

*Canadian Action on Nigeria-Biafra*

it is General Ojukwu himself who really must carry the brunt of the blame for the war and for the death of so many of his people, especially during the last few months when surely he could have seen the handwriting on the wall and realized that it was impossible for him to win the war.

I urge hon. members of this House to consider the matter carefully. We must accept our responsibilities. There are those who say that Canada should have done more to stop the war. I remind them of what we thought of General de Gaulle when he came to Quebec and uttered just a few words extolling the independence of the province of Quebec. Certainly his cry of "Vive le Quebec libre" was not accepted by Canadians. In the same light, it was impossible for a foreign country such as Canada to go in and settle the war in Nigeria.

In relation to the situation in Africa, I would also point out that if the Biafran secessionist movement had succeeded and a country of Biafra had been established, there are a dozen potential Biafran situations in African countries. The tribal situation in many of the new countries in Africa is such that if some tribes thought there was the possibility of gaining their own ends, they would follow the lead provided by Biafra. I can give no better example than the crisis through which Kenya has passed in recent months.

Without belabouring this situation any further, may I commend to the House an article which appears in tonight's *Telegram*. It was written by Peter Worthington, a reporter who has spent several months on both sides. The article has much merit and is worthy of our consideration.

Before closing, Mr. Speaker, I wish to point out that during the last few weeks food shipments could have been made to Biafra if a land corridor had been used. But the Biafran leaders made it clear that they could not accept the use of a land corridor because they feared the food would be poisoned by the Nigerian authorities, even though assurance was given of international supervision. I also suggest that if the Biafran officials had allowed daylight flights it would not have been necessary for the International Red Cross or the World Relief Commission to stop its food flights, which occurred only a few weeks ago.

I wish also to refer to the statement issued today by General Philip Effiong, which I think is worthy of note. As I read it, I think

he meant it to be interpreted as saying clearly that those officials who have been responsible for enforcing the continuance of the fighting in recent weeks have now been removed from the scene, meaning General Ojukwu and his senior officials, and he hopes to achieve as honourable a settlement as can possibly be worked out. I think this is commendable.

I am also concerned about the present attitude of many humanitarian agencies and many people who have been interested in relief efforts in Canada in recent months and years. I am concerned about why in some areas their reaction has been negative to the news that the war has stopped. It seems to me that we ought to be lifting our hearts in thanksgiving to the Almighty that this has been the case, and then ready ourselves for the responsibility which is the challenge of this debate.

• (9:30 p.m.)

I say to the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) that the government has a responsibility to the tens of thousands of Canadian people who in the last year or two have been so concerned and have shown it in active participation by their contributions. The government must receive direct assurance from the Nigerian government that they will allow full and free distribution of food and relief supplies. If the Nigerian government intends to fulfil its stated policy, there is no reason, why they should not give this assurance.

Second, I think it is imperative that we ready the aircraft which the minister has said is available at the present time to move in and transport the supplies which are stockpiled. There are ample supplies for at least the weeks ahead. These should be moved into the area where fighting has ceased. Without four, five or six million people in that small area the confusion and breakdown of communications and the administration of law and order, except such as the military forces of Nigeria are able to provide, demands immediate action. This is of first importance.

Third, from reports which I have received today through a church oriented relief organization in which I am personally involved, it appears that the immediate need, in addition to the transportation of food supplies, medicine and relief supplies, is personnel. I am very pleased to say that one Canadian organization is moving to send a team of a dozen or twenty doctors, nurses and social workers. I believe there will be much response from the