

*Alleged Failure to Aid Biafrans*

starvation in Nigeria-Biafra and, particularly, regrets its repeated refusal to assist Joint Church Aid and Canairelief operations which have continued to deliver substantial relief despite great hazards, and urgently requests the government to change its policy in this respect.

**Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert):** Mr. Speaker, the House has listened to a lecture by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) on a matter that touches the hearts of all Canadians and in respect of which there is universal demand for action on the part of the government. The Prime Minister condescendingly told the House that any member of the opposition who wanted to contribute to Canairelief would receive his approval. This represents the attitude that has been shown throughout by the Prime Minister.

All I have to do, Mr. Speaker, is to recall some events. First of all, when the Prime Minister was asked during one of his visits to a part of Canada some 15 or 16 months ago what he was going to do about Biafra, he replied: "Where is Biafra?" That was a facetious observation. The other day during the course of the debate he turned to an opposition member and said: "Have you ever been to Biafra? I have". Yet, when this serious question was asked, the Prime Minister brushed it aside with an observation that had no basis in fact.

In addition to that, we recall very well an occasion in the city of Halifax when a number of young people gathered round the Prime Minister and asked him what was going to be done about Biafra. I am very pleased to see the Prime Minister leaving the chamber, because he knows he cannot face the facts.

**Some hon. Members:** Shame.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** This tells the story. Whenever the Prime Minister is worried about criticism, he always absents himself; he cannot stay to face the facts. What he means by dialogue is that one should listen to him. Apparently he speaks *ex cathedra*. When the members of the House dare to speak, he departs. This is because he believes in unilateral discussion in the House of Commons. The Prime Minister regards this institution as something of a debating society, and he appears whenever he or any of his selected ministers decide it appropriate to do so.

**Some hon. Members:** Order.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** That is the fact. Will these trained seals explain to me why the Prime Minister left?

[Mr. Deputy Speaker.]

**Mr. Walker:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. May I point out that all through the speech of the hon. member for Fundy-Royal (Mr. Fairweather) the Prime Minister remained in the House. I presume the hon. member was speaking for his party, and certainly his remarks had much more relevance than the remarks of the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker).

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

**Mr. MacEwan:** You're a great help.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I might point out to the hon. member that he has hardly raised a point of order. The appeals for order that are being made on both sides of the House make it very difficult for the Chair to hear the right hon. member for Prince Albert. The right hon. member has the floor.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Mr. Speaker, today we received a lecture in the form of an alibi. Is the government of Canada going to contribute to Canairelief? The answer is that it is not. That was quite definitely stated, though it was suggested that following 18 months of consideration on the part of the government the government is still considering ways and means that might be taken.

Let me recall what happened in the city of Halifax when the Prime Minister was asked by a group of students whether he would do something on behalf of the poor people of Biafra. The Prime Minister's reply was: "Would you have expected to give support and food to the Nazis at Stalingrad?" That answer indicates a state of mind that is detrimental to fair and reasonable discussion.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** I do not mind the noise. Some of the members opposite make their best contributions when they interrupt from a seated position. But they know what is in their hearts. When they go back to their constituencies, they will say that they hope something is going to be done, that they know something will be done. They will say: "We cannot understand why the opposition presses for action, because for 18 months we have been trying to give consideration to this matter. We are giving the question our deepest thought and perchance at some time, somewhere, we will do something".

While this consideration is being given to the matter, tens of thousands of people are