

*External Aid*

cried when I saw women nursing their babies, and other women who were pregnant line up to receive a bit of food and some iron tablets. They cheered and sang songs because Canadians were there. They had been told we would help them and send food to them.

I was also touched to see little children in refugee camps and in sick bays there. There were little tiny ones, one, two and three years old; certainly they were not responsible for the war. I saw children with hair that was turning red because of lack of protein. Their little tummies were distended; their feet were swollen and their ribs were showing. We helped to feed some of these children and to distribute some soup that was made with nutritious food. These teeming, hungry children were given that food.

I will never forget the looks on their faces, and the little bowls they carried with them as part and parcel of their lives. They walked around with their little bowls, hoping they would obtain food. Some of them had bowls, and some of them had cans like our opened sardine cans or other fish cans. You could cut your finger on the jagged end. Certainly we would make sure that our children would never carry around cans like these on which they could cut themselves; but that is all those poor little children had to put their food into.

These are things you do not forget; these are things that tear at your heartstrings. These are things, also, that tend to make you look at that situation from the point of view of those who at that moment are being presented to you. Nevertheless, regardless of the emotional involvement, it is absolutely essential that we all look at this situation from every point of view. I cannot emphasize too strongly that we cannot become involved in a political situation. Ours is a humanitarian consideration, and nothing more.

We heard figures quoted about the numbers of people dying. It was said there were 1,000, 2,000—the figure went all the way up to 10,000—who were dying every day. I do not know the right figure. I do know, none the less, that people are dying needlessly. That is the important point. I also know that people are afraid. They are afraid of being exterminated. Whether their fear results from government propaganda I do not know; whether their fear stems from having seen families suffer atrocities I also do not know. They are afraid of their enemies. We were told that the people were afraid of losing their lives, and

[Mr. Stewart (Cochrane).]

some were so afraid they would not come out of hiding.

Imagine, Mr. Speaker, a very simple people, most of whom are probably illiterate in any language. They are just living their daily lives and want nothing else but to live that life. Suddenly a war comes along, and there is a departure from normal customs. Naturally the people are afraid. They are afraid of troops, no matter whether they are Biafran or Nigerian. They do not want any more war; that is all. The question we must ask ourselves is not of whom they are afraid; the question to be considered is that they are afraid.

We must study the political situations existing on both sides of the war. To understand what is happening we must study more and more. But we must not become involved politically in the situation. As I say, we shall only understand the problems of the area by studying them. I do not pretend that simply because I spent two weeks in Africa I am an expert in African affairs. But at least I gained a little insight into the problems of the area by studying those problems before going over. Certainly, I think I have a greater insight than those who have never been there, and I appreciate the opportunity that enabled me to study the problem at first hand.

● (8:10 p.m.)

We spent several days on the Biafran side and then we went over to the Nigerian side. We also spent a little time on Fernando Po, an island off the coast of Nigeria. While in Lagos we had the opportunity to speak with several officials. We also had the opportunity to speak with the Bishop of Calabar, a town in the southern part of eastern Nigeria which had been in Biafran hands and is now in federal hands. We heard about atrocities on both sides. The Bishop of Calabar told us about the Ibos having locked a number of civilians in a church and set fire to it. If we are to believe all the reports we have heard it is obvious that atrocities have been committed by both sides. Another thing which came out in our talks to the bishop was that much of the propaganda which has gone out has not been completely correct. We know there has been propaganda on both sides. For example, while we were there it was obvious that the B.B.C. was not reporting the same thing in Africa as it was in its international service; it was obviously slanted to the federal side. This is something