

with the Secretary General of the United Nations. Can he inform the House whether or not in his discussions with U Thant any matters were raised relative to the war in Nigeria-Biafra, specifically the removal of some of the obstacles the Prime Minister referred to in his speech in the debate in reply to the Throne Speech in terms of relief and progress regarding the possibility of United Nations assistance toward a ceasefire?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I can speak only in general terms because I believe I would be wrong to refer to the discussions in detail. The matter of confidence regarding these meetings is very important. I did want to assure myself whether Canada could usefully take any new initiatives at the United Nations. On that aspect of the question I received no encouragement from the Secretary General.

**Mr. MacDonald (Egmont):** Mr. Speaker, was the Prime Minister able to ascertain from the Secretary General whether the United Nations might play some role in establishing effective relief corridors?

**Mr. Trudeau:** No, Mr. Speaker, and I would hesitate to speak in the name of the United Nations.

## PUBLIC SERVICE

### ALLEGED LACK OF EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN

**Mr. Barry Mather (Surrey):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether I might be allowed to rephrase a question I tried to direct to the attention of the President of the Treasury Board on November 10. Having in mind the statement last weekend by the chairman of the Public Service Commission of Canada alleging discrimination in employment opportunities for women in the Public Service, will he undertake to inquire into this situation?

**Hon. C. M. Drury (President of the Treasury Board):** Mr. Speaker, I recommend that the hon. gentleman read the speech of the chairman of the Public Service Commission; I will send him a copy of it. It is an analysis of a situation which is perhaps to some extent reflected in this chamber. It involves obtaining adequate recognition of the rights and qualifications of women, even in Parliament. He was merely drawing attention to the fact that this situation also exists in the Public Service.

**Mr. Mather:** Mr. Speaker, I should like to—

## *Inquiries of the Ministry*

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member is rising on a supplementary question. Perhaps he would kindly resume his seat so that it will be easier for me to indicate to him that I have the same reservations today that I had last week about questions concerning statements made outside the House by persons other than ministers of the Crown. Perhaps the supplementary question should be asked in another fashion.

**Mr. Mather:** Mr. Speaker, I simply want to ask the minister whether, in spite of what he has said, he will have a look at this general situation?

## TAXATION

### SALES AND SPECIAL COMMODITY TAXES— INQUIRY AS TO REVIEW

**Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister without Portfolio from Windsor West whether, in view of the statement by the Minister of Finance that the government will review its sales and special commodities tax as soon as Parliament and the country have digested the white paper proposals issued last week, he can indicate when this review will get under way and how it will proceed? Will we have a white paper on the subject of these other taxes and, if so, when may we expect it?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Minister without Portfolio):** Mr. Speaker, the white paper on tax reform points out in paragraph 1.19 that income taxes:

—should be given priority in the tax reform program. Reform of the sales tax is less urgent and can be undertaken after action on the proposals in this paper.

I think these words speak for themselves. May I conclude by saying that the method of reviewing sales taxes will be announced in due course.

**Mr. Stanfield:** I take it this relates to something that is possibly in the dim and distant future. Do I understand the minister correctly that it is the intention of the government to have the country and Parliament study the proposals in respect of income tax changes without having had an opportunity to examine and consider in the same context changes in sales and commodity taxes which might very well have a bearing on attitudes toward the special proposals in the white paper?

**Mr. Gray:** Mr. Speaker, Parliament and the public may well feel that the proposals in the