

The House of Commons is a place where from time to time we reveal an understanding of each other, and an appreciation of members sitting opposite which dispels the acerbities of party warfare and which causes each of us to form deep and abiding admiration for those members who sit in every part of the house.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

### EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

#### BIAFRA—SUGGESTED ACTION BY UNITED NATIONS

On the orders of the day:

**Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to address a question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs and ask whether, in view of the fact that the meetings of the Organization of African Unity are now over and the countries of that organization have decided not to bring the Biafran crisis to the United Nations, the minister will now undertake to bring this matter before that world body.

**Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, in the light of the resolutions and decisions made by the Organization of African Unity we have been exploring with the secretary general of that organization and with the Secretary General of the United Nations how best this matter might be brought before the United Nations.

**Mr. Stanfield:** A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Can the Secretary of State for External Affairs give us some assurance, in view of the fact that thousands of people are dying there daily, that this serious crisis will in fact be brought promptly before the United Nations?

**Mr. Sharp:** Mr. Speaker, as the hon. gentleman knows, such matters can be brought before the United Nations only by a group of countries. We have explored the possibilities of bringing this before the security council, and the soundings we have made show that is not a very fruitful way to proceed; but we believe we will find a group of countries that will be prepared to join with us in bringing this matter before the United Nations general assembly.

**Mr. Stanfield:** A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I ask the minister, when did these explorations commence?

#### *Inquiries of the Ministry*

**Mr. Sharp:** These explorations have been going on for some time, having in mind the very serious nature of this crisis.

**Mr. R. Gordon L. Fairweather (Fundy Royal):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether the Secretary of State for External Affairs can tell us what representations Canada has made to Britain for that country to cease supplying arms to Nigeria.

**Mr. Sharp:** Mr. Speaker, the Canadian government has not made representations to the British government on this subject.

**Mr. W. B. Nesbitt (Oxford):** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. In view of news that reached us this morning by press and radio, what is the minister's assessment of how much longer Biafra can exist as a de facto state, in view of the military progress of the Nigerian government?

**Mr. Sharp:** Mr. Speaker, I am afraid that kind of information is not available to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. The house will have observed from the newspapers this morning that the Organization of African Unity is supposed to have asked—I cannot confirm this—the Biafran authorities to surrender, so as to save lives, and the Biafran authorities have said they intend to fight on.

[Later:]

**Mr. Jack McIntosh (Swift Current-Maple Creek):** I should like to direct my question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Following the minister's reference yesterday to the terrible war in Nigeria, I should like to ask the minister whether he has been in consultation with his colleagues the Minister of Transport and the Minister of National Defence concerning the possible employment of Canada's mobile command in its peace restoring role?

**Mr. Sharp:** I do not know that I quite understand the purport of that question. It gives me the opportunity, however, to say that we have been moving food from Vancouver to Halifax to put on board the ship that is leaving soon for Nigeria. We are flying the supplies, using Hercules airplanes of the Canadian Armed Forces.

**Mr. McIntosh:** A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I do not know what the mobile command has to do with the transportation of food, but in view of the imminent removal of the Canadian contingent from Cyprus can the