

*External Aid*

will constitute a more constructive and more effective approach than we have seen so far.

It would seem to me that the attitude of the government has been one of a desire to keep out of this thing. A number of Liberal members have spoken in this way. I am not referring simply to the offhand and unfortunate comment of the Prime Minister when, during the summer, he was asked about this and is reported to have said, "Where is Biafra?" and, "You ask the funniest questions." However, ever since this session began the position of the government has seemed to indicate a reluctance to become involved, and to give every appearance of simply bowing a bit to public feeling and public concern and taking steps only by virtue of this concern. The initial attitude seemed to be just to make a gift and leave it at that, that there is far more suffering in the world than we can do anything about, and that it is all beyond us.

For example, when the suggestion was first made in the house that aircraft should be made available to the International Red Cross there was a great reluctance on the part of the government to accept this proposal. Indeed the Prime Minister appeared to give the widespread impression that this might very well be interpreted as an act of war.

Then, a little later, he indicated that the government of Canada would be prepared to make aircraft available to the International Red Cross if Nigeria granted permission. When there was some difficulty about permission being forthcoming to the International Red Cross, I then asked the Prime Minister whether the government of Canada would assist the Red Cross in obtaining this permission by the government of Canada itself, through its representative, approaching the government at Lagos in this regard. The Prime Minister replied to me in the house by saying that this is not the way it had been agreed. He said that we must make the aircraft available to the International Red Cross and that it is the International Red Cross that must do the consulting in an effort to obtain the agreement.

I do not know what happened in the meantime, but a little later on the government abandoned this position and made direct contact. As the Prime Minister reminded us this afternoon he eventually sent a representative to Lagos who, in the words of the Prime Minister, fulfilled a very useful mission and secured agreement of the government of Lagos to certain important measures.

Now, one cannot help but wonder why this sort of thing was not done long since. However, the amount of relief that has been brought to the starving people of Nigeria to date by means of the aircraft has not been great. There has been one difficulty after another, and various reasons have been given. In view of the reluctant procedures the government indicated earlier it will take to come to grips with the problem of bringing relief to the starving people of Biafra, it is very difficult for me and those of us on this side of the house to be convinced that this government is really trying, with full determination, to solve these problems which stand in the way of bringing relief to these people in Nigeria, particularly in the Biafran area. We must come to the conclusion that there seems little likelihood that enough food and assistance will be taken to Biafra to eliminate the suffering and starvation, unless the fighting is stopped and a peaceful solution worked out.

● (8:30 p.m.)

The Prime Minister and spokesmen on the other side of the house seem to take the position that this is a civil dispute, and that the recognized government of Nigeria has the right to use force to prevent secession. Let me say first of all that I do not believe for a moment that Canada should attempt to impose a solution.

There has been a great deal of confusion created by the use of certain words. The Prime Minister and the government are very right in insisting that Canada ought not to become involved in this war, and certainly ought not to sell arms in this connection. When hon. members opposite use words such as sovereignty and intervention, the situation can rapidly become very confusing. The Prime Minister, for example, said today that the United Nations ought not to intervene in the dispute, except under very extreme circumstances. He then went on to say that, even in connection with South Africa, African nations had not suggested arms intervention. In other words, he was suggesting that an intervention or interference of any sort must mean an arms intervention. Let me make it perfectly clear that I am not suggesting for a moment any form of arms intervention, and that when people talk about this they in effect create a red herring.

We should discuss among ourselves the meaning of these words and terms we use. Otherwise we only create more confusion. What is intervention in Nigeria? Are we intervening in some improper way in the