

*External Aid*

fact that the interest has been sustained have surprised visitors from other nations which have not experienced the same degree of concern. It is unfortunate that the government has not been able to give adequate expression to what I consider a most refreshing outpouring of concern. Senator Edward Kennedy wrote letters last week to the president and president-elect. He said that decisions of the United States government about the civil war and massive destruction of human life in Nigeria-Biafra must not be lost in the mechanics of political transition and cannot wait for the coming of the new administration. He described the situation as an "awesome tragedy". He went on to say:

● (4:10 p.m.)

I cannot accept the view that the deteriorating situation and extraordinary loss of life in Nigeria-Biafra is primarily an internal or African concern, and must be met within that context, however desirable this objective.

May I interpolate: If this were the case, how convenient it would be for those who pursue this attitude.

The mere fact that arms are pouring into the area from many parts of the world to needlessly prolong violence at the expense of innocent millions, should tax the conscience of all mankind—especially that of our nation, whose traditions and ideals call for a maximum effort in the service of peace and the welfare of humanity.

Senator Kennedy wrote:

The United States has always found a way to make its weight felt in the affairs of others when our political self-interest and national security have been at stake. In the historic tradition of our nation, I would also hope that we can still exert our powerful influence when great human tragedy strikes our fellowman.

And so today, I urgently call upon the leadership of our nation to make every effort to meet the needs of our fellowman in Nigeria-Biafra.

Senator Kennedy made three suggestions. I realize they are in the context of the United States situation, but I think they are worth repeating as part of this debate.

First, I urge that the United States energize its diplomatic initiatives to end immediately the flow of arms to either side—

And how much more effectively Canada could do this because of its special relationship in this regard with the United Kingdom.

—to pursue without delay a cease-fire on the battlefield, and to support earnestly and without prejudice to either side the renewed efforts by the Organization for African Unity to bring the warring parties to the conference table. I do not believe that the international community has lost its sensitivity to the moral imperatives in the pursuit of a newer world. So I am extremely hopeful that

if a truly urgent call for peace is made, the world will support it, and the combatant leaders will respond.

Second, I urge that the United States, solely for humanitarian purposes, and in co-operation with the parties to the conflict, substantially escalate its contributions to the relief efforts being made by the International Committee of the Red Cross, UNICEF and the private voluntary agencies, whose dedicated representatives in the field deserve high tribute for a mission undertaken with great personal risk.

It is a harsh reality that the relief agencies do not have at their disposal adequate funds, food, medicine, and delivery capability to meet current needs, let alone those greater needs anticipated by the end of the year. I believe that nothing should be lacking in the commitment of the United States—especially in a positive response to the appeals for help by the religious agencies operating the air bridge into the besieged Biafran heartland with its starving millions.

But I do not believe that the maximum effort that can be made, under existing circumstances, is being made. So I urge that our leaders make a commitment, a massive commitment, to do what must be done, by making available funds, personnel, aircraft, and supplies to relieve a truly desperate situation. The stockpiling of food supplies must be given immediate priority. The United States can well afford to release additional commodities, especially corn, from our surplus. And let us forcefully enlist the help of others in an international humanitarian alliance, to head off what is clearly becoming one of the greatest nightmares of modern times.

Third, I urge President Johnson and President-elect Nixon to jointly agree on the appointment of a special presidential representative to galvanize this nation's acting commitment to do what must be done in Nigeria-Biafra, and to help mobilize the public and private sectors in an international humanitarian alliance in behalf of the starving millions. In the tradition of earlier missions carried out by Herbert Hoover, Herbert Lehman, and others who have served humanity, the special representative must be qualified by a deep compassion for those in dire need.

Senator Kennedy ends by saying:

I fully understand the many difficulties in taking new initiatives to relieve the situation in Nigeria-Biafra—especially those relating to the overriding need for a cease-fire and a negotiated settlement. But I also know that, while intensified measures to feed a starving people can surely save additional lives, only an early end to the conflict will avert the impending disaster of total famine and produce the conditions for a fully effective relief and reconstruction program.

At stake are human lives—innocent lives—African lives—thousands, even millions of lives—whose destruction will burden the conscience of Nigeria-Biafra and all mankind for generations to come, unless something more is done to save them.

Let statesmen act today—because it is right to do so—because it is unconscionable to remain silent—and because the hope of all mankind for a better world will be strengthened.

Canada is not in the midst of a transition. The Prime Minister and the government have