

15. Canadian officials in Geneva have been informed by Biafran representatives that Biafra demands more than military assurances; that, in addition, guarantees of a political nature are required in order to break the impasse. The Canadian government is not willing to give the political guarantees demanded as these would be tantamount to recognition of an independent state of Biafra, and an overt interference by Canada into the political affairs of another country, contrary to the resolutions of the Organization of African Unity.

16. During the past several weeks, the Secretary of State for External Affairs has continued his discussions about Nigeria with some 25 other foreign ministers, many of them from African nations, at the United Nations. I talked to Secretary General U Thant about the problem in New York on November 11 as I had a year earlier. Canadian leaders have pursued the Nigerian issue with the leaders of two African countries who have visited Ottawa this fall. They were President Hamani Diori of Niger and President Nyerere of Tanzania. I can say that the unanimous view of these African leaders is that the Organization of African Unity resolutions must be respected.

17. The government is now considering, as stated a few days ago, alternative means of delivering relief to Biafra in daylight. It does so while agreeing entirely with the recent statement of United States Secretary of State Rogers: "Daylight flights under agreed procedures... remain the only practicable scheme for an immediate and substantial expansion of relief operations."

18. The government's concern remains, Mr. Speaker, as it has throughout, and as does that of hon. members opposite and indeed all Canadians, with the innocent civilian victims of this tragic war. Delivering adequate food and relief supplies to these people must be our resolve, notwithstanding the disinclination of the Ojukwu regime to accept it, except in return for political advantage.

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in finishing his statement the Prime Minister passed very harsh judgment on Colonel Ojukwu. We are not in a position in this House to assess the faults of those involved in this dreadful disaster. But we are in a position, as it is our duty to do, to pass judgment on the government of this country and the Prime Minister of this country for the way their responsibility in relation to this matter has been discharged.

Minister's Statement on Biafran Relief

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Stanfield: The Prime Minister has really given us nothing more than a catalogue of excuses for inaction.

An hon. Member: Shame!

• (2:20 p.m.)

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Stanfield: The Prime Minister and his government colleagues are trying to escape the indictment they deserve, because this issue has profoundly affected the Canadian people. A government that proclaims participatory democracy on the one hand cannot be indifferent when the people respond. The people have left no doubt about their anger over government inaction.

Let us be under no illusions, Mr. Speaker, about the purpose of the statement made today by the Prime Minister. Hundreds of thousands of Canadians watched a television show on Sunday night in which an important statement made by the Prime Minister in this House was shown to be misleading.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Stanfield: The Prime Minister was asked in the House whether there had been any recent requests to the government of Canada by Canairelief for relief assistance and aid. On November 17, as recorded at page 874 of *Hansard*, the Prime Minister said:

Mr. Speaker, I cannot speak of any recent request. There may have been some; I do not know.

This is a subject of great importance, Mr. Speaker. If it has been recognized to be of great importance, why did the Prime Minister not make it clear to the House at the first opportunity that such a request had been received from Canairelief? Even during the course of his long statement today he did not disclose that such a request had been made by Canairelief.

We can all agree, Mr. Speaker, that the arrangement of daylight flights would be most desirable and satisfactory. The Prime Minister indicated that this idea originated with the government of Canada. I doubt that very much, but I do not rise to quarrel about that.

An hon. Member: You're all heart. Really big!

Mr. Stanfield: I ask the Prime Minister to tell the House some time the conditions of a political nature which the government of Biafra has attached to its recent position with