

and food supplies to the civilian population on both sides of the fighting lines. The Red Cross has been the principal agency engaged in this humanitarian work on both sides. For this reason, and because the Government believes strongly in preserving the vitality and efficacy of the Red Cross as the chosen instrument designated by the great majority of the states of the world for more than 100 years as primarily responsible for relief activities, Canadian aid to both sides has been channelled through this agency. Without a healthy, functioning Red Cross, the 1949 Geneva Conventions on the Law of War would lose much of their effect. The international community could no longer rely in cases of disaster on a readily available, functioning and generally-acceptable relief organization.

The Canadian Government has constantly sought more effective methods of delivering greater quantities of relief supplies. Canada took the lead in attempting to arrange for daylight flights into Biafran-held territory in order to increase the quantity of food delivered. These attempts were redoubled when a Red Cross aircraft was shot down, bringing Red Cross relief flights to an end. Efforts were made to persuade the Federal Nigerian Government to accept daylight relief flights to Biafran-held territory and to meet the Biafran military objections to daylight operations. The Nigerian Government agreed but the Biafrans did not. More recently, careful studies have proved the feasibility of dropping relief supplies by air from Canadian Armed Forces aircraft into areas of Biafran-held territory not now reached by relief carried on board night flights. Tests of air drops were conducted in Canada with Hercules aircraft, an examination was made of West African airport and relief storage facilities needed to support such an operation and the Red Cross was consulted. The necessary organizational steps to mount such an airlift, with its immense delivery potential, were undertaken. A Canadian proposal to this effect was put forward to the Federal Nigerian Government but not so far accepted, presumably because they continue to prefer the daylight flights to which they have agreed and which would be more effective in the delivery of relief supplies.

The Government supported the Red Cross airlift into Biafra while it continued. When it ended, we pursued vigorously the attempts to organize daylight flights. When it became apparent that because of Biafran objections daylight flights could not be made, we worked seriously