

Inquiries of the Ministry

operating in Nigeria. He said on Thursday that he would answer the question when next he was in the House. Can he reply now?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Yes, Mr. Speaker. The answer is that Canada pays the salary and the normal allowances drawn by Department of National Defence officers assigned to overseas duty. We also, of course, cover the transportation costs of the Canadian observers to and from Nigeria. While in Nigeria the Nigerian authorities meet the local accommodation and food expenses of the team and provide transportation, although we are ready to provide transportation if the observers should request it. I understand that this arrangement applies both to Canadian observers and to the nationals of other countries comprising the observer team. The value of rations and quarters is placed at \$36 per month and is deducted from the allowances paid to the officers.

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the statement that has been made to the effect that international observers admitted into Nigeria have not had access to the area surrounding Uli airstrip, the area in which there is possibly the greatest concentration of refugees, is the minister prepared to say that the observers have been given access to all of former Biafra or is he simply basing his position on the fact that no complaints have come forward from the observers?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, I make the assumption, which I hope the Leader of the Opposition makes, that as good Canadians our observers are just as interested in observing conditions and reporting to the Canadian people and the world as either one of us would be.

Mr. Brewin: A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Has the minister's attention been drawn to the statement of the United Nations observer on the team to the effect that they have not been able to go into any area except that close to advancing troops and that their reports to date were pointless?

Mr. Sharp: No, Mr. Speaker, I have not seen this report.

CITIZENSHIP**REDUCTION OF FIVE-YEAR RESIDENCE PERIOD**

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Secretary of State.

It is prompted by the widespread interest of many established residents of Canada in the attainment of the right to vote and the right of citizenship. Is the minister giving consideration to bringing in an amendment to the Citizenship Act which would reduce the mandatory five-year residence period where that is now applicable?

[Translation]

Hon. Gérard Pelletier (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, this matter is included in the interim study pending publication of a White Paper on citizenship.

[English]

NATIONAL FILM BOARD**LAY-OFFS OF EMPLOYEES—CHARGES FOR USE OF FILMS**

Mr. Robert McCleave (Halifax-East Hants): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Secretary of State. Can he report now on the matter of the rentals being charged by the National Film Board, which libraries and other educational institutions have asked be withdrawn?

[Translation]

Hon. Gérard Pelletier (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, I cannot give a final reply yet in this matter, in spite of the fact that the answer to the starred question gave the particulars as I had heard of them from the National Film Board. But as I said to the House before, this matter was studied by an impartial party appointed by me for the purpose at the request of the Commissioner of the National Film Board. The report was submitted to the Commissioner who then sent it to me. It is now being translated into English and I understand, from talks with the Commissioner, that he has certain remarks and comments that he would like to publicize concurrently with the report, which should be soon.

[English]

Mr. Jack Marshall (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe): A supplementary question to the Secretary of State, Mr. Speaker. In view of the fact that the charge for films by the National Film Board is causing serious hardship in the province of Newfoundland where people cannot afford it and as it results in denying many thousands of students the right to this educational facility, will the minister investigate this situation and eliminate the charge in those areas where people cannot afford it?

[Mr. Nystrom.]