

us whether the other aircraft which have been flying into Biafra regularly for weeks have been involved in all these legal niceties that the minister keeps throwing up from time to time?

**Mr. Sharp:** Well, if I may speak on that, one of the legal niceties with which they did not have to contend is the fact that we have a new republic. Equatorial Guinea, whose permission we now must obtain.

**Mr. Lewis:** May I ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs whether he can give us any indication as to how long these negotiations with Equatorial Guinea and Biafra, as well as other matters, are likely to take.

**Mr. Sharp:** No, I cannot say. All I know is that we are putting pressure on the authorities to get this airlift approved.

**Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, am I to understand from the answer of the Secretary of State for External Affairs that the government of Canada is today taking the position that it is making representations to the governments of these countries, whereas yesterday the Prime Minister stated that the policy of the government was not to make such representations directly?

**Mr. Sharp:** No, Mr. Speaker. I think the Leader of the Opposition missed the significance of my previous reply. One of the obligations we have which has not been encountered by anyone else arises out of the establishment of the new state of Equatorial Guinea in which Fernando Po is involved. In order to have our planes land we must have their permission. This is one of the factors. For the rest, we are putting pressure on the International Red Cross.

**Mr. MacDonald (Egmont):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether I might raise with the Secretary of State for External Affairs a question similar to one I raised with the Prime Minister yesterday. In view of the continuing difficulty in obtaining this approval, and in view of the great anxiety on the part of many people of this country to see some action taken with regard to the relief efforts, I wonder whether a deadline could be set for the International Red Cross with regard to its efforts in order that this matter may be facilitated at the earliest possible date.

**Mr. Sharp:** I agree with the statement made yesterday by the Prime Minister. I do

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

not think this would be helpful. It would constitute an ultimatum, which is not what we want. We want to get action.

**Mr. Lewis:** I have a further supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister indicate to the house, from the reports the Red Cross has given him, whether he has any idea what the difficulties are so far as Equatorial Guinea is concerned? What is the holdup there in respect of obtaining their consent?

**Mr. Sharp:** Our understanding is that we cannot find the officials who would give us the permission.

**Mr. Lewis:** They are not on the roster.

**Mr. Stanfield:** I understood the Secretary of State for External Affairs to say that representations were being made to Equatorial Guinea. Would the minister be good enough to explain to the house the reason that representations can properly be made to Equatorial Guinea but cannot be properly made to the state of Nigeria, for example, with regard to assisting the Red Cross?

**Mr. Sharp:** I think the Leader of the Opposition has forgotten that we did get the agreement of the government of Nigeria.

**Mr. Stanfield:** Am I to understand that the policy announced by the Secretary of State for External Affairs is that the government of Canada has made representations directly to the government of Nigeria, whereas yesterday I understood the Prime Minister to say that it would not be possible for the government of Canada to make such representations to the state of Nigeria?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I wonder whether this is not an argument rather than a question.

[Translation]

**DOMINION-PROVINCIAL RELATIONS**

**INQUIRY AS TO AGENDA FOR CONFERENCE**

On the orders of the day:

**Hon. Martial Asselin (Charlevoix):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a question to the right hon. Prime Minister. It concerns Canadian affairs.

The Prime Minister recently announced that the next federal-provincial conference will be held about the middle of December. Can he tell me whether the agenda of the