

*External Aid*

As hon. members know, section 2 of citation 323 of Beauchesne's fourth edition states that:

A report from a committee cannot be amended by the house, but it must be referred back to the committee.

Under the provisions of that citation, the purported amendment now before the house could not normally be received or debated, since it seeks to amend the report of the committee rather than the motion for concurrence in the report. However, in view of the terminology of the special order setting up this debate, that is, suspending precedents and standing orders, the Chair, under the circumstances, considered that the amendment should be accepted. I hope that today's proceedings will not be drawn on as a precedent for use at a later date.

**Mr. Jamieson:** Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that at this time we would normally have private members' hour. However, if there is unanimous agreement, and since I gather a number of members wish to speak in this debate, perhaps we might have consent to continue with this debate until seven o'clock, adjourn at that time, and then resume at eight o'clock.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** It is agreed.

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont):** Mr. Speaker, there are debates in which I have enjoyed participating much more than this one because it does not make me particularly happy to stand here to participate in a debate which has as its basic note the sad reflection that our government has been so engulfed in its own red tape and misconception that it basically has been unable to act in respect of one of the greatest international tragedies that face us today. I could have wished very honestly that the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) of this country, when he addressed the house this afternoon, would have given us a statement that would somehow have sounded a realistic clarion call to action which is something that has not been forthcoming from this government from the time of the earliest review or consideration of the problem. Indeed, the speech we listened to this afternoon was filled with nothing much more than distortions, half truths, weak defences and misleading statements about this great tragedy. I do not know whether one should spend time in delineating, in the context of his speech, the failure to grapple realistically

[Mr. Speaker.]

with this problem. It might be wiser in the long run to take the time, for example, to outline the basic weaknesses of the government's position plus some of the initiatives that it might yet consider.

There is, and I think this must be admitted, a basic misconception on the part of the government, first of all, about the nature of the conflict itself. The Prime Minister stated it clearly in his speech when he said it is necessary to grasp the basic fact that this is a civil war. I am neither an international expert nor a lawyer. I do know enough, however, to believe that civil wars are usually those which involve the recognition of certain basic standards of governmental conduct. If one examines the record in Nigeria even over the past few years it becomes evident that such certainly has not been the case. An automatic consideration by any government that the federal military government of Nigeria is fully accepted and representative of the views of the people of that country is a failure to come to grips with the situation as it exists. It is a well known fact that the government is the result really of a military coup, following a previous military coup, that there was no election in respect of the present government, that the constitution as it exists today in the country bears no relation to the one agreed to by all the people at an earlier date, that security of property and persons has broken down completely over the past two years and more in Nigeria, and that the economic action of the military government against a sizeable minority was such as to question the viability of that country even if there had been no civil war. This is beyond question.

The Prime Minister and other government spokesmen have failed even to recognize that such a situation exists. In the speech of the Prime Minister there were comments with regard to what the position of the government should be. He has suggested—I believe he suggested this as recently as yesterday in the house—that it was not the position of the government to take sides. How I wish that were true. What we have been faced with from the beginning is an increasing amount of partisanship, not in the sense we speak of it internally in our country but in terms of this conflict. Canadians, I believe, from coast to coast have asked that the government's action be genuinely neutral. This has not been the case with the government. I believe the