

*External Aid*

If so, they are prepared to abandon a principle which has been at the root of Canada's foreign policy since the second world war, and if they are prepared to do so they should be clear what they are doing, because they are encouraging countries to interfere in the affairs of another country when they say they have a moral right to do so. This is a dangerous principle which is contrary to the way in which we have been trying to strengthen the system of international politics.

● (6:30 p.m.)

Criticism has been made that the government's policy is bound up by legalisms, diplomatic niceties and protocol positions. The suggestion has been that we should ignore the rules of the game. But we are not involved here in some kind of symbolic and monstrous game of hopscotch or tiddlywinks with rules which can be broken or not broken, but rather we are concerned with practicability. The rules of international conduct we have been trying to establish are related to the real political world in which we live. The real question is not whether the kind of intervention which hon. members in the opposition have asked for is within or without the rules of the game or whether or not it confines itself to protocol. The real question is a practical one: Will it work? Will the kind of dramatic intervention which the hon. member for Egmont (Mr. MacDonald) has asked for, work? Will the appeal to the United Nations which the hon. member for Fundy Royal (Mr. Fairweather) has asked for, work? It is not whether they will confine themselves to the rules of the game, it is whether they will work, and whether they will be useful.

The unfortunate thing for proponents of their view is that all evidence is against the hope they will be useful. Legal authorities have been cited, but the question is not whether it will be legally possible to bring this matter before the United Nations but whether it will be useful. Sometimes I have had the feeling as I did when the hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Brewin) was speaking, that some people believe that out there somewhere there is a fantastically powerful force of public opinion which stands around with bated breath waiting for Canada to come out and lead it. He almost feels that if the trumpets were sounded, the walls of Jericho would crumble down. If he really believes that in the present world there is that force of moral character and strength which can dominate the affairs of a civil war, such as

that between Biafra and Nigeria, he is living in a fool's paradise and he is advocating a Disneyland foreign policy. The question is whether this would be helpful, and the evidence is against the position the opposition has been taking.

It is not just the view of the government, it is the view which has been expressed by diplomats, by the vast majority of African nations and by the vast majority of nations in the United Nations, as well as the view expressed by U Thant. On this particular point it seems that everyone is out of step but the opposition parties in the Canadian parliament. What is the point of trying to make some dramatic statement about Canada's moral view of the situation? What is the point of trying to make a great public show at the United Nations on where Canada stands? It will enable us to stand up and be counted. We will have the smug feeling that we have expressed our moral point of view.

There are limits to what moral authority can do in international affairs. Righteous indignation, even when spouted so eloquently by the hon. member for Fundy-Royal and the hon. member for Greenwood, is not a foreign policy. To the Africans, the situation does not seem to be so easily susceptible to those simple moral judgments which have been presented to us. For them it is a complex problem, a problem of tribalism, of oil resources, of cold war involvement, of religious conflict, and of commercial interests. They do not seem ready to accept or to wish for Canada, as the self-proclaimed conscience of mankind, to interfere in this complicated situation, especially when it is the Africans and not the Canadians who will have to live with the consequences of such an intervention. The Africans, rightly or wrongly, will judge our morally inspired attempts as at best a clumsy, and at worst a self-interested missionary neo-colonialism.

What would be the result of such action? The proponents of the view that we should ignore the wishes of the Nigerian authorities and that we should at all costs bring this matter to the United Nations will succeed in doing three things. They will severely damage our influence in Africa for at least a decade by characterizing us as neo-colonialists. Second, they will deny the basic principles of the Canadian foreign policy of non-intervention in the affairs of foreign countries; and third and most important, they will not assist to one degree in the preservation of life or the relief of suffering in this area. They will not help because, as I have stressed before,