

*External Aid*

the effective provision of relief in this area requires the assistance and co-operation of the Nigerian authorities. We may not like it and we may wish it were otherwise, but that is the fact of the situation.

In the committee hearings it was clearly brought forth that something in the order of 3,000 tons of food in daily relief supplies would be required as the year wore on. There is no possible way to ferry or airlift that amount of material into Biafra, and there is no way of really dealing with the relief problem by way of the land corridor without the acceptance of it by the Nigerian authorities.

We have heard about the determination of the Biafrans to fight on. I can assure you, based on my experience at the United Nations, that there is just as strong a determination on the Nigerian side to bring this civil war to a successful termination from their point of view. The test of our foreign policy should not be whether it would give relief to the Canadian humanitarian desire, whereby we feel morally desirous of helping the Biafrans; but the test, as John Kennedy said, is whether it will work and whether it will help.

There is no doubt the Nigerians wish to pursue this war with all the force they can. They may be right or wrong. I suggest it is not for us to make that moral judgment. I believe that on the basis of the test of what will work and what will help, the Canadian government has done as much as any government is doing, and as much as any government can do at the present time. If I were to make one criticism of the minister and of the policy of the Canadian government in this area, I would say that perhaps we have been weak in explaining the policy and that our public relations has not been as good as it might have been. However, I do not think that the Canadian people ultimately will judge Canadian foreign policy from the effectiveness of its public relations nor do I think they want a foreign policy which is dominated by the idea of public relations. I do not think they want our politicians to strike attitudes in relation to our foreign policy, attitudes which are of no effect. What they want is a government which works effectively in two areas: first, to strengthen the rules of international conduct, and second a government which effectively works to assist those less fortunate than ourselves. That is the kind of government and the kind of foreign policy we now have.

[Mr. Roberts.]

**Mr. R. N. Thompson (Red Deer):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity of participating in this debate even as I appreciated participating in the committee hearings, I believe them to be some of the most fruitful and informative committee sittings ever held by this house. I have likewise appreciated the work that has been done by that committee. I am also grateful for these opportunities, because Africa still has the bigger part of my life and I know the continent very well. I know the background of the country and the tribal differences that have led to the present situation in Nigeria. To realize that we have in this house at least 30 members who have participated in the committee hearings and have been informed of the situation in Nigeria, as otherwise they would never have been informed, is something of great value and intense interest to me.

• (6:40 p.m.)

Emergent Africa has known more than its share of strife over the years, starting with Mau-Mau movement and going on through the carnage of the Congolese Secession. In scope of suffering, however, in depth of bitterness and in the hopelessness of any viable solution short of wholesale slaughter, I doubt that there has ever been a parallel to what is taking place in Nigeria today. This is the Nigeria of which only eight years ago we were so hopeful. It was held up before the world as one example of a colonial territory that was truly ready for self-government. Sir Alec Robertson, the last governor of Nigeria and a personal friend of mine—I had known him in Ethiopia, in the Sudan and then later in Nigeria—had the task of moving Nigeria into independence. He often said to me that Nigeria was perhaps the one country in Africa in which there was a hope of a stable, democratic government because the situation in Nigeria, which we do not have time to deal with today, prepared that country for self-government as no other colonial territory had been prepared.

Today we find the people of Ibo land, a tremendous race of people, fighting for what they believe to be their lives against their sister tribes, basically the Hausas and the Yorubas, who had joined with them to form the federation eight years ago. It is an interesting commentary on the situation that exists today to realize that the Ibo people led the struggle for federation; it was the Ibo people who struggled hardest for the federation. The northern section did not want to go along with it and the Yorubas in the west