

External Aid

give my reasons for that later. Second, we should arrange a cease-fire. Third, we must do something to stop other countries shipping arms to Nigeria. In later questioning it was admitted in committee that perhaps we also ought to do something about arms going into Biafra. In the beginning hon. members were only concerned about the shipment of arms to Nigeria. The fourth point is that we should give military assistance somehow to produce a stalemate in Nigeria and Biafra. Some witnesses, seemed to want a solution whereby Biafra would be stronger than the federal area of Nigeria. It was also suggested that recognition be accorded to Biafra itself, something which fortunately seems to have been forgotten.

• (5:50 p.m.)

Lastly, there was a veiled suggestion, not by a member of this house but by a member of a provincial legislature, that possibly later if not as a first priority, we should give consideration to seeing that more arms were supplied to Biafra. These attitudes are not, in my opinion, consistent with the proper interests of Canada or of our friendly relations with other countries of the world.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Cafik: Throughout all this confusion, fortunately for Canada and for the Canadian people and, indeed, for the people of Nigeria and Biafra, we had strong leadership from the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) who refused to be swept along by this kind of emotionalism. As I see it, Canada has taken the only course which is capable of achieving any kind of worth-while results. The course we have taken, justifiably, I think, is one of saying that the Nigerian-Biafran affair is a civil war, a matter of concern to those within that country, and that we have no right to interfere politically. Taking the matter before the United Nations would, I believe, amount to interference in a civil war, and for this reason I do not think we should do it.

In the second place—and this is the basic point I wish to make this afternoon—Canada must show proper respect and regard for international law. It seems odd to me that at this particular moment in history when peace of the world depends upon good relations between one nation and another, people in this House of Commons, who are as concerned with peace as I am, should suggest that this government take action of a kind which would tend to destroy the validity of

[Mr. Cafik.]

international laws governing the relationship between nations.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Cafik: I do not see how one can be an advocate of peace while at the same time advocate that we should take the bull by the horns and disregard such laws. It is imperative today that nations should bear in mind the long term implications of their foreign policy. Unless nations have respect for each other's integrity the world could end in nothing less than chaos and destruction for the whole of mankind.

It has been suggested in this debate that the concept of sovereignty is outmoded. I realize that any concept of international relations is subject to scrutiny and inspection. But to imply that the destruction of the theory of international sovereignty or the rights of individual nations would, at the present time, be helpful to mankind is thoroughly questionable.

Some members opposite talk as though we should interfere in this war. I wonder whether they would talk in the same way if the nation now engaged in this civil war were large enough and strong enough to tell us where to get off. I wonder whether they are prepared for Canada to become involved only because they feel secure in the knowledge that no retaliation is possible. The rules applied should be the same in the case of strong nations as in the case of weaker nations. I have never heard anyone on the other side suggest we should become directly involved in the affairs, say, of Czechoslovakia, or in Russian affairs when something happens there. We are obliged to be careful in such circumstances because we want peace in the world. And we must also be careful in this case; otherwise there will be chaos in the whole of Africa.

There is another point. Canadian foreign policy recognizes, rightly in my view, that our humanitarian efforts must be conducted through the government of Nigeria. Much as we would desire to do so, we cannot take humanitarian aid into that country and frustrate the legitimate government of that nation. We should bear in mind that the area presently occupied by secessionist troops is merely an island in the middle of the federal territory of Nigeria. Biafra has no seaport; it has no access to the outside world except through federal territory or air space. In these circumstances it is impossible to offer