

*Canadian Action on Nigeria-Biafra*

and into the villages that have been overtaken, to ensure that no massacre of Biafran civilians will occur. Activity of this sort will often take place in a situation like this, even though at times it is quite unintentional. There must be immediate action to prevent any such activity taking place.

I am not referring to military observers. It has been stated that military men should not be sent to observe military men. Civilian men are required as well and, as has already been suggested, we could include some jurists. We could send other people as well. Members of the press could be sent to expose the situation. This must be done immediately. A delay of even a few hours could be vital to the lives of many people on the west coast of Africa.

The second point we are making is that relief must be sent immediately. We cannot afford to delay even a few hours. Relief planes have been grounded for about two days and supplies in Biafra are virtually nil. When relief supplies were flown in at night, they were distributed the next morning. There is no stockpile of food or medicine in Biafra. In a few days many hundreds of thousands of these people could die like flies. This should be obvious to anyone who has knowledge of the situation.

I appeal to the government to immediately send observers into these areas that have been recently taken over. As I have said, these need not be military men. Relief must be given immediately. Canairelief and Joint Church Aid have issued statements that they have food supplies available and they will turn them over to anyone who will fly them in, such as the Nigerian Red Cross or the International Red Cross. This food must be delivered before it is too late. I ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs to act on this suggestion tonight. I ask him to contact as many governments and relief agencies as possible. Then by tomorrow morning Canada could be well on the way to doing something in Nigeria which would ensure that the minimum amount of death and starvation will occur from the tragic situation which already exists in that area.

**Mr. Ray Perrault (Burnaby-Seymour):** Mr. Speaker, at four o'clock this afternoon the Biafran army surrendered to Nigerian federal forces and the final desperate chapter of the Nigerian civil war was acted out. Hopefully, an end will soon come to the misery and bloodshed which has affected both sides of the battle-line. There is no disagreement in

the House that when that end comes, Canada must and will be among the very first to make food and medical aid available.

This was indicated today in the statement by the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp). All parties should have been encouraged by that excellent statement. Valuable suggestions were made in the debate today. Some of them related to the role of Canairelief. It seems logical that the demonstrated resources and abilities of Canairelief should be enlisted as quickly as possible. If food is ready to be delivered, staff is on hand and distribution facilities exist, let us act to bring these Canairelief resources to the area in need as soon as this can be negotiated with the Nigerian government.

We have 24 Hercules aircraft in Canada. Each one has a trained crew and is able to carry over ten tons of relief materials. They could fly non-stop from here to Lagos. Loading procedures on these aircraft should begin tonight, each with ten tons of needed food-stuffs. The crews are available and ready. They should leave in waves of at least three a day so that within a week all these Canadian mercy ships of the air would be there. If we err on any side in this dispute—it is now no longer a dispute but a situation in which we hope a settlement will occur—then let us err on the side of generosity.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Perrault:** Let us do too much rather than too little. Let us show the world that Canada is interested and concerned. Let us get the planes to where they are needed, and when they are there let us use them to ferry supplies from all over Europe and Africa to Nigeria. Some people will say they may have difficulty landing, but Hercules aircraft can land on a grassy meadow. Where they land and where they are used are questions which could be countered by, who will stop them from landing? Landing strips are available. We should bestow on the situation as much Canadian generosity as possible. After that we can send them a copy of today's *Hansard*.

Some estimate that 2 million people have died in the war. In the United Nations meetings in New York in the early part of December 1, as one of the group of Canadian delegates, was told by officials of the Organization of African Unity that the figure is closer to 5 million.

Harsh words have been uttered in this House by the opponents of the government in