

*Inquiries of the Ministry***RURAL DEVELOPMENT****ARDA—ONTARIO—CUT-OFF OF DRAINAGE FUNDS**

Mr. R. E. McKinley (Huron): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Forestry and Rural Development. In the light of all the submissions received by western Ontario members from municipalities in connection with the cut-off applied to ARDA funds for drainage, does the minister intend to hold further negotiations with the provinces in an effort to alleviate the present difficulties produced by the lack of assurance that further funds will be provided by the federal government?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Forestry and Rural Development): Mr. Speaker, as you know, under the ARDA program the provinces make recommendations to the federal government which approves them.

With regard to the particular case mentioned by the hon. member, I shall look into the matter; I might be able to give more information to the house sometime later on.

[*English*]

Mr. McKinley: Could the minister not assure these people that at least the original commitment of a five-year period given to the provinces in this respect—I believe there is one more year to go—will be respected?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marchand (Langelier): Mr. Speaker, to my mind it would not be wise to give at this time an assurance with regard to something I am not fully familiar with.

I shall look into the matter and within the next few days I will probably be able to give a more complete reply to the hon. member.

[*English*]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**BIAFRA—SITUATION FOLLOWING STATEMENT OF CHIEF AWOLOWO—DAYTIME RELIEF FLIGHTS**

Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont): My question is to the Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker. In view of the seeming conflict between the statement made last week by the Prime Minister and the statement made by Chief Awolowo that there would be no negotiation in the absence of certain preconditions, can the right hon. gentleman clear up the position of the Nigerian government in connection

with the situation in terms of his own announcement last week?

Right Hon. P.-E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I would be glad to attempt to do so. I believe the confusion which arose in the understanding of some members of the opposition derived from the fact that Chief Awolowo did give a commitment to certain heads of delegations in London that he would meet while in London, without any conditions, representatives of the Biafran regime. The further statement to which reference has been made was relevant to meetings which might be held at some future time back in Nigeria or elsewhere. The chief was stating that while in London he would be prepared to meet, without any preconditions, the representatives of the Biafran regime. In the event, the representatives of that regime refused to meet with him at that time.

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): Are we to understand that Chief Awolowo attached a fuse to his commitment at that time? Now that the Canadian representatives have been talking with Biafran officials I wonder whether they are in fact only considering the possibility of cease-fire discussions or whether they have attempted to clear up some of the communications difficulties which have existed with regard to possible daytime relief operations in that part of Africa?

Mr. Trudeau: Did the hon. member ask whether he had attached a fuse? I am afraid I do not see the significance of that question.

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): As to the second part of the question with regard to the possibility of daylight relief operations in Biafra, have discussions been held?

Mr. Trudeau: The position as we learned it in London was the same as we have reported to the house on previous occasions. The Nigerian authorities have agreed to allow daylight relief flights to go through but the Biafran authorities refuse to contemplate such flights.

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): On a point of clarification, Mr. Speaker, is the Prime Minister aware of the lengthy statement that has been made by Colonel Ojukwu and gentlemen of this kind, and has he not received confirmation of the statement from the Biafran authorities in London?