

*External Aid*

dying of starvation or sickness. The experience was not successful, but as I said, some leaders were not overly wise and did not co-operate as much as they should have. Since when, Mr. Speaker, must we plead with those we want to help to accept our assistance and our alms? There again, it is the humble folk, the peasantry who must suffer for the pride and the ambition of their leaders.

In my opinion, Canada has made a commendable effort, by no means daring, to bring relief to the sick and starving people who are dying by the thousands.

At this stage, I should like to pay tribute to those who have risked their lives several times carrying food and drugs in aircrafts under difficult and sometimes impossible conditions. I am referring to the crews in the service of *Caritas Internationalis* who have risked their lives several times to save other lives and relieve hardship, where the fighting was taking place, and I should like to quote a few excerpts from the report of Rev. Father Anthony Byrne of *Caritas* about the risks which the crews working with the Red Cross or *Caritas* had to take. Three of their members died carrying a Red Cross shipment when their plane crashed. Father Byrne himself ran similar risks; he tells us that on July 7 last and I quote from his report:

I take off with a load for Biafra; 15 minutes before landing the cannons of Nigeria use us as target. But they miss the bull's-eye by a long shot, and we continue our trip peacefully. There was much happiness in Biafra when it was learned that a load of fish had just arrived. It was the first shipment of fish since the beginning of the war.

Other trips were made in the meantime, but on the 14th of July, another very difficult trip was made.

A load of salt, fish and medical supplies was sent by a Superconstellation. Heavy fire greeted Commander Malcolm as he flew over Biafra. The commander is an experienced pilot and it was only thanks to his ability that the plane did not crash to the ground. The crew was convinced that the radar guiding the marine and ground firing was manoeuvred by Europeans. The plane about-turned and when it landed the members of the crew handed in their resignation.

Mr. Speaker, I feel one could have done it with less provocation. July 20, and I continue:

Arriving at Lisbon, I am confronted by a new problem: Nigeria now uses radar to direct the firing of the marine and ground batteries. They fire on our planes with great precision. A plane, flying at high altitude, was almost shot down. The pilots agree that Europeans are directing the firing.

Father Byrne also tells of another difficult trip; on July 31:

An important supply of blankets and 9 tons of dry beans were shipped by a Superconstellation. The plane got caught in heavy barrage fire but commander Raab, with his usual ability and courage, managed to escape.

And that goes on almost every day, and he speaks of the trip, on August 5:

Attempt to fly to Biafra. Commander Sheriffs and his crew managed to make it. They ran into curtain fire extremely well guided by Nigerian radars. One wing of the DC7 came within an inch of being struck, Commander Sheriffs and his men returned to Sao Tomé with frayed nerves. As he landed, the mechanic immediately gave his resignation. The other members of the crew refused to leave again until such time as another air route had been picked out.

The following is an account of the trip on August 9:

The planes are again flying through heavy artillery fire and a warning is issued by the commanders of both aircraft that under such conditions they refuse to take off for Biafra.

Finally, on August 21:

The plane's aircrew—

—from Transair (Sweden)—

—used to fly at a very low altitude of about 100 metres to avoid radar and anti-aircraft fire. On that night, unfortunately, the Nigerians had assembled troops equipped with anti-aircraft guns and machine-guns close to the border. The commanding officer had to use all his ability to avoid shells. His aircraft was hit twice and bursts of gun-fire tore holes through the wings. In spite of the danger, the pilot was able to fly through the exploding shells. On the way back, he had to face the same problems but he was not hit. Once in Sao Tomé, while mechanics were repairing the bullet holes in the wings, the commanding officer and his crew had something to eat. One hour later, they were taking off again at the risk of their own lives so that the starving people of Biafra might receive some assistance.

● (5:20 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker, it must be admitted that a great deal of courage is necessary in such danger and Rev. Father Byrne, commanding officers Raab, Malcolm, Sheriff and others deserve to be remembered. They should be rewarded for their outstanding bravery.

Had it not been for financial and political interests at the outset, all this suffering, all those deaths and risks would have been avoided. British oil interests did not hesitate in influencing their government which, through the supply of modern armaments supported the federal army, thereby preventing 10 million people from deciding their own fate, while they obviously wanted to do so.