

Inquiries of the Ministry

Has he received reports from the Fathers Doheny, Irish priests, who recently returned from the eastern region of Nigeria where they served for 15 years, to the effect that there is an urgent and very real need for international action to persuade the government of Nigeria to accept an immediate and massive airlift of food? What action, if any, is the government taking on these reports?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I have had the pleasure of spending a good half hour with these gentlemen and I must say I admire greatly their devotion to the cause of their parishioners. I had from them a report on conditions as they were a couple of weeks ago when they left Nigeria and they urged the desirability of getting relief to these people. I could not agree more.

Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if the Secretary of State for External Affairs would make a report on the progress being made with regard to the publication of the most recent report of the observer team?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, there have been no further messages since my report yesterday.

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister clarify his statement yesterday and tell us just where responsibility lies with regard to these reports and whether there is not some responsibility on the part of our own observers to make these reports and then to make them public?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, as I have already said, these are independent observers who do not take instructions from the Canadian government. They act on their own and report what they see which is, I am sure, what we want them to do. They have their own rules and I think we have been well served by these observers. From the reports I have seen recently I think we will continue to be well served, and I hope my hon. friend will support me in that.

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs if he is acting upon the suggestion that Nigeria be urged to use the two other airports besides Uli, that is, Obill-a-goo and Oguwa?

Mr. Sharp: I must repeat what I have said before, that I do not accept the proposition

that the government of Nigeria is less interested in the people over whom it has control than we in this Parliament. If we go on taking this patronizing, superior attitude toward them, we cannot expect the kind of co-operation that I think we should have.

DRUGS**MARIJUANA—ALLEGED STATEMENT AS TO LEGALIZATION**

Mr. W. B. Nesbitt (Oxford): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Did the minister state yesterday that the government will legalize marijuana if a reasonable minority of Canadians is found to use the substance? If so, what does the minister mean by a reasonable minority?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member knows that the question cannot be asked in this way.

[*Later:*]

Mr. Nesbitt: Mr. Speaker, may I rephrase the question I asked a moment ago and direct it to the Prime Minister. Was the Minister of National Health and Welfare stating government policy when he said that the government will legalize marijuana if a reasonable minority of Canadians is found to use the substance? If so, may I ask what is meant by a reasonable minority?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am informed by the minister that he stated nothing of the kind.

LABOUR CONDITIONS**EQUAL PAY FOR WOMEN FOR EQUAL WORK**

Mr. Randolph Harding (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Labour. In view of the legislation presently before the Parliament of the United Kingdom which will at long last give women in that country the right to equal pay for equal work, is the minister considering bringing before the Parliament of Canada during the present session similar legislation for the benefit of the women of Canada?

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, frankly, although we are reviewing our legislation we are waiting for the report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. We want to have before us the recommendations of that report because they will perhaps have some bearing on the proposed legislation.