

Since early 1969, and with the knowledge of the Nigerian Government, contacts have been made and discussions about relief and other measures subsequently held by Canada with representatives of the Biafran regime. The Secretary of State for External Affairs has spoken with Biafran authorities in New York; various Canadian officials have met with Biafran representatives in London, Ottawa, Geneva and New York, and are continuing to do so in one or more of these places whenever it appears appropriate to do so. It is in this light that my statement of last week must be viewed when I said there had been contact at the ministerial level. This contact was made at New York; of course there have been other contacts at the official level in the various capitals, as I have just said.

In an effort to overcome the delivery difficulties, the Canadian Government has consulted continuously with a number of other donor governments which make up what is known as the Hague Group. It has consulted as well with the United States Government. That Government, early this year, took the recognized lead in Nigerian relief activities when President Nixon appointed Ambassador Clyde Ferguson as his official representative to co-ordinate humanitarian assistance to Nigeria.

In June of this year, I sent my representative back to Nigeria to ensure that General Gowon's single condition for daylight flights remained unchanged. Professor Head then journeyed to Tanzania on my behalf to speak to President Nyerere, the leader of an African country which had recognized the independence of Biafra, about all aspects of the Nigerian situation.

On July 10, in an attempt to meet Biafran contentions that daylight flights would prejudice its military position, the Secretary of State for External Affairs offered to send Canadians to the area to act as inspectors of relief cargos.

In the early summer, the International Committee of the Red Cross began negotiations in Geneva in an attempt to solve the flight impasse which by then had reached a critical point as the Nigerian Air Force increased its efforts to prevent night flights of arms from reaching Uli. After one of its aircraft was shot down, the ICRC halted its night flights.

A Red Cross proposal for daylight flights (I repeat ... this whole business of daylight flights was begun as a result of Canadian initiative, the whole idea was brought up as a result of Canadian initiative which followed upon our obtaining from General Gowon his consent to such flights) was given to both Nigerian and Biafran representatives in Geneva on August 1. Biafra accepted the proposal in principle on August 14 but made its acceptance subject to the condition that it would continue to use Uli Airport for its own operations. The Biafrans offered no evidence that they were prepared to meet the single Nigerian request that arms not be flown in during daylight hours. The paper setting out "technical modalities" of daylight flights, drawn up by Professor Freymond of the ICRC and Dr. Cookey of Biafra, and circulated by the Biafran authorities, must be read in light of this Biafran condition.

In late summer, the ICRC sent a team of representatives to Nigeria in an attempt to conclude a daylight relief agreement with both sides, no agreement having been reached with either side up to this point. On September 13, the Federal Nigerian Government and the ICRC reached an agreement for an internationally-inspected and militarily-inviolable daylight relief airlift. The