

External Aid

earlier, more aid would have been possible. It seems to me there is no way of terminating the suffering without in some way bringing about a termination of the fighting. I have to ask this question, and I think most of us in this world must ask it of ourselves: Must we all sit back while thousands die and the world is faced with the prospect of growing bitterness and real danger as a result?

An hon. member to your right, Mr. Speaker, suggested this was a civil war; that they had a perfect right to fight it out without interference from outside. I ask: Is the civilized world faced with no alternative but to sit back, perhaps try to get some aid in there, but to refrain from taking any initiatives with regard to the cessation of the shipment of arms? Must the civilized world refrain from taking any initiative to bring the matter before the United Nations? Canada could have had the matter brought before the United Nations in the summer, without the large number of supporting countries to which the Prime Minister referred this afternoon. Is the civilized world compelled to sit back? Has it no alternative but to accept the view that any initiative of this sort is an interference with the "sovereignty" of a country and a danger to international order?

I do not accept that view. I am as anxious as the next fellow to preserve and build international order.

I think we must proceed in a regular and proper way. But I do not think this compels the world or Canada to refrain from taking proper initiatives. I do not think it is an improper interference on the part of Canada to try to bring about, in consultation with the United States, Russia, France, Great Britain and other countries, a cessation of the shipment of arms; to try to bring about, also, conditions which will lead to the fighting being stopped.

I do not think we have to accept that position. I hope it is not really the position of the government of Canada. We are talking about a country with a colonial background, created, with the best hopes and intentions in the world, under the leadership of Great Britain. Is the world compelled to sit back and watch them fight it out? On the other hand, is it not more constructive for Canada to join with other countries, through the United Nations or any legitimate means open to us, and in concert, to use the United Nations and our good offices to bring about a cessation of the shipment of arms and the real peace that must come through a settlement?

I hope nobody believes it is possible for a government to impose in any enduring way an arrangement or settlement through force upon any substantial number of people in a country. There has in the end to be a settlement of the dispute. I do not want to be unfair, but on the other hand I want to put it bluntly and frankly. I suggest in all sincerity that the government should stop looking for excuses. The Prime Minister said that Canada wanted to be, and would be, friendly with the people of Nigeria long after this dispute is ended. The way things are going now, because of what is happening in Nigeria there will be a great many people in this world with whom Canadians will find it very difficult to be friendly, at the rate people are dying in that country.

Without being maudlin about it, Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the attitude of the government should be: Stop looking for excuses; stop using concepts to serve our own purposes and justify our positions. As I resume my seat I am looking forward to the Secretary of State for External Affairs making some positive suggestions or proposals whereby Canada can offer leadership to the world and take some initiative which will lead in a proper way and without any danger to the international structure of society, to the termination of this dreadful slaughter.

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): At the outset, Mr. Speaker, I would say that I concur with most of what was said by the hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Brewin) and the hon. member for Egmont (Mr. MacDonald). I will not go into many of the details of the trip we just made to Nigeria-Biafra; my colleague the hon. member for Cochrane (Mr. Stewart) mentioned the different places we visited and the many things we saw.

I am rising to participate in this debate because of a great feeling of personal conviction, responsibility and concern for what is happening in Nigeria-Biafra. I have just returned from that country and have experienced a great deal of the suffering that is going on there. We all know that many people are dying. If anybody doubts this, all he has to do is go to Biafra for a few hours. I have pictures on my desk and many more in my office which illustrate the suffering in that country, and I invite anybody to see them at any time. I have pictures of Biafran children who are starving to death, not only Ibo children but those of different ethnic tribes in Nigeria-Biafra.