

*External Aid*

world if we could simply compartmentalize the political problems on one side and the humanitarian objective of bringing in relief supplies on the other. But unfortunately the political and humanitarian aspects are intermingled for at least three reasons.

First of all, unfortunate as the fact may be, in modern war the question of the morale of the state and the condition of the civilian population, is a factor of importance in the successful conclusion of a dispute. Second, in relation to this war it is obvious that a battle of public relations is going on. We have all seen newspaper reports that enormous sums of money are being spent, some in Geneva and some in the United States, to promote on both sides the public image that they wish to present. On the part of the Biafran authorities, this is quite a reasonable position for them to take. There is an attempt by them to use public relations, to use natural world sympathy, to promote their interests, which is the imposition of a political stalemate in the area. I do not criticize them for that. I simply point out that the public relations aspect and the humanitarian aspect are involved necessarily in a political dispute.

Unpleasant as the fact may be, we must recognize that for every plane load of relief supplies that goes into the Biafran area, a plane load is freed to bring in a supply of arms from Gabon or whatever part of the world is supplying arms to the Biafran authorities. The provision of relief relieves other facilities to bring in arms; so there is a necessary intermingling of the humanitarian and political problems.

It would be simple-minded to expect the Nigerian authorities to simply say: Go ahead with your humanitarian efforts regardless of how they affect our war situation, and pay no attention to our views. They have an interest in how the humanitarian efforts are being carried out. If we look at the real facts of the situation we will understand that without the co-operation of the Nigerian authorities no very substantial effort can be made which will be effective in bringing relief to the trouble-spot of Biafra.

As has been mentioned by other hon. members, Biafra is landlocked; it does not have great air or port facilities. The position is roughly similar to that in Berlin at the time of the blockade. I understand that in Berlin one aircraft arrived every 70 seconds bringing in food, medicine and other supplies, and even then the airlift was not effective. We cannot possibly hope, no matter how effective

[Mr. Roberts.]

our airlift, no matter whether we use the airdrops the hon. member mentioned, to deal with the problem without land corridors; and we cannot get land corridors without the co-operation of the Nigerian authorities. That is the practical reason why whatever Canada does in the humanitarian area must be done not in defiance of the Nigerian authorities but with their co-operation.

Let me now turn to the second criticism which has been levelled against the government's policy, that which suggests we must insist upon or push for a political settlement, some kind of stalemate to the war, as a means of achieving the humanitarian end. Such an argument raises the question that other hon. members have mentioned, namely, that of the intervention of Canada in the internal affairs of other countries. What I think has not been sufficiently stressed is that the principle of non-intervention in the affairs of other countries is an extraordinarily progressive principle in international affairs. It is progressive because it substitutes another rule of action to that of the use of force in international affairs. It substitutes something other than national interest as a guide to the conduct of nations in foreign affairs. This is exactly the principle of non-intervention which we have attempted to use to protest, to deny the validity of the Russian intervention in Czechoslovakia.

The opponents of the policy of this government suggest a way of proceeding which they say is for the greater moral good in dealing with the problem of starving children and suffering in Biafra. They suggest we should be prepared to let these rules of international conduct go by the board. We should accept this minor inconvenience as a necessary price to pay for doing something good. They argue a little, like the girl who is prepared to be just a little bit pregnant as long as it is all good fun. They say that the morality of our objective justifies our intervention. There never was a country that intervened in the internal affairs of another country that did not claim its purposes to be moral and honourable. No country ever said it is going to intervene in somebody else's affairs for its own wicked ends. This principle of non-intervention is one which poses a rule of conduct which is not simply that of a self proclaimed interest of a country in the affairs of another. It may be that those who are opposed to the present government's policy in Biafra are prepared to abandon the principle of non-intervention in the affairs of another country.