

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

DEVCO—USE OF FUND IN RETIREMENT PLAN

Mr. Donald MacInnis (Cape Breton-East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Labour. Will he tell the house under what arrangements Devco is using the Unemployment Insurance Commission fund in its early retirement plan?

Hon. Bryce S. Mackasey (Minister of Labour): As has been mentioned in the house before, Mr. Speaker, the assistance to people retired at age 60 is a two-stage step. The first step is supplementary unemployment benefits administered by the Unemployment Insurance Commission. The second step is direct assistance or pensions paid for by Devco when unemployment insurance benefits run out.

Mr. MacInnis: It is apparent the minister completely misunderstands the representations I am making. Under what special arrangements has Devco brought about the use of the U.I.C. fund in its early retirement plan?

Mr. Mackasey: Mr. Speaker, it is perhaps of historical interest to the hon. member to know that this arrangement was made some time ago, as the former minister of manpower has pointed out on several occasions in the house. It is not the first time such arrangements have been made, and it probably will not be the last. The important thing is that it is of great benefit to the men concerned.

Mr. MacInnis: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I would very much like to ask the minister to take into account that this is the first time that any such plan has been in operation. It has nothing to do with former arrangements. I ask the minister once more: Under what special arrangements can Devco use the U.I.C. fund, a fund which has been denied to individual Canadians?

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member has asked the question three times. He may not be satisfied with the reply given to him by the minister, but I suggest to him that the rules allow him to ask the question just once. He asked it the third time as a point of order, and I suggest it was not a legitimate point of order.

Mr. MacInnis: As a supplementary question I would ask the minister why individual Canadians are being denied that right that is being used by Devco, a Crown company?

Mr. Speaker: The supplementary question is argumentative.

Inquiries of the Ministry

EXTERNAL AID

BIAFRA—RED CROSS ROLE IN PROVIDING RELIEF

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs a question that was directed to the acting minister a few days ago and which he was unable to answer. Now that the Biafran authorities are indicating that they are prepared to allow daylight flights, what representations has the government of Canada made to encourage Nigeria to extend safe passage for daylight flights by the Red Cross?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Recently on a number of occasions we have had discussions with the Nigerian authorities urging them to agree to continue their offer for daylight flights. I am very happy that there seems to be some progress and I hope the Leader of the Opposition is correct in saying agreement has been reached on these matters. We have also been discussing with the Nigerian government the safety of flyers who may be involved. We share with the Leader of the Opposition the desire to make our aid available on the most effective basis.

Mr. Stanfield: As a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker, in view of the report that the Red Cross has withdrawn from operations in Nigeria because of planes being shot down, is the government of Canada prepared to make arrangements to bring assistance to the starving people in Nigeria through any other agencies? Is this matter being given active consideration?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, I hope that the Leader of the Opposition's statement is not correct. The International Red Cross, I understand, will be continuing to operate in both Biafra and other parts of Nigeria. Discussions are now going on with respect to daylight flights and other methods of delivery over land and over water. We are doing everything possible to assist with these discussions.

Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs whether in his discussions with the federal government of Nigeria he made any protest about the shooting down of a clearly marked Red Cross relief plane on June 11, I believe, with consequent loss of life of the crew, in complete disregard of international conventions?