviser, or the Minister if all such courts are not within the area under the jurisdiction of one Customary Courts Adviser, shall determine in which court the cause or action shall be heard and thereupon such court shall have the same jurisdiction over the land in question as it has over land lying wholly within its jurisdiction and may take such course with regard to the cause or matter which it considers justice requires".

Sir, when I was speaking on the Second Reading of this Bill I said that it must have been an omission on the part of the person responsible for enacting this Bill to have omitted this particular part. The proviso which I desire should be inserted is exactly taken from the proviso to Section 8 of the Native Courts Ordinance which this Bill seeks to abrogate. The purpose of it, as I have said earlier, is that if there is land lying between the jurisdiction of two Courts there is no medium by which any dispute arising because of that land might be decided. We cannot say to which Court it will go—you cannot go into District Court A because part of it is lying there, you cannot go into the other District Court because it is not lying wholly within there, so that this particular amendment seeks to empower the Customary Courts Adviser if all such courts lie within the jurisdiction of the Customary Courts Adviser, or the Minister if the courts do not lie within the jurisdiction of one Customary Courts Adviser, to decide to which court this case should go.

This is of material importance because it may happen that the inhabitants of a particular area dispute a particular piece of land. If you say that this particular land is going to be decided in Court you find it is persons who are really interested in the case that come in there, obviously you know the result. That is why I suggest that in such a case an impartial court shall be the decider and the whole shall be decided either by the Customary Courts Adviser, whom we assume is not interested in the affairs, or the Minister, who we also assume is not interested.

Sir, I beg to move.

*Question proposed.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, the amendment is acceptable to Government.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 20 as amended agreed to.*

*Clauses 21–30 agreed to.*

*Clause 31.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to insert the following proviso after sub-clause (1):—

“Provided that notwithstanding the provisions of this subsection a person whose mode of life is not that of the local community shall be entitled to be represented by a legal practitioner before a Customary Court and where such person is so represented the Court may allow any other party in the same cause or matter also to be represented by a legal practitioner whether such party is a person whose mode of life is that of the local community or not”.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 31 as amended agreed to.*

*Clauses 32–58 agreed to.*

*Clause 59.*

**Mr C. A. Abangwu:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to leave out the clause. Clause 59 says that “The writs of Mandamus, of Certiorari and of Prohibition shall not lie in respect of any proceedings in a District Court of Grade “A” or “B” or in a “County Court”. As I said earlier, on the debate on the Second Reading, if we take away these prerogative writs it may happen that a Customary Court may be dealing with illegalities and yet the person, or persons, as the case may be, may be unable to stop the court dealing with such illegality. This is the only reason why it is necessary to delete this clause.

I have spoken at length on this matter so I do not intend to make it long.

*Question proposed.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** The arguments of the honourable Member are sound and the amendment is acceptable to the House.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 59 as amended agreed to.*

*Clause 60 agreed to.*

*Clause 61.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move in Clause 61, sub-clause (d) (i), lines 6-8, to leave out "from County Court in criminal cases and in any civil cause or matter in which the subject matter in dispute is of the value of one hundred pounds and upwards".

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 61 as amended agreed to.*

*Clauses 62-64 agreed to.*

*Clause 65.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to leave out in Clause 65, line 1 the words "a Customary Court of Appeal" and insert "a County Court".

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 65 as amended agreed to.*

*Clauses 66-71 agreed to.*

*First Schedule agreed to.*

*Second Schedule agreed to.*

#### New Clauses

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to add a new clause after Clause 5.

- (1) No person who has been appointed under the provisions of section 4 to be a member of a customary court shall sit or in any way act as a member of such court until he shall have taken and subscribed the oath in the form contained in the Third Schedule.
- (2) The oaths shall be administered by the Customary Court Adviser or by such person the Minister may direct at a sitting of the court".

*Clause read the First and Second time and added to the Bill.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move that a new clause be added to the Bill:—

"The Minister may by order fix the maximum amount or the rate of any sitting fee payable by a council to persons who are ex-officio or otherwise members of a customary court".

*Clause read the First and Second time and added to the Bill.*

#### New Schedule

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Sir, I beg to move to add a new schedule as follows:

##### "Third Schedule Section—

##### FORM OF OATH OF COURT MEMBER

I,.....being appointed the \*President/a Member of the..... Court do swear by Almighty God that I will well and truly serve as the \*President/a Member of the ..... Court and will do right to all manner of people after the laws and usage of the Eastern Region of Nigeria without fear or favour affection or ill-will and that I will not accept in respect of my service as \*President/Member any bribe, or any unlawful recompenses, reward or benefit whatsoever.



*Schedule read the First and the Second time.*

*Schedule agreed to and added to the Bill.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported with amendments.*

Motion made, and Question proposed, That the Bill as amended be re-committed to a Committee of the Whole House.—(*The Minister of Internal Affairs*).

*Question put and agreed to.*

(In the Committee)

*Clause 54.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs :** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to delete clause 54.  
*Question put and agreed to.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

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

### **The Age of Marriage Law, 1956**

*Order for Second Reading read.*

**The Minister of Welfare :** Mr Speaker, I beg to move that a Bill for a Law to make void all marriages between persons under the age of sixteen be now read a Second time.

Honourable Members will already have read the recommendations of the Bride Price Committee that child marriage should be abolished. No marriage is valid when either party is below the age of sixteen. Where either party is below the age of twenty-one years the consent of the parent or guardian should be required. But this is not always given.

This Bill gives effect to this recommendation by making any marriage between persons either of whom is under the age of sixteen void. At the same time it makes it a punishable offence for any person to receive or give a bride payment or any other payment for marriage at the time when either party is under the age of sixteen.

Sir, this Bill sets a standard for the Region. It is adopted in nearly every civilised country in the world. There are two obvious reasons why marriage between children under the age of sixteen years of age is undesirable. The first is on the grounds of health. A girl under the age of sixteen years should not marry, and as a doctor I can say that in many cases it could be dangerous for a girl to marry before she is old enough to bear children.

The second reason is that the element of consent is nearly always lacking when one of the parties is under the age of sixteen years of age. Such marriages are, as everyone knows, arranged marriages. The girl is often much too young to know her own mind and if she did she would have no power to protest against the authority of her parents. By all means let the parents have a say in arranging marriage according to custom but the whole civilised world condemns the practice of marriage where the element of consent is lacking.

This Bill is especially necessary in a country like ours where it is customary to make a payment of bride price and where it is a real temptation, as it is well known, for poor parents to marry off their daughter whether she likes the arrangement or not, in order to get the bride price quickly.

But, Sir, there are also special reasons why this Bill is necessary. There are customs in certain areas, I do not say they are common, which are obnoxious and shameful and which must be stopped. There is a custom under which a rich man pays a bride price for a girl who

is a child, carries her off to his area, and gives her conditions under which she must live virtuously under her husband's wishes too far away from home; and she is bound to him by deed of dowry which she has no means of repaying. She may be used to farm that area, her husband's land, taken by him on pledge.

These barbarous customs still go on in the areas where the matrimonial system prevails, where a rich man who wants to procreate children can have a wife from whom he can have children to which she has no right. It is well known to the Police and Administrative Officers and others that there are cases, which amount to slavery, which cannot be prosecuted because the guilty party is able to claim that the child he has bought as a slave is his wife. This Bill will place a weapon in the hands of the police and I hope such cases will be prosecuted vigorously.

Apart from these abnormal and illegal practices I consider that the time is now ripe for Government to insist that custom must give way to civilisation and enlightenment. I appreciate that social custom dies hard and that in certain areas it is customary for parents to arrange marriages for their children at a very early age and to start to make payment early to make the marriage firm, but it is the job of an enlightened government to educate the people and not to wait for custom to change by the slow process of education alone. Civilisation condemns the practice of marriage under the age of sixteen. The sooner we say this thing is wrong and show that we are serious, the better. Let us give the people a lead.

In order to make this Bill effective I realise that what is needed is to make compulsory the registration of marriages. This is going to be done through local Government Councils and I am asking them to co-operate as soon as the bye-law to make compulsory the registration of marriages in that area is passed. Bye-laws will be circulated throughout the Region for consideration and approval and I hope the machinery for putting them into effect will soon be established.

I invite this House to give approval to this Bill to prevent child marriage.

**The Minister of Industries :** Mr Speaker, Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr E. A. Chime (Udi Division):** There are certain laws which this House has passed and this is one of them. The Minister says he has appealed to Local Government Councils to co-operate as soon as the law is passed but I am afraid it cannot work. In rural areas and townships young girls not over sixteen are living with men without marriage, and they take these girls as wives at ten and five. Even people take girls of four years and train them until they are sixteen when they are married.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*

*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

*Clauses 1-8 agreed to.*

*Schedule agreed to.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported without Amendments; Read the Third time and passed.*

#### **The Limitation of Dowry Law, 1956**

*Order for Second Reading read.*

**The Minister of Welfare :** I beg to move that a Bill for a law to limit gifts and payments on account of marriage be now read a Second time.

This Bill, Sir, carries into effect one of the principal recommendations of the Bride Price Committee. That Committee, as honourable Members will remember, was appointed in July 1954, and, after a most thorough tour of the Region, presented its Report on 30th October. I would here like to congratulate the members of that Committee for their careful and painstaking work. Their conclusions have not been reached without detailed consultation with the people of almost every part of this Region.

Their two principal recommendations are as follows:—

First, that dowry throughout the Region should be limited to a maximum of £30, and that it should be made an offence to demand, pay, or receive any sum in excess of this. Secondly, that petty expenses throughout the Region should be limited to a maximum of £5, and that it should be made an offence to demand pay or receive any sum in excess of this. This should not be treated as refundable.

I need not tell honourable Members how strong is the demand throughout this Region that these recommendations should be put into effect by this Government as quickly as possible. They are already aware of it. Many Local Government Councils have already taken steps, by passing Bye-Laws, of their own, to limit bride price in their areas. I, myself, am getting hundred of letters from young men all over Nigeria-urging rapid action by Government on this matter. Here is an extract from one of them:—

“You will agree with me that when this Committee was appointed . . . it received the unanimous support of all reasonable and progressive youngmen of the Eastern Region. You will also agree with me that when the Committee submitted its Report . . . almost if not the entire single young men of Eastern Region welcomed the Committee's recommendation . . . I humbly urge you to be kind enough to present a Bill embodying this Report during the Budget Session of the Eastern House which meets early in March. If you do this, be sure that the entire young men of the Region will be saved from their present plight which makes it impossible for them to get coupled to young ladies of their choice due to excessive demand by parents”.

There are a number of reasons why this Bill is necessary. Firstly, there is a general demand for it. That was the conclusion of the Bride Price Committee after its tour of the Region. Secondly, the present situation is neither in accord with our traditional customs nor is it appropriate to our modern times. As is well-known, our original custom was for a young man who wished to marry a girl, to render labour services to the girl's parents. He would work on their farms and he would give presents to them. In this way parents were compensated for their trouble in bringing up their daughter and for the loss of her services on the farm when she married. This was the origin of the dowry which in times past was paid in manilas or brass-rods or cowries. Our traditional customs served a good purpose. The betrothal period lasted a number of years and the dowry which was paid by instalments did not cause excessive hardship. There was a degree of stability, and divorces were not common. You will agree with me that the situation today is a travesty of our ancient customs. It is exploitation of the young men by the parents. In Owerri, for example, £100 may be paid for an illiterate girl, £200 for one with Standard VI, while the dowry on a certificated teacher, nurse or midwife may be as high as £300.

A third reason why this Bill is necessary is given by the Bride Price Committee, who report:

“The high dowry is to a large extent responsible for the fall in morality in the Region, and of the consequences it has brought in its wake. Both men and women are forced to remain single long after the age at which they would normally marry, and the adjustment and adaptation necessary in both partners to a marriage is more difficult and generally less complete . . . It may well be true that the birth rate is not increasing as rapidly as it otherwise would be if marriage today were easier . . .”

The Report goes further to say:—

“Many children are today born out of wedlock. Girls are flocking to the towns to practise prostitution merely because as long as their parents demand an exorbitant dowry, they know there is little likelihood of their getting married if they remain at home.”

There is yet a further reason—the social problems caused by the restlessness and frustration of the young men. They are driven to extremes in order to raise money for the dowry. They burden themselves with heavy debts at exorbitant rates of interest or they pledge land and personal belongings. Sometimes men are tempted to steal or misappropriate public funds for the purpose. A marriage which starts off under a heavy cloud of debt has little chance of success and bickerings and quarrels generally ensue. Broken homes are often the result.

There is another reason—the present state of affairs lowers the social status of women. It is frequently said that, today, fathers do not give their daughters in marriage; they sell them to the highest bidder. The social state of women is deteriorating.

Finally, there is a further reason. We in this Region are moving into important progressive society and it is in order to finance social services that we have introduced the Finance Bill at this Session. That is how we shall become a modern state. The money extorted by greedy parents from young men is the money needed to pay tax—the money going into the pockets of the parents without return when young men are hard put to it to pay tax.

This Bill, Sir, limits the dowry and incidental expenses together to £30. In other words, if a dowry is £25, the incidental expenses must not exceed £5. This Government maintains that £25 is quite enough or £30 with incidental expenses thrown in. The sooner a resolute attempt is made to stop these soaring prices the better. The Government would not be doing its duty to wait for education or custom to change. Education has not helped in this matter so far. Rather, it has made matters worse. It may be asked, why try to limit the petty expenses? The answer is that apart from the question of limiting dowries, there is also an overwhelming demand, at least in the Ibo area, that the cost of the petty expenses to a marriage should be reduced because of the performance of customary rights, presents given by a man to the girl's parents during the betrothal period, marriage feasts and other expenses, such as payment to those who gather to settle the dowry. All may add up to an enormous figure.

Honourable Members will note that marriages, under the Marriage Ordinance, have been excluded from the provisions of this Bill. Those who get married under the Marriage Ordinance are usually educated and comparatively well-off. They can look after themselves. It would not be fair to insist upon limiting incidental expenses to £5 when the cost of an engagement ring might be much more. Expenses of the Church ceremony and the wedding reception could not be limited to £5.

There is one other point I would ask honourable Members to note. The limitation of incidental expenses to £5 only applies to expenses paid by the husband or intended husband, or on his behalf. There is nothing to prevent other incidental expenses being met by the bride's family up to any sum they wish. In England it is customary for the family of the bride to undertake the cost of the wedding reception.

There is one small error in the Bill which makes it necessary for me to move an amendment. In section 6 it says that any person who is guilty of an offence under the provisions of section 3 shall be liable to such and such penalties. The reference should be section 4. I will move this amendment in the Committee Stage.

I am fully aware, Sir, that this House cannot change social customs by legislation, but it is up to this Government to give a lead. The present state of affairs is bad and it is getting worse. In order to relieve the sufferings of the thousands of young men in this Region I urge this House to support me in approving this Bill.

The Government does not propose to leave this matter at passing this Bill. In order to make it effective a further step is necessary, namely, the registration of marriages. This also is recommended strongly by the Bride Price Committee. It is for Local Government Bodies to take action. A circular will be sent to all Local Government Councils requiring them to make bye-laws to make compulsory the registration of marriages in their areas. When

each marriage is registered the amount of dowry paid and the amount of the petty expenses, and to whom paid, will be recorded in each case. I am sure that this House will agree with me that this step has long been needed, and I seek the co-operation of Members in ensuring that it is carried out.

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Industries:** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

**Mr U. A. Otop (Opobo Division):** This Law, as I see it, is not a compulsory law. It does not provide any punishment for the man who will be unable to pay the £30. What happens to the man who pays less than £30? What a wonderful law! In our native law and custom a man may marry for £5, a man may marry for a bottle of gin, a man may marry according to his own pocket, but it seems that in the Eastern Region, Government wants to put everything so that even the native people may not feel comfortable in their lives. They want to centralise everything for themselves.

As I said, Mr Speaker, with this Law a man can wear a cap according to how it fits. The law might be passed but it is one that will be hard to implement.

**Mr A. J. Ekpe:** Mr Speaker, I must oppose this Bill because I have been asked by my people to oppose it. After the release of the Report of the Bride Price Commission I went round my constituency and read to them the recommendations of the Committee and my people were alarmed. They said they could never agree to the Regional Government coming to meddle with the marriage system. Sir, marriage as we all know is as old as man, in fact it is older than Government, and this Bill, if it is passed, will disrupt our local customs and traditions.

The Bill is premature. We have not yet reached the stage when we can regulate bride price in our community.

The very fact that the Minister stipulates the amount of money to be paid for a bride really shows that he admits the principle of bride price which in a civilised nation should be abhorred. How does the Minister arrive at £30, as the price for a bride? What is the basis? How does he arrive at that? It seems unscientific.

Again, Sir, the Bill emphasises money, as if it were the main aim of marriage. Another wicked thing that the Bill does, Sir, is to make us regard our daughters as interest on investment. Marriage becomes investment and daughters become interest. Such a thing should be discouraged by Government. Its outlook is wild, Sir. It now appears that if I marry a wife, that is an investment. If I have a daughter she begins to yield interest, and the interest on my one daughter is £30; if I have two—£60; and if I have three—£90 interest. I think that is not moral at all, Sir.

The Bill, as I have said, is premature. If we are convinced that we want to adopt the English system of marriage let us wait for a time when we shall say so and abolish bride prices altogether.

There is another point. There is no half and half measure. Marriage is a holy institution and this Government cannot meddle with it. We still have in our community, Sir, some old men and old women who still expect and take the whole of their future subsistence on the daughters they have.

Now by stipulating or laying down the exact amount of money to be paid we are going to increase the difficulties. In fact, we are going to drive marriage underground and bring about a black market in marriage—that is what is going to happen. As my honourable Friend from my division has rightly pointed out, if the Government says you must pay £30 for a bride and I cannot afford to pay the £30, certainly what I am going to do is to try and find a way of eloping with a girl. In the ordinary way we marry, I come and offer kola or palm wine

or drink to the parents and then make my negotiations. I will begin to pay as I earn but when the law stipulates that you must pay £30 what the parents will certainly demand is that you pay £30 and take your wife. If you have no £30 you cannot marry. In the former days, in the pre-Bill days, in the pre-marriage law days, we could marry by instalment. I think, Sir . . .

**Mr Speaker:** Order! Order! The honourable Gentleman has made his point.

**Mr K. J. N. Okpokam (Ikoma Division):** I rise to support the Bill. It appears my friend the Member for Opopo was only playing politics. He did not mean what he was saying. He had his two legs, one leg on one canoe and one in another canoe and he did not know where he was really. He tried to please his constituency but he found that by pleasing his constituency he would be displeasing the public so he tried to say things he did not mean at all.

It is not true that by limiting bride price in the Eastern Region you are trying to imitate the white man. It is not correct. It is an attempt to go back to what our parents did many years ago. It is quite true that we know that young men of today are avaricious. They want plenty of money and that is why they begin to look upon their children as articles of trade which was not so at the beginning. The original aim of marriage—African marriage—was that the young boy must like the girl and the boy must be respectful to the parents of his bride. Once that was so there was no difficulty in marriage. But after these soldiers returned from the Army after the last war, they came back with a lot of money and spoiled the minds of parents and from that time dowry has been rising and rising. It will soon come to the state when it will be impossible for any young man to marry. There are going to be many girls who are going to be doomed to have no husbands for life, and that is why it is very, very necessary, and we must be very grateful to the Minister of Welfare for introducing this law just at this time. It is a Bill which nobody can oppose except somebody who just wants to play politics. I support the Bill.

**Dr A. N. Obonna (Owerri Division):** I rise to support the Bill and to make one or two comments. Every young man outside would welcome the Bill. But I beg to observe that it would have some adverse repercussions. Some of these will be increase of wives. It would appear that it would encourage polygamy. Whereas in the past years people marry for sums ranging from £100—£300, now the dowry is reduced, you will find some well-to-do men accumulating wives and so we encourage polygamy. Except that the conditions of the people have not permitted it, I think we would not have stopped here. We would have legislated against polygamy, but I do not think we could do that now. I do not say that I am against polygamy, but I know that by limiting the bride price we are going to encourage polygamy.

Another point I would make is that but for the introduction of free primary education you will find that one of the repercussions will be mass illiteracy of the female sex because in the past you have parents training the girls with a view that they get good husbands for higher pay, but now that there is no distinction between the dowry for the educated one, you will find that parents may not even bother to train the girls; but government has in a way met that by free primary education, so that will not arise. Anyway, I think it is a progressive Bill, and I ought to support it.

**Mr E. A. Chime:** This Bill is again a Bill that has now opened the way to corruption. It is a plain fact that in the Bill it states that a man with a daughter cannot accept anything more than £30. Well, a young man goes to marry that daughter and the father tells him, "You give me £100 and pay £30 in public. If you will not do that—go". And the young man who wants to marry that girl must be prepared to do it. I do not think any young man who wants to marry a man's daughter wants to take that man to court for black market.

Furthermore this Bill states that that young man who gives his parents in law any gift above £30 is guilty. If my daughter-in-law comes to my house and I give her £10 now as a gift I am guilty unless she refuses it. Mr Speaker, I am just saying that we should go slowly on this sort of thing. It will not help us in rural areas at all. If somebody pays dowry of

£150 and his wife leaves him tomorrow he can only get £30 back in the court and he loses £120. We are all here to see that any young man profits if he wants to marry a girl cheaply. The young man must refuse to give more if he wants to get his wife cheaply.

**Chief I. I. Morphy (Ogoja Division):** In some areas people marry with £100 to £200 but in our own area they marry from £1 to £5. Now I feel that raising the bride price up to £30 and making it a Law is raising the hope of my own people. People who marry with about £1 now, the parents of such people will say give me £30 before you marry my daughter. There should be no maximum at all.

I now refer to the point made by my honourable Friend for Ikom. He said that he supports the Bill. In Ikom nobody marries with more than £5. So that coming here to support such a Bill is not good.

Mr Speaker, I oppose the Bill.

**Mr K. J. N. Okpokam:** On point of information, it is wrong. It is £20.

**Mr Kemte Giadom (Ogoni Division):** Mr Chairman, we have no point to quarrel with this Bill at all. It is a welcome Bill. There is one warning I would like to make to the Minister concerned. In some Local Governments people have taken decision on Bride Price. May be in some areas Bride Price has been controlled to below what the Government has put down—£30.

I would remind the honourable Minister concerned to send notices to all Local Government Councils that have taken decisions on Bride Price in their areas that they must not raise their fixed price in their areas as controlled by them to £30. If the local authority had fixed the amount at say £20 in their area, no amount of money should be given beyond that. They should keep to their own. There is a snag, if this is not done, it will uproot the home as my honourable Friend from Ogoja said.

I do welcome the motion in Obudu, where they only control the Bride Price for girls, who have not been to school to a sum in the neighbourhood of £20, but girls who have been to school and have been to colleges, there is no control at all. They give £100 or £200 so that we have two things—one, to control the Bride Price for girls who have not gone to school, and the second, girls who have been to school and colleges are let free so that the parents of girls charge anything they wish. That is why I want the Minister of Welfare to send now, particularly to Obudu District Council, warning them there that they should not give beyond what has been decided. They should not go beyond that whether the girls have been to college or school or not, that Bride Price should be all the same.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*

*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

*Clauses 1-5 agreed to.*

*Clause 6.*

**The Minister of Welfare:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to leave out in lines 1 and 2 of clause 6 the following: "Any person who is found guilty of an offence under the provisions of section 3", and insert "Any person who is guilty of an offence under the provisions of section 4".

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 6 as amended agreed to.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported with an Amendment; Read the Third time and passed.*

### The Local Constabularies Law, 1956

*Order for Second Reading read.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Speaker, I rise to move that a Bill for a law to establish local constabularies in the Eastern Region, to provide for their constitution, organisation, discipline, powers and duties, and for matters connected therewith, be now read a Second time.

According to section 69 of the Eastern Region Local Government Law, 1955, it is the responsibility of every local government council "to maintain order and good government within the area of its authority". According to section 70, it is also the duty of every council "to interpose for the purpose of preventing, and to the best of their ability to prevent the commission of any offence within the area of their authority". This means that it is within the competence of Local Government Councils to maintain the peace and to prevent the commission of crime.

This Bill seeks to establish a police force to be known as local constabularies in the 107 Local Government Councils of this Region. Its main objects and reasons are to assist these councils in performing any function for the provision of the peace, good order and welfare of the persons within the area of the authority of the council, as sanctioned by the Minister charged with responsibility for internal affairs. A law of this nature already exists and operates in the Northern and Western Regions of this country as well as in the Gold Coast. We did not introduce it here because we have been preoccupied with other problems of administration, although the Bill was drafted early last year for introduction into the House.

As I have just hinted, there have been Police forces, paid and administered by the Native Authorities, in the Northern and Western Regions, for a number of years, but under the operational command and control of Superior Police Officers of the Nigeria Police Force. In the Eastern Region there have been no such forces and we have but little experience of their operation. The Western Region Local Government Law, 1955, provides for Local Government Councils to take over Native Authority Police forces or to establish their own. The Northern Region Local Government Law, 1954, provides for the continuation of these Native Authority Police forces. In the Gold Coast, the Local Authority Police Forces Ordinance caters for the first two of three stages in which the former Native Authority forces will be assimilated into the Central Police Force, in accordance with approved policy.

The scope of possible local police forces in the Eastern Region has been considered for some time. Some have suggested that there might be no more than a body of village wardens, presumably untrained and with limited powers, whose functions might be to assist Local Government Councils in their duties under section 86 of the Eastern Region Local Government Law. But the dangers of abuses are obvious, especially in certain known areas where the traditional system of village guards have for long operated against law and order and was brought under control with great difficulty.

A second suggestion was for the elaboration of the court messenger system, an organisation of local enforcement officers, to enable councils to ensure compliance with their own bye-laws. Some councils have already asked for approval of such posts, and there is no doubt that they are necessary in certain spheres, where councils are trying to regulate and control, for example, markets, vehicles (cycle licences, lorry parks). Such staff in addition to dealing with offences against local bye-laws, might have considerable powers by virtue of section 234 of the Eastern Region Local Government Law.

The last suggestion is to employ full scale police forces. These would need to be fully organised and disciplined. It is presumed that only County Councils and, when established, municipalities will be constituted as local police authorities. The proposal to establish such forces at once raises issues of the greatest importance; pay and conditions of service; standards of recruitment; organisation and operational control; relations with the Nigeria Police Force, cost both to local authorities and to the Regional Government.



The Commissioner of Police, Eastern Region, has made a strong plea that the operational control of local forces and of the Nigeria Police Force should be closely integrated. If it were not there is the danger that a council might use it for its own ends, which might not be for the common good. Divided operational control might produce unfortunate results; for example, an individual might lodge a complaint to the Nigeria Police Force which was refused as a criminal charge; he might then go to the local police and the same case might be made a prosecution in another court. Again, two persons might be involved in an incident and go each to a different police office, with the result that the two forces might be brought into conflict. Again, a person might complain to a local force, an officer of which might make an investigation; the person who was the subject of the investigation might complain that the local officer had abused his office to the Nigeria Police Force which would have to investigate and so the two forces might be brought into conflict, especially if the local officer was acting under the influence of a councillor. Clause 18 of the Bill has been carefully drafted to obviate such a clash. On the problem of costs, it is held that if the English practice is to be followed, the cost of such local forces will fall on the councils, assisted by grants from Regional funds. With the passing of the Finance Bill, this can no longer constitute a problem to the local councils.

Under the Native Authority Ordinance, a council was empowered under its Instrument to establish, provide and maintain a rural constabulary. In the report of a Select Committee of the Eastern House of Assembly, which was commissioned on 2nd August, 1948 to review the existing system of local government in the Eastern Provinces and to formulate general principles for the reform of that system, it was suggested that a council should be empowered to make bye-laws in respect of all such matters as are necessary or desirable for the maintenance of the safety and well-being of the inhabitants, or for the good rule and government of its area of authority. In this connection, the Select Committee recommended that councils should provide for the establishment of a rural constabulary and regulating the employment, duties, uniform, inspection and other matters pertaining thereto.

During the debate on the memorandum submitted by this Select Committee, which took place in this House on 15th July, 1949, an official member explained that although there were Native Authority Police in the Northern and Western Provinces, and none in the East, provision had to be made "for a constabulary in the future, after the Local Government Bodies were on their feet". The bone of contention centred on the issue whether, in the absence of a rural constabulary, members of councils should be individually responsible under penalty for certain Police duties. Some members felt that it was an encroachment on individual liberty. The then Crown Counsel, who is now our learned Attorney-General, reminded them that it was a Common law duty. Other members feared that it would be impossible to have enough police to cover the entire area of authority of a council. When informed that there was distinction in the jurisdiction of a member of the Nigeria Police Force and that of a Local Government Police Force, Chief Nyong Essien, our revered Deputy Speaker, indicated that in view of these revelations, the establishment of a local government police in the East was an immediate necessity.

The Bill provides for the establishment of a constabulary in any council area whose duties generally shall be connected with the maintenance of law and order. The constabularies will be under the general direction of the Inspector-General of Constables, who shall be appointed by the Governor and who shall be responsible to the Regional Government for the efficient organisation, administration and management of the constabularies. The Bill provides that the holder of this office shall be the Commissioner of Police of the Eastern Region or any other person. Each constabulary shall be in charge of a Chief Constable, who shall be responsible to the Inspector-General for its efficient control and administration, and it shall consist of a cadre of inspectors, sergeants, corporals and constables, who shall make a declaration of obedience to the laws of the Eastern Region. All members of the constabularies are police officers; as such, they are entitled to all the privileges and rights attached to police officers. According to the Nigeria (Constitution) Order in Council, 1954, the subject of Federal Police

falls within the exclusive jurisdiction of the Federal Government, so that Local Government Police becomes a residual power within the competence of the Regional Government. It is necessary for me to make this distinction because the Bill does not seek to confer on local constabularies any rights or to impose upon them any duties in relation to any matter within the competence of the Federal Government. It may not be generally known that the Federal Police is also concerned with matters of security and therefore may be armed, whilst Local Government Police is not necessarily to be armed, unless in cases of emergency. Moreover, the Federal Police is expected to operate within the jurisdiction of matters which are listed on the Exclusive Federal List, whilst the Local Government Police will operate within the jurisdiction of matters not so listed. Both the Federal and Regional Governments exercise concurrent powers on matters on the Concurrent List, and if there is any conflict, the will of the Federal Government shall prevail.

Clause 2 of the bill defines a number of terms for purposes of clarity. Clause 3 makes it possible for a council or more to act jointly in the establishment of a constabulary. Clause 4 provides for the composition of local constabularies and clause 5 defines the duties of a constabulary to include assistance in the maintenance of the peace, order and good government and the prevention of crime. Clause 6 stipulates that as soon as this law has been enacted there shall be a Police Disciplinary Council which may punish any member of a local constabulary by dismissal, suspension, reduction in rank, or by reduction in rate of pay. Clause 14 gives any aggrieved constable who had been dealt with by the Council to appeal to the Minister who may refer the appeal to a commission of inquiry, upon whose report he may allow the appeal or dismiss it or vary the original punishment. The Minister's decision in this respect shall be final and no appeal therefrom shall lie to any court of law. May I enlighten honourable Members by saying that clauses 14 to 16 of the Bill are taken from the Police Appeals Act, 1927 of the United Kingdom.

Every person who enlists in a local constabulary is required upon appointment to make and sign a declaration that he will obey, uphold and maintain the laws of the Eastern Region and will execute the powers and duties of his office honestly, faithfully, and diligently, without fear or favour, and without malice or ill-will towards any person, and will obey without question all lawful orders given by those who are set in authority over him. This declaration is a variation from the one employed in the Native Authority Ordinance which is used in the Western and Northern Regions. Ours is based on that of the Gold Coast Local Police and it has been commented upon in authoritative circles in the United Kingdom as being more progressive than a declaration to obey and respect the authority of the local council which employs the constable.

Clause 18 provides that a member of a constabulary shall have all powers, privileges and rights and be subject to all duties conferred or imposed upon Police officers by any ordinance or law which is in force in the Region within the area of the authority of the council establishing his constabulary. Adequate provision has been made to avoid a clash of authority; a proviso is incorporated to the effect that nothing in that section of the Bill shall be construed to confer any right or impose any duty in relation to any matter within the competence of the Federal Government.

The Bill creates the post of a Chief Constable who shall have the command and superintendence of the constabulary and shall be responsible to an Inspector-General of Constables for the efficient administration and control of the constabulary and for the proper expenditure of moneys appropriated for the service thereof and be accountable for all public stores belonging to the constabulary. Any other person in charge of a constabulary may also act as a Chief Constable and both officers are for purposes of this law to be regarded as superior police officers within the meaning of the Police Ordinance. The Chief Constable shall have the power to suspend any member of the constabulary for negligence in the discharge of his duty or if he is unfit for the performance of his duty, in which case he is expected to make a report to the Disciplinary Council for any action.

The Inspector-General is empowered, under clause 22, to give directions to any constabulary on matters relating to the organisation of a constabulary. Clause 23, empowers him to direct constabularies, generally or specifically, in the performance of their duties, and they are obliged to implement same. He is vested with power, under clause 24, to inspect all records and premises occupied by any constabulary. Clause 25 stipulates that facilities will be provided to the Inspector-General for verifying any information given to him by any constabulary in such manner and such times as he may require. Subject to direction by the Government of the Region, he shall also exercise operational control over any or all of the constabularies established by this law.

Clauses 27-31 deal with a number of matters including termination of appointments of constables, desertion from the rank and file, dismissals, debts incurred by constables, offences of personation, and prevention of constables from joining trade unions. These provisions are the usual practice in legislations of this nature and we have embodied them in ours so as to measure up to the standards already established by other Governments in this respect. Clause 32 empowers the Governor in Council to make standing orders for local constabularies after consultation with the Inspector-General, and clause 33 vests the Governor in Council with power, after consultation with the Inspector-General, to make regulations regarding the qualifications of persons seeking enlistment in a constabulary, conditions of service, the appointments of disciplinary and promotions boards, rights to allowances and perquisites, description of uniforms and other related subjects.

I can assure this House that in presenting this Bill, Government has given thought to the type of men and women who should be invited to join in preserving the peace by maintaining law and order in this Region. With a large number of our able bodied men and women, some of whom are ex-service men, I appreciate that we will not be disappointed in securing first class talent. The task of being a policeman or police woman is tedious but there is also a spiritual satisfaction in a job well done. As you may have divined, the constabularies will be open to male and female persons alike. No doubt, the female constables may be confined to urban areas for obvious reasons. Nevertheless, I look forward to the establishment of constabularies throughout the Region, with our men and women well-dressed in smart uniforms, discharging their duties with efficiency, and comporting themselves with a sense of responsibility and dignity.

The constabularies will not encourage spivs and ne'er-do-wells in their rank and file. The discipline will be rigorous, and the orders will be given and executed with typical military precision. Efforts will be made to establish a training college for the professional and physical education of our police recruits, but this will be done after due consultation with the Federal Police authorities, who, more than any one else, will be expected to co-operate with this Government in giving birth to a child which they will be obliged to adopt as a foster son. The Federal Police has played a reputable role in the social history of Nigeria, and I have no doubt that, with the establishment of a local police force in this Region, that renowned police organisation will play a still more creditable role in the spheres of influence to which it is now constitutionally limited.

There is one subject which is dear to my heart and which I cannot minimise at this stage of the debate of this Bill, I have in mind the kind of uniforms which will be specified for the use of the constabularies, and the type of persons to be recruited as police, in the Eastern Region. If I am privileged to influence policy in this direction, I will use every power at my command, in association with my honourable colleagues, to devise a uniform which will make every Nigerian proud. We shall see to it that our men and women constables are elegantly dressed and efficiently trained, so that they will play the radiant role of a peace officer—one who is a friend of the people, charitable in disposition, courteous in demeanour, honest in all their activities, energetic in the discharge of their duties, faithful to their employers, and loyal to their country. Mr Speaker, I am optimistic that this Bill will help to make this dream come true, and I beg to move.

**The Minister of Finance:** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*

*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

*Clauses 1-3 agreed to.*

*Clause 4.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move the deletion of the following words in lines 4 and 5: "in accordance with any directions given under the provisions of Section 22".

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 4 as amended agreed to.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman I beg to move the deletion of the following words in lines 4 and 5 of the proviso: "after directions have been given to that effect under the provisions of Section 22".

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 4 as amended agreed to.*

*Clauses 5-12 agreed to.*

*Clause 13.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to leave out Clause 13 and substitute the following:—

"13. Subject to the provisions of sections 22 and 23 and any Regulations made under the provisions of this Law the Police Disciplinary Council may punish any member of a local Constabulary by dismissal, suspension, reduction in rank, or by reduction in rate of pay".

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 13 as amended agreed to.*

*Clauses 14-21 agreed to.*

*Clause 22.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to leave out Clause 22 and insert the following:

"22. The Inspector-General shall with the prior approval of the Governor-in-Council give to any Constabulary established under the provisions of this Law directions of a general or specific character as to the exercise and performance of its functions and directions on all matters relating to the discipline, training, equipment and the employment of such Constabulary".

*Question proposed.*

**Mr C. A. Abangwu:** Speaking on this particular clause, we have heard the Government Bench tell us many a time in this House that owing to the position of the Governor in Civil Service matters they have no control whatsoever over civil servants and are not responsible for their actions.

Here we are told that the discipline and employment of the local constabulary shall be under the supervision and direction of the Inspector-General. The Inspector-General is in no way under the control of the Regional Government, and if this particular clause is allowed it may be that after a year or two we shall hear that a certain thing has happened and that the Regional Government is unable to do anything.

I do not know precisely what powers the Inspector-General will have for it says here: "with the prior approval of the Governor-in-Council". If it is provided that the Ministers shall be able to control the Governor in case certain matters shall arise I have no objection to the clause. But then it is possible that they will advise the Governor and the Governor will not take their advice. For this reason I am suggesting that local constabulary shall not be placed under the control of the Inspector-General since the Inspector-General is not answerable to this Government.

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** The point, Sir, is that it is indicated that the Inspector-General shall be the Commissioner of Police, and in that case, as a Public Officer, it is usually the Governor who appoints with the permission of the Governor-General. But there is a proviso that it may be an Inspector-General or any other person.

I do not agree with my friend that the Inspector-General employs. He does not employ. He dismisses, suspends, reduces in rank or rate of pay, but the employment or the composition is usually the responsibility of the Governor-in-Council in which case I think we can safely allow the clause to remain as it is in that whatever the Inspector-General does he does it subject to the directions of the Governor-in-Council or after the Governor-in-Council had consulted with him. It is not intended that the Inspector-General should have power to appoint.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clauses 22 as amended agreed to.*

*Clause 23.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** I beg to move to leave out clause 23 and insert "23. The Chief Constable or other member in charge of a Constabulary to which any directions have been given under the provisions of section 22 shall give effect to such directions".

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 23 as amended agreed to.*

*Clauses 24—30 agreed to.*

*Clause 31.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move in sub-clause (2) line 3, to leave out "Minister" and insert "Inspector-General".

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 31 as amended agreed to.*

*Clauses 32—33 agreed to.*

*Clause 34.*

**The Minister of Internal Affairs:** Mr Chairman, I beg to move to insert in line 1, the words "after consultation with the 'Inspector-General'" between "Council" and "may".

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Clause 34 as amended agreed to.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

*Bill reported with Amendments; Read the Third time and passed.*

### **The Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Law, 1956**

*Order for Second Reading read.*

**The Premier:** Mr Speaker, I beg to move that a Bill for a Law to amend the Criminal Procedure Ordinance be now read a Second time. The objects and reasons are clearly stated. It is purely consequential to the Local Constabulary Law which we have just enacted into Law. Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Finance:** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*

*Bill immediately considered in Committee.*

(In the Committee)

*Clauses 1-2 agreed to.*

(Mr Speaker resumed the Chair)

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

**The Land Registration Ordinance (Amendment) Law, 1956—Second Reading**

*Order read and discharged. Bill by leave withdrawn.*

**The Education Law, 1956**

*Order for Second Reading read.*

**The Minister of Education:** Mr Speaker, I rise to move that the Bill for a Law to make provision for education in the Eastern Region of Nigeria and for purposes incidental thereto and connected therewith be now read a Second time.

Honourable Members will recall that the existing Education Ordinance was designed to operate under a Constitution which has been superseded. Education is now a Regional responsibility. The machinery of the Ordinance was designed to allow control from the Centre. In addition, many changes are also necessary to fit in with the Ministerial system of Government, but the Government, Sir, is not content merely to revise the wording of the old Ordinance to enable it to suit new conditions but it has instead thought it proper to introduce an entirely new Bill which will set the pattern of the educational system in the vital years ahead.

This Bill has been kept as short as is convenient. It is for an enabling law that will allow the machinery to be worked flexibly by means of regulations.

In order, however, that there shall not be too abrupt a transition, the greater part of the existing Grants-in-aid and General Regulations are being re-enacted. When the time is ripe these will be replaced where necessary by new regulations.

In general terms, regulations under this Law will be made by the Minister except in cases where interest other than educational are involved, when they will be made by the Governor in Council.

Before commenting in detail on the provisions of the Bill I should make clear what it does not do. Federal Institutions of Higher Learning and their staff, and the University of Nigeria and its staff, are exempted from all the operations of this Bill. They are provided for by their own laws and statutes.

The Bill as a whole vests all powers in the Minister and Clause 4 authorises him to delegate his powers to any public officer of the Ministry. This has the effect of ensuring that responsibility is vested in the Minister, while executive action is carried out by the appropriate public officer.

Clauses 9 to 19 deal with the Board of Education. This Board will be advisory, and will be composed of representatives of Local Government Councils, Voluntary Agencies and Teachers. A further departure is that no public officer or other representative of the Ministry will be a full member of the Board, although Clause 17 provides for the attendance of such representatives at meetings. The Government is convinced that this Board will be a focus for the fruitful co-operation of those who are concerned with education.

Part III of the Bill, together with the Third Schedule, lays down the system of education, which is in line with this Government's expressed policy.

Clause 20 (2) gives the Minister power to make regulations in connection with the introduction of universal primary education. It is my intention to make these in the near future.

In this connection I should like to say that the introduction of universal primary education throughout the Region in January next is a gigantic operation which needs the efforts of all to carry it through. I therefore, Sir, would call on everyone, Local Government Councils, Voluntary Agencies with their wealth of experience, parents, teachers and children to co-operate with us to the fullest extent in this great adventure.

Part IV of the Bill ensures that there shall be no racial or religious qualifications required of the staff, teachers or pupils in any institution which is assisted by Government or Local Government Council funds, and contains provisions regarding religious education. Also in this part is provision for the making of regulations concerning the conduct of schools and institutions. For the present, the relevant parts of the existing General Regulations have been repeated in the Fourth Schedule.

Part VI deals with the establishment of Local Education Authorities and committees and gives the Governor in Council power to make regulations prescribing their powers and duties.

Part VII gives the Governor in Council power to make regulations dealing with finance. The existing Grants-in-Aid regulations will be temporarily re-enacted to cover the transitional period until universal primary education is introduced in nine months time and to avoid dislocating the existing system in the middle of the school year. Modifications will, however, be made where necessary in the light of decisions now taken by this House.

In Part VIII are proposals for the establishment of a Teachers Disciplinary Council. This is an entirely new departure. The Members of the Council will be graduate teachers, and it is they who will recommend, after due investigation of an alleged offence, whether a teacher's name shall be temporarily or permanently removed from the Register. The Minister will then make an order accordingly. Appeals from such an order will be to the High Court. The responsibility for the maintenance of professional standards of conduct is thus laid on the teachers themselves, and Government is confident that they will meet this challenge with enthusiasm.

The last part of the Bill deals with the registration of teachers, and empowers the Minister to make regulations on matters concerning them. Among these are the scales of salaries and so on to be paid to teachers, other than public officers, in assisted schools and institutions. Honourable Members are aware, Sir, that I set up a Joint Negotiating Committee to consider this question under the Chairmanship of Sir Francis Ibiam. As the matter was under review, the rules laid down in the old Grants-in-Aid regulations have not been printed as Tables to the Seventh Schedule of this Bill. The proposals of the Committee were received two days before the opening of this session of the House and are receiving the most urgent consideration. Government fully appreciates the interest and concern in the matter which is felt generally, and by the teaching profession in particular, and I hope to introduce Government's proposals at the Committee stage of this Bill.

To conclude, this Bill, by laying down the lines on which it will be conducted, will play a vital part in the development of education in the Region, a development which Government is determined to press forward with all the force at its command.

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Finance:** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed.*

*Bill accordingly read a Second time.*

**The Minister of Education:** Mr Speaker, I beg to move that this Bill be committed to a Select Committee under Standing Order No. 43.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed.*

*Bill accordingly committed to a Select Committee of the House.*

#### MOTIONS

**The Minister of Finance:** Mr Speaker, I rise to move the motion standing in my name as follows:—

That this House approves the transfer from Regional Reserve Funds of £1,591,000 to a Colonial Development and Welfare Regional Contributions Account—£1,250,000 being Regional contribution from reserves and £341,000 being the amount received during 1955-56 under section 166 of the Nigeria (Constitution) Order in Council, 1954, and passed to the general revenue balance for 1955-56.

This House will recall that in Sessional Paper No. 4 of 1955 mention was made that, with the inception of the 1955-60 Development Plan, under which this Government will receive £2.75 million total grant over the period from the U.K. Treasury, it would be necessary to make provision for the Regional contribution to these schemes.

Honourable Members are aware that Colonial Development and Welfare Plans are financed partly by the Home Government, and partly by the recipient Government. The percentage reimbursement attributable to each individual scheme varies, and in respect of the new schemes Members are referred to page E 19 of the Draft Estimates before the House for the year 1956-57.

In the Budget Session of last year provision was made under Appendix T of the 1955-56 Estimates for £500,000 of the Federal loan to be made available as part of this Government's local contribution to the Plan, and a separate motion will be tabled to authorise the transfer of this amount from Loan Funds to this Regional Contribution Account.

It was proposed in Sessional Paper No. 4 of 1955 that these funds should be further supplemented by a contribution from Regional Government reserves amounting to £1.25 million.

This House will wish to know that the 1951-56 Development Plans, shown under different sections of the various expenditure heads in the 1955-56 Approved Estimates, the administrative control of which passed to this Regional Government with the commencement of the present Constitution, were by agreement, charged entirely to Regional revenue as from the 1st April, 1955. The reasons for this were primarily convenience of accounting. Although the basis of division between this Government and the Federal Government was relatively easy, complications occurred in the determination of the share of these schemes which were made originally in respect of the Eastern Region, as geographically constituted prior to October 1st, 1954. Honourable Members will recall that it included the Southern Cameroons and that the administrative control of their share of these schemes passed to the Government of the Southern Cameroons. This House will appreciate that by operation of the Constitution which separated the Southern Cameroons from the rest of the Eastern Region, it was determined which parts of the original schemes would pass to the control of the Southern Cameroons.

As I have said, it was agreed that the cost of the schemes passing to the control of the Eastern Region would, as from 1st April, 1955, be borne entirely upon Regional funds. Concomitantly, it has been agreed that the total unexpended balance of the U.K. contribution of these would become available for redistribution by this Government under the new 1955-56 Development Plan. In this connection I would refer Members to paragraphs 4 and 5 of Sessional Paper No. 4 of 1955. It will, therefore, be seen that this has increased the total available from the U.K. Government to approximately £3.75 million.



At paragraph 2 of the Chick Report it was proposed that a grant should be made to the Regional Government in respect of the remaining Federal share of special expenditure under the old schemes. This was adopted by all parties at the January Conference in 1954, and embodied in section 166 of the Nigeria (Constitution) Order in Council, 1954. In respect of this grant a sum of £341,424 has been received by this Government and by operation of the accounts for 1955-56 has passed to the general surplus at 31st March, 1956.

Members will appreciate that this particular money can only be used for development purposes by virtue of the fact that it is money which has passed to Regional control by operation of Section 166 of the Order-in-Council. This being so, it is proposed to transfer this sum to the account which forms the subject of this motion.

The purpose of this account is to have readily available all those monies which the Eastern Regional Government proposes shall comprise the local contribution in respect of the 1955-56 Development Plan. It is proposed that this account shall operate in the following manner.

There will be paid into Revenue from the account each year a sum equal to the local contribution and in this connection I draw honourable Members' attention to Head 414 sub-head 1 of the printed Draft Estimates for 1956-57. The advantage of this technique is that the budget is not unbalanced by the necessity of making payments direct from reserves. Also it is possible, by means of payment directly into revenue from this fund, to increase the buoyancy of the Regional revenue, at the same time not run the risk of producing a budget deficit due to expenditure on these schemes.

It also has the advantage of demonstrating to the outside world that this Government has every intention of honouring its proposals in respect of development monies, and equally demonstrating the Region's ability to finance its development programmes during the whole period of the Plan.

I feel sure, Mr Speaker, that this House will see with me that this technique has everything to recommend it, and nothing to detract from its merits.

I shall also say, Sir, that since the progress of the development of this Region is a matter close to the hearts of both the Government Bench and the Opposition, it would not be inappropriate to claim that this is a non-contentious motion.

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Transport:** I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Minister of Finance:** Mr Speaker, I rise to move the motion standing in my name which reads:—

That the Accountant-General of the Eastern Region of Nigeria be authorised to make transfers from the Federal Loan Account amounting to £765,000 as set out in Appendix B to the Estimates of the Eastern Region of Nigeria for the Financial year 1956-57 in accordance with the details set out under sub-heads 1 and 2 of that Appendix.

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Agriculture:** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Minister of Finance:** Sir, I rise to move the motion standing in my name which reads:—

That the Accountant-General of the Eastern Region of Nigeria be authorised to make payments of loans amounting to £1,000 from the Eastern Region Local Government Loan Fund as set out in Appendix C to the Estimates of the Eastern Region of Nigeria 1956-57 in the event of any of the funds shown under sub-head 6 being allocated.

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Trade:** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Minister of Finance:** Sir, I rise to move the motion standing in my name which reads:—

That the Director of Public Works, Eastern Region of Nigeria, be authorised to expend on the installation of Urban Water Supplies, the sum of £285,000 as set out in Appendix D to the Estimates of the Eastern Region of Nigeria for the Financial year 1956-57.

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Transport:** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Minister of Finance:** Sir, I rise to move the motion standing in my name which reads:—

That the sum of £138,500 be transferred from the general revenue account to the Public Works Urban Water Supplies Account, as set out in Appendix D to the Estimates of the Eastern Region of Nigeria, 1956-57.

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Development:** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Minister of Finance:** Sir, I beg to move the motion standing in my name which reads:—

That the Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Eastern Region, be authorised to expend on investigation into the co-operative marketing of Oil Palm Produce the sum of £7,900 as set out in Appendix F to the Estimates of the Eastern Region of Nigeria in the Financial year 1956-57.

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Industries:** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Minister of Finance:** Sir, I beg to move the motion standing in my name which reads:—

That the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Transport, Eastern Region, be authorised to expend on replacement of Marine Craft the sum of £40,000 as set out in Appendix G to the Estimates of the Eastern Region of Nigeria, 1956-57.

[Appendix H to the Estimates and  
Lead-Zinc Mining Co. Ltd.]

28th March, 1956

[Scholarship Funds and Appen-  
dix A to the Estimates]

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Industries:** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Minister of Finance:** Sir, I rise to move the motion standing in my name which reads:—

That the Director of Public Works, Eastern Region of Nigeria, be authorised to expend the sum of £4,090 as set out in Appendix H to the Estimates of the Eastern Region of Nigeria for the Financial year 1956-57 for the purposes set out under sub-heads 1-8 of the said Appendix.

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Development:** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Minister of Finance:** Sir, I beg to move the motion standing in my name which reads:—

That this House approves the investment of £50,000 from the Eastern Regional Government reserves in the Nigerian Lead-Zinc Mining Company Limited.

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Industries:** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Minister of Finance:** Sir, I beg to move the motion standing in my name which reads:—

That the Permanent Secretary, the Ministry of Education, be authorised to expend the following sums out of the Eastern Region Scholarship Funds:—

(a) in respect of the year 1955-56—£179,110.

(b) in respect of the year 1956-57—£193,608,

as set out in Appendix I of the Draft Estimates (as amended).

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Education:** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Minister of Finance:** Mr Speaker, I rise to move the motion standing in my name which reads:—

That the sum of five hundred and three thousand, eight hundred and nineteen pounds (£503,819) be appropriated from the Colonial Development and Welfare, Local Contribution Account, for the purposes set out in Appendix A to the Estimates of the Eastern Region of Nigeria for the year 1956-57.

Sir, I have already explained the purpose of this account when I spoke on the motion creating it. It is now necessary for this House to formally approve payment from the account to revenue.

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Agriculture:** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

**The Minister of Finance:** Sir, I rise to move the motion standing in my name, which reads:—

That the Director of Agriculture be authorised to expend, on the long term rehabilitation and new planting of cocoa and the rehabilitation of natural Palm Groves, the sum of five thousand and ten pounds (£5,010) as set out in Appendix E to the Estimates of the Eastern Region of Nigeria for the Financial year, 1956-57, such expenditure to be made in anticipation of reimbursements from the Eastern Region Development Corporation grants.

Sir, I beg to move.

**The Minister of Agriculture:** Sir, I beg to second.

*Question proposed.*

*Question put and agreed to.*

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Premier:** Mr Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn *sine die*. This concludes the business of the meetings of this House and I would wish to take this opportunity to thank the various Permanent Secretaries and officials of the various Ministries for their co-operation with their Ministers in steering the Estimates through the Committee of Supply. It has been tough going, but all of us have been able to survive the weather.

I would also like to take this opportunity of expressing my thanks to the honourable the Attorney-General for his patience and painstaking efforts in drafting the twenty-six Bills, twenty-five of which have been passed by us, and also I am sure it would be your wish, too, that I express our thanks to Mr Speaker for his urbanity, and sense of humour under the most trying circumstances, and I think that all the honourable Members deserve the thanks of this side of the House for their sense of duty, but, particularly, the Opposition for their constructive criticisms.

Before taking my seat, I would like to announce that immediately on adjournment there will be a meeting of the Committee of Selection. Members all know that we are meeting here to enable us to appoint a Select Committee which will scrutinise an Education Bill which has been read for the Second time here. The honourable the Minister of Health will have a few words to say about the staff of the Clerk of the House.

Sir, I beg to move.

*Question proposed.*

**The Minister of Health:** Sir, I beg to second. Mr Speaker, although we have all practically withered away, it may not be out of place to extend congratulations to the reporters who have been specially efficient in a most exacting meeting really. (*Hear ! Hear !*). Honourable Members will notice that they have been getting this *Hansard* rather more regularly than before. Congratulations should also go to the clerks from the Trade Centre who have given them great assistance in preparing the Daily Reports. We understand, also, that the Secretary to the Premier was invaluable in giving no little measure of assistance to the reporting team so that they found their way about easily and got their reports in time. We really appreciate what they have done. I have been to the House of Commons and I can say truthfully that their performance is not very far from what I saw at Westminster.

**Chief M. W. Ubani:** Mr Speaker, on behalf of the Members of this side of the House, I want to associate myself with the sentiments of appreciation expressed by both the honourable Premier and the Minister of Health.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Adjourned accordingly at ten minutes past two o'clock a.m. on Thursday, 29th March, 1956.*

[Written Answers]

28th March, 1956

[Written Answers]

## WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

## Udi Boys and Girls admitted in Colleges in Enugu

24. **Mr D. E. Akilo** asked the Minister of Education the number of boys and girls from Udi Division who have been admitted into colleges in Enugu Township, and their names and villages.

**The Minister of Education:** There are seventy-two and thirty-one girls from Udi Division in Colleges in Enugu Township.

With permission, the particulars will be supplied to the honourable Member in writing, and included in the official report.

## College of Immaculate Conception, Enugu

| <i>Name of Students</i> |     |     |     |     |     | <i>Village</i>  |
|-------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----------------|
| Alexis Aniello          | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Eke.            |
| Augustine Ani           | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Abo.            |
| Anthony Ojielo          | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Obeleagu Umana. |
| Christopher Ejike       | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Aguobu Owa.     |
| Augustine Otiji         | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Umumba.         |
| Raphael Onyigbue        | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Iwollo Oghe.    |
| Martin Okeke            | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Ogweofia Owa.   |
| Vincent Eburnoha        | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Egede.          |
| Benedict Chivu          | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Owa.            |
| Placidus Nnaji          | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Emene.          |
| Ignatius Onyia          | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Amokwe.         |
| Christopher Agu         | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Ngwo.           |
| Sylvanus Ugwu           | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Nsude.          |
| Marius Nwabusi          | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Obioma.         |
| John Chime ...          | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Udi.            |
| Thomas Onaga            | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Udi.            |
| Francis Onigbo          | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Oha.            |
| Edward Nnamoko          | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Akpugo.         |
| Stephen Ejike           | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Aguobu Owa.     |
| Basil Nnamani           | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Nsude.          |
| Eugene Eneh             | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Amokwe.         |
| Linus Aneke...          | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Abia.           |
| Ferdinand Nnadi         | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Abo.            |
| Peter Anibueze          | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Oghe.           |
| Basil Eneh ...          | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Obioma.         |
| Charles Emehel          | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Oghe.           |
| Matthias Okafor         | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Umana.          |
| Francis Nwokike         | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Awaha.          |
| Anthony Okafor          | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Aguobu Owa.     |
| Matthias Chime          | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Umuabi.         |
| Josephat Ude            | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Ngwo.           |
| Malachy Ogbozo          | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Umulumgbe.      |
| Edwin Onaga             | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Udi.            |
| Anthony Ozoalor         | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Ngwo.           |
| Anthony Okafor          | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Akama Owa.      |
| Stanislaus Akilo        | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Umughu Owa.     |
| Augustine Amadife       | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Amofia Affa.    |
| Justus Chibuoke         | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Amokwe.         |
| John Obianyo            | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Amokwe.         |
| Daniel Nwankwo          | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Eke.            |
| Linus Okechi            | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Oghe.           |
| Simeon Ogbu             | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | Okpatu.         |

| <i>Name of Students</i>    | <i>Village</i>   |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| Paulinus Nkoloenyi. ... .. | Egede.           |
| Vincent Mba ... ..         | Nkanu.           |
| Sylvester Okafor ... ..    | Amokwe.          |
| Cyril Onodugo ... ..       | Abo.             |
| Dominic Ozoeze ... ..      | Obinofea.        |
| Raymond Okonkwo ... ..     | Umana.           |
| Simon Onwu ... ..          | Amozala Affa.    |
| Godwin Onoh ... ..         | Ngwo.            |
| Paulinus Egbujie ... ..    | Inoyi Affa.      |
| Gregory Nwatarali ... ..   | Olo Ifenkata.    |
| Augustine Udezulu ... ..   | Iwollo Oghe.     |
| Patrick Oyinze ... ..      | Anekeneze Egede. |
| Ignatius Nwanyawu ... ..   | Ozala Agbani.    |
| Kenneth Onyia ... ..       | Amajiba Nsude.   |
| Gregory Chibuzor ... ..    | Abo.             |
| Cletus Ogwudu ... ..       | Umulumgbe.       |
| Christopher Nnamani ... .. | Abuani Uruku.    |
| Michael Ene... ..          | Obioma.          |
| Emmanuel Agalamanyi ... .. | Affa.            |
| Simpson Mbonu ... ..       | Amokpu Agbani.   |
| Francis Nzekwe ... ..      | Oghe.            |
| Augustine Anibueze ... ..  | Aguobu Owa.      |
| Bertrand Ude ... ..        | Abo.             |
| Dominic Isife ... ..       | Egede.           |
| Paul Onyia ... ..          | Amokwe.          |
| Crescent Agu. ... ..       | Owa.             |
| Christopher Chime ... ..   | Udi.             |
| Felix Igwe ... ..          | Owa.             |
| Matthew Nnamani ... ..     | Ogui Nike        |
| Callistus Chukwuani ... .. | Ozalla.          |

#### Holy Rosary Training College, Enugu

|                         |              |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| Eucharia Nwankwo ... .. | Eke.         |
| Angela Nwankwo ... ..   | Eke.         |
| Regina Chukwude ... ..  | Ebeh.        |
| Veronica Agu ... ..     | Udi.         |
| Rose Okpokwu ... ..     | Abo.         |
| Teresa Mbomi ... ..     | Eke.         |
| Monica Anosike ... ..   | Egede.       |
| Agnes Ojikwu ... ..     | Nkanu.       |
| Virginia Ilo ... ..     | Aguobu.      |
| Theresa Okpokwu ... ..  | Abo.         |
| Martina Aneke ... ..    | Udi.         |
| Virginia Ude ... ..     | Ngwo.        |
| Rebecca Ofodile ... ..  | Udi.         |
| Clara Onwuapa ... ..    | Eke.         |
| Philomena Maduko ... .. | Owa.         |
| Sussana Ejike ... ..    | Aguobu Owa.  |
| Agatha Amu... ..        | Eke.         |
| Mary Onwukpa ... ..     | Oghe Akama.  |
| Catherine Uzoh ... ..   | Aguobu Owa.  |
| Regina Ojiogu ... ..    | Oghe Iwollo. |
| Monica Adinde ... ..    | Owa.         |
| Regina Eketete ... ..   | Egede.       |

**Women's Training College, Enugu**

| <i>Name of Students</i>     | <i>Village</i>                                     |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Mrs C. C. Offomah ... ..    | 75, Ogui Road, Asata.                              |
| Miss C. C. Agugua ... ..    | 102, Ogui Urban Area,<br>Enugu.                    |
| Miss E. C. Nwafor ... ..    | Umumba.  |
| Miss D. N. Ukeje ... ..     | Ebe-Eke, 35, Tailor Avenue.                        |
| Miss B. U. Nzekwe ... ..    | Amansi Odo-Oghe.                                   |
| Miss C. O. Uansenime ... .. | Enugu.   |
| Miss N. C. Eze ... ..       | Umuaga Town, c/o Umu-<br>abi School, Udi District. |
| Miss B. I. Ene ... ..       | C.M.S., Enugu Amaokwe,<br>Udi District.            |
| Miss C. N. Onyia ... ..     | Obinagu Town.                                      |

**Loan for Nsukka Division**

101. **Mr M. U. Obayi** asked the Premier, how many people from Nsukka Division applied for loans during 1955; how many were successful; and what were the purposes for the loan.

**The Premier :** I am informed that nine persons from Nsukka Division applied to the Eastern Region Development Corporation for loans during 1955—four loans were approved, three rejected, one will be considered at the next meeting of the Corporation and the ninth is under investigation. Of the four loans for which approval was given, three were for agricultural purposes and one was for a tanning industry. Of those rejected, one application was for a rice mill which was rejected on the grounds that there were already too many mills in the district and that one financed by the Corporation was not making headway; the second application which was rejected was for a piggery, it was rejected on the advice of the Agricultural Department. The third application, rejected also on the advice of the Agricultural Department, was for agricultural projects, for palms and poultry. The project which is to come before the Corporation at its next meeting is for a corn mill. The application under investigation is for palms.

The value of the three applications for agricultural projects which were approved total £1,750, and the application for a tanning industry was for £500.

Prior to 1955, three loans were granted to Nsukka Division: two for agricultural projects totalling £5,000 and one for a rice mill totalling £1,004.

**Meeting of the House of Assembly of 19th April, 1955**

153. **Chief M. W. Ubani** asked the Premier, apropos Answer to Question 361 asked during the last Session, whether he is aware that the meeting of the House of Assembly of 19th April, 1955, was attended only by the Ministers, the Government Chief Whip and Members of the Opposition; if so, will the Premier explain why transport allowances were paid to twenty-six other Members who did not attend that meeting; how much was the total amount involved in paying these twenty-six Members.

**The Premier :** No, Sir. I am not aware that the Ministers, the Government Chief Whip and Members of the Opposition only attended the meeting of the House on the 19th of April, 1955. Twenty-six other Members also attended that meeting and were therefore entitled to transport allowances. The amount paid to them was £365 3s and this sum included 15s paid to each Member for car allowance for the 19th of April.

**Supplement to Votes and Proceedings containing Questions  
and Answers received thereto during Adjournment  
(29th March-21st June, 1956)  
Third Session—Third House  
of Assembly**

**Abakaliki-Mamfe Road**

10. **Mr S. N. Alo** asked the Minister of Transport, whether he will make a categorical statement regarding the bad condition of the Abakaliki-Mamfe road and the possibility of its being tarred.

**The Minister of Transport :** I cannot give the honourable Member a categorical statement regarding the Abakaliki-Mamfe road because it is a Federal responsibility and I would be usurping the premises of the Federal Minister of Works. It is not impossible, I am informed, that portions of the road will be tarred under the Federal Government's 1955-60 Economic Programme.

**Health Centre in Udi Division**

28. **Mr D. E. Akilo** asked the Minister of Health, when will a health centre be established in Udi Division.

**The Minister of Health :** A health centre can be built in Udi Division as soon as the Local Government Councils decide to do so. Government policy concerning these centres is set out in the Statement of Policy for Medical and Health Services which was laid on the Table of the Eastern House of Assembly as Sessional Paper No. 1 of 1954. It will be seen from that Statement that Government whilst not itself proposing to establish centres will give every encouragement to Local Government bodies to do so. Under the 1955-60 Colonial Development and Welfare Scheme for Medical and Health Services £120,000 is available during the next four years to help with these centres.

**Inland Fish Ponds in Udi Division**

30. **Mr D. E. Akilo** asked the Minister of Agriculture, when will the Department of Fisheries establish inland fish ponds in Udi Division, the sites for which have been selected.

**The Minister of Agriculture :** A Fisheries Assistant made a survey of Onitsha Province including Udi Division between December, 1954 and January, 1955, and a copy of the report of this survey was submitted to the Resident, Onitsha Province.

In Udi Division, only two sites were considered as possible for fish ponds, but since then real enthusiasm has been lacking; assistance will be given as soon as definite requests are received. Material assistance is given to every fish pond project in the shape of drainage pipes and bags of cement for spillways. The installation of the pipes and the construction of the dams and spillways is invariably supervised by the Fisheries Department, but the manual labour must be supplied by the local people.

**Girls' Secondary School, Owerri**

43. **Chief S. E. Onukogu** asked the Minister of Education, why the Girls' Secondary School, Owerri, is not given financial assistance by Government.

**The Minister of Education :** This is a new school. As a matter of routine this school will be inspected in 1956 to see if it merits assistance.

**Grant to Girls' Secondary Schools**

48. **Chief S. E. Onukogu** asked the Minister of Education, how much grant was allocated to Girls' Secondary Schools in the Eastern Region, during the 1955-56 financial year, what such secondary schools receive grants and how much in each case.



[Written Answers]

[Written Answers]

**The Minister of Education :**

| Name                               | Recurrent | Capital |
|------------------------------------|-----------|---------|
|                                    | £         | £       |
| Girls Union, Ibiaku ... ..         | 4,930     | —       |
| Queen of the Rosary College ... .. | 7,093     | —       |
| Conellia Conelly, Uyo ... ..       | 6,209     | —       |
| Holy Child, Calabar ... ..         | 2,023     | —       |
| Elelenwa ... ..                    | 6,636     | 5,000   |
| Nkwerri Girls ... ..               | —         | 2,500   |
| Queen's School ... ..              | 10,512    | —       |

**Teachers' Salaries**

65. **Mr D. A. Nnaji** asked the Minister of Education, what percentage of Teachers' Salaries will be paid by the Regional Government when Universal Primary Education is introduced in the Region next year.

**The Minister of Education :** 100 per cent.

**Regional Scholarships**

70. **Mr M. U. Obayi** asked the Minister of Education, how many persons were awarded Eastern scholarships tenable overseas in 1955 from Nsukka Division; for what courses were the awards made; how many of the beneficiaries were girls.

**The Minister of Education :** Three persons from Nsukka Division were awarded scholarships in 1954-55 tenable overseas, their courses of study being B.A. with a Diploma in Education, Medicine and Accountancy.

No awards went to girls, as there were no female applicants from Nsukka in 1954-55. The awards for 1955-56 have not yet been announced.

**Schools in Nsukka Division**

71. **Mr M. U. Obayi** asked the Minister of Education, what was the total number of children in schools in Nsukka Division during 1955; which of the four rural district areas there has the largest school attendance and has the best result in the 1955 First School Leaving Certificate examination.

**The Minister of Education :** The total number of children in schools in Nsukka Division in 1955 was 19,220. The following are the school population of each rural district area:—

|                   |       |
|-------------------|-------|
| Igbo-Etiti ... .. | 8,683 |
| Isi-Uzo ... ..    | 5,284 |
| Igbo-Eze ... ..   | 2,902 |
| Uzo-Uwani ... ..  | 2,351 |

Igbo-Etiti has the largest school attendance. It has 70 per cent of the Standard VI schools in the division; and consequently the largest number of passes in the 1955 First School Leaving Certificate examination and it has 71 per cent pass, which is the best percentage of the four areas.

**Women's Training College**

75. **Mr S. T. Akpan** asked the Minister of Education, whether he is aware of the fact that the domestic science taught now in Women's Training College, Enugu, is not suitable for African homes; if so, when will the course be re-orientated to suit African homes.

**The Minister of Education :** Domestic Science at the Women's Training College is under the direction of a well trained and capable African Officer, and is taken as one of the subjects leading to the Teachers' Grade III or Grade II Certificate. In the latter course it qualifies a teacher to give instruction up to Standard VI. In both grades the syllabus is orientated on the African house. The first item in the Syllabus is African Cookery according to locality.

The second part of the question therefore does not arise.

#### Free Compulsory Primary Education

78. **Mr J. H. E. Nwuke** asked the Minister of Education, whether it would be possible for the Government to implement its Free Compulsory Primary Education scheme by 1st of January, 1957; if so, will Government take full financial responsibility.

**The Minister of Education:** Yes, Sir.

The honourable Member is referred to Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1954. It has never been the intention of Government to make Universal Primary Education compulsory in the first instance.

Government will assume full financial responsibility for payment of teachers' salaries. Other aspects of the cost of Universal Primary Education are under active consideration and a statement on this will be made as soon as possible.

#### School Population in Eastern Region

79. **Mr J. H. E. Nwuke** asked the Minister of Education, how many boys and girls are attending schools in the Eastern Region.

**The Minister of Education:** In 1955 the enrolment was as follows:—

|       |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |                |
|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----------------|
| Boys  | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 546,442        |
| Girls | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 180,174        |
| Total | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | <u>726,616</u> |

Accurate figures for 1956 will not be available until later in the year, but it is estimated that there are 850,000 children in primary schools and 12,000 in secondary schools.

#### Provincial Education Office

80. **Mr J. H. E. Nwuke** asked the Minister of Education, whether he is aware that Local Government Councils, Native Administrations and Voluntary Agencies in the Rivers Province are not receiving adequate expert advice from the Provincial Education Office due to acute understaffing; if so, what arrangement is Government making to provide for more Education Officers and Supervising Teachers in the province.

**The Minister of Education:** Yes, Sir.

The Ministry is aware of the shortage of staff in the Education Department and efforts are being made to remedy this position.

#### Water Engineers and Inspectors of Works

83. **Mr R. O. Ukuta, M.B.E.** asked the Minister of Development, how many Water Engineers and Inspectors of Works have been recruited into the service of the Eastern Region since his recent visit to the United Kingdom; if none, why.

**The Minister of Development:** No Water Engineers or Inspectors have been recruited since my return from the United Kingdom in November, 1955. There is a world demand for Civil Engineers and this Government must compete with other employers. It can only be assumed that the terms offered were insufficiently attractive. On this assumption, the terms offered to contract Civil Engineers and Inspectors have been generally improved.

#### Ex-Mason David Ifejika

88. **Mr E. A. Chime** asked the Minister of Development, if he is aware that one David Ifejika, ex-Mason under the Public Works Department, Onitsha, was retired after 22 years' service without gratuity and annual allowance; if so, why.

[Written Answers]

[Written Answers]

**The Minister of Development:** The honourable Member appears to have been misinformed. Mr David Ifejika was dismissed for unsatisfactory work after the usual warnings. He was not retired and is thus not eligible to receive a gratuity or annual allowance. He was informed of this fact at the time and was again so advised when he petitioned His Excellency the Governor in 1954.

#### Reckless Driving over Uyo-Oron Bridge

94. **Mr S. T. Akpan** asked the Minister of Transport, whether he is aware that up to date there are no effective measures for checking reckless driving over the bridge before mile 3 to Oron on the Trunk "A" road from Aba to Oron; if so, will the Minister consider introducing one early.

**The Minister of Transport:** I find it difficult to understand what measures the honourable Member wishes to have introduced. In the whole of 1955 there was only one accident at this bridge according to police records. However, the Federal Government has had all bridges on the principal Trunk Roads A surveyed with a view to reconstruction in due course.

#### Trunk "B" Road, Ogoni

97. **Mr Kemte Giadom** asked the Minister of Transport, if he is aware that Ogoni main road classified as a Trunk "B" road has been closed to traffic since one year and that the diversion via Obigbo is unsafe; if so, what action is Government taking to improve the road system in Ogoni.

**The Minister of Transport:** I am aware of the situation regarding the road from Umukoroshe to Kono but I have never before been told that the route via Obigbo was unsafe. Tenders have been invited for the improvement and tarring of the road from Umukoroshe to Kono. The closing date for tenders is 22nd March 1956.

#### Voluntary Agency Teachers

109. **Chief S. E. Onukogu** asked the Minister of Education, how many teachers in Voluntary Agency Schools recommended for Senior Service grades by Voluntary Agency Authorities have been so graded, how many have been turned down and for what reasons.

**The Minister of Education:** The numbers of Voluntary Agency Teachers who have been promoted to the extended scale, or rejected, are as follows:—

|                |     |     |     |     | <i>Number<br/>recom-<br/>mended</i> | <i>Number<br/>promoted</i> | <i>Number<br/>rejected</i> |
|----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Before 1-10-54 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 55                                  | 39                         | 16                         |
| Since 1-10-54  | ... | ... | ... | ... | 37                                  | 28                         | 9                          |
| Totals         | ... | ... | ... | ... | 92                                  | 67                         | 25                         |

Before 1st October, 1954 all promotions to the extended scale were made by the Central Public Service Board. Since that date promotions have been made by the Minister of Education on the recommendation of the Department of Education. For promotion to the extended scale, the same considerations apply as for recruitment to the post of Education Officer; and where a candidate has been rejected it was for the reason that he was not considered up to the required standard.

#### Ngwa High School

113. **Mr N. W. Abengowe** asked the Minister of Education, if the Ngwa High School has been given a Government grant; if so, how much, if not, why.

**The Minister of Education:** No capital grant has yet been made. None was applied for until 1955 when there were previous priorities to be met.

The school has however been inspected and as a result of this inspection, it is being recommended for grants in the current year.

114. **Mr N. W. Abengowe** asked the Minister of Education, whether he is aware that it is the desire of a large majority of Ngwa people at home and abroad that the Aba-Ngwa County Council should be the proprietors of the Ngwa High School; if so, will Government take steps to give effect to this desire.

**The Minister of Education:** Government will take no steps in the matter. The choice of proprietor is one for the people of Ngwa themselves.

#### Death of Benson Ani at Eha-Amufu

124. **Mr C. A. Abangwu** asked the Premier, what was the result of police investigation (if any) into the death of one Benson Ani, a District Councillor and native of Eha-Amufu in Nsukka Division whose body was discovered in the Aboyin River in December, 1954, in suspicious circumstances.

**The Premier:** On the 16th December, 1954 the police at Nsukka were informed that the body of Benson Ani had been recovered from the River Aboyin and enquiries were begun.

It appears that Councillor Ani left home on the 13th of December and told his wife that he would be going to Enugu the following day. On the 16th of December his wife discovered his naked body in the river when she went to draw water.

The case was investigated as one of murder. The body was exhumed and, with the contents of the coffin, was sent for post-mortem examination, but the examination did not reveal the cause of death. A competent C.I.D. team made a thorough investigation of the circumstances surrounding the death with the result that there is no evidence to pursue enquiries further.

#### Dismissals—Eastern Region Development Corporation

134. **Mr B. C. Okwu** asked the Premier, how many European managers and assistant managers in the service of the Eastern Region Development Corporation were dismissed in 1954 and 1955 and how many African senior staff were dismissed in the same period; what were the causes of the dismissals.

**The Premier:** One European manager only was dismissed by the Eastern Region Development Corporation in June, 1955. No member of the Corporation's African senior staff was dismissed either in 1954 or in 1955.

The European manager was dismissed for misconduct.

#### Draft Estimates of the Eastern Region for 1956-57

135. **Mr O. C. Manu** asked the Minister of Finance, whether he is aware that the District Officer, Nsukka, discussed the Draft Estimates of the Eastern Region for 1956-57 marked "TOP SECRET" with the staff and councillors of Nsukka County Council and Igbo-Etiti District Council on the 1st of March, 1956, in the presence of three Members for Nsukka Division in the House of Assembly; if so, what is the Government's attitude to such act.

**The Minister of Finance:** I understand that the meeting in question was held to discuss the published Finance Bill and arose because an honourable Member wished to know from the Local Government Commission the amount of rates Nsukka tax-payers would have to pay over and above the figures published in the Finance Bill. At the meeting the District and County Estimates were called for and total expenditure was added up. Deductions were then made for County precepts and other forms of revenue and the proposed Government grant was also deducted. For the last-named figure one of the honourable Members of the House present produced his copy of the Draft Estimates with the relevant figures marked. I consider that the Local Government Commissioner was entirely correct in seeking to co-operate with honourable Members in discussing the effect of the Finance Bill.

[Written Answers]

[Written Answers]

### Foreign Insurance Companies

139. **Mr C. A. Abangwu** asked the Minister of Transport, whether he is aware of the difficulty generally experienced by persons who insure their cars with Foreign Insurance Companies in obtaining compensation for damage done to their cars by accident, etc.; is he also aware of the fact that many policy holders are not sufficiently educated on their rights and benefits and in consequence the purpose of the Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance) Ordinance is defeated; if so, will Government not take steps to improve the situation.

**The Minister of Transport:** I did not know that people were finding difficulty in collecting from their Insurance Companies. If they do, then the best advice that I can give is consult a member of the learned and honourable Member's profession.

With regard to the second point, if the policy holder reads his policy he knows where he stands. But I fail to see how Government can force him to read it.

141. **Mr C. A. Abangwu** asked the Minister of Transport, whether Government will undertake to educate the public by radio, cinema, lectures and pamphlets about their rights in regard to motor insurance.

**The Minister of Transport:** I gave a radio talk on this subject last October and my talk was also published. I intend to continue advising people of their rights in this matter.

### Okpoha Bridge

143. **Mr U. Onu-Chima** asked the Minister of Transport, apropos answers to questions Nos. 338, 339 and 340 asked during the last session, will the Minister make a statement why the Okpoha bridge in Afikpo Division has not been completed.

**The Minister of Transport:** The honourable Member's attention is invited to my reply to question No. 99.

### Maintenance of Unclassified Roads

144. **Mr U. Onu-Chima** asked the Minister of Transport, what is the Government policy in regard to the maintenance of unclassified roads in divisions which are not in receipt of equalisation grant.

**The Minister of Transport:** Government cannot have a policy towards a matter for which it is not responsible. So long as a road is unclassified, that is, so long as it is not included in the Trunk Road B network, Government has no policy towards it. If the honourable Member wishes to know under what circumstances a road can become a Trunk Road B he is referred to my policy paper.

The broad issue of general financial assistance to Local Government bodies is not a matter which falls within my portfolio. The honourable Member is now aware of the Government's proposals in this matter.

### Afikpo Road-Afikpo Town and Umuahia-Ibeku-Alayi Road

145. **Mr U. Onu-Chima** asked the Minister of Transport, when will the Afikpo Road-Afikpo Town and Umuahia-Ibeku-Alayi roads be tarred.

**The Minister of Transport:** The Afikpo Road-Afikpo Town road will not be tarred in the foreseeable future. It is high on my list for consideration when funds become available.

The cost of tarring the road from Ahaba to Umuahia-Ibeku has been estimated at £111,190. At present, £65,000 only has been provided for this and for the Bende-Umuahia road. The consultants who carried out the survey estimate that the whole project will cost £236,000.

In the first instance, I propose to seek an additional £49,290 to permit the worst portions of the road from Ahaba to Bende via Umuahia to be brought up to all weather earth standard. To bring the least bad portions up to the same earth standard would require a further £28,380 and £26,400 for the Ahaba-Umuahia and Bende-Umuahia sections respectively.

### Speed Limit

146. **Mr S. E. K. Iwueke** asked the Minister of Transport, whether having regard to the increase of road accidents on the major roads in the Region, he will not impose a 30 miles per hour speed limit for transport lorries on straight roads.

**The Minister of Transport:** All commercial vehicles not exceeding 8 tons gross weight are already restricted to 35 miles per hour outside townships, native towns and villages. Inside these, the speed limit is 30 miles per hour. We all know how this provision in the law is flouted. A driver going at 55 would be breaking the law by a margin of 20 miles per hour. The effect of his recklessness is the same as if he was exceeding a lower limit by 25. If drivers stick to 35 on straight roads, then in my opinion they are driving at a safe speed. The need is exemplary punishment of offenders.

### Unclassified Roads

147. **Mr S. E. K. Iwueke** asked the Minister of Transport, whether he is aware that the cost of unclassified roads are wholly borne by County Councils who are straining under it; if so, whether he does not consider it advisable to give grants annually to assist such County Councils for maintenance and repair of unclassified roads.

**The Minister of Transport:** I appreciate that Local Government bodies must pay for the maintenance of roads that are not classified as Trunk Roads B. What the honourable Member is perhaps asking me to do is to increase the mileage of Trunk Road B. In this connection, I refer him to my policy paper which sets out the conditions which guide me in making such classifications.

The broad issue of general financial assistance to Local Government bodies is not a matter which falls within my portfolio. The honourable Member is now aware of the Government's proposals in this matter.

### Roads

148. **Mr S. E. K. Iwueke** asked the Minister of Transport, how many miles of roads has the Eastern Government in each division.

**The Minister of Transport:** This is being worked out. It is fairly complex. The Public Works Department maintains its records on a provincial basis and the Provincial Engineers are not always aware of the divisional boundaries. This is more difficult than appears at first sight because sometimes an isolated tongue of a division is traversed by a road. For example, the Aba-Opobo road comes out of Aba Division into Abak north of Akirika, goes back to Aba Division south of the place and finally enters Abak after Azumini.

### Ikot Ekpene-Abak-Ekparakwa and Abak-Uyo Roads

150. **Mr O. U. Afiah** asked the Minister of Transport, what proposals are being made to tar the Ikot Ekpene-Abak-Ekparakwa and the Abak-Uyo Trunk B roads.

**The Minister of Transport:** None, Sir.

### Enugu Court Buildings

152. **Mr C. A. Abangwu** asked the Minister of Development, if he is aware that Enugu is the only Regional Headquarters where the Supreme and the Magistrates' Court buildings are in a deplorable condition; what immediate step is the Minister taking to give to the Regional Headquarters court buildings commensurate with its status in the Federation of Nigeria.

**The Minister of Development:** Provision of £33,000 and of £25,000 was inserted by the Finance Committee in the current Estimates for the erection of a new Supreme Court and an Administrative Block respectively. Both projects are at the moment in the planning stage and will be put out to tender soon after Easter. There are no proposals for a new Magistrate's Court.

[Written Answers]

[Written Answers]

**Acquisition of Land in the Region**

161. **Chief M. W. Ubani** asked the Minister of Land, how many acres of land has the Government acquired in each division of the Eastern Region since January, 1954 to January, 1956; for what purposes were such lands acquired; how much land was acquired compulsorily.

**The Minister of Land:** A Schedule showing all the acquisitions of land completed between January, 1954 and January, 1956 is given overleaf. The purposes in respect of each are stated.

Compulsory acquisitions of land can be due to three reasons:—

1. If Government and the land owners cannot reach agreement as to rent or outright compensation.
2. If there is an agreement that the land should be leased, but disagreement as to ownership.
3. Outright unwillingness to let Government have the land.

All the Certificates of Title can be said to be in respect of land acquired compulsorily for one of the three reasons stated above. All the Leases were freely negotiated.

SCHEDULE

ACQUISITIONS (COMPLETED) JANUARY, 1954-JANUARY, 1956

CERTIFICATES OF TITLE

| <i>Serial No.</i> | <i>Division</i>                            | <i>Area</i>     | <i>Purpose</i>   | <i>Date of Execution</i>                                     | <i>Whether on behalf of Regional or Federal Government</i> |
|-------------------|--|-----------------|--|--|--|
| "AA" 10 Vol. I    | Bende Division, Owerri Province (ELS: 831) | 24.30 acres     | United Mission Joint Training Hospital, Umuahia.                 | 30th August, 1954  | Regional.  |
| "AA" 22 Vol. I    | Onitsha Division                           | 3334.55 sq. yd. | Tele-communication   | 29th September, 1954<br>Term: 99 years w.e.f. 1-12-52.       | Regional.  |
| "AA" 23 Vol. I    | Amala Nsukka Nsukka Division               | 4.008 acres.    | Cattle Control Post (L. 1444)                                    | 10th November, 1955<br>Term: 20 years w.e.f. 1-12-52.        | Regional.  |
| "AA" 22 Vol. I    | Calabar Division                           | 12.92 acres     | Extention of Water Supply Scheme (L. 1920)                       | 8th January, 1954<br>Term: for ever commencing from 21-4-53. | Regional.  |
| "AA" 23 Vol. I    | Abak Division                              | 11.38 acres     | Extension of Abak Government Station                             | 20th July, 1955<br>Term: 99 years w.e.f. 1st January, 1954   | Regional.  |
| LEASES            |  |                 |  |  |  |
| "B" 36 Vol. I     | Umuaro, Aba                                | 3335.84 sq. yd. | V.H.F. Multi-Channel Scheme. (L. 1987)                           | 1st February, 1955<br>Term: 99 years from 1-1-54             | Federal.   |
| "B" 37 Vol. I     | Bende Division                             | 3337.31 sq. yd. | V.H.F. Multi-Channel Repeater Station                            | 5th April, 1955<br>Term: 99 years from 1-1-54.               | Federal.   |
| "B" 41 Vol. I     | (Abor) Udi Division                        | 3328.47 sq. yd. | Tele-communication   | 2nd November, 1953<br>Term: 99 years from 1-1-54.            | Federal.   |
| "B" 43 Vol. I     | Milliken Hill, Udi Division                | 53.28 acres     | Radio Transmission and Receiving Station (L. 1255 II)            | 4th April, 1955<br>With effect from 1-8-53.                  | Federal.   |
| "B" I Vol. II     | Uyo  | 2.543 acres     | Water Supply for Teacher Training, Centre, Uyo                   | 27th May, 1954 w.e.f. 1-1-53.                                | Regional.  |
| "B" 2 Vol. II     | Opobo Division                             | 889.08 sq. yd.  | Land required for Police Post at Ika (Ibot Hem) Andoni Clan Area | 3rd August 1955<br>Term: 20 years w.e.f. 1-10-53             | Federal.   |
| "B" 4 Vol. I      | Abonnema, Degema Division                  | 1064.45 sq. yd. | Post Office  | 5th April, 1955<br>Term: 99 years from 1-1-55                | Federal.   |



[Written Answers]

[Written Answers]

**Secondary School Scholarships for Backward Areas**

164. **Mr C. A. Abangwu** asked the Minister of Education, whether, in view of the paucity of qualified candidates for higher education scholarships in the more backward areas of the Region especially in certain areas in Onitsha and Ogoja Provinces, Government will consider awarding a number of secondary school scholarships to these areas in 1956, 1957 and 1958 as compensation for higher scholarship awards.

**The Minister of Education :** It is the policy of the Board to compensate with secondary school scholarships those divisions which are unable to produce candidates of sufficient calibre to qualify for scholarships for higher education.

**Eastern Regional Scholarships**

166. **Mr U. Onu-Chima** asked the Minister of Education, how many Eastern Regional Scholarship holders for 1955 and 1956 have left Nigeria for further studies; what are their names and divisions, the fields of study and in what Universities have they been admitted.

**The Minister of Education :** One hundred and fifty-one holders of Eastern Regional scholarships in 1954-55 have left Nigeria for further studies. Awards for 1955-56 have just been announced and arrangements for their placing in Universities have been put in train. Particulars of those that have left are as follows:—

## SCHEDULE

| Name                     | Division  | Courses of Study                    | Educational Institution                  |
|--------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1. C. U. Abengowe        | Aba       | Medicine                            | St. Thomas Hospital, London.             |
| 2. C. N. Nwankpa         | Aba       | Secretaryship                       | Balham & Tooting, London.                |
| 3. Miss S. N. Ajiere     | Aba       | Nursing & Midwifery                 | County Hospital, London.                 |
| 4. C. Amaechi            | Aba       | Mental Nursing                      |  |
| 5. Miss M. Ahunanya      | Aba       | Domestic Science                    | Bath Training College.                   |
| 6. I. O. Nwauche         | Aba       | Diploma Education                   | University of Leicester.                 |
| 7. G. U. Ukairo          | Aba       | B.A. & Diploma Education            | University of the S.W. Exeter.           |
| 8. A. S. A. Alaribe      | Aba       | Radio Engineering                   | Bolton Technical College.                |
| 9. B. I. Nwakama         | Aba       | Medicine                            | St. George's Hospital, London.           |
| 10. E. E. Ekpenyong      | Aba       | Education                           | University Tutorial College, London.     |
| 11. S. E. Umanah         | Abak      | Co-operatives                       | Loughborough College.                    |
| 12. I. J. Ebong          | Abak      | B.Sc. Economics                     | London School of Economics.              |
| 13. N. U. Akpan          | Abak      | Chemistry                           | Portsmouth College of Technology.        |
| 14. E. E. Udo            | Abak      | Civil Engineering                   | West Ham College of Technology.          |
| 15. F. O. Eze            | Abakaliki | Accountancy                         | Leeds College of Commerce.               |
| 16. L. O. Ukeni          | Afikpo    | Librarianship                       | Loughborough College.                    |
| 17. M. O. Chuku          | Afikpo    | B.A. Economics                      | Cork University, Ireland.                |
| 18. Miss F. N. Ibiam     | Afikpo    | Ministry of Education Certificate   | Portsmouth Training College.             |
| 19. M. S. C. Abani       | Afikpo    | B.A. Economics                      | Cork University, Ireland.                |
| 20. F. E. Achiekwelu     | Awgu      | Colliery Management                 | Doncaster Technical College.             |
| 21. E. Wokocho           | Ahoada    | B.Sc. Economics & Diploma Education |  |
| 22. F. C. Eze            | Ahoada    | Medicine                            | Woolwich Polytechnic.                    |
| 23. A. A. Okoye          | Awka      | Agriculture                         | Acton Technical College                  |
| 24. B. I. Okpala         | Awka      | Ph.D Biology                        | Purdue & California Universities, U.S.A. |
| 25. O. Ukeje             | Awka      | Education                           | Syracuse University, U.S.A.              |
| 26. E. P. Amaku          | Awka      | Medicine                            | Institute of Education, U.S.A.           |
| 27. Miss C. Okechuku     | Awka      | Teacher Training                    | University of Ottawa, U.S.A.             |
| 28. E. D. O. Okeke       | Awka      | Medicine                            | Coloma College, Kent.                    |
| 29. U. S. Okeke          | Awka      | Bacteriology                        | Heidelberg University, Germany.          |
| 30. T. I. Ogbukagu       | Awka      | Geology                             | State University of Iowa.                |
| 31. A. E. Aronu          | Awka      | Laboratory Technology               | University of Nebraska, U.S.A.           |
| 32. N. F. O'Kagu         | Awka      | Medicine                            | Central Middlesex Hospital.              |
| 33. W. C. Uduku          | Awka      | Medicine                            | Hamburg University, Germany.             |
| 34. A. E. Ukiwe          | Awka      | B.Pharmacy                          | Edinburgh University.                    |
| 35. I. U. Osisioogu      | Awka      | B.Pharmacy                          | Portsmouth Technical College.            |
| 36. Miss U. Unuoha       | Awka      | Domestic Science                    | Reading Technical College.               |
| 37. P. O. Oriaku         | Awka      | Cotton Tex Technology               | Bath Training College, London.           |
| 38. J. A. Iroaganachi    | Bende     | B.A. History                        | Huddersfield Technical College.          |
| 39. Miss A. A. Ogali     | Bende     | Ministry of Education Certificate   | St. Mary's College, London.              |
| 40. C. O. Chiori         | Bende     | Pharmacy                            | Goldsmith's College, London.             |
| 41. J. I. Ofo            | Brass     | B.Sc. Biology                       | Howard University U.S.A.                 |
| 42. B. H. E. A. Nyananyo | Brass     | B.A. & Diploma Education            | Reading Technical College.               |
|                          |           |                                     | St. Andrew's University, Scotland.       |

SCHEDULE—continued

| Name                        | Division          | Courses of Study                  | Educational Institution                       |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| 43. M. Kemmer .. ..         | Brass .. ..       | Medicine .. ..                    | Birmingham University.                        |
| 44. W. O. Alazigha .. ..    | Brass .. ..       | Ministry of Education Certificate | Goldsmith's College, London.                  |
| 45. C. D. Okprubia .. ..    | Brass .. ..       | Pharmacy .. ..                    | Huddersfield Technical College.               |
| 46. O. E. O. Ani .. ..      | Calabar .. ..     | Medicine .. ..                    | St. Andrew's University, Scotland.            |
| 47. E. I. Eta .. ..         | Calabar .. ..     | Printing .. ..                    | Leeds College of Technology.                  |
| 48. D. E. Hogan .. ..       | Calabar .. ..     | Civil Engineering .. ..           | Hammersmith's School of Building.             |
| 49. O. A. Young .. ..       | Calabar .. ..     | Building Engineering .. ..        | Brixton School of Building.                   |
| 50. J. S. W. George .. ..   | Calabar .. ..     | Mental Nursing .. ..              | Warley Hospital, Brentwood.                   |
| 51. E. E. Eyo .. ..         | Calabar .. ..     | Dental Mechanics .. ..            | Rutherford College of London.                 |
| 52. B. E. Bassey .. ..      | Calabar .. ..     | Physics (Postgrad) .. ..          | University College, Leicester.                |
| 53. E. Eyo .. ..            | Calabar .. ..     | Medicine .. ..                    | University of Vienna, Austria.                |
| 54. M. T. B. Fiabema .. ..  | Degema .. ..      | Chemistry .. ..                   | Portsmouth Technical College.                 |
| 55. C. W. Thompson .. ..    | Degema .. ..      | B.Pharmacy .. ..                  | Portsmouth Technical College.                 |
| 56. C. K. Manuel .. ..      | Degema .. ..      | Medicine .. ..                    | Mercy Hospital, Dublin.                       |
| 57. M. S. O. Bongilli .. .. | Degema .. ..      | Chemistry .. ..                   | Chelsea Polytechnic, London.                  |
| 58. S. Green .. ..          | Degema .. ..      | Bio-Chemistry .. ..               | Antioch College, U.S.A.                       |
| 59. O. J. Okon .. ..        | Eket .. ..        | Civil Engineering .. ..           | Battersea Polytechnic, London.                |
| 60. E. A. Ekaette .. ..     | Eket .. ..        | Parasitology .. ..                | University of Leeds.                          |
| 61. C. E. Anthony .. ..     | Eket .. ..        | Agriculture .. ..                 | Institute of Agriculture & Horticulture, Usk. |
| 62. E. A. Okpo .. ..        | Eket .. ..        | Laboratory Technology .. ..       | St. Mary's Abbot Hospital.                    |
| 63. G. S. A. Ulaeto .. ..   | Eket .. ..        | Accountancy .. ..                 | British Railways.                             |
| 64. L. O. I. Nwangoro .. .. | Enyong .. ..      | Accountancy .. ..                 | Leeds College of Commerce.                    |
| 65. M. E. O. Nwafor .. ..   | Enyong .. ..      | Education .. ..                   | University of S.W. Exeter.                    |
| 66. Miss F. C. Anyiwo .. .. | Enyong .. ..      | Nursing .. ..                     | Surrey Hospital, Surrey.                      |
| 67. C. E. Ebong .. ..       | Enyong .. ..      | Veterinary Medicine .. ..         | Tuskegee Institute, U.S.A.                    |
| 68. J. O. Ikpeme .. ..      | Enyong .. ..      | Medicine .. ..                    | Durham University.                            |
| 69. S. W. Nkon .. ..        | Ikot Ekpene .. .. | Diploma Education .. ..           | University of Southampton.                    |
| 70. E. U. Otu .. ..         | Ikot Ekpene .. .. | Mental Nursing .. ..              | All Saints Hospital, B' Ham.                  |
| 71. U. E. Enang .. ..       | Ikot Ekpene .. .. | Chemistry .. ..                   | S.E. Essex Technical College.                 |
| 72. U. U. Okoro .. ..       | Ikot Ekpene .. .. | Accountancy .. ..                 | Gayland College, London.                      |
| 73. E. P. Akpan .. ..       | Ikot Ekpene .. .. | Radiography .. ..                 | Glasgow Royal Infirmary.                      |
| 74. I. I. U. Akpabio .. ..  | Ikot Ekpene .. .. | Medicine .. ..                    | Boston University, U.S.A.                     |
| 75. A. U. Mba .. ..         | Ikot Ekpene .. .. | B.Sc. Agriculture .. ..           | Reading Technical College.                    |
| 76. A. O. Abung .. ..       | Ikom .. ..        | Building Construction .. ..       | Brixton School of Building.                   |
| 77. E. E. Arikpo .. ..      | Obubra .. ..      | B.Sc. (General) .. ..             | S.E. Essex Technical College.                 |
| 78. S. N. Owan .. ..        | Ogoja .. ..       | Diploma in Agriculture .. ..      | Gelli Aur Farm Institute.                     |
| 79. E. Egbe .. ..           | Obubra .. ..      | B.A. .. ..                        | University of Hull.                           |
| 80. G. B. Leton .. ..       | Ogoni .. ..       | B.Sc. & Diploma Education .. ..   | Woolwich Polytechnic.                         |
| 81. S. L. Togi .. ..        | Ogoni .. ..       | Co-operatives .. ..               | Loughborough College.                         |
| 82. E. D. Oguegbu .. ..     | Okigwi .. ..      | Auto-Engineering .. ..            | Auto & Aeronautical College, Chelsea.         |
| 83. Miss V. C. Ebirim .. .. | Okigwi .. ..      | Midwifery .. ..                   | Kingston, London.                             |
| 84. I. B. Osuji .. ..       | Okigwi .. ..      | Civil Engineering .. ..           | West Ham College of Technology.               |
| 85. A. O. Ebirim .. ..      | Okigwi .. ..      | Civil Engineering .. ..           | Battersea Polytechnic.                        |

[Written Answers]

DEBATES IN THE EASTERN HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

[Written Answers]

SCHEDULE—continued

| Name                            | Division      | Courses of Study                            | Educational Institution              |
|---------------------------------|---------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| 86. E. N. Achara .. ..          | Okigwi .. ..  | Pharmacy .. ..                              | Sunderland Technical College.        |
| 87. E. O. G. Muotoh .. ..       | Okigwi .. ..  | Geology .. ..                               | South East Essex Technology.         |
| 88. A. E. Ibeawuchi .. ..       | Okigwi .. ..  | Veterinary Medicine .. ..                   | Tuskegee Institute, U.S.A.           |
| 89. D. O. Onyeaso .. ..         | Okigwi .. ..  | Medicine .. ..                              | Westminster Medical School, London.  |
| 90. B. C. Uzodike .. ..         | Onitsha .. .. | Medicine .. ..                              | Leeds University.                    |
| 91. E. O. Onyechi .. ..         | Onitsha .. .. | Medicine .. ..                              | University of Dublin.                |
| 92. G. C. Nnoli .. ..           | Onitsha .. .. | Telecommunication .. ..                     | West Ham College of Technology.      |
| 93. F. M. C. Obi .. ..          | Onitsha .. .. | B.Sc. Statistics .. ..                      | Norwich Technical College.           |
| 94. G. O. N. Egbuna .. ..       | Onitsha .. .. | Civil Engineering .. ..                     | Battersea Polytechnic.               |
| 95. C. C. Nnolim .. ..          | Onitsha .. .. | B.Sc. Economics .. ..                       | Manchester University.               |
| 96. E. A. Osemeka .. ..         | Onitsha .. .. | Architecture .. ..                          | Northern Polytechnic.                |
| 97. C. C. Arinze .. ..          | Onitsha .. .. | Printing .. ..                              | Leeds College of Technology.         |
| 98. S. N. Agwuegbo .. ..        | Onitsha .. .. | Plumbing .. ..                              | Brixton School of Building.          |
| 99. Miss B. O. Anamaleze .. ..  | Onitsha .. .. | Nursing .. ..                               | Royal Albert Edward, Wigan.          |
| 100. G. I. O. Afamefuna .. ..   | Onitsha .. .. | Architecture .. ..                          | Northern Polytechnic, London.        |
| 101. N. N. Egbuonu .. ..        | Onitsha .. .. | Ph.D. History .. ..                         | Columbia University, U.S.A.          |
| 102. E. C. Emelife .. ..        | Onitsha .. .. | Medicine .. ..                              | University of Birmingham.            |
| 103. P. N. C. Okigbo .. ..      | Onitsha .. .. | Ph.D. Economics .. ..                       | Nuffield College, Oxford.            |
| 104. G. N. A. Ogbuoto .. ..     | Onitsha .. .. | Veterinary Medicine .. ..                   | Reading Technical College.           |
| 105. C. O. Efobi .. ..          | Onitsha .. .. | B.Sc. and Diploma Education .. ..           | Aberdeen University.                 |
| 106. J. A. Ndulue .. ..         | Onitsha .. .. | Mining Engineering .. ..                    | Montana School of Mining, U.S.A.     |
| 107. Miss N. O. Nwozo .. ..     | Onitsha .. .. | Medicine .. ..                              | Pensylvania Women Medical College.   |
| 108. A. Osakwe .. ..            | Onitsha .. .. | Dentistry .. ..                             | Marquette University, U.S.A.         |
| 109. R. M. Okafor .. ..         | Onitsha .. .. | B.Sc. Civil Engineering .. ..               | Ohio University, U.S.A.              |
| 110. G. N. Nzeako .. ..         | Onitsha .. .. | Civil Engineering .. ..                     | West Ham College of Technology.      |
| 111. E. A. Udoh .. ..           | Opobo .. ..   | B.Sc. Economics and Diploma Education .. .. | London School of Economics.          |
| 112. G. B. Peterside .. ..      | Opobo .. ..   | B.Sc. Parasitology .. ..                    | Marquette University, U.S.A.         |
| 113. E. I. Ekanem .. ..         | Opobo .. ..   | B.Sc. Economics .. ..                       | University of Oregon, U.S.A.         |
| 114. B. O. J. Nwosu .. ..       | Orlu .. ..    | Telecommunication .. ..                     | Woolwich Polytechnic.                |
| 115. L. I. Egormu .. ..         | Orlu .. ..    | Laboratory Technology .. ..                 | Paddington Group Laboratory, London. |
| 116. S. I. Agwu .. ..           | Orlu .. ..    | Biology .. ..                               | Norwood Technical College.           |
| 117. Miss C. M. Abaecheta .. .. | Owerri .. ..  | Medicine .. ..                              | Glasgow University.                  |
| 118. L. M. Opara .. ..          | Owerri .. ..  | Accountancy .. ..                           | Leeds College of Commerce.           |
| 119. P. I. Ohale .. ..          | Owerri .. ..  | B.A. and Diploma Education .. ..            | Trinity College, Dublin.             |
| 120. P. N. Okaru .. ..          | Owerri .. ..  | Electrical Engineering .. ..                | Aberdeen University.                 |
| 121. O. Ekechukwu .. ..         | Owerri .. ..  | B.Sc. Chemistry .. ..                       | Washington University.               |
| 122. R. A. Njoku .. ..          | Owerri .. ..  | Building Construction .. ..                 | Hammersmith School of Building.      |
| 123. C. E. Okorie .. ..         | Owerri .. ..  | B. A. Economics .. ..                       | University of Manchester.            |
| 124. O. Nnawuchi .. ..          | Owerri .. ..  | Accountancy .. ..                           | Glasgow School of Accountancy.       |
| 125. Miss G. Odili .. ..        | Owerri .. ..  | Domestic Science .. ..                      | Northern Counties Training College.  |
| 126. L. A. Onyeakazi .. ..      | Owerri .. ..  | Ministry of Education Certificate .. ..     | Goldsmith College, London.           |
| 127. E. O. Iwuagwu .. ..        | Owerri .. ..  | M.A. (Economics) .. ..                      | Howard University, U.S.A.            |

SCHEDULE—continued

| Name                          | Division            | Courses of Study                  | Educational Institution            |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 128. B. C. Njoku .. ..        | Owerri .. ..        | Ph.D. (English Literature) ..     | Catholic University, America.      |
| 129. M. M. Ofokansi .. ..     | Owerri .. ..        | Civil Engineering .. ..           | Regent St. Polytechnic.            |
| 130. J. C. Okoye .. ..        | Udi .. ..           | Medicine .. ..                    | Royal College of Surgeons, Dublin. |
| 131. Miss C. C. Madueke .. .. | Udi .. ..           | Nursing and Midwifery .. ..       | Hammersmith College, London.       |
| 132. B. O. Agbo .. ..         | Udi .. ..           | Civil Engineering .. ..           | Reading Technical College.         |
| 133. Miss C. O. Ebo .. ..     | Udi .. ..           | Nursing and Midwifery .. ..       | New Market Hospital, London.       |
| 134. J. A. Uddoh .. ..        | Udi .. ..           | Civil Engineering .. ..           | Paisley Technical College.         |
| 135. N. A. Nnamani .. ..      | Udi .. ..           | Secretaryship .. ..               | Balham and Tooting College.        |
| 136. G. G. O. Alo .. ..       | Udi .. ..           | B.A. and Diploma Education ..     | University of S.W. Exeter.         |
| 137. H. O. P. Agballah .. ..  | Udi .. ..           | Accountancy .. ..                 | Messrs Harding and Brighton.       |
| 138. Miss M. J. Edet .. ..    | Uyo .. ..           | Ministry of Education Certificate | Coloma College, Kent.              |
| 139. Miss L. A. Essien .. ..  | Uyo .. ..           | Domestic Science .. ..            | Bath Training College, London.     |
| 140. E. R. Ufot .. ..         | Uyo .. ..           | B.A. and Diploma Education ..     | University College, Leicester.     |
| 141. O. A. Essiet .. ..       | Uyo .. ..           | Medicine .. ..                    | University of Nebraska, U.S.A.     |
| 142. S. N. Ugoji .. ..        | Port Harcourt .. .. | Medicine .. ..                    | McGill University, U.S.A.          |
| 143. Miss E. A. Allotey .. .. | Port Harcourt .. .. | Nursing and Midwifery .. ..       | New Market Hospital, London.       |
| 144. E. Ijoma .. ..           | Enyong .. ..        | Medicine .. ..                    | Trinity College, Dublin.           |
| 145. O. O. Uvere .. ..        | Enyong .. ..        | Science and Mathematics .. ..     | St. Andrew's University, Scotland. |
| 146. S. O. J. Ezenekwe .. ..  | Awka .. ..          | Medicine .. ..                    | West London Medical School.        |
| 147. M. O. Wabara .. ..       | Aba .. ..           | Physical Therapy .. ..            | University of Pennsylvania.        |
| 148. K. T. Achi .. ..         | Awgu .. ..          | B.A. (Economics) .. ..            | Fourah Bay College, Freetown.      |
| 149. A. S. O. Okwu .. ..      | Owerri .. ..        | B.A. Statistics .. ..             | Fourah Bay College, Freetown.      |
| 150. C. U. Ugwu .. ..         | Nsukka .. ..        | Education .. ..                   | Fourah Bay College, Freetown.      |
| 151. O. E. E. Bassey .. ..    | Uyo .. ..           | B.A. (Economics) .. ..            | Fourah Bay College, Freetown.      |

[Written Answers]

DEBATES IN THE EASTERN HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

[Written Answers]

167. **Mr U. Onu-Chima** asked the Minister of Education, how many scholarships were awarded in 1955 and 1956; what are the names of the candidates and their qualifications.

**The Minister of Education :** The honourable Member is referred to Government Notice No. 320 published in *Gazette* No. 26 of the 19th April, 1956.

Should the honourable Member desire the educational qualifications of any particular candidate, they will be supplied on application.

#### Development of African Languages

168. **Mr R. O. Iwuagwu :** asked the Minister of Education, how much money was allocated for the development of African languages; how much of this amount was for the Ibo language and for personal emoluments.

**The Minister of Education :** None.

The Adult Education branch has an establishment of three translator-teachers and its activities include the production of literature in Ibo and Efik-Ibibio for adult literacy purposes.

#### Teachers' Salaries

172. **Mr B. C. Okwu** asked the Minister of Education, what is the outcome of the negotiations between the Government and the representatives of the Nigerian Union of Teachers on the Voluntary Agency Teachers' Salaries; how soon will teachers be paid the new scales and the arrears due to them.

**The Minister of Education :** The recommendations of the Joint Negotiating Committee were received on the 3rd of March, 1956, and are receiving urgent consideration. A full statement will be issued as soon as possible.

#### Award of Scholarship to Mr Okafor

174. **Mr B. C. Okwu** asked the Minister of Education, whether he is aware that Mr Okafor who was awarded the Regional Scholarship as a citizen of Awgu Division, is in fact from Udi Division and never even lived in Awgu; what steps have the Government taken to compensate Awgu for this error.

**The Minister of Education :** No, Sir.

Mr P. Okafor was awarded a scholarship in 1953 under Udi Division. This is confirmed by the relevant minutes of the Scholarship Board, although it has to be admitted that, when the award was published in the Press, Mr Okafor was stated in error to be from Awgu Division.

Moreover, in 1952-53 there was no official quota system for the award of scholarships on a Divisional basis.

The last part of the question does not therefore arise.

#### Elementary Schools for Girls

175. **Mr B. C. Okwu** asked the Minister of Education, whether the Government will be willing to assist local communities in Awgu Division financially to erect Elementary Schools for girls.

**The Minister of Education :** It is not Government policy at present to give Capital Grants for the building of primary schools. Government is, however, giving active consideration to the policy for the building of the new primary schools in connection with the Universal Primary Education and will announce same when completed.

#### Building Grants

175A. **Mr B. C. Okwu** asked the Minister of Education whether he considers it desirable to make building grants to assist the less developed communities of Awgu Division to build more schools in order to benefit fully from the Free Primary Education Plan in 1957.

**The Minister of Education :** The honourable Member is referred to the answer to Question 175.

#### Cashew Experimental Farms in Nsukka Division

176. **Mr C. A. Abangwu** asked the Minister of Agriculture, whether Government has conducted any research into the possibility of establishing cashew experimental farms in Nsukka Division, many parts of which grow wild cashew.

[Written Answers]

[Written Answers]

**The Minister of Agriculture :** No, Sir. The cultivation of cashew nuts has been investigated at the Provincial Farm, Nkwelle Zunake, and at a small plot near Eke in Udi Division. The result of the investigations are applicable to Nsukka Division and the Agricultural Staff are available for advice at any time. Strictly speaking, cashews do not grow wild in Nigeria as they are a crop introduced from South America and have been planted at various times in scattered groups throughout the Region.

#### Government Contracts

178. **Mr B. C. Okwu** asked the Minister of Development, what organisations or persons have been awarded contracts by the Regional Government in 1953, 1954, and 1955; what is the sum involved in each case; how many of these contractors are women.

**The Minister of Development :** The honourable Member's question relates to calendar year but I presume he meant financial years 1953-54, 1954-55 and 1955-56, this being the period covered by Government records as the honourable Member will no doubt appreciate. I presume also that the reference to "contracts" in the question is to be understood to mean "major constructional contracts".

Organisations or persons to whom the Regional Government have awarded contracts during the periods in question number thirty-three. With your permission, Mr Speaker, I will cause the list to be printed in the Supplement to the Votes and Proceedings. None is a woman because no woman has tendered for any major project.

#### SCHEDULE

|    | 1953-54  | 1954-55  | 1955-56   |
|----|--|--|---|
| 1  | Eastern General Contractors:<br>Value, £18,000 | Enugu Ex-Servicemen:<br>Value, £3,332          | United Bros.:<br>Value, £6,440                  |
| 2  | Micheletti & Dolcino:<br>Value, £17,000        | Mutual & Eastern:<br>Value, £9,285             | Echidime Building Co.:<br>Value, £6,400         |
| 3  | Micheletti & Dolcino:<br>Value, £10,000        | Eastern General:<br>Value, £2,950              | Edozien Bros.:<br>Value, £6,200                 |
| 4  |  | Eastern Civil Engineering:<br>Value, £12,200   | National Building Contractors:<br>Value, £6,400 |
| 5  |  | Ephraim & Bro.:<br>Value, £6,400               | Uzoechina & Co.:<br>Value, £6,400               |
| 6  |  | Master Building Association:<br>Value, £12,000 | City Building Contractors:<br>Value, £6,275 8s  |
| 7  |  | Enugu Ex-Servicemen:<br>Value, £6,100          | Eastern General:<br>Value, £46,530              |
| 8  |  | F. O. Mbadiwe:<br>Value, £12,200               | Eastern General:<br>Value, £16,360              |
| 9  |  | Matt and Mike:<br>Value, £3,135                | Eastern General:<br>Value, £17,600              |
| 10 |  | Obioma Contractors:<br>Value, £6,400           |   |
| 11 |  | Adimco:<br>Value, £9,150                       | E. M. Micheletti:<br>Value, £17,800             |
| 12 |  | Angus Builders:<br>Value, £9,345               |   |
| 13 |  | A. & A. Builders:<br>Value, £6,300             |   |
| 14 |  | Borini Prono:<br>Value, £38,740                |   |
| 15 |  | Costain W/A Ltd.:<br>Value, £1,839             |   |
| 16 |  | Micheletti & Dolcino:<br>Value, £33,000        |   |
| 17 |  | Costain W/A Ltd.:<br>Value, £32,000            |   |
| 18 |  | E. M. Micheletti:<br>Value, £55,290            |   |
| 19 |  | Eastern General:<br>Value, £12,000             |   |
| 20 |  | E. M. Micheletti:<br>Value, £3,180             |   |

### Tour to India and Japan

184. **Mr U. Onu-Chima** asked the Minister of Industries, when will the report of his visit to India and Japan be laid on the Table of the House of Assembly.

**The Minister of Industries:** The report of my tour has been submitted to the Government for consideration and until it is released, I regret I can make no comment.

### Ministry of Education First School Leaving Certificate Examination

185. **Mr J. O. Umolu** asked the Minister of Education, whether he will give a full list of successful candidates, school by school, and division by division, in the 1955 Eastern Nigeria Ministry of Education First School Leaving Certificate Examination; what is the percentage pass in each school and in each division.

**The Minister of Education:** The full list of successful candidates has been published.

As there were over 33,000 candidates for the examination, and over twelve thousand of which were successful, it is regretted that the details asked for by the honourable Member cannot be supplied because of the amount of work involved. If however, the honourable Member desires information on any particular school it can be supplied on application.

### Roads in Abak Division

188. **Mr J. E. Eyo** asked the Minister of Transport, what subsidy has been paid to Annang County Council, Abak, towards the maintenance of roads in the division.

**The Minister of Transport:** No subsidy has been paid to the Annang County Council or to any other County Council for the maintenance of roads. Some Councils receive reimbursement but that is not a subsidy. Annang County, having no Trunk Roads B III, B II and B I has received no reimbursement.

189. **Mr J. E. Eyo** asked the Minister of Transport, how many miles of roads are maintained by the Eastern Regional Government in Abak Division.

**The Minister of Transport:** 27. About 24 miles of the Aba-Opobo road and 3 of the Uyo-Abak road lie in Abak Division. But I will not say that this figure is completely accurate. I am having the details compiled for every division in the Region but this will take time to complete.

### Honorary Teachers' Higher Elementary Certificate

192. **Mr J. E. Eyo** asked the Minister of Education, how many teachers were awarded Honorary Teachers' Higher Elementary Certificates during the years 1953, 1954 and 1955 in each of the divisions in the Region; what are their names; how many attempts did each make in passing the Teachers' Higher Elementary Certificate Examination; is it not a condition that a teacher will have made attempts at passing the examination before an award of an honorary certificate could be made.

**The Minister of Education:** One of the conditions governing the award of Honorary Higher Elementary Certificate is that the teacher shall have completed a number of attempts, normally not less than three, at obtaining the Certificate by Examination. Since 1953, 156 Certificates have been awarded. The names of successful candidates, the divisions from which they come and particulars of the attempts made by each to pass the Higher Elementary Certificate Examinations, are available in the files of my Ministry and may be consulted by the honourable Member any time he so desires.



[Written Answers]

[Written Answers]

### Eastern Regional Scholarships

193. **Mr K. J. N. Okpokam** asked the Minister of Education, how many Eastern Regional Government Scholarship holders are doing courses of studies in, (i) water engineering, (ii) medicine, (iii) pharmacy; how many scholarships were awarded in 1954-55.

**The Minister of Education:** The particulars required are as follows:—

|                              |    |
|------------------------------|----|
| (i) Water engineering ... .. | 1  |
| (ii) Medicine ... ..         | 60 |
| (iii) Pharmacy ... ..        | 10 |

209 post-secondary and 103 secondary school scholarship awards were made in 1954-55.

### Termination of Mr A. O. Akpuaka's Appointment

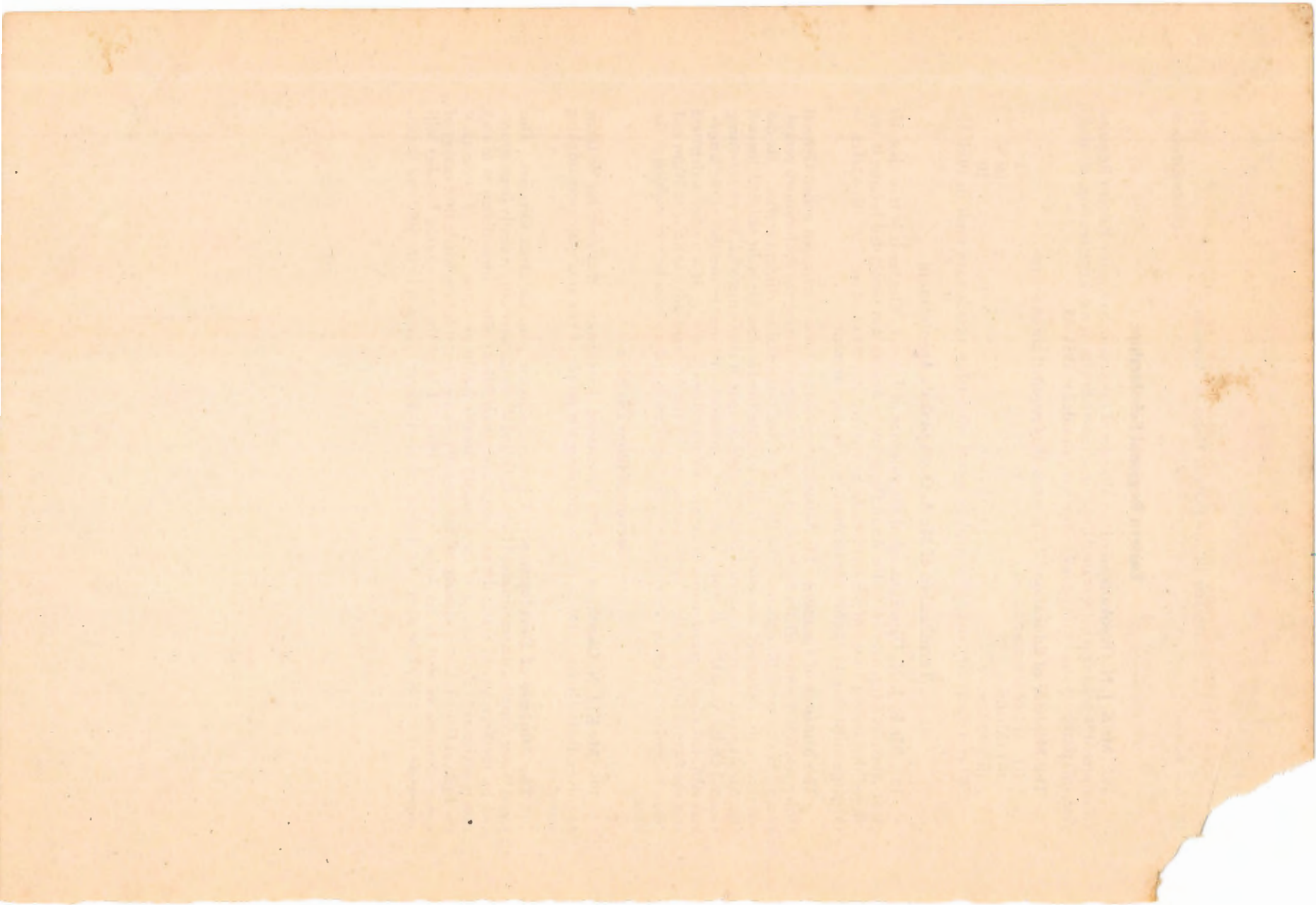
195. **Mr K. J. N. Okpokam** asked the Minister of Finance, whether it is true that Mr A. O. Akpuaka's appointment in the Audit Department, Enugu, was terminated because it was alleged that during a tour of the Cameroons he engaged in politics; if so, were steps taken to investigate that allegation before the termination of his appointment.

**The Minister of Finance:** Mr Akpuaka's appointment was terminated under General Order No. 02204 which relates to termination of appointment during the probationary period, because he was not in the opinion of the Director of Audit qualified for efficient service. He did not receive the customary one month's notice because the Director of Audit satisfied himself that Mr Akpuaka had misconducted himself, while on tour in the Cameroons, by contravening General Order No. 04211 (d), which states that "no officer, employee or member of the temporary staff shall engage in canvassing in support of political candidates". It is further understood that the facts of his misconduct were corroborated by the Administrative Officers at Wum and Nkambe, and by the senior officer of the Audit Department under whom he was working at the time.

### Survey of Ikom Division

196. **Mr K. J. N. Okpokam** asked the Minister of Development, what steps has he taken to survey Ikom Division with a view to providing the people of this area with good drinking water.

**The Minister of Development:** I have no separate plan for Ikom Division. Our Rural Water Supplies scheme financed by the C.D. and W. funds have only recently been approved by the Secretary of State; the next stage and which follows almost immediately is to seek expert advice as to the best type of water supply suitable for the province. In this connection, the Federal Department of Geological Survey will post a geologist for the whole time survey of water resources as soon as his house has been built. I hope the honourable Member will appreciate that it will take some time before the need of every division in the province is met.



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5th—28th March, 1956

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| (Adj. Deb.) | — Adjournment Debate. |
| E.R.        | — Eastern Region.     |
| 1R          | — First Reading.      |
| 2R          | — Second Reading.     |
| 3R          | — Third Reading.      |
| Com.        | — Committee.          |
| Q.          | — Question.           |

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