

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

the very near future on what has happened and what is the government's policy in that area?

[Translation]

**Hon. Gérard Pelletier (Secretary of State):** Mr. Speaker, I now have the required information; I got it this morning. However, I may have to consult with you. You may find the answer rather lengthy, but with your permission, I could give it now.

[English]

**Mr. Speaker:** The minister is asking me to rule in advance whether his answer is going to be too long. If the minister wants to revert to motions for the purpose of making a statement, which will be subject to comment and discussion by representations of parties in opposition, then it would be up to the house to decide.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pelletier:** Then, Mr. Speaker, I shall risk reading it as it is, without fear of your strictness, and you can always interrupt if you find the statement too long.

[English]

The Canadian Corps of Commissionaires is a private organization, and commissionaires are not members of the public service of Canada but employees of the corps. The government of Canada contracts for the services of commissionaires through the Department of Defence Production, and individual departments and agencies arrange for their requirements through that department. In the fiscal year 1969-70 the National Museums of Canada has arranged for the services of 54 commissionaires for duty in the National Museum of Man, which includes the Canadian War Museum, the National Museum of Natural Sciences, and the National Museum of Science and Technology. The National Gallery of Canada, whose requirements are somewhat special, has a separate contract for security services with National Protective Service Company Limited.

In October, 1968, officials of the National Museum discussed with the commandant of the Ottawa division of the corps the feasibility of supplying bilingual commissionaires for duty in the areas of the National Museums of Canada which are open to the public during the hours they were open. Air Vice Marshal—

[Translation]

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I must interrupt the hon. minister at this time to suggest that the statement he is delivering must normally be

[Mr. Lewis.]

made on motions, unless all hon. members are willing to hear the hon. minister's statement as a reply to a question. I do not think the hon. minister is entitled to continue any further.

[English]

**Mr. Lewis:** A supplementary question. I ask this question of the Secretary of State, particularly in view of your ruling, Mr. Speaker, in regard to the answer that he attempted today. In view of the disquiet that there is about this matter, and particularly in view of the fact that the people concerned were not public servants, and therefore had none of the security and protection that a member of the public service has, or is alleged to have, would the minister seriously and favourably consider answering this question in the form of a statement on motions on Wednesday? If the situation is as good as his face suggested it might be, is there any reason for him to fear comments by opposition spokesmen?

[Translation]

**Mr. Pelletier:** I am not afraid of comments, Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, but you will excuse my lack of experience. So many questions have been asked on that subject that I will not so to speak make any statement but rather reply in turn to the several questions that have been put to me and that have piled up.

[English]

#### EXTERNAL AID

##### BIAFRA—MANNER OF MAKING RELIEF SHIPMENTS

**Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont):** Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. In view of the imminent shipments of foodstuffs for Nigerian and Biafran relief, would the minister inform the house whether it is still the plan of the government to send a major portion of this relief to Fernando Po, as originally planned?

**Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, this was a decision that was made by the International Red Cross. After discussions with us they decided they would divide their shipments into two parts. I am not sure what the position is now because, as the hon. gentleman knows, the International Red Cross has been having some difficulties with the government of Equatorial Guinea. Until those matters are settled probably the International Red Cross itself does not have a view.