BUDGET SPEECH

BY

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The Administrator of East-Central State of Nigeria

PEACE UNITY INDUSTRY

SATURDAY 5 MAY 1973

BUDGET SPEECH

Fellow Countrymen and Women,

IT IS my duty and privilege now to present the Budget for the Government of the East-Central State of Nigeria for the financial year, 1973–74.

In the past three years the people of this State have faced with fortitude and vigour the challenge of post-war reconstruction and in spite of grave financial handicaps have achieved significant successes. Today, as the nation enters into the last year of the current Development Plan and begins the count-down to the next, my Government is convinced that it is time for a change of orientation. While some of the wounds of conflict are only too patently still with us, it is our determination henceforth to review our situation and requirements in the context of present day realities and future needs. It is our intention to begin to face up to the even greater challenge of establishing our place in the fast-developing economy and contributing our full share to national development.

For the financial year, 1973–74, my Government is providing for a total appropriation of ₦82.9 million for recurrent expenditure as against an original appropriation (i.e., excluding the appropriation on the Supplementary Estimates) of ₦61.2 million for 1972–73. Our estimated revenue on current account for 1973–74 is ₦71.8 million as against estimated receipts on the same account for 1972–73 of ₦59.2 million. There is thus an over-all deficit on current account of ₦11.1 million. Although the figures underline continuing desperate condition of our finances, they represent on the one hand a welcome improvement in our ability to generate revenue internally and on the other hand the considerably expanded high level of public services (especially in education, health and welfare, water and utility services) which the State is carrying and the fortuitous increases in the cost of some of these services (for example the increases due to the enhanced conditions of teachers) and the irrevocable commitment which we made last year to repay during this financial year the compulsory loan—the twenty-five per cent. surcharge—which we had had to borrow from all workers. Thus although the deficit on current account is rather less dismal than it would appear as a reflection on our performance, and while it is hoped that improved revenue performance than forecast will significantly reduce the deficit, I must confess that we are not satisfied. Therefore we cannot yet truly say that "Happy days are here again".

For the financial year 1973–74 my Government is also appropriating the sum of ₦59.6 million for Capital Expenditure as against total estimated Capital Receipts of ₦31 million. There is thus a deficit of ₦28.6 million on Capital Account. This is a rather large deficit, but hardly surprising in view of our continuing deficit position on current account. The State has great confidence in the ability of the Federal Military Government directly, and through its various agencies and mediation with foreign agencies, to contribute to the funding of the capital project. As experience in the past three years has shown, ability to attract such funds often depends on the despatch, economy and efficiency with which the projects are programmed and executed. It is therefore the responsibility of all public officers to put in their very best efforts this year in promoting their projects and not to seek to excuse idleness, indifference or incompetence by a plea of lack of funds. This is the final lap of the National Four-Year Plan and we must either be ahead or move together with all those who breast the tape. This will call for extraordinary effort from everyone; it will call for initiative, discretion, hard work and leadership from the Heads of the various Ministries, Departments and Agencies. I can promise you this much, that there will be sanctions for failures and for those who help; who succeed there will be reward of satisfaction and recognition of a job well done and a continuing opportunity to seat and toil in the service of our Nation. *Olu Obodo.*

Now for some details—on the revenue side, the estimated recurrent revenue of ₦71.8 million represents an increase of ₦12.5 million in our internal revenue. By contrast, our statutory share of Federal revenue has remained virtually stagnant. Had this source shown a corresponding increase, the recurrent budget would have reflected a significant surplus. However, it is a measure of the self-help spirit of the people of this State that the share of total revenue attributed to internal sources has risen from the dismal situation in 1970–71 to fifty-five per cent. in the current year. To have arrived at a situation in which internal revenue is greater than Federal revenue in only three years in the post-war circumstances of the East-Central State is truly remarkable; it is even more impressive if it is realized that such a situation is definitely a record in the fiscal history of the Nigerian Federation and almost certainly a record in the history of the various world federations created after 1945. My Government will continue efforts to strengthen these internal sources so as to provide a more stable base for development. On capital receipts very little is expected from internal sources since facilities are still being restored. Grants from the Federal Military Government for Agriculture, Water Supplies, Community Government Units and Education account for an expected ₦5.3 million. ₦16.4 million are expected from Domestic Borrowing—₦6.4 million from proceeds of the Development Loan Stock and ₦10 million from Federal Treasury Loans. The State has so far not benefited from the External Loan programmes in the current Development Plan. It is expected that with some of the administrative problems resolved some progress will be made this financial year.

The great increase of ₦12.2 million in recurrent expenditure over the total appropriations last year is due mainly to increased expenditure on schools and to loan repayment obligations. The capital provisions reflect an assessment of what can be achieved if the funds are available. The keynote in expenditure is prudence and cost-effectiveness. My Government will continue to pursue a policy of rationalizing the organization and operation of Government agencies and re-examining the scope, nature and functions of our executive Ministries. During the past year, a large number of appointments and promotions brought the Public Service close to its established strength. No significant increases in establishment have therefore been proposed, but new posts have been created and existing posts regraded where necessary. It is expected that the continuing reorganization will facilitate a more intensive and productive use of the existing manpower and better equip us to cope with the challenge of the post-reconstruction era.

I will now expand on some of the more significant aspects of the Budget. The Divisional Administration has become firmly established in the past year. The challenge of Community Government and community development has been accepted with enthusiasm and self-sacrifice by communities through the length and breath of this State. For the first time in our history rural communities, through their community councils have demonstrated an awareness of the need for programmed and well articulated development plans and remarkable ability to mobilize resources and skills to carry them through. In the last financial year alone the various communities have raised from among their members the sum of over ₦9 million for various projects, notably education, health and transport and water supplies. Easily the most outstanding performance among community councils was achieved by Uke Community Council in Idemili Division which, with a population of 8,000 has raised ₦221,000 in self-effort.

The worst performance is by the fractious Oguta Community Council which, in spite of all our earnest efforts, remain divided and whose total performance is only ₦1,100 with a population of 25,000. It is said that when grasshoppers kick in unison they can break the pot. There can be no better illustration of this ancient proverb.

The Government is proud of you, the communities, and says: well done. We hope that every community will take up the challenge and perform even better this year. In order to underline the importance my Government attaches to these efforts, we have decided that with effect from this financial year a proportion of the loans and grants to Community Council will be strictly related to their level of performance. In other words, the State will help those communities which help themselves. Other provision will, of course, be made for cases of special need.

In order to play its full part in community development, my Government has taken a number of practical measures.

The Community Development Training Centre at Awgu has been rehabilitated for training courses for Community Councils staff and Community Leaders to be able to commence from June this year. It is envisaged that future training programmes would provide a more systematic and regular pattern of instructions well oriented to generate increased tempo in rural development and welfare all over the State. Substantial sums of money were also spent on the restoration of the Rural Works Unit of the Community Development Unit; and the reactivation of village integration and resettlement schemes in parts of the State. In the past year also, a sum of ₦988,000 was made available by Government for the purchase of heavy equipment, plant and machinery required for the development and maintenance of roads in urban and rural areas. Besides the supply of quantifiable capital assistance in equipment and machinery, the Divisional Administration Department also made available free and regular technical and expert advice to communities for the implementation of their various development programmes. Maintenance and improvement of the major arteries of communication between communities and between the State Capital and Divisional Headquarters will be encouraged in this financial year.

Lack of adequate funds and poor works organization and competent technical staff have no doubt militated against better achievements in the past. For this purpose, in the provision of ₦3.7 million for the Divisional Administration Department the Finance Branch concerned primarily with revenue collection as well as the Rural Works Service Section of the Community Development Section have been strengthened. The new system of collection of direct assessment income tax by the use of community councils as agents is yet too young to be assessed. I have every hope that now that the community councils are better established there should be some dramatic improvement in performance. It is expected that in this financial year all councils should apply themselves more vigorously to tapping the established and new sources of income. The former Local Government Council staff have now been absorbed and integrated in the State Civil Service. From now on, the strength of staff each Community Council should have will be related to its functions and ability to pay. These measures, coupled with prudent administration of their funds, will certainly improve the financial health of Community Councils.

In the conscious and continuing effort to bring Government nearer to people, and at the same time to minimize obvious grievances emanating from previous artificial, political and administrative groupings, a community council's Reorganization Committee was appointed by my Government to look into a number of problems relating to the Divisional Administration System and to report and recommend as appropriate. While the Committee's work continues, Government has taken decisions on some of the reports it has already submitted. In this respect, it may be of general interest to announce the following administrative changes in the State. Izzi Division with Headquarters at Oru Aboyi has been created out of the former Abakaliki Division. The former Ngwa and Aba Urban Divisions have been reconstituted. A new Northern Ngwa Division has been created with Headquarters at Okpuala-Ngwa, while Aba Urban Division has been enlarged to include the communities contiguous to the town, so that their interests will be fully protected and planned for in the wider context. Also a new division, Uzo-Uwani Division, with Headquarters at Adani, has been created out of Anambra and Nsukka Divisions. Three divisions—Oru, Nkwerre and Orlu—have been created out of the former Nkwerre and Mgbidi Divisions. In addition experienced administrative officers will be posted to live in special areas of some of the larger and more complex divisions; in Egbema in Oguta Division, Ohaji in Owerri Division, Ohaozara in Afikpo Division, Ufuma in Aguata Division, Nworieubi in Mbaitoli-Ikeduru Division, Ikwuano in Umuahia Urban Division and Isuikwuato in Okigwi Division.

As an effective measure to harmonise the efforts and programmes of Government and the various communities in the State in the task of nation building by free flow of information between them, I have transferred the Field Publicity and Public Enlightenment Section in the Ministry of Information and Home Affairs to the Divisional Administration Department as a Community Enlightenment Section, together with staff and facilities.

On the administration of justice, the last financial year saw the creation of two new Judicial Divisions—Awka and Okigwi. My Government has also succeeded in establishing a Magisterial District in each of the administrative Divisions and opened more places of sessions to ensure that every community has easy access to justice. Judicial libraries at Enugu, Onitsha, Aba, Owerri and Umuahia have been partially restored and restocked. The programme for the rehabilitation of courts will be completed this year. Even more fundamentally we have initiated a programme of research into various aspects of our traditional law and jurisprudence with a view to developing a unified body of law rooted in our values, traditions and present circumstance rather than deriving from exotic, anachronistic and/or irrelevant systems.

Education accounts for a total appropriation of ₦44.8 million made up of ₦36.7 million for recurrent expenditure and ₦8.1 million for Capital. Investment in education has been, traditionally a major pre-occupation of our people. The establishment of the new State System of education has now given us the opportunity of directing such investment rationally to maximize quality and output. Today in the East-Central State we have an enrolment of 1.3 million children in State Primary Schools and nearly 100,000 in State Post-primary Institutions. This represents an increase of over sixty per cent. in the pre-war figures for the area now constituting the State and accounts for well over one-quarter of the total enrolment for the Federation. Part of this remarkable achievement is due to the fact that the direct involvement of the communities in the ownership and control of the schools has stimulated even the less developed parts of the State to respond to the call for education and strive to train all their children.

It is a matter of particular satisfaction that as a result of the combined effects of two of our major policies—Community

Government and community ownership and control of schools—that the hitherto deprived and underdeveloped areas of this State have now moved dramatically to join the mainstream of our society in the field of education. The table below provides a full picture:

PUPIL ENROLMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Serial No.	*Division*	1970	1971	1972	1973	1973: *Using* 1970 = 100
1.	Aba	10,336	18,873	24,313	27,254	264
2.	Abakaliki	15,217	17,298	22,771	25,895	170
3.	Afikpo	29,309	39,484	40,374	44,823	153
4.	Aguata	36,785	46,925	40,726	45,017	122
5.	Anambra	17,685	24,727	21,765	24,526	139
6.	Arochukwu	8,785	10,959	11,571	11,397	130
7.	Awgu	23,841	28,939	32,198	37,763	158
8.	Bende	13,851	19,790	20,964	23,235	168
9.	Enugu	19,504	28,924	36,456	42,221	216
10.	Etiti	14,727	19,226	19,583	18,609	126
11.	Ezzikwo	20,765	22,447	26,848	29,255	141
12.	Idemili	29,954	33,749	31,467	33,479	112
13.	Igbo-Eze	15,430	18,099	20,624	22,489	146
14.	Ihiala	19,372	24,208	21,466	25,494	132
15.	Ishielu	18,508	18,813	23,841	28,574	154
16.	Isi-Uzo	18,078	18,148	18,686	21,853*	121*
17.	Mbaise	55,345	61,999	59,901	62,445	113
18.	Mbaitoli/Ikeduru ..	40,202	45,057	44,101	48,349	120
19.	Mbano	32,577	35,860	42,156	41,110	126
20.	Mgbidi	39,611	44,969	44,226	46,961	118
21.	Ngwa	50,759	66,553	74,400	78,390	154
22.	Njikoka	37,696	46,063	46,583	50,307	133
23.	Nkanu	17,229	24,882	30,498	33,810	196
24.	Nkwerre	66,015	74,679	66,334	70,807	107
25.	Nnewi	32,718†	34,808	30,532	34,190	120†
26.	Nsukka	16,516	22,124	26,050	29,776	180
27.	Ogbaru	—	3,575	3,841	5,002	140‡
28.	Oguta	15,426	14,984	19,114	23,077	150
29.	Ohafia	18,283	24,747	21,457	24,631	135
30.	Okigwi	35,035	43,025	40,103	45,621	130
31.	Onitsha	11,036	17,923	25,126	29,985	272
32.	Owerri	51,967	57,573	62,465	66,930	129
33.	Udi	32,689	38,011	42,961	43,950	134
34.	Ukwa	10,480	14,287	17,033	18,662	178
35.	Umuahia	38,306	48,373	49,817	54,776	143
	Total	914,037	1,080,099	1,160,451	1,270,663	139

*Figures for Isi-Uzo Division are current estimates.

†Ogbaru and Nnewi comprised the Nnewi Division of 1970, i.e., 1970 Nnewi figures include Ogbaru.

‡Ratio for Ogbaru is based on 1971.

It is a great achievement that should be highly pleasing to the gods and men that areas such as these should report such dramatic increases in school enrolment, in the brief period of three post-war years: Nkanu—196 per cent, Nsukka—180 per cent, Ukwa—178 per cent, Abakaliki—170 per cent, Ishielu—154 per cent, Afikpo—153 per cent, Igbo-Eze—146 per cent, Ezzikwo—141 per cent, Ogbaru—140 per cent. It will also be observed that as against the state-wide average of 139 per cent, that there have been exceptional increases in the Urban Centres of Onitsha—272 per cent, Aba—264 per cent, and Enugu—216 per cent. These high increases are due to great problem and prospect of urban explosion in post-war East-Central State. Aba with a population of 600,000, Onitsha—500,000 and Enugu—450,000 represent the dizzy summits of a major and fundamental transformation in the structure of our society from predominanatly rural society in 1966 to the most highly urbanized and mobilized society in Nigeria. I should note parenthetically that I use the term urbanized in its full sociological sense, that is not merely in terms of demographic densities but also in terms of the heterogeneity of the population in their division of labour and differentiation of functions. It is very important to understand the nature of this transformation, of this mutation. It is a situation of great hopes and expectations but alas also one of great pain, trauma and neurosis in the process of it becoming.

It is no part of our claim that our system of education is now ideal and the best of all possible worlds. There are problems—many of them—but we can claim to be solving them and we can claim on part performance that we shall solve them. There are of course other problems, if one must call them that, to which we have not and will not essay a solution: we refer to the "problems" of those who see in the democratization of education the death-knoll of their contingent privileges—"who is going to be the steward if everyone goes to school ?"; of those who worry that there are now no more special schools for their little Lord Fauntleroys, instead the children of the "bigman" and the children of the "onyeburu" now share the same facilities; of all those who seek to impose the heavy hands of yesterday and the revolutionary and dynamic present. To all such people I can only assure them that their children will be better than they are. Their children, our children will have the elementary opportunity which we never had to be able to view man as man, a moral being, capable of good and evil of love and hate, of wisdom, piety, courage and humility simply because he is man and not man as "educated man", as "an illiterate", as "Christian man", as "Pagan man", as "Moslem man" or as "Ibo or other ethnic man". These categories by which we create circles of inclusion and of exclusion in an already pluralistic world when they become the sole or primary means of mediation serve as barriers to communication, and ultimately become an affront to the social nature of man, a denial of man's intrinsic, sacred and moral nature, an antideluvian and superstitious counterpoise to the wisdom, grace and understanding of the spirit of ecumenism.

Athletics and other sports are organized under the Ministry of Education. Recently we witnessed the Second Annual State-wide Sports Festival and in our speech on that occasion we spoke about a long range programme of development through our schools and colleges. We so intend. As a beginning, the Edict establishing the East-Central State Sports Council will shortly be promulgated. The Edict will provide for a full-time Chairman, for a Director of Sports and for membership of the Council, etc. The one and only Jerry Enyeazu will of course continue in office as the Chairman to the greater glory of sports in this State, in the nation and indeed all Africa.

The demand for education, which must be sustained since it is basic to development, however, imposes a severe strain on our financial resources. The State School System now caters for an establishment of about 35,000 teachers with a total wage bill of over ₦34 million. The quality of instruction is being upgraded by the absorption of more graduate and well-qualified specialist teachers and the continuing retraining of those in service. At the same time efforts are being made to equip the schools and to renew the content of instruction to prepare out children for a well adjusted and useful life in the community.

In our search for excellency, it becomes necessary to take steps to ensure that the system does not break down for lack of sustenance. Last year we were obliged to slightly increase tuition fees in post-primary institutions. This year it has become necessary to make a similar demand in primary schools. With effect from the next school year which starts in September, the following rates of school fees will apply in primary schools—

Elementary I ₦3.00 per annum or ₦1 a term.

Elementary II ₦5.10 per annum or ₦1.70 a term.

Elementary III ₦7.50 per annum or ₦2.50 a term.

Elementary IV ₦10.50 per annum or ₦3.50 a term.

Elementary V ₦13.50 per annum or ₦4.50 a term.

Elementary VI ₦15.00 per annum or ₦5.00 a term.

Even with these increases, it remains the case that for every naira the state calls upon parents and guardians to pay, the State has to find ₦2 to meet the recurrent cost of education, in addition to bearing the cost of capital development. Under the less efficient systems of the past the burden could have been much greater and the results less concrete.

We also intend in this financial year to begin a demonstration, contrary to the norms of the classic economists, that expenditure on education can be a direct and causal stimulus to economic development. We intend to achieve this through the medium of a trading organization, shortly to be incorporated, which will be owned by the State School Board and will, on the one hand supply most of the material needs of the schools system and on the other control and stimulate the growth of a multiplicity of schools—services industries by a system of franchising. In this way we hope not only to expand the resource base for financing education but also to achieve an absolute increase in the amount of available finance. Finally I wish to state that before the end of this month the Tribunal to be set-up to determine on the nature and amounts of compensation that may be due to the former proprietors of schools will be set up.

At the level of post-secondary education preliminary work has now been completed on the establishment of two new specialized institutions, the Institute of Management and Technology at Enugu, the Alvan Ikoku College of Education at Owerri. The first intake of students under the new statutes will take place in the new academic year.

In the last year there were a few days of stress and worry at the temporary campus of the College of Technology. Although we found the actions of the students unjustified since they had not made use of all the normal channels of communication open to them it was nonetheless true that Government had not performed adequately in terms of its responsibility to these students. Part of the failure of Government was due to its mood of anxious expectancy of the release of the remainder of the grant by the United Kingdom Government towards the construction of the College—a state of expectancy induced and sustained by the repeatedly affirmed and re-affirmed promises of agents of the British High Commission in their perennial ambulations between Lagos and Enugu since 1970. Just when it seemed we were waiting for Godot a letter was at last issued in late 1972 ostensibly releasing the remainder of the grant. But not yet, it now developed that the British High Commission was first anxious to meet the alleged outstanding claims of a firm of British civil engineering contractors, and only thereafter would the inconsequential remainder be made over to us, subject of course to our agreeing to use another British contractor. Now this is a bit much. We do need aid; we will continue to accept aid from all friends including the British but never at the cost of our self-respect and dignity. In this particular instance we see no need for continued dialogue—either the British will transfer the full amount of the outstanding grant and with no pre-conditions or they can keep it and thanks for nothing. The University of Nigeria has been restored, and as already announced the Government of the South-Eastern State and my Government have invited the Federal Military Government to take over the University.

On Health and Social Welfare Services, a total provision of ₦16.3 million has been made, ₦8.8 million under recurrent and ₦7.5 million as Capital Expenditure. The Balonwu Expert Advisory Committee appointed last year to study and make recommendations on the ways and means of improving the administration of health care in the State has since reported and Government is currently reviewing the existing system in the light of the report. The reorganization will be accommodated within the ₦8.8 million provided for recurrent expenditure. Considerable progress was recorded in the provision of medical services last year, the task of reconstructing and re-equipping Government hospitals, dental clinics, medical training institutions and other medical institutions in the State was largely accomplished. Two newly completed divisional hospitals at Udi, and Enugu-Ezike were opened. Three similar new hospitals to be opened this year, are now under construction at Isi-Uzo, Ishielu and Ukwa Divisions, in pursuance of my Government's policy of providing one good hospital for each administrative division. Extension of health services to rural areas would be vigorously pursued this year in order to provide better medical care for our entire population. Two Chest Clinics would be built at Awgu and Nsukka. The reconstruction and conversion into Specialist Hospitals of the former Enugu General Hospital has since been achieved and it has now admitted its second batch of clinical students as a Teaching Hospital bringing the total to about 140 such students. For more effective administration and co-ordination we have lent the hospital to the University of Nigeria, Nsukka to use as her Teaching Hospital for a period of five years.

With regard to mental care for the people, it is proposed to build a new Psychiatric Hospital at Enugu and provision has been made for the establishment of an Eye Hospital also at Enugu during the year.

A nucleus of Pharmaceutical Inspectorate Branch established last year to combat and control the sale of drugs to the public has been expanded for effective operation in the main towns in the State in order to arrest the menace of indiscriminate sale and administration of drugs in streets and market places by quacks, which lead to loss of innocent lives, sight and limbs. Ample provision has been made to improve on the quality and range of drugs supplied to our hospitals and health centres.

Efforts at controlling communicable diseases with particular reference to smallpox and poliomyelitis will be intensified. In cases of tuberculosis, it is envisaged that all persons below fourteen years of age will receive free B.C.G. inoculation. The Health Division has been reorganized on divisional basis to give effect to bringing public health education and preventive services to a great percentage of the rural population. The re-union of 10,000 displaced and orphaned children has been successfully completed with almost all the children re-united with their real parents and families. In the field of orthopaedics and rehabilitation of the disabled, the Haile Sellasie Institute of Plastic Surgery which is nearing completion will be equipped and commissioned during the year.

Provision has been made for short fall grants, salary and training grants to Joint and Voluntary Agency Hospitals respectively. Maintenance grants will also be paid to Voluntary Agency Hospitals that offer leprosy services.

A Ministry was created for Industries last year in order to allow greater concentration of effort in this important sector of our economy. A provision of ₦.26 million is made for its recurrent services. During the year the momentum of industrial reconstruction in the State was intensified and a beginning was made in setting up new industries. A total provision of ₦11.2 million has been made for various capital projects. Provision for reconstruction projects include the expansion of the Golden Guinea Breweries at Umuahia, the modernization of Aba Textile Mills, and continuing work on the rehabilitation of Nigersteel at Enugu, Modern Ceremics at Umuahia and the Mineral Waters Plant at Onitsha and Nigergas at Enugu. New industries include new investment in the General Cotton Mills at Onitsha to fund its expansion and vertical integration, completion of the Paints Projects at Enugu, and the formal establishment of the Investment Company and the Hotel Project at Aba on which much of the preliminary work has now been completed and the Holiday Resort Centre at Oguta. The expanding possibilities of the Central Water Transportation Company have also been recognized by new capital provisions.

Effort is continuing to encourage the growth of small-scale industries in the State through the fund for small-scale industries credits scheme which commenced operation in the financial year just ended. During the year, the committee responsible for the administration of the scheme approved a total of ₦318,670 for fifty projects in the various parts of the State. The bulk of this loan will be disbursed in the 1973–74 Financial Year. To improve the establishment facilities for the small-scale industries, construction of industrial estates primarily for small-scale establishments will commence early in the coming year.

An industrial survey of the State was commissioned last February. The Report of this study which should be completed in September, 1973 will form the basis for the industrial development programme in the next Plan and provide a sound and rational basis for planning of industrial projects and investments in both the private and public sectors. Many more industrial establishments are under active study and some may mature this year.

The Ministry of Information and Home Affairs is provided with ₦2,153,980 for its sources during this year. Adequate provision has been made for materials to enable the Printing Division of the Ministry satisfy the needs of other Ministries and Departments and to make it capable of undertaking printing works for Ministries and Departments for which provisions were hitherto made separately in their estimates. The *Renaissance* and the E.C.B.S. continue to grow in effectiveness, sophistication and profitability.

Full work on reactivation of our Television Service will begin this year. A contract worth ₦1.6 million has been signed between this Government and a foreign contracting firm. It is hoped that the service would be commissioned at the end of this calendar year. The Onitsha and Umuahia Libraries were reactivated during the past year, while work on Aba, Abakaliki, Enugu and Owerri Pilot Libraries will begin this year. The establishment of more branch libraries is also on hand since it is the intention of my Government to bring knowledge to everyone irrespective of his place of residence in the State. We intend to do so not only through the extension of library facilities and the spread of formal education but also through the newspaper, radio and especially the T.V. We intend and will seek to involve all our people in the march forward without distinction of class or of occupation.

₦1.3 million has been appropriated to the recurrent service of the Ministry of Lands, Survey and Urban Development, and ₦2.3 million is provided for capital projects in Town and Country Planning. During the past year a new policy in the system of land acquisition was developed and applied at Aba to the satisfaction of the local community. As from now on, instead of the outright acquisition of land from communities, Government will be willing to share rents in perpetuity on a fifty-fifty basis with communities that convey title of their land to Government for residential and or industrial purposes. Where, however, land is sought by Government for the provision of services or amenities the community will be required to "show" the land to Government or else the project will be transferred to a more willing community and no compensation would be paid to landowners. Survey and designing of all the various layouts in Enugu, Oji River, Owerri Government Station, and Aba as well as surveys of some of the new Divisional Headquarters and the State Survey School at Agbogwugwu in Awgu Division were completed during the year.

A Landscape Unit has been established in the Ministry. An Open Spaces Authority of which the Landscape Unit shall form the executive arm is to be established. Reorganization of the Planning Authorities with a view to their revitalization and viability will be carried out during the year while new Authorities for fast growing towns will be appointed.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Agricultural Extension has an appropriation of ₦3.12 million on current account while ₦10.3 million are provided for capital projects in the Primary Production Sector. The reorganization of the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources which I promised in my 1972–73 Budget Speech has virtually been accomplished. Government Farms and Farm Settlements were transferred to the Agricultural Development Corporation from 1st April, 1972. The Edict establishing Agricultural Development Authority which is now the direct successor to the Agricultural Development Corporation and which took over from it all its former activities connected with direct production is shortly to be enacted.

Already in the process of transition to the full blown Agricultural Development Authority many significant successes have been achieved in the implementation of our outlined strategy for agricultural development. The rump Ministry of Natural Resources and Agricultural Extension is already moving forward in a new and dynamic manner now that its role and functions have been clearly defined. In this connection it is with great pleasure that I announce that two significant research breakthroughs have been made by staff of that Ministry, the details of which will be made known by the appropriate authority. The former Research Division of the Ministry was along with the School of Agriculture Umudike, the Umudike Research Station and the Oji Tennery, transferred to the Federal Government. The Produce Division has now transferred to the new Ministry of Trade and Transport. The Report of the Committee appointed to examine the feasibility of establishing a Forestry Commission in the State will soon be considered by Government. The Ministry has thus by the above extensive operation been restricted to extension work and supporting services.

In the last financial year 41,000 out of 48,000 envisaged acres of Oil-Palm Plantation were reclaimed. So far thirty-four Divisional Farmers Councils have been inaugurated with forums in Community Council areas. These bodies will form channels of information between farmers and the Government agents and agencies. An Edict has been promulgated in which the responsibility for meat inspection has been transferred from the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare to this Ministry. A draft Edict on Supervised Agricultural Credit will soon be promulgated.

The Ministry of Trade and Transport was established last year in order to bring under one organization the arms of Government responsible for trade, transport and co-operatives. A provision of ₦1.2 million is made for its recurrent services. Among its major responsibilities this financial year will be the establishment of the Market Authorities for the main urban centres of Enugu, Onitsha and Aba. The Bus Transport Service is being expanded to provide a network of communication binding the major centres in the Eastern States, and a beginning is being made in providing Water Transport Services in the riverine areas.

With the creation of a national organization for the purchase of export produce, the *raison d'etre* of the State's Marketing Board would seem to have disappeared. A new Marketing Organization properly structured to carry out the remaining functions on commercial principles is being considered and will be established shortly. The old Board would have "withered away".

A provision of ₦7.2 million is made from the recurrent services of the Ministry of Works and Housing. This Ministry occupies a central role in our development effort, being responsible for the organization or execution of the physical construction. This financial year we are starting the process of reorganizing this agent of government for greater effectiveness. A Water Board has been created to take over the functions of the Ministry in relation to water resources development control and the provision of water supplies. Capital provision for Water Supplies amount to ₦6 million. It is however expected that with the efficient operation of the Water Board it will be possible to raise funds to carry out viable new projects for communities able and willing to support such projects. The rehabilitation of our road system has been delayed both by the lack of funds and by the time lag in equipping the Ministry of Works and Housing. A provision of ₦6.7 million has been made for capital projects under the Ministry. It is expected that in the current financial year since much of the equipment has now come in, a higher level of performance than in the past will be achieved. Already there is evidence of the success of our efforts to re-structure and re-orientate the Ministry. Believe it or not the Ministry of Works and Housing has actually begun to earn revenue for the State; the engineers are growing more self-confident and self-reliant as they get involved in the direct execution of works and other construction projects.

Under General Administration considerable expenditure has been undertaken to reconstruct and rehabilitate damaged public buildings but a lot still remains to be done. The tax offices and Sub-Treasuries in many places are still to be repaired. Erection of court buildings in the new Magisterial and High Court Districts is proceeding apace and it is hoped that substantial expenditure will be undertaken on this project during the year. Other expenditures will be for the re-establishment of the various workshops, yards and stores of Ministry of Works and Housing to facilitate the work of that Ministry in various parts of the State and for the Divisional Secretariats complex. For the latter, approval has already been given for work to start in Ogbaru, Anambra, Isi-Uzo, Udi and Ukwa Divisions. Other Divisions will shortly follow.

In a subsequent briefing the State Commissioner for Finance will provide ample details of the various aspects of the Budget which I cannot discuss here. I would therefore like to conclude my statement by highlighting the performance of some other institutions sponsored by this Government. The African Continental Bank Limited recently held its Board of Directors meeting here in Enugu and the report is that although they are not yet wholly out of the woods they can see light ahead. I also believe that with the reopening of the Port Harcourt Branch in the past year that the joint partnership between the Rivers State and this State will mature into a real and meaningful co-operation. The affairs of the other bank—the Co-operative Bank of Eastern Nigeria—have not been so happy wholly as a result of self-serving and misdirected leadership from the top. The people, the ordinary co-operators followed the generous lead of my Government in supporting and sustaining the Bank and it is largely as a result of the support of the people that the Bank will continue to survive. One is particularly happy that as soon as the people became fully aware of the failures of their leaders they convened a meeting on their own and in the true spirit of co-operative democracy overthrew the failed leadership and entrusted the management and control of the bank to my Government. I hereby make a solemn promise that we shall not fail and that we shall in time return the bank to you—enriched, stabilized, strengthened and prosperous.

I wish to return even briefly to a problem, an ugly cancer which threatens in its predictable consequences—to undermine and invalidate all that we have done and all that we have achieved these past three years. I refer of course to the issue of the so-called "abandoned property" in the Rivers State. I began working at this problem as long ago as 1968 and I must confess to a sense of mortification and grief that it remains in 1973 an issue worth talking about. Of course we have made progress, considerable progress in the most fundamental areas of our relationships with the Rivers State—indeed if one overlooked this one issue it must be admitted that general relationships and social intercourse have practically achieved normalcy. This has been the joint achievement of the Government and people of Rivers State and of our people and my Government But there has been no genuine progress on the peripheral though highly emotive and symbolic issue of "abandoned property". The situation makes no sense. The problem of "abandoned property" arose because of strained and hostile relationship, which had developed in the process of the national crisis—when it was felt that Ibos from the East-Central State would never be able to return and be welcome in Port Harcourt. Today Ibos in their tens of thousands have returned to Port Harcourt, they are made welcome and there is no rancour. I like to believe and I think I know that my good friend and colleague Commander Alfred Diete-Spiff is wholly sincere in this efforts to resolve this problem, justly and equitably. But it would appear that vested interests have developed, anxious to expropriate and to continue to enjoy their illegal booty from the efforts of others, some of whom even now live in Port Harcourt but have no access to their legitimate property. I continue to believe that the most viable solution to this problem lies along the path of dialogue based on honour and mutual confidence and fidelity. But this charade must end now. Enough is Enough. A solution can no longer be postponed without permanent injury to the interests of the people of the Rivers State, of the East-Central

State and indeed all the people of Nigeria; and such a solution must be based on equity and fairplay consistent with the provisions of our national constitution. A solution based on power and in disregard of fairplay and equity would be no solution at all, or at best a transient and pyrrhic solution. It will be overthrown because it will automatically evoke the contrapuntal power of affected groups and the process of their struggle may well consume us all.

Fellow country men and women the last three years have not been easy but we have faced all challenges with fortitude, determination, courage and understanding. I must stress understanding because I know that in the process of a war, when man is reduced to a being merely struggling to survive there is a tendency towards amorality, towards expediency, towards opportunism—aberrations which did sometimes acquire a "moral" character because of the elemental urge to survive. Because one understood one has not hitherto been willing to impose sanctions. Rather I pleaded and urged all units in society, but more especially the professional groups to please police themselves and their kind. I do not believe my appeals have failed; I like to think that a great majority of our people have once more redeveloped the capacity to differentiate good from evil. But it has been a hard struggle—and three years later is time enough, and thus some have fallen in the struggle and we have cast them from us. So let it be, we hope others would have learnt some lessons. The last few days have provided a fine time for mudrackers. Yet we do not think it is a matter for celebration that some of our comrades have fallen. As the poet said do not ask for whom the bell tolls; it may toll for thee. We will continue as we must until we have restored a viable level of ethical commitment and conformation in the process of our Government. But no one need be afraid if he is satisfied that his hands are clean.

In conclusion I would like to make a few announcements which affect the circumstances of some people in the civil service and elsewhere. Firstly, as already indicated we are agreed and determined to repay our compulsory loan to the workers this Financial Year ending 31st March, 1974. But when exactly within this period and how we will effect the repayment is strictly a function of cash-flow in our deficit budget situation. Secondly, in view of the more violent content of our lives today we have decided to help provide personal accident insurance on a group basis for all persons employed in the public service with effect from this year. We have been witnesses to too many tragedies whose impact might have been cushioned if the surviving widows, children and other dependants had a nest-egg to inherit. Finally, it is my pleasure to announce that with effect from 1st April, 1973, all outstanding sums yet to be repaid on car, motor vehicles and bicycle advances granted before 30th May, 1967 will be treated as having been written off and are therefore no longer due to be collected by Government.

Fellow citizens, we have come a long way since our journey began three years ago. We have taken the measure of our problems and reviewed our needs and objectives. Let us determine this year to embark on the foundation for a solid future. I am confident that if we all work steadfastly toward our common purpose, we shall succeed. Let us continue.

Thank you.

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