

External Aid

Mr. Fairweather: And by Colonel Adekunle.

Mr. Sharp: Yes, that is right; but let me read how the Biafran commissioner of information described the observer team. He said, "We don't recognize the observer team. They are a bunch of crooks." It is difficult, under these circumstances, for there to be any particular welcome for that group of observers in Africa. We shall, however, continue to study the feasibility of this proposal.

To the extent that the committee's second recommendation deals with continuing and future Canadian assistance—

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, would the minister permit a question on the observer team?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: That is not a point of order. If the minister wishes to permit a question he is free to do so.

Mr. Sharp: My speech is not very long. I prefer to answer questions at the end.

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): It is a short question with regard to whether or not any inquiries have been made—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Sharp: To the extent that the committee's second recommendation deals with continuing and future Canadian assistance to Nigeria, I can report that we are in regular contact with the World Bank and with interested governments. The World Bank currently has a team of experts in Nigeria studying economic projects and priorities, and we expect to have the benefit of the conclusions of this team when it returns. It is important to note that assessments of this kind in any country must be carried out with the concurrence of the government concerned, and I may add, Mr. Speaker, that in this respect the co-operation between Nigeria and the World Bank is proving to be very useful at this critical juncture.

In so far as the committee was referring to emergency food aid, the government has had constant advice from the international committee of the Red Cross both on the amounts needed and on the particular categories of food to be emphasized.

The question of land and sea corridors has been discussed in the committee and in this house. It is one of those items on which it has not been possible for the two sides to agree, despite the best efforts of the relief agencies. I am sure we all regret this because it is

[Mr. Sharp.]

quite clear, as was pointed out by one of the speakers in the far corner who said, "I would take planes moving in at about one a minute to supply the food that will probably be needed," and what we need will probably be land corridors. I regret, as I am sure do all hon. members, the fact that it has not been possible to work this out. I hope it still will be possible. Most of all I hope that the war will be over.

The committee's proposal for international machinery to aid innocent civilian victims of hostilities is one I supported at the United Nations. The house may recall, and the members who were observers at the United Nations General Assembly will remember that I made specific recommendations along these lines. These are now being discussed with other governments, and I hope will result in some positive action.

● (9:20 p.m.)

The committee's third recommendation relates to the continuation of our emergency aid to the victims of the hostilities. The government has intensified its efforts to be of assistance in the humanitarian sphere. I wish to announce, Mr. Speaker, that we have made a further allocation of food aid to Nigerian-Biafra in the amount of \$1,600,000. A shipment will be made early in the new year.

Mr. Lewis: To both sides?

Mr. Sharp: This aid will be distributed, as the other food aid was, to both sides. When we made our shipment on the vessel that left some time ago—and the vessel arrived recently—it was decided that the food was to go to various bases so that it could be moved either into the rebel areas or into the areas controlled by the Nigerian government. The planning we have undertaken has followed consultations with the Red Cross and other contributors in order that the delivery of our supplies could fit in with their plans.

As to the airlift into rebel territories, it is obvious that daylight operations would permit the delivery of much larger quantities of relief. The Prime Minister therefore appealed to the rebel authorities to agree to daylight flights. I earnestly hope that Colonel Ojukwu will give his consent without further delay. It is tragic that food should be waiting to be moved in to feed hungry children, and is being held up because the necessary authority has not been granted for the movement. As to relief operations on the federal side, Canadian Caribou aircraft have been offered through