

*Alleged Failure to Aid Biafrans*

call it a grand coalition—of government interests in this country, in the U.S. and in the U.K., and I wonder whether, in face of the quick kill theory so popularly accepted and promoted by the British government a couple of years ago and now obviously a little too shoddy to be hauled out again, this coalition has given its assent to starvation as a legitimate weapon.

If you look at the war situation—if one is able to get an accurate picture of what is happening in Nigeria and Biafra—it seems to be relatively static. The lines have not altered substantially in the last few months. We have not had fresh word of new atrocities. We do not have any new information which would alter the position of these three governments. But there is one piece of news which perhaps can shed some light on what seems to be a very real hardening of positions in the last few weeks; that is that recently very important oil production—not only important to Nigeria but important to its allies—has been severely hampered by military offensives on the part of Biafra and by what could be described as the mini-Biafran air force which, in my understanding, has reduced the oil production of Nigeria by some 50 per cent. It has reached the stage where in fact a number of insurance companies are reluctant even to insure tankers approaching Nigeria to pick up oil.

Is there in fact some kind of an oil lobby or conspiracy that is exerting pressure which we are feeling perhaps not directly but at least indirectly? I think the question should be raised, because there certainly are lines that could be drawn very easily in recent months that show up clearly the fact that we are now acquiescing in starvation as a weapon of war with much greater ease than we should have even a year ago.

Today and earlier the Prime Minister referred in his shadowy way to political guarantees which have been demanded and which are tantamount to recognition. Of course, the diplomatic recognition of one of the combatants in a civil war is a difficult matter to resolve, and when the Prime Minister stated it, it suggested that perhaps Biafra is trying to achieve an advantage by linking daylight flights to diplomatic recognition as political capital.

The Prime Minister has indicated to the House and to the Canadian people that because of these unreasonable demands for recognition General Ojukwu was really trying to take advantage of the situation. But when

he has been pressed, both inside and outside the House, to spell out these conditions, when they were raised and with whom, the Prime Minister very conveniently says, "It is not really for me to say. I do not want to break a confidence". It is amazing how he can suddenly respect the confidence of people who to him do not legally exist. It is also very convenient that he can put forward an interpretation without having to clarify it. This is what I tried to do this afternoon following his speech, because I think there has to be honesty at least if we are to expose the situation as it exists and as we are faced with it.

What is the situation? Why has the Prime Minister talked about political conditions or guarantees tantamount to recognition? I think we have to be honest and say that the Biafrans, in order to permit daylight relief flights, have as I understand it asked for certain kinds of guarantees. Quite frankly, they have been led down the garden path too often to accept merely goodwill or the suggestion of our being "hail fellows well met" not to realize that their own security—and after all this is what the war is all about—is at stake. They have asked for guarantees, not necessarily only from Canada but from other countries. I am impressed by the fact that they are still willing to trust us to that extent. They ask for guarantees which may be with regard to trade or perhaps having to do with diplomatic recognition, not necessarily in terms of recognizing Biafra but perhaps intending to cut off our recognition of the Nigerians were they to forego or break their own commitments on a negotiated relief plan or some kind of military guarantee.

The Prime Minister, of course, is right in suggesting that if we offer a guarantee on the basis of trade, diplomacy or military matters, we are in effect taking a position which is tantamount to recognition. But put on the basis of a fundamental requirement for their own security, as the Biafrans see it, it is a vastly different thing than when it is simply brought in as a sort of back-door proposition, as a bargaining point, or as a kind of extra for which the Biafrans are looking in trying to build up their political bank account.

I think we have to be realistic, and I am sorry that the Prime Minister in his comments was less than realistic. I am using a kind word there. Some of the things that were said when he quoted the secretary of state of the United States, Mr. Rogers, were certainly not the kind of things that would