

*External Aid*

children who have no control over the tragedy which engulfs them.

I put this suggestion forward today in the sincere hope that the government will consider it. It does, I think, fit within the terms of the report made by the committee on external affairs, and if adopted and carried out successfully it could bring a very high and deserved measure of credit to those who have put forward the suggestion.

As most hon. members probably know, the members of my party who were on the committee, namely, our acting leader, the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis), the hon. member for Vancouver East (Mr. Winch) and myself, prepared and issued what would have been a minority report had the rules permitted it. In this document, issued at the time the committee made its report, we said that although we agreed with much of what was contained in the report we nevertheless found it inadequate in the following particulars:

1. It failed to call for Canadian action through the third committee of the United Nations, founded on concern for human rights, for an immediate cease-fire between Nigeria and Biafra.

2. It failed to call on Canada to use its influence, both diplomatically and through the United Nations, to put an end to the supplying of arms to the combatants on either side of the conflict.

3. It failed to propose action by the Commonwealth of Nations by which the Prime Minister of Canada might seek to convene a meeting of the Commonwealth, with a view to discussing and taking action to bring about a cease-fire and the cessation of the supplying of armaments to either side.

4. It failed to recommend with sufficient clarity and particularity the concrete action which could be taken forthwith by Canada to increase the effect of the airlifts into Biafra.

5. It underemphasized the handicaps and difficulties which have rendered the task of the observers virtually futile, and overemphasized the value of the observers' reports under present circumstances.

6. In discussing the issue of genocide it failed to emphasize the disastrous implications of the further continuation of the war.

I do not intend to review all these matters today. I would prefer to deal with two particular aspects which in my view are of overwhelming importance. First, let no one be deceived about the magnitude of the tragedy which is hanging over the heads of the people of Biafra. It has recently been estimated that

more than one million have already died of starvation. That was up to the end of October. The *New York Times* reported just the other day that Dr. Herman Middlekoop, the Dutch relief expert in charge of the relief work of the World Council of Churches, sent the following figures to Secretary General U Thant:

● (4:40 p.m.)

Estimated deaths from starvation in month of July 6,000 per day, August 10,000 per day, September 12,000 per day. Present situation holds or decreasing slightly with present level of relief flights.

There are one million persons in refugee camps and they are receiving some food, but there are a further three million persons without relief in the bush. Carbohydrate reserves from last winter's crops will be exhausted in seven weeks, leaving Biafra completely without food. Acute mass starvation is then expected. This is not my opinion. This is from a report released by the Catholic relief services executive director.

What can we in Canada do about this disaster? I should like to discuss this matter under two heads. The first, and by far the most important, is that every possible effort should be made to bring the war to an end. However much the relief effort is kept up it cannot be adequate to meet the crisis. In our view the Canadian government should propose an immediate cease-fire, and this proposal in our view should be linked with a request for an immediate end to the supplying of arms to combatants on either side. This could be followed by massive governmental relief operations in the areas occupied by federal and Biafran forces.

The Canadian government is hesitant about taking action. All sorts of reasons have been given when the Prime Minister has been asked why Canada could not take this action. Such action has been described by the Prime Minister and others as intervention in the domestic affairs of Nigeria. To my mind this is a totally mistaken view. It might be that we would not get immediate or universal support if we took action through the United Nations, but if Canada gave a lead we believe the peoples of the world would require their governments to support that lead. There is already much more support throughout the world than the Prime Minister and his government are willing to admit.

The members of the committee were furnished with a memorandum on international law by Dean Ronald MacDonald. As has