

External Aid

somebody will have to give, so the more planes we have available to fly in food on day flights, the better.

• (8:20 p.m.)

We certainly would not be able to continue the night flights because I have every reason to believe the Nigerians have been tracking all these flights on their radar, and it is just a question of time before they start shooting down these aircraft. Certainly we do not want our planes to be shot down. Canada is well favoured by both sides. In fact both sides are almost begging us to help. They respect Canada more perhaps than any other country in the world. They feel we have a prestige which other countries do not enjoy, and that we have an influence with other countries. They would like us to help them. I think the main thing is that this war be ended by whatever means are possible. There must be an end to the fighting. We can bring in food and do other things, but unless the fighting ends a great deal of misery will continue and one might wonder where it will lead.

I suggest therefore that Canada offer itself as a mediator in an effort to bring about a ceasefire. Then it might be possible to bring about a solution of the political problem, with Canada acting as a mediator between the two sides. I feel that Canada not only would be acceptable but would be welcomed by both sides. Any other consideration, whether it be in respect of the political situation or recognition of it, or whether it be by arms, should be set aside and Canada should concern itself with the humanitarian problems only.

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I hope my remarks will be reasonably brief in respect of the point at issue. I hope also that I shall be able to shed a little light, and not too much heat on the subject. The hon. member who just spoke urged that we do not make this a political issue. I do not think it has been made a political issue. Nevertheless I believe we have a duty to express our opinions quite frankly. When we feel there is some defect or shortcoming in the policy or in the position of the government I believe it is our duty to say so, with whatever reluctance we might have about becoming involved in argument or in making a political issue out of the suffering of the people of Biafra. What we want to do is get on the right course and stay there. This must be our aim.

I am a little disappointed in one sense, although I hope this will be corrected shortly.

[Mr. Stewart (Cochrane).]

The Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) indicated during the supper hour that he had, as I understood him, some constructive suggestions to make with regard to Canada's position in respect of this problem. I am rather disappointed that he did not do this earlier in the day, so that this could have been discussed freely by the members of the house. I hope he will take the earliest opportunity to put his suggestions before this house and before the country even at this late hour, after we have been discussing the Nigerian and Biafran problems through most of the day.

As the hon. member who last spoke suggested, we are not involved in any gamesmanship in respect of this, and I am sure the Secretary of State for External Affairs does not want to make this a matter of gamesmanship. Therefore I suggest that he put his projects and ideas before the house as rapidly as possible, so that they can be discussed.

Next let me say I might willingly accept the standards and aims set forth by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) in his speech this afternoon when he said that the government must be judged by one test and one test only on the simple issue, has the government acted correctly and wisely. As I recall, those were his words. I would not have put it quite that way, I would not have put the word "correctly" before the word "wisely". This may be an indication to some extent of the attitude of the government, but I do not wish to quibble about that.

I am prepared to accept that as not perhaps the happiest way in which the matter could be put, but as a standard by which to judge the position of the government. Certainly later on the Prime Minister said there is only one standard by which any particular measure should be judged, and that is as to whether it will be effective. I accept that. In other words, will it be effective in bringing relief to the people who are suffering, or will it be effective as a means, presumably, of bringing a cessation of the hostilities which are the fundamental cause of the suffering that is going on. I accept those standards for the purpose of this discussion. They are not put exactly the way I would put them, but I accept them.

I have come to the conclusion, judged by these standards, that the government policy to date has been a failure. I hope the Secretary of State for External Affairs tonight will place before the house some suggestions that