

03d

-75



NATIONAL LIBRARY  
OF NIGERIA  
EXCHANGE MATERIALS

RIVERS STATE OF NIGERIA

# BUDGET SPEECH

by

His Excellency Commander A. P. Diete-Spiff

*Military Governor of the Rivers State of Nigeria*

for the Financial Year 1974-75



**His Excellency Commander Alfred Papapereye Diete-Spiff**  
*Military Governor of the Rivers State of Nigeria*

**Budget Speech by His Excellency Commander Alfred Papapereye  
Diete-Spiff, Military Governor of the Rivers State of Nigeria  
for the Financial Year 1974-75**

Fellow Citizens,

The State Executive Council has approved the Budget for the financial year, 1974-75. As is customary, I am pleased to address you this evening on the budget.

2. As I have said in previous years, the needs and services of progressive governments usually increase annually thereby requiring higher expenditure each financial year. My Government has accordingly continued its efforts to accommodate the increasing expenditure by raising more revenue. In the past financial year alone my Government invested ₦34 million in capital projects and with similar determination it is planned to do just as much or even more in the current financial year.

3. An estimated total revenue of ₦110,668,830 will be raised in the 1974/75 financial year. This sum is made up of our share of revenue collected by the Federal Government on behalf of all the States and revenue to be collected internally. There is a significant increase in revenue receivable through the Federal Government this year over that of last year. This is accounted for by the level of posted price of petroleum during the past year and to minor adjustments in the calculation of mining revenue. There is also an indication that the revenue to be raised internally will be higher by as much as ₦2 million than that of the 1973/74 Financial year.

4. It is also now known that the revenue collection in the 1973/74 financial year achieved an increase of 25 per cent over the previous year's figure. My Government will ensure that the rising trend in our revenue collection continues in this and succeeding years. All Divisional Tax Offices have been completely reactivated and are ready for effective tax collection in the new financial year. Sub-Treasuries have also been opened in fifteen of the eighteen administrative headquarters while a second Sub-Treasury has also been opened in Port Harcourt to ease congestion and reduce delays in Treasury operations.

5. For the past five years, my Government has pursued a liberal tax policy. This year, there will be slight modifications in our tax structure. In the immediate post-war years, my Government understandably considered it desirable to fix tax rates as low as possible. Rehabilitation of our war-battered people was upper-most in our minds. At that time, my Government allowed a special 2/9th relief on taxable incomes of ₦2,000 and above. This relief was deliberately granted over and above the normal tax relief stipulated in the law.

My Government still intends to keep tax rates within the ability of income earners in the State to pay, but such rates will now be fairly comparable to tax rates of sister States of the Federation. Accordingly, the special relief will be removed as from the 1974/75 financial year. Similarly, a new schedule of income rates is introduced with effect from 1st April, 1974, applicable to income under ₦2,000.

6. The Finance Edict of the State will be amended to reflect these changes. The overall effect of the abolition of the 2/9th relief on taxable incomes of ₦2,000 and above and of the raising of tax on incomes under ₦2,000 will be a slight increase in the tax burden beginning from this financial year. It might seem paradoxical that I am calling on you to make greater contributions in terms of your personal income tax at a time our total revenue expectation has increased appreciably. There are a number of reasons for these measures:

First, as I indicated earlier, the days of rehabilitation and reconstruction are over; the measures which were introduced to assist tax payers to shake off the effects of the war must now yield place to the determined effort which the dynamic growth of the economy of the State now requires. It is a mark of the success of our rehabilitation measures that our economy is now growing so rapidly that we can now call upon you to make sacrifices to sustain and improve this dynamic growth.

Secondly, although our income has increased appreciably, our expenditure has even increased at a higher rate because of the high cost of the implementation of our programmes due to world-wide inflationary spirals. We must therefore adequately supplement funds accruing to us from our natural resources by our own increased contribution.

Thirdly, the rise in our income due mainly to petroleum ought also to be an occasion for deep reflection and hard work; for the fortunes of this State are tied up with the neglect of the past, the confidence of the present and the hopes of the future. The effects of the past neglect are still staring us in the face in terms of underdevelopment, lack of trained manpower and lack of adequate amenities for the present generation. The creation of States has now enabled us receive a fair share of the enormous contribution which the natural resources of our State are making to the growth of our great country, and so enable us break the spiral of underdevelopment which haunted our past. But just as the misfortunes of the past were inherited by the present generation, my Government is determined that the opportunities and the resources of the present must not be

complete  
invested  
respect  
is also  
rapid d  
can pa  
which  
enable  
is now  
enable  
Govern  
heavy  
program  
eloquer

7.  
of whi  
for Ca  
this ye  
by ₦59  
again  
which

8.  
continu  
of mor  
tions o  
scholar  
colossa  
further  
Manag  
operati

9.  
to ₦14  
million  
has dec  
Revenue  
more r  
the cur

10.  
ance to  
two ye  
This re  
expecte  
enrolm

completely consumed by the present generation, but adequately invested for the dynamic progress of future generations. It is in this respect that the occasion of the improvement of our natural resources is also the occasion for our own self-dedication to the course of the rapid development of the State. The question then is not whether you can pay higher taxes; it is whether opportunities will be created which will enable you to increase your earning capacity and thereby enable you to satisfy the demands which the State Government is now making on your resources. To create these opportunities to enable you earn higher incomes is a major responsibility of my Government, and to that end we are fully committed. Indeed, the heavy sums which my Government has voted for the various programmes and projects for execution this financial year bear eloquent testimony to this commitment.

7. The total estimated expenditure for 1974/75 is ₦154,226,000 of which ₦50,226,000 is for Recurrent services and ₦104 million for Capital Development Projects. Thus, the level of expenditure this year exceeds the 1973/74 estimated expenditure of ₦95 million by ₦59 million or 62 per cent. Of the Recurrent budget, Education again claims the highest allocation accounting for ₦21.4 million which is 43 per cent of the recurrent budget.

8. The high expenditure in education is due mainly to the continued expansion of educational services in the form of opening of more and more primary and secondary schools, coupled with additions of more and more classes to existing ones and to an ever-growing scholarship scheme, in order to quicken the rate of clearing the colossal back-log of educational neglect inherited by the State. A further contributory factor is the establishment of the Schools Management Board and Divisional Management Committees. The operational cost of these bodies alone amount to ₦15 million.

9. Thus there will be a deficit in the overall budget amounting to ₦14 million i.e. after taking account of Capital receipts of ₦89.6 million. I am, therefore pleased to announce that my Government has decided to transfer a sum of ₦60.4 million from the Consolidated Revenue Fund to the Capital Development Fund which means that more money will be available for Capital Development projects in the current financial year.

10. My Government continues to attach the greatest importance to educational and social services for the people. In the past two years, primary school enrolment rose from 233,000 to 244,000. This represents an increase of 4.6%. In the next academic year, it is expected that primary schools will increase from 558 to 620 with an enrolment of 255,400 pupils. In the current academic year, secondary

education was expanded by establishing nine new schools. This brings the total number of secondary schools in the State to 48. Secondary school population rose from 16,000 to 18,000. Contracts have been awarded for the building of additional secondary schools.

11. My Government continues to encourage nursery education. This is fully justified by the increased demands from all sections of the community for nursery schools. The two nursery schools in Port Harcourt have a total enrolment of 540 pupils. The third school will start to function by the beginning of the next school year. Nursery schools will be started at suitable centres in the Divisions.

12. Special attention is being paid to vocational and technical education in order to redress the imbalance in our production of skilled manpower. Contracts have been awarded for the building of additional trade schools.

13. Prominence is being given to science education so that we can meet the demands of the present technological age. To this end, a science section has been established in the Ministry of Education. This section is specially charged with responsibility for raising the standard of science teaching in our secondary schools, and introducing the teaching of science in the primary schools.

14. Acute shortage of trained teachers is the greatest problem in our efforts at improving our educational system. This problem is being tackled by the establishment of more teacher training colleges and increase in the intake of the existing colleges. Total enrolment in the existing six colleges is 2,070 students, of which 360 will graduate next June.

15. Enrolment in our Advanced Teacher Training College rose from 240 to 368 students in the past year. The first batch of 120 students will graduate in June this year. Plans are on hand for the construction of the first phase of the college buildings at its permanent site in this financial year. It is hoped that a part of the college will be able to move to the permanent site during the year.

16. In the past year, educational administration in this State broke two new significant grounds. I have already mentioned the Schools Management Board and the Divisional Management Committees. These were set up under the Schools Management Board Edict. The Schools Management Board, with the Divisional Management Committees, is responsible for the management and running of all our schools, with the exception of those exempted by the edict, functions which were hitherto discharged by the Ministry of Education. By this reorganisation it is hoped to make the manage-

ment and running of our schools more effective and efficient so as to raise the standard of the products of these schools. The Ministry of Education is also thereby freed in order to concentrate on its primary function of formulation of educational policy. The other important innovation is the establishment of the Teaching Service Commission. The primary object of the creation of this body is to improve the lot of teachers in the State. The Teaching Service Commission exercises in respect of teachers the functions which the Public Service Commission exercises in respect of civil servants such as appointments, promotions and discipline. The Federal Military Government proposes to introduce universal free and compulsory primary education in the country in the near future. As a result of this a crash programme of teacher-training is being contemplated. The Teaching Service Commission will be deeply involved in the programme.

17. In the last financial year, 2,440 post-primary scholarships were awarded. In addition, 493 post-secondary and 25 post-graduate awards were made. Areas of our manpower needs continue to be carefully examined, and students who possess the requisite potential will be awarded relevant scholarships.

18. The College of Science and Technology which began to function in October, 1971, with 218 students has continued to make laudable progress. The student population rose from 378 in 1972-73 session to 705 in the present session. The number of senior academic and administrative staff rose from 55 in the 1972-73 session to 103 this session. The new Schools of Agriculture, Business studies and Education, which were established as planning units last session, began to run various courses in October last year.

19. The building development projects of the college are going on admirably. Major construction works in progress include an amphitheatre for 250 students, additional classroom blocks, staff quarters, and hostel blocks for 384 students. Work has also begun on phase one road development of the college complex. The College Consultants have produced a full Master Plan of the College together with the fundamental design report for the Schools of Science and Engineering. The college will produce its first diplomates in Engineering this month.

20. For the financial year 1974/75, my Government has budgeted a total of ₦5 million for the college's capital and recurrent expenditures. I am glad that our hopes and aspirations in establishing the College of Science and Technology in Port Harcourt are being properly fulfilled. I therefore seize this opportunity to thank all who have been involved in the development of the college; in particular, my thanks go to the Governing Council, the staff, the students and

the benefactors of the college both here and in other parts of the world.

21. Although there was a set-back in the implementation of our hospital building projects, good progress has, on the whole, been made in the provision of health services. This has been due to an appreciable increase in the number of medical personnel, together with medical equipment. The infectious Diseases Hospital at Choba is almost completed, and should start to function in a few months' time. The State Ministry of Health has now taken over the operation of the four Mobile Clinics previously operated by the Lutheran World Federation in conjunction with the Nigerian Red Cross. With the arrival of two hospital boats, this service will be extended to more localities in the riverine areas. To ensure an uninterrupted Floating Doctor Service, a modern Marine Base, complete with a double slipway and workshop, is now ready at Choba for use by our fleet of medical boats and ambulances.

22. In this financial year, emphasis will be laid on Preventive Medicine and Training. To this end, a Health Education unit will be established to enlighten our people in preventive health measures. My Government will increase its activities in the fight against Tuberculosis and leprosy. The Tuberculosis Control programme will be greatly expanded and four Leprosy Segregation Clinics will be completed this year. A Malaria Control Unit and an Environmental Sanitation Unit will be established. Contract for the construction of the School of Nursing and Midwifery has been awarded and construction work will begin any time from now. This school will provide accommodation for 300 student nurses. The School of Hygiene which was established in January, 1971, will actively embark upon the training of Health Inspector, Community Health Superintendents and Community Nurses from May this year. Work on the construction of the School of Hygiene building will start this year.

23. Last year, I informed you of the creation of the Ministry of Rural Development and Social Welfare, and that the new Ministry would take over Rural Development, Social Welfare and Co-operative functions from the various Ministries and Departments which were then responsible for these functions. I am glad to say that the arrangement has proved very successful. Supplementing the rural water supplies provided by the Utilities Board, the Ministry of Rural Development and Social Welfare has provided in various towns and villages in the State 130 bore-holes fitted with hand rotary pumps. In the second phase of the programme this financial year, 500 bore-holes will be provided. For their self-help project schemes, 333

communities received a total of ₦246,200 from my Government. Altogether, 130 major self-help projects were completed in the last financial year. Eight of twelve Craft Centres developed are now fully operational and offer courses in sewing, carpentry and masonry. So far, 400 persons have been trained in basic skills. On a higher technical level, the newly organised Works Service Unit of the Ministry has assisted village communities to complete five jetties, four major road bridges, and approximately 20 miles of new road. In the present financial year, the Ministry will embark upon projects for village integration, low cost housing, reclamation and dredging in the riverine areas, and the establishment of community industries.

24. One of the outstanding achievements of the Ministry of Rural Development and Social Welfare during the past year is the completion of the Rural Development Training Centre at Aluu, which was officially opened about a fortnight ago. This centre, which was built at a cost of ₦600,000, will provide accommodation for 250 persons attending courses or conferences.

25. Social Welfare Service has been expanded to cover most of the rural areas of the State. There is serious shortage of qualified Social Welfare workers, but this disability is being combated by the injection of suitable Local Government staff followed by intensive training in all branches of social welfare work at the newly-created Port Harcourt Training School and at the Kaduna Polytechnic.

26. The Family Welfare Service, which was formerly limited to Port Harcourt, Bori and Degema, now covers nine of the Administrative Divisions and this expansion will continue until social welfare offices have been established in all parts of the State. The number of cases handled during the year has risen from 556 to over 1,000, with a corresponding increase in the maintenance allowances collected from delinquent fathers. Juvenile delinquency, for which no treatment existed previously, is now being dealt with by the Juvenile Court which was opened in Port Harcourt in November, 1973, to which is attached an active Juvenile Probation Service, while a Children's Remand Home required for the detention of delinquents before and after trial has been opened in Port Harcourt. Work on the Boys' Approved School in Port Harcourt is well advanced and the institution should be operational in this financial year, thus for the first time providing a complete organisation for the treatment of Juvenile delinquents in the State. This is only a beginning and it is planned to expand these facilities to suitable parts of the rural areas in due course.

27. The Children's Reception Centre in Port Harcourt having completed its massive task of repatriating displaced children from

Gabon and the Ivory Coast, is now being converted into a home for motherless and abandoned babies. This home will begin to function early in this financial year. Attention is also being paid to other less fortunate members of the society. Some blind trainees who passed out of the Ikeja Farmcraft Centre are being rehabilitated and a workshop for disabled persons is being established at Elele, where it is hoped to produce low cost crutches, wheel chairs, and other useful articles.

28. The organisation of Co-operative Societies made considerable strides in the past year. Loans totalling ₦147,200 were approved for issue to 101 co-operative societies in the State. Credit facilities extended to these societies have helped their members to develop their businesses, particularly in the field of Agriculture. As a result, the Rivers State Co-operative Produce Exporters Limited (Licenced Buying Agents to the Rivers State Marketing Board) was responsible for 25 tons out of the total of 63 tons of cocoa marketed during the 1972-73 season, and for 206 tons of the palm kernels marketed during the season.

29. Sites for Co-operative shops in all parts of the State have been selected and construction work on a number of the buildings has already started. It is expected that the first twelve of these shops will be opened in this financial year. These will help stabilise commodity prices in the State and provide the rural population with the opportunity of purchasing essential commodities at competitive prices.

30. In my Budget Speech last year, I said that my Government would provide incentives in money and materials to farmers and fishermen. I also promised the expansion of the then newly inaugurated Tractor Hire Service and indicated that the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Natural Resources would develop the Peremabiri Rice project into a major rice production complex capable of supplying large quantities of processed product. It gives me great satisfaction to say today that the 1973/74 financial year was indeed a fruitful year for agriculture. Under the subsidy scheme for increased food production a total of ₦214,780 was paid out to 7,202 farmers. In like manner, materials worth ₦46,000 were distributed to fishermen. Contracts to the value of ₦94,000 have been awarded for the supply of additional equipment to fishermen. Under the tree-crops subsidy scheme a sum of ₦150,000 was set aside for distribution to farmers for the rehabilitation of 10,000 acres of oil palm. As a result of these efforts, there was an increase of 2,000 acres in the area of cultivated land in the State last year. The subsidy scheme will continue this financial year. Details will be published soon.

31. I am also happy to say that the Tractor Hire Scheme has been well received by the farming population and that items of equipment purchased have been put into good use.

32. Progress on the Peremabiri Rice Scheme has been steady and the results are encouraging. Within the year just ended, a total of 107,520 lbs. of paddy was harvested from 50 acres. Survey and design for the extension of the remaining acreage have been completed. Three caterpillar tractors have also been bought and conveyed to the site, and work has begun in earnest for irrigational cultivation of 500 more acres this season. A Food Production Company dealing with food crops other than rice will be started this year, while the formation of a Rice Production Company which will include the Peremabiri Rice Scheme has also been approved.

33. The Ministry is being re-organised in order to assume a more important and direct role in the production of both cash and food crops. As many of the professional staff as possible will be sent to work on State farms which will be expanded to at least 500 acres each.

34. On fisheries, two new fishing vessels were purchased at a cost of ₦237,616 and added to the existing fleet of the Ministry. Shrimp fishing has continued with appreciable success. Between 16th of January and 30th of September last year, 705,040 lbs. of shrimp valued at ₦791,433 was landed by Rivers Gulf Fisheries. Detailed drawings of the Fish Distribution Centre at Borikiri in Port Harcourt and the Fishing Terminal at Peterside, Bonny, have been completed, and will be put out to tender soon.

35. The Ministry has also made marked progress in the production of livestock. The Veterinary Service has continued to give subsidized treatment of livestock throughout the State. For the improvement of veterinary service in the delta areas of the State, the Ministry has recently purchased a floating clinic costing ₦25,000. The Ministry will pursue its plan to open Veterinary Clinics at Port Harcourt, Yenagoa, Ahoada, Degema and Bori. A rabies diagnosis unit will be established in Port Harcourt to facilitate quick diagnosis.

36. Demarcation of 91 square miles of forest for reservation has been completed. An inventory project to determine the resource potentials of the forests has started. The siting of forest industries and plantation development will depend largely on the result of this exercise. Meanwhile, cultivation of citrus fruits and the establishment of botanical and vegetable gardens will be undertaken in earnest in suitable parts of the State. Also, land under forest cultivation will initially for a number of years be cultivated with annual food crops

in order to maximise the economic returns from such lands in the long run. Similarly, a pilot sawmill-cum-furniture workshop has taken off the ground by the appointment of a timber utilization expert and the purchase of saws and saw-doctoring equipment.

37. We are building up a collection of wild life for the State Zoo which will be set up by an edict. Communities and individuals who have interesting specimens to donate should not hesitate to do so. There are also plans to plant ornamental flowers and trees at roundabouts and along major roads in the urban centres for the purpose of beautifying our cities and towns.

38. For more effective servicing of the farming population, the State has been zoned into touring zones. Farmers will be organized into committees for regular meetings with Extension Staff so that they can state their problems and receive advice. You are invited to take advantage of these arrangements.

39. This year, a plan for a special food production programme covering 1,000 acres of rice and 500 acres of maize will be implemented on a piece of land acquired by the Ministry. It is estimated that this programme will cost ₦439,000. Also, a research sub-station to be established at Otuaka in Ogbia Division for raffia palm, covering upward of 700 acres, has been approved by the Nigerian Oil Palm Research Institute. Dairy farming and buffalo rearing will be introduced this year in the State.

40. The Agricultural Research Division of the Ministry was strengthened during 1973/74 with the recruitment of experienced personnel and the provision of necessary farm and laboratory facilities. A three year programme of research experiments to improve the cultivation of our principal food crops has been drawn up and is being implemented. It is hoped that the result of this research will enable our farmers to produce better quality food crops.

41. While constructional work is going on at the permanent site of the School of Agriculture at Onne, arrangements have been made for classes to be held at a temporary site in Port Harcourt.

42. Last year, I told you that an Industrial Management Section would be created in the Ministry of Trade and Industry to follow up and control the activities of enterprises in which the Rivers State Government has shareholdings. This section has since been created and its work has grown enormously, particularly under the stimulus of the Nigerian Enterprises Promotion Decree.

43. As a sequel to the industrial survey undertaken in the past two years, a number of statistical data have been collected and com-

piled to guide businessmen within and outside the State. As a follow-up measure, a preliminary geological survey was conducted last year to assess mineral resources in the State. A detailed geological survey will be undertaken this year to identify the quantity, specifications and location of various mineral deposits. These surveys constitute an important exercise, as the policy of my Government is to ensure that industries of all sizes are widely distributed in the State to check the movement of people from the present rural areas to the urban centres.

44. As indicated in my last Budget Speech, a Small Scale Industries Credit Scheme Fund has been established to assist the small entrepreneur in the State. In this year, an Industrial Development Sub-Centre will be established to assist in the transfer of various skills and technology to industrialists.

45. The Industrial Consultants mentioned in my speech last year have been commissioned to undertake a number of feasibility studies to guide Government in making industrial decisions. A team sponsored by the Federal Government was in the State to examine agro-allied and other projects to be incorporated in the Third National Development Plan 1975/80. In this year, detailed studies will be executed on all projects to ensure that items appearing on our programme are all feasible and viable.

46. The policy of trade promotion and advice to the private commercial sector, particularly for the benefit of indigenous small scale businessmen, will be intensified this year. A Business Place Registry will also be established.

47. The Ministry of Trade and Industry will continue to pursue the policy of ensuring the production of a high quality standard of produce in the State. A total of 20,900 tons of produce was passed for export in the last financial year. That figure showed a 27% increase over the figure for the previous year. Produce Buying Stations will be spread to all the 18 Administrative Divisions of the State.

48. The preparation of a comprehensive Master Plan for Port Harcourt will soon be completed by the Ministry of Lands and Housing. Work on Master Plans for the Divisional Headquarters of Ahoada, Bori, Brass and Degema has been completed and steps are being taken to carry out developments in these towns in accordance with the plans. Master Plans in respect of the remaining 13 Divisional Headquarters are being prepared and will be completed in this financial year. The eighteen Divisional Headquarters are declared planning areas and the Divisional Officers made Planning Authorities, each for his division. No new buildings will be erected

without the prior approval of the Planning Authority. More towns will be planned in pursuance of the overall regional planning scheme.

49. The Cartographic Branch of the Survey Division of the Ministry of Lands and Housing is now better equipped for the production of maps. In collaboration with the Federal Survey Department, the Ministry of Lands and Housing is now undertaking the mapping of Port Harcourt. Already, the mapping of some of the Divisional Headquarters has been completed.

50. Major projects for which land has been made available through Government acquisition include :

- (a) The 200-acre Federal Government College at Rumuokoro;
- (b) Army Barracks occupying an area of ten square miles at Elele;
- (c) An International Airport at Omagwa; and
- (d) Federal Government Girls College at Abuloma in Okrika Division

51. The housing problem, which is due to population explosion in Port Harcourt, still continues to bedevil us. As a result, over two hundred contract officers of this Government live in hotels and other rented accommodation. Houses acquired by my Government will be used for staff housing and new housing units will continue to be built, to cope with the requirement. Payment of compensation in respect of buildings acquired by my Government for public use started in the last financial year, and it is hoped that within this financial year this and other related matters will be fully disposed of.

52. Also in implementing Government's policy of easing the housing problems in the State the Housing Corporation has virtually completed all the houses at the Rumuibekwe Housing Estate mentioned in my budget speech last year. In addition work has already started on the building of 250 dwelling units at Elekohia as part of the Federal Government Low Cost Housing Scheme of which the Housing Corporation is the agent. This year the Corporation will embark on the building of estates at 10 of the Divisional Headquarters in addition to the Presidential and Rumuogba Estate in Port Harcourt and environs.

53. To ease the financial burden of home ownership by all classes of people a Savings and Loans Scheme will be launched early this year by the Housing Corporation to encourage small savers to save up towards owning houses of their own.

54. Considerable progress has been made in the execution of our Public Works projects. In my budget speech last year, I informed you that the reconstruction of the Elele-Ahoda road would be completed last year. I also informed you that work had begun in earnest on the Ahoda-Omoku-Okwuzi road; Ahoda-Mbiama-Yenagoa road, and the new East-West Road leading to Patani in the Midwest. I am glad to say that the Elele-Ahoda road has been completed and that the Ahoda-Omoku-Okwuzi road will be completed by the end of this month. The construction of the Ahoda-Mbiama stretch of the East-West Road will be completed this dry season, while work on Mbiama Bridge over the Orashi Rivers has been started. Earthworks have gone far on the trans-Orashi stretch of the road towards Patani. Also to be completed this year are Port Harcourt-Elele-Alimini Road; Brass Coastal Road and Air-strip; Bonny Coastal Road and Air-strip; Igwuruta/Rumukoroshe-Okomoko-Okehi-Igbodo Road; Onne-Refinery Road; Kaa-Okwale-Road Bridge at Wiyakara; Elele-Omanelu Road and Diobu G.R.A. Phase II Roads.

55. Contracts have been awarded for the construction of Elele-Omanelu Road; Ahoda-Abua-Degema-Buguma Road; Yenegwe-Okarki-Nembe Road; and Chara-Bori-Kono Road. Work has already started on some of these roads.

56. Feasibility studies and detailed engineering design work will be carried out on the following roads in this financial year; Bomu-Bonny Road; Nembe-Brass Road; Amassoma-Sabegreia to East-West Road; Yenegoa-Ayama-Otu-Okpoti-Okodogu Road; Oporoma-Okubie-Koluama Road; Elele-Umudioga-Ubumini-Omoku Road; Omanelu-Umuoye-Okehi-Eberi Road; Emuoha-Harry's Town Road; Tombia-Bukuma-Bakana Road; Okrika Causeway and Kaa-Gwara-Okwale Road. These feasibility studies will form a spring board for our 1975-80 road development work.

57. Traffic congestion is steadily building up in Port Harcourt. Plans to combat this include building of new exit roads to supplement the existing ones and, in particular, design work to make Yakubu Gowon Drive and Liberation Drive four-lane roads has reached an advanced stage.

58. Work has progressed well on the Sports Council Olympia House project as well as on several other building projects. On the 2nd of March this year, I performed the formal foundation stone laying ceremony of the Secretariat Buildings complex, work on one unit of which was already in good progress. The total estimated cost of the Secretariat complex is ₦17.8 million.

59. In the last financial year, jetties were constructed in ten locations in the riverine areas. Arrangements are on hand to provide permanent causeways and jetties at twenty locations in the areas. It is expected that these will be completed this financial year. Arrangements are also on hand for three new Marine Bases to be completed by the middle of this year so as to facilitate slipping of crafts and repairs. Workshops will be equipped to carry out necessary repairs independent of Port Harcourt Marine Base. In the first phase, only three places are to be provided with these facilities namely, Brass, Degema and Yenagoa. In this financial year, consideration will be given to more locations. The existing Marine Base in Port Harcourt will be extended and equipped up to the standard of a modern dockyard with facilities for repairs and dry-docking of vessels of over 100 feet. A clearing and dredging programme has been started. Nembe waterside as well as the Nembe flats are being dredged and made navigable. A fully equipped waterways party has been formed and this party will soon start operation for laying and picking up moorings and marking buoys in our creeks and rivers. The total number of buoys required is well over five thousand which will be completed in various phases.

60. The Utilities Board has embarked upon its rural electrification programme. Generating sets have already been installed in eleven areas and are now supplying power for the operation of water installations in those areas. Government institutions and private buildings are also being served. Following the rural electrification programme of the Utilities Board, the Ministry of Works and Transport has carried out the electrical wiring of several Government institutions and buildings in the rural areas. Work has commenced on the construction of overhead lines at Abua, Abonnema, Buguma, Nembe, Yenagoa and Bodo. The constructions should be completed by June this year. Consultants have been appointed for the study and detailed design of the supply of power to 49 approved locations in the State. It is expected that constructional work will commence in October this year.

61. Work has already started on the extension of the Port Harcourt Water Supply. The extension will raise the water supply in the city from its present capacity of 7 million gallons a day to 15 million gallons a day. So far, 10 additional boreholes have been completed. Subject to early delivery of imported plant and materials, the construction of service reservoirs and associated works will be completed in October this year. The construction of 98 boreholes, which will serve the 49 locations mentioned above, is in progress. Twelve boreholes have already been completed.

62. Over the years the Ministry of Economic Development and Reconstruction has been systematically collecting and collating statistics relevant to the economic life of the State. These statistics have now definitely indicated in what areas the Rivers State is rich in resources. Accordingly, a reputable firm of Consultants has been commissioned to carry out feasibility studies on a number of projects varying from agro-allied industries to petro-chemical complexes. These studies will promote industrial activity in the State, both in the private and public sectors.

63. Already the economic growth in the State is impressive after gathering momentum for about four years in the provision of the necessary infrastructures such as an efficient system of water transport, good roads, electricity and water.

64. As you are aware, the Rivers State Development Plan, 1970-74, envisaged a total plan outlay of ₦68 million. We have so far spent a total of ₦50 million. This means that we have spent three-quarters of the amount estimated for the Whole Plan. This does not however mean that we have achieved on the ground three-quarters of the Plan. Two main reasons account for this. First, no proper economic studies of projects were made during the war years and the Plan was prepared soon after the war. The costs of the projects were therefore in most cases under-estimated. Secondly, cost of goods has been steadily rising since the launching of the Plan .

65. Marks of development especially in the private sector are quite spectacular and evident in all parts of the State. It is only natural that after the necessary infrastructure has been provided by Government, business should flourish almost automatically in the favourable economic climate so created. From statistics available to the Ministry of Economic Development and Reconstruction, about ₦106 million was invested in 1973 in business in the Rivers State by non-indigenous firms in the private sector as against ₦39 million in 1971, and ₦71 million in 1972. Indigenous business men invested ₦110 million in 1973 as against ₦9 million invested by them in 1971 and ₦41 million in 1972.

66. You are aware that the public sector is only a small aspect of the economy of any nation, although the policies made in the public sector have strong influence on the private sector. More human and financial resources are devoted to the private sector. As a support for the private sector the Government has set up five financial institutions namely, the Pan African Bank, Pabod Finance Company, Rivbank Insurance Company, Pabod Supplies Company and Pabod Investments and Properties Company and all of them

have gone into business operations seriously. The Pan African Bank is already operating five branches, while the Rivbank Insurance Company has two branches. These Government organs provide the financial and commercial infrastructures on which enterprising businessmen can build and thereby speed up the economic growth of the private sector as a whole. I invite you to call at the offices of these financial institutions and take advantage of their assistance.

67. Directors will be appointed soon to the boards of companies acquired under the Indigenisation Decree and of companies in which we have shareholdings through the Eastern States Interim Assets and Liabilities Agency.

68. Similarly, the public corporations have forged ahead successfully in the past financial year. They are gradually building up the necessary resource base to enable them operate independently, but in the meantime, my Government has to supplement their efforts with subventions and loans.

69. The Transport Corporation has made further progress in its function of providing every part of this State with suitable and adequate means of transport. In February this year, it increased its fleet of ferry boats to 37 by the acquisition of one more boat and two self-propelled barges. With this increase in the number of boats, the Corporation has been able to increase the frequency of its service and the number of towns served.

70. For the land area, 12 new luxury passenger buses costing ₦200,000 will soon be acquired in order to increase the present fleet of buses run by the Corporation. In addition, 12 new saloon motor cars costing ₦60,000 will soon be purchased for the Corporation's Car Hire Service being operated in Lagos and Port Harcourt. Work on the new bus terminal along Olusegun Obasanjo Road in Port Harcourt has been completed and the terminal is now in use. The construction of another terminal at Ahoada town has already begun. The Corporation's Headquarters office block is nearing completion.

71. Perhaps the most spectacular and significant achievement of the Transport Corporation during the past year was the launching in September, 1973, of the Waterglass Boatyard. The role of the Waterglass Boatyard in the provision of modern yet cheap means of maritime transportation in the Rivers State and Nigeria as a whole cannot be over-emphasised. To enhance efficiency and increase production at the Boatyard a fully equipped modern workshop is to be built this year.

72. The Nigerian Tide, printed and published by the Newspaper Corporation, which started as a weekly newspaper in 1972, started to be published twice weekly since September last year. Arrangements are nearing completion for it to be published daily.

73. The Newspaper Corporation will also, within this financial year, embark upon the production and sale of some items of stationery. Construction of an office buildings and workshops block of the Corporation is in progress.

74. The State Development Corporation has now completed the rehabilitation of all its oil palm and rubber estates. Consequently, the production of palm oil and rubber latex in the State has increased considerably. When the Corporation's giant oil mill and crumb rubber processing factory are commissioned later this year, the production of these commodities will rise even much higher than the present level.

75. During this financial year, the Development Corporation will establish new oil palm plantations in various parts of the State, and will be prepared to enter into joint ventures with reputed individuals or organisations to achieve this. Also, in pursuance of my Government's desire to increase the production of staple foods, the Corporation will form during this financial year, a Food Production Company to produce food for human and animal consumption.

76. The Development Corporation's natural gas distribution service was reorganised and expanded last year. This year, new equipment will be acquired in order to improve and increase the gas supply service.

77. In my Budget Speech last year, I stated that the Rivers State Marketing Board maintained a high level of producer prices in the previous year in spite of the low world market prices for the commodities marketed by the Board, and thus increased the income of farmers. I am glad to say that that policy of the Board has resulted in very significant increases in the tonnage of produce marketed in the last financial year. The tonnage of palm kernels increased by 48% over the previous year's purchases and significant increases were also recorded for copra and cocoa throughout the State. In pursuance of the Federal Military Government's declared objective to improve the lot of farmers, producer prices of palm oil for 1974 marketing year have been increased by 100% over the prices paid last year. The prices of copra and palm kernels have also been increased.

78. I wish to seize this opportunity to urge all Chiefs and Community leaders to endeavour to educate their people to tap all the produce resources in the State for the benefit of the Communities and the State economy. No bunches of palm fruits should be allowed to waste.

79. Credit also goes to the Rivers State Marketing Board in the last year for its contribution towards the opening of Abonnema Port. By this event an additional port has been reactivated for business in the State. The first shipment of produce from Abonnema since the the creation of the Rivers State was made in February, 1974 when M.V. "Ahmadu Bello" lifted 1,500 tons of palm kernels for Hamburg. It is expected that regular shipments from that port will continue in the current year.

80. My Government is considering the merger of the Rivers State Development Corporation and the Rivers State Marketing Board. This re-organisation will do away with the existing overlapping of functions of these two bodies and ensure that only one body is responsible for the exploitation of our agricultural resources and their processing and marketing. An edict to give effect to this re-organisation will soon be promulgated.

81. The Tourist and Hotels Corporation made good progress in the execution of the projects announced during my last Budget Speech. The extension work on the existing Port Harcourt Rest House began during the past year. Construction of new Rest Houses also commenced in four Divisional Headquarters namely, Ahoada, Brass, Bori and Degema. All these projects are expected to be completed during the first half of this financial year.

82. Design work for the extension of the Hotel Presidential was completed during the last financial year. Construction of this extension of the Hotel by 200 bedrooms will commence early in this financial year. Construction of the giant Eagle Hotel with its facilities of an eighteen hole golf course, swimming pool, cinema, shopping centre, casino, night club and speciality restaurants will also commence during the current financial year, as also the construction of the Isaka Holiday Resort complex. It will also have a housing estate of 400 housing units.

83. The Ministry of Information has set up the Film Production Unit which I promised in my Budget Speech last year. Already, documentary films are being shot. When the Unit begins to operate fully, it will produce monthly feature films that will be shown around the State.

84. The Ministry has also overhauled its Printing Division with the installation of up-to-date machines in more commodious workshops. The Division is now in a position to cope with practically all the printing requirements of Government and its agencies.

85. The Radio and Television project of my Government has suffered a temporary set-back. Remedial steps are now being taken to ensure that the State has its own Radio and Television Service in the not too distant future to complement the existing mass information media in the State.

86. The Council for Arts and Culture, which was established last year to promote and preserve the culture of our people, has generated considerable culture reawakening in the State. Its achievements so far include the setting up of a gallery of contemporary arts and crafts; a museum, and a permanent standing culture troupe. Under the auspices of the Council, two successful pilot archaeological excavations were undertaken at Ke and Onyoma in Kalabari and Brass Divisions. The first carbon dates from the artifacts have been received and it is hoped that these will go a long way in the reconstruction of our history.

87. In this financial year, Divisional Cultural Committees will be formally set up and field workers posted to the areas. Music and Arts Workshops will be organised for musicians and practising artists, and a museum laboratory will be established for the treatment of antiquities.

88. In the field of sports, our young men and women distinguished themselves in the sporting events of last year. At the first All Nigeria Sports Festival, we did not only come out in the fifth position among the twelve States which participated in the festival, but we also won a total of 51 medals, 9 of which were gold. In February this year, we had the honour of playing host in two international sporting events—the first ever cricket test match between Nigeria and Tanzania and the international pre-open Golf Championship in which professional golfers from different parts of the whole world participated.

89. The International Standard Basketball Court to which I made reference in my Budget Speech last year, has now been completed, and reconstruction of the Liberation Stadium will be started early this financial year. Adequate funds have been voted by my Government to enable the Sports Council to carry out its highly desirable functions.

90. With the expansion of the Staff Training Centre in the last financial year, the centre is now in a better position than in the past

to organise training courses for more categories of staff in the Public Service. Already, several subordinate employees are undergoing a training course to fit them for advancement to the standard clerical service. This is an opportunity which was not available to such staff in the past and I hope that they will make very good use of it. Within the next few days, a 9-month course for members of the Secretarial Class will be started to fit them for higher secretarial duties. Short courses will also be run for members of the Administrative Class and Clerical Officers.

91. Although there was a shortfall in the number of the normal intake from the Universities due to the inception of the National Youth Service Scheme, the Public Service Commission succeeded in recruiting a sizeable number of overseas officers, mostly medical officers, engineers, and architects. On the whole, the Commission effected a total of 117 substantive, 72 contract and 30 temporary appointments in the senior grades during the period under review. The shortfall in local recruitment in respect of permanent staff was also largely offset by the service of more than 160 National Youth Service Corps members assigned to this State. Much credit goes to the Federal Military Government for introducing this Scheme which not only enables our young men and women to know their country better but also provides an additional source of supply of qualified personnel so badly needed in several of the young States of the Federation. A Statutory Corporations Service Commission has also been established. For the present, the members of the Public Service Commission discharge the functions of the Statutory Service Commission also.

92. The Fire Service in the State continues to improve. Its training programme is being vigorously implemented. Two Fire Stations will be opened this year in the suburbs of Port Harcourt—one at Rumumasi and the other at Borikiri. It is also proposed to extend the Service later to other parts of the State.

93. Local Government administration through Town and Community Councils will be established this year. An Edict defining the powers and functions of the Councils will soon be promulgated. For this purpose, plans are in hand to provide modern office accommodation and staff housing in the divisions.

94. In view of the especial place which Chiefs occupy in our society and the important role they are expected to play in local Government administration and customary matters, an Edict on Traditional Authority will be promulgated this year.

95. A section has been created in my office specifically for chieftaincy matters which will now be treated with all speed. Already the recommendations of the Working Committee on chieftaincy affairs which were only recently submitted to me are being looked into.

96. As regards the administration of justice, which is of paramount importance in a well-ordered society, Judges of the High Court have continued to hold sessions in the Divisions. The High Court of Ahoada Judicial Division was inaugurated in the last financial year and a Judge assigned to it. Three new Magistrates were appointed during the year. It is hoped that within the next few months, the Bori Judicial Division will be created. In this financial year, a new Magisterial District for Yenagoa will also be created. Development and expansion of our Judicial Central Library still continue. During the year, books and other library equipment worth ₦32,000 were purchased. Construction work on the Port Harcourt High Court Buildings, estimated to cost ₦1.6 million, is progressing satisfactorily.

97. Fellow citizens, here is another year of challenge and hope. The success which my Government has achieved since the creation of the State seven years ago has been due to the support and loyalty we have consistently received from you. Our appreciation also goes to the various arms of the Federal Government, the Army, Navy, Air Force, the Police and the other Federal Departments for their contribution towards our achievements of the past financial year. We thank the firms, companies, and business houses as well as the public corporations and state-owned companies for the employment opportunities they offered and for their immense contribution to the growth of the economy of the State.

98. The task of State building is admittedly great, but it is a task which we all have set ourselves to accomplish. It has clearly not been an easy task for us. Our needs are enormous. Due to the development starved condition of virtually all parts of the State in respect of all sectors of the development plan, we are faced with a real situation where every area and sector is in practical terms a priority area and demands immediate attention.

Our topography is perhaps the most difficult in the entire Federation; our climate among the most trying. We live permanently with devastating annual floods, soil erosions and land slides. These pose challenges to us as a State and also to the Federal Government no doubt. The blessings from our natural resources are often accom-

panied by serious set-backs resulting from their extraction. Thus, our farm-lands have from time to time been rendered unproductive by spillages of oil arising from blow-outs of oil exploration well. Similarly, considerable oil pollution of our creeks and rivers, the habitat of our marine resources, also takes place time and again. We cannot ignore the economic distress these occurrences cause the poor farmer and fisherman. It is considered fair that a special fund be created at the national level to rehabilitate persons and areas adversely affected by devastations arising from economic activity from which the entire country is benefited, such as oil exploration. Despite these handicaps which we suffer as a State, I am confident that, as we are among the most hard-working and self-reliant people in the country, my Government will succeed, with your continued support, in building a happy, contented, and virile State.

Thank you. Good Night.