

## CANADIAN RELIEF TO NIGERIA

Mr. Mitchell Sharp, Secretary of State for External Affairs, announced on September 30 that, in the interest of continuing the close co-operation between the Canadian Government and the Canadian Red Cross Society, he had invited Major-General A.E. Wrinch, National Commissioner of the Canadian Red Cross Society, to visit Ottawa on September 26 to discuss Canadian relief programmes in all parts of Nigeria. General Wrinch had just returned from Europe where he had studied the Nigerian operations of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the sister Red Cross societies participating in the relief of suffering in the area of conflict.

Mr. Sharp explained the basic considerations behind the Government's policy on Nigerian relief. Canada has maintained the closest relations with Nigeria since it became independent in 1960 and recognizes the government at Lagos as the only Nigerian Government. The Canadian Government and people, he declared, had been "deeply distressed" by the civil war particularly by the suffering of civilians. The Canadian Government nonetheless respects the fact that this was a civil war and had no intention of intervening in Nigeria's internal affairs. It had also taken note of the views of the African states, expressed in the resolution of the Algiers meeting of the Organization of African Unity Heads of State. However, Mr. Sharp said, Canada was deeply concerned with the humanitarian problem of supplying food and other relief to those in need, and in helping if possible, to see that relief reached those who needed it most. The Canadian Government deeply regretted that it had not been possible for the parties to reach arrangements that would permit relief supplies in the amounts required to be sent to the affected areas.

General Wrinch and the Minister exchanged

views as to how Canada might contribute most effectively in meeting the immediate needs as well as those that might arise in the future. General Wrinch said that in view of the limited response to the public appeal made by the Nigeria-Biafra Relief Fund of Canada, neither the Fund nor the Canadian Red Cross was able to meet the request of the International Committee of the Red Cross for an aircraft to participate in the International Red Cross's relief operations.

### AIRCRAFT AND CREW

Following the discussion, Mr. Sharp said that the Government was prepared to facilitate these relief operations by providing a Canadian Forces *Hercules* aircraft and crew to the Canadian Red Cross for participation as soon as practicable in relief operations in areas under the control of the Nigerian Government.

The Minister and General Wrinch also discussed the arrangements for the shipment and distribution of the remainder of the \$1-million worth of food aid which the Government had made available to the International Red Cross for use in Nigeria. The next shipment, which will begin loading in Halifax on October 13, will consist of 2,500 tons of dried, salted fish provided by the Canadian Government, together with 650 tons of supplies contributed by Canadian voluntary agencies and 20 tons contributed by the government of British Columbia. Arrangements were agreed upon that would facilitate the International Red Cross's distribution of Canadian Government relief supplies in all areas of Nigeria in which the International Red Cross is operating. (See also *Canadian Weekly Bulletin*, Vol. 23, Nos. 31, P. 3, dated July 31, and 33, P. 3, dated August 14.)

## SALE OF PLUTONIUM TO FRANCE

Arrangements have been approved by the Governments of Canada and France for the sale of Canadian plutonium to France.

In a statement to the House of Commons on September 30, Mr. Mitchell Sharp, Secretary of State for External Affairs, said that officials of Atomic Energy of Canada Limited and the French Commissariat à l'Energie Atomique had been discussing the possibility of such an agreement for some time. Mr. Sharp said that the Commissariat à l'Energie Atomique had done intensive research in plutonium-burning, fast-breeder, nuclear-power reactors, but that France was not able to meet all its requirements. Canada, on the other hand, did not use all the plutonium it produced, he said, and "discussions between the French Commissariat and AECL on the possible supply of plutonium from Canada, therefore, came as a natural outcome of the collaboration between the two government agencies".

### PEACEFUL PURPOSES

The Minister continued:

"It is a long-standing policy of the Canadian Government that nuclear materials be exported from Canada for peaceful purposes only. With the full agreement of the French Government, it has been decided that the plutonium which will be used in the French civil nuclear programme will be transferred to France under the provisions of the agreement between Canada and the European Atomic Energy Community, of which France is, of course, a member. This agreement provides for the application of EURATOM safeguards and for procedures whereby Canada may obtain assurance that the Community's safeguards-and-control system is satisfactory and effective for any material transferred under the agreement from Canada to the member states of EURATOM. The role is fully compatible with Canada's signature of the test-ban treaty and of the NPT.

"I should also like to point out that the agree-