

Does he not think that it might be in order to offer a house to the Quebec minister through the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation?

[English]

EXTERNAL AID

BIAFRA—INQUIRY AS TO STEPS TO RENDER ASSISTANCE

On the orders of the day:

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Arising out of the questions that were asked on Friday regarding the disastrous situation in Biafra and the rather uncertain replies of the ministers, may I ask whether now, after three days of further contemplation, the minister is in a position to advise the house what action Canada intends to take in order to meet a situation that is pregnant with deep danger to the peace of the world. Has Canada been asked by Sweden for assistance by supplying aircraft and, if so, have the aircraft been supplied?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): I have reviewed the answers I gave on Friday and I do not think there is any necessity to add to those answers. I indicated that Canada has been very active and continues to be active both in trying to bring the conflict to an end and in the provision of relief.

As I said at the time, we had been asked to supply aircraft but this had proven to be hypothetical because there was no place to land. As hon. gentlemen in the house know, even the International Red Cross had to suspend its flights. I can assure hon. gentlemen that as soon as it is possible for supplies to be flown into Biafra we will be there to help.

Mr. Diefenbaker: The uncertainty still continues. I now ask the minister whether at the earliest possible date the government will provide an opportunity to this house to express opinions concerning what should be done in this regard, to put an end to the feet dragging that has gone on on the part of this government.

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, there will be ample opportunity during the next few days to discuss this question and many others of equal importance. If necessary I would be happy to participate in the debate.

[Later:]

Mr. W. B. Nesbitt (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Can the minister tell us

Inquiries of the Ministry

whether any Canadian relief supplies have reached Biafra as yet?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, I doubt very much whether any of the supplies that we have put into Lagos have yet reached Biafra, but they certainly have been reaching people who are now under the control of the Nigerian authorities. Our supplies are moving forward into areas where former residents of Biafra are now located.

Mr. Nesbitt: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I wonder whether the minister can give the house some indication of the nature of these supplies, and perhaps their extent.

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, they consist in the main of high protein foods, fish and things of that kind, which are very much needed by the people of this area, who have had to get along on a very starchy diet, if any at all.

CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

REQUEST FOR PROVISION FOR VOTING BY INCAPACITATED PEOPLE

On the orders of the day:

Mr. E. B. Osler (Winnipeg South Centre): I should like to direct a question to the President of the Privy Council. In view of its accent on involvement and participation, does the government intend to seek revision of the elections act so that in future bedridden and physically incapacitated people may vote by mail or exercise their franchise in some other way at election time?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (President of the Privy Council): As hon. members will have noted, there is no provision for revision of the elections act at this session of parliament. I hope to be in a position to announce to the house some vehicle by means of which hon. members can express to the government their views on changes that might be made in the Canada Elections Act.

IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS RESPECTING ELECTION EXPENSES

On the orders of the day:

Mr. David Lewis (York South): I should like to direct a further question to the President of the Privy Council. In view of this underlining of the fact that there will not be any legislation to amend the election act, could he inform this house whether there will be any legislation at this session to implement the recommendations of the committee on election expenses?