

Alleged Failure to Aid Biafrans

we shall work through or with joint church organizations and Canare Relief in assisting the starving people of Biafra, and that way save lives. That is all we ask. If the Prime Minister cannot give an affirmative answer to that plea, he will stand condemned in the history of this country as a man who is in a strait-jacket of legalisms, logistics and protocol which make it impossible for him to act as the human being he undoubtedly is.

Mr. Ray Perrault (Burnaby-Seymour): Mr. Speaker, in view of the time, could we consider it as officially 5.45 p.m. and commence again after the dinner adjournment?

Mr. Speaker: I assume the hon. member is referring to the fact that there will be royal assent in a few moments. Since it might take a few minutes for that to happen, the hon. member might begin his remarks at this time.

Mr. Perrault: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have all listened attentively this afternoon to the eloquent expressions of concern about the fate of the youngsters in Biafra. It has been correctly stated that concern about the fate of these young people is not restricted to one party in this House; it is not restricted to the Liberal Party, the Conservative Party, the NDP or the Creditistes. We are all concerned about the needless and tragic death of little children. I regret that the right hon. gentleman who was so critical of the early departure of the Prime Minister did not himself come into the House sooner than he did today.

I have heard many arguments on this matter, but the nations of the United Nations see day by day what effort Canada is making to resolve this terrible tragedy in Nigeria and Biafra. Every week since September, Canadians have been meeting Biafrans and Nigerians—I can give the dates—and offering their good offices to arrange a permanent settlement of this tragic dispute. It is all right to talk about whether we are going to ship food during the day, in the twilight or in the evening; but the only way these youngsters' lives will be saved is by a permanent settlement of the dispute. That is the direction in which Canada is working.

Mr. Peters: That is unsupported propaganda.

Mr. Perrault: When I heard the irresponsible claptrap of a former prime minister who never at any time when he was prime minister of the country engaged in the kind

[Mr. Lewis.]

of unilateral action he is suggesting to this government, and when I heard the government abused by the deputy leader of the NDP, I could only listen in magnificent wonder.

What is Canada's record at the United Nations? I heard the official representatives of Sweden, Norway, Finland and Denmark, the social democratic parties of Europe, and they all supported the Canadian position. The issuing of guns—

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Burnaby-Seymour (Mr. Perrault) has the floor.

Mr. Perrault: I have the floor now, and I shall answer questions later. We have taken a great deal of abuse this afternoon and I think it is time for a reply. I met Dr. Otue, the Biafran representative in New York, yesterday afternoon and I heard that members of the opposition had been telephoning and telling him we would have a special debate on Biafra. They said to him, "Could you clue us in, Dr. Otue?". Do you know what he said? He said, "We are in a terrible way this week, Mr. Perrault, because tomorrow night the Labour government of Great Britain is sending a shipment of heavy artillery from Dover and it will be used against us next week."

I reiterate the position of the hon. member for Bruce (Mr. Whicher) and suggest that one of the most effective steps which can be taken by the clique in the corner of this chamber is to send a spirited delegation to Harold Wilson of Great Britain and say, "Stop the shipment from Dover." Mr. Speaker, why did Right Hon. Michael Stewart, the British Foreign Minister, say "No" to the Canadian government when it begged him to stop the shipment of arms? Is this the kind of enlightened, social democratic government we can expect from the NDP if they come into power?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I think the hon. member should be given an opportunity to make his speech.

Mr. Perrault: Mr. Stewart said, "We have important economic relations with Biafra"—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.