

*External Aid*

begin to communicate with both sides. Some suggest we cannot talk to Biafra because we do not recognize it. In diplomatic parlance it does not exist. I think it was only a few days ago that one of our ministers stood in this house and announced further sales of wheat worth millions of dollars to another country which, according to diplomatic representation, does not exist. It is a very easy thing to sell wheat to anyone who wants to buy it, whether they exist or not, but when it comes to carrying on a relief operation for people who are literally starving to death, then we have to cross all the "t's" and dot all the "i's", making only those contacts which are diplomatically acceptable.

I for one am not anxious that Canada's name be listed in the record book as simply another partisan in a very futile and sick war. At the very most we can say we are pacifists. I am not a pacifist, nor am I a warmonger or a military type. I believe that Canada should be a peacemaker and it strikes me as incredible that the man who is now the Prime Minister of this country, who has said over the years many things with regard to the establishment of an international morality with greater acceptance in dealing with questions of the establishment of an international morality, should now be reduced to the point where he is just another national partisan in this great human agony.

Some people have talked about the great role that Canada plays as a quiet diplomat. Where is this great quiet diplomacy? We have had occasional references from time to time to what our government has done. Yet on investigation much of it has seemed to be half-hearted and misdirected. If quiet diplomacy really does work then let us see some definite results from it and not the kind of defensive innuendo that has been made far too often by the Prime Minister and others in his government in place of real action.

I am not going to spend all my time being critical of the government. I have done that in other places, and some people have suggested they have heard enough of my views on this situation. Let me just suggest a few initiatives that are still open to the government, some of which are so incredibly obvious I cannot understand why they have not been attended to months ago.

One of the comments made recently about the ineffectiveness of our Hercules aircraft was that the airfields at Enugu, Calabar and Port Harcourt were not suitable or would not bear the continual use of Hercules aircraft. I

[Mr. MacDonald (Egmont).]

understood these were military planes and as such it was a relatively simple matter for our air force, because of training, to improve local airport conditions or, if necessary, to build new ones. Is the government trying to tell us that if we ever get into a real war or something like it we are going to spend as much time saying that we cannot fly these planes here, there and everywhere because we do not have suitable airports, and we will have to wait for five or ten years until we instal long runways with sufficient density to bear these aircraft? That is nonsense, and I think most people realize it.

I asked the Prime Minister a few weeks ago why, in view of the fact that many of these aircraft remained inoperational, we did not use a massive airdrop. I think the reply really was that the government had not considered this. The government has not considered this? This is one of the basic reasons we own these aircraft, but we simply pull them all back to Canada. Why can we not carry out an airdrop and carry it out now?

Earlier the Prime Minister referred to the idea of developing corridors, saying that corridors have been offered by land and by sea by Nigeria but have been refused by Biafra. That is misleading, to say the least. Corridors have been offered from time to time by both sides and both sides have refused them. If we are going to have statements about relief operations at least let us have the whole picture from the Prime Minister and not a one-sided, loaded story.

At the earlier stages it was the hope of myself and the hon. member for Greenwood that we would not get into some of the difficulties raised by the Prime Minister about acts of war. He has dropped that one for some time, but there are other problems as well. We suggested that the government could do what other agencies and other governments have done. It could put these aircraft at the disposal of private agencies to remove any kind of international involvements, if this was felt to be not in the national interest. This, of course, was considered summarily at best and abandoned.

It is my suggestion there were other alternatives available if the government really wanted to act. We know there are other agencies working, and even if we could not make our aircraft available we do have financial resources. A committee meeting is taking place right now in Toronto in an attempt to raise enough money to buy one Superconstellation to increase the relief operation into