

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

churches. We would have to obtain the same permission from the Nigerian authorities with respect to the churches as we did with respect to the Red Cross. This is the way we are proceeding. We still believe it is important that we do not disregard international law and that we do not follow the advice of the right hon. gentleman from Prince Albert who feels that rules in this matter are of no importance.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. I never made any such suggestion. The Prime Minister is hiding behind such statements as an excuse for inaction. I was speaking of the rules of the House of Commons and suggested that they were never designed to be used by this government to stultify and prevent the Canadian people doing what is necessary.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Trudeau:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear from the right hon. gentleman that this government is invited to disregard the rules of this house when it sees it is convenient to do so.

**Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood):** Would the Prime Minister tell the house whether or not a determined effort is being made to check the statement I have made on a number of occasions, and which has also been made by the hon. member for Egmont, that on Tuesday, October 8, the High Commissioner for Nigeria agreed to the supplies being flown in from Sao Tome with one condition only, that they be inspected by the Red Cross? Why is further consent needed? Will the Prime Minister tell us that?

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** It is an escape hatch for the government.

**Mr. Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, we are making determined efforts to proceed in this way if the government of Nigeria indicates its consent. As the Secretary of State for External Affairs indicated, the Commissioner for External Affairs of Nigeria is in hospital and it is very difficult to communicate with him. But my belief is that if the Nigerians ask the Red Cross to inspect the cargoes supplied by the churches and if the Red Cross is agreeable to do that, we will certainly find no difficulty. We will be very happy to proceed in this way.

**Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River):** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question I wish to direct to the hon. member for St. Paul's as chairman of the committee. Would

[Mr. Trudeau.]

the hon. member undertake, as chairman of the committee, that when the report is brought in next week he will move a motion for concurrence by the house so that the house and the country can find out who is hiding and who lacks intestinal fortitude?

**Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont):** Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that before the house meets again the Secretary of State for External Affairs will have left the country, and in view of the fact that we urgently need to hear from him in some detail about negotiations or arrangements being made, either through the Red Cross or with the government of Nigeria, to bring about an effective relief action, either from Fernando Po or Sao Tome, will the Prime Minister not make the Secretary of State for External Affairs available to the house some time later today in order that he can make a clear statement so there will not be this tremendous uncertainty and confusion about what seems to be a very basic concern of many Canadians as to the whole operation of our relief effort? I am sure the Prime Minister would be anxious to have the Secretary of State for External Affairs make that kind of explanation to the house.

**Mr. Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, the Secretary of State for External Affairs is not leaving the country on Sunday as the hon. member suggests. He will be here next week to answer questions or make statements as the need arises. During the time he is not here, and if it is a matter concerning the whole nation, I would be prepared to answer in his place.

**Mr. MacDonald (Egmont):** We are very glad to note that the minister will be here next week but there is this element of urgency of time. I think it is very important that a statement be made today. Even a matter of two or three days can be very important. We have already lost somewhat over two weeks and I am sure hon. members on both sides of the house would like this matter resolved as quickly as possible.

**Mr. Lewis:** Mr. Speaker, I want to ask a supplementary question concerning the Hercules aircraft, but the Prime Minister said something a moment ago that puzzled me and, if you will permit me, I would like to clear that up first. The Prime Minister said that the Secretary of State for External Affairs will be here next week, but the Prime Minister's statement yesterday on the ministerial mission to Latin America indicated that