

*External Aid*

affairs of Nigeria if we place this matter before the United Nations? Is that an improper intervention or interference with the rights of a sovereign nation? Are we interfering improperly if we try to bring about a cessation of the shipment of arms into Nigeria? Is this an intervention, or is it inconsistent with the exercising of sovereign rights of a country? Is it an improper interference with the sovereignty of a country, in this case Nigeria, to bring about in concert with other countries some pressure toward a negotiated settlement or understanding?

What I am suggesting is that we must not just use words like sovereignty, interference or intervention without defining meanings. I agree immediately that we should not interfere by shipping in arms, but are we and would we be endangering the whole structure of international order by taking an initiative, in co-operation with other countries, to bring about the cessation of the shipment of arms, or by taking some initiative in the United Nations to bring some pressure to bear to stop the fighting, and effect an ultimate peaceful settlement? My hon. friends opposite have suggested that this would be intervening, or could constitute an improper intervention or interference under international law. The suggestion has been made that, somehow or other, because there is a civil war, these people have a perfect right to fight it out and no one has the right to interfere. The suggestion has been made that interfering in any sense of the word is an act which might endanger the whole structure of international law and international order.

I agree that the sole test to be used by the government of Canada in respect of any particular proposal can be found in the question, will it reduce the suffering and achieve a peaceful settlement without bringing about worse consequences? When we ask ourselves whether the means employed by the government with regard to bringing aid to the suffering people, or in working toward a peaceful settlement, have been effective in either respect, I believe any honest man, regardless of his politics, has to say no, the government has not been effective in this regard. We must come to the conclusion that it has not effectively or substantially reduced suffering, and certainly has not effectively advanced measures to bring about the cessation of hostilities or the initiation of a settlement of an enduring nature.

The Prime Minister asked that these programs be judged on the basis of effectiveness.

[Mr. Stanfield.]

Unfortunately we have to say that so far these measures have been ineffective. I shall not keep the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) waiting long, but I hope as soon as I sit down he will propose some effective measures to achieve either or both of these goals.

What is meant by acting wisely? What does the Prime Minister mean when he asks us to judge whether the government has acted correctly and wisely toward this problem? Does this mean prudently, from the point of view of the interests of Canada? What does it mean when we are asked to use wisdom in connection with the deaths of thousands of people each day? What is the test of wisdom under these circumstances? What is the test of wisdom when we know that thousands of people are dying today, that the fighting is continuing with no prospect of an early termination, and when we know also that arms are being shipped to both sides, and other large powers are threatening to intervene?

• (8:40 p.m.)

What is the wisdom, in those circumstances? The Prime Minister has warned the country against becoming involved in another Viet Nam. I do not think that is relevant. I lived through the 1930's. I think the Spanish civil war is much more relevant. It is by no means a complete parallel, but there you had a civil war in which the League of Nations and civilized society felt unable to intervene and bring about any sort of settlement. On the one side the fascists, and on the other side different powers, were shipping in arms. The result was a bitter, prolonged civil war that not only tore apart Spain, but also the rest of the world. I am not suggesting that the present terrible suffering in Biafra and Nigeria will develop into something comparable to Spain in the 1930's; but the fact is that the fighting is continuing, power on both sides of the dispute is becoming greater, arms are being shipped into that country, and at the moment there appears to be far more prospect of escalation than of de-escalation.

In these circumstances, what is wisdom? That is a question I direct through you, Mr. Speaker, to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, who bears the very heavy responsibility of recommending the appropriate policy for the government of Canada. What has the government accomplished to date? There has been delay in acting. There appears to have been a lack of enthusiasm. I think we have to say that had the government acted