

*External Aid*

insisted on going back to the Nigerian government and giving it the opportunity which it quickly took to renege on this promise which was clearly made, and the result has been to stultify the whole effort.

I understand that three Hercules were flown into the area. One was stationed at Lagos and it was withdrawn on the silly pretense that it was impossible to land anywhere in federally occupied areas. This is nonsense and is just not factual. Calabar has one of the three internationally recognized airports in the whole of Nigeria, and it is within the federally occupied area of Biafra. It is nonsense to say that you can land a Hercules on what is virtually an enlarged paved highway at Uli, which is where the churches are flying in, but you cannot fly them into an internationally approved airport. This is perfectly ridiculous and another example of the willingness of this government to accept any sort of excuse for not doing very much about this situation.

It is the government's attitude I am complaining about in this matter. The Hercules is supposed to be designed so as to be able to land almost anywhere, even in open fields if need be. I suggest that the attitude of the federal government that we cannot land anywhere in the territory Nigeria occupies with planes that are best suited for this job speaks much louder than words about their feelings toward the starving people within the territory Nigeria controls. I wonder whose is really the voice of Nigeria, the soft spoken General Gowon who speaks gently to our Prime Minister, or his representative, or the Black Scorpion who speaks with a more savage tone. The latter has made it perfectly clear that in the areas he controls, and he does control substantial areas, no food will be given to any Ibo until they surrender.

The government has been strangely hesitant about getting the operation from Fernando Po going effectively. The Prime Minister made a statement in the house several weeks ago in which he said the government of Nigeria had agreed to daylight flights. The other day I asked him whether the flights had not been restarted and he said there had been no word from the Biafran authorities. He said in his usual flippant way that he knew that Colonel Ojukwu could read *Hansard*, as though the head of state in a war had nothing to do but read *Hansard*.

The government took the position, as I understand it, that it could not communicate officially with Biafra. Surely this is a question

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of where there is a will there is a way. The government is well aware that the Biafran government maintains an office with an accredited representative in New York near the United Nations, as well as one in London. Surely if it could not communicate directly it could communicate indirectly through one of the Commonwealth countries, for example Tanzania or Zambia, which have recognized Biafra and are ready to talk to the Biafrans. The United States does not recognize the people's Republic of China but that does not stop it from undertaking to talk with that republic about matters which affect the two countries, through informal discussions at Warsaw. Cannot the Canadian government in the interest of saving lives do something about improving its means of communication with Biafra?

Just yesterday, Mr. Justice Onyuki, leader of the Biafran delegation to America and a justice of the Biafran court of appeal, issued a statement which, as I read it, made it perfectly clear that the Biafran government would consent to daylight flights of Canadian Hercules aircraft. The statement said there would be no difficulty in getting permission for these Hercules aircraft to fly into the Uli airstrip provided that those unloading the food and drugs would not be fired upon and also that the Canadian government and the crews were satisfied with the verbal guarantees of safety.

The Prime Minister, typically, I suggest, rather than allowing this statement to speak for itself petulantly read into it that the Biafran government was turning down the condition that the Hercules daylight operations would not fly in arms. Of course, the Biafran government for its own part is perfectly willing to give such a guarantee. The Canadian government itself surely trusts the Red Cross not to fly in arms. One would think that the guarantee of the Red Cross would be more important than any words from the Biafran authorities. After all, it is the Red Cross which is the shipper and the carrier of what is in these planes. Why is there this insistence on a condition of this sort? Why is there this inability to get in touch with the Biafran government? With the little contact I have I can get in touch within 12 hours to find out what the position is, yet this apparently takes the government weeks. The Biafran authorities are perfectly willing to accept these terms. The Prime Minister could have found this out very quickly and the air flights could have been restored. The attitude of the government does not seem to be one of anxiety to