

Government Orders

If I may be permitted a personal note, in an Armistice Day presentation in my riding we spoke about the remembrance of those who had given their lives in sacrifice to their country. We also talked about those in the Middle East who were preparing to fight for liberty, peace, and freedom. We all hoped that their sacrifice would be in the preparation and not in the giving.

There was a couple there, Mr. and Mrs. McGurk, whose son, Darren, was in the Middle East. Mrs. McGurk went through a terrible evening listening to this. I spoke to her afterward and assured her that this Parliament would make sure that everything in the world was done to have a peaceful settlement of this operation.

My son is an RMC graduate. He happens to be in Montreal now, but he may well be in the next contingent to go to the Middle East. He belonged to a band at RMC, The Happy Days. The lead guitarist in that band is the squadron navigator for the force in the Middle East, Lieutenant Roger Boulet, and I know him quite well.

Another member of the band serves in submarines and he may be going. I talked to him three or four days ago. His name is Chris McLaughlin. He said: "What do you think is going to happen?" I said: "Well, we are all hoping for a peaceful settlement".

In looking at the human dimension of this, there can be no greater dimension and there can be no greater motivation than to try within every single perimeter that we can put on ourselves, in Canada, in Parliament, in the United Nations, and in the world, to try to settle this peacefully.

Few of us, here in the House, have lived through the horrors of war, but most of us know about them. I think it is safe to say that democratic wars, as just as they are, are not small; they are large. They are not short; they are long. They are also bloody.

In all the considerations that the government has, all the motivations—which I am assuming and I am positive are for the right reasons—I do not subscribe to the idea that we are supporting one nation. That is an insult to the 26 nations that are there. I do not want to subscribe to that. I think we are there for the right reasons, but I implore members of the government to look at the

human dimension and to seriously consider what they are doing when they stand up to vote. If they all voted, they could, in numbers, pass this motion. This is probably the biggest decision they will make in this Parliament.

Mr. Patrick Boyer (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I found the hon. member's speech very helpful and thorough. I certainly agree with a lot of the ideas he was expressing including, in his words which were identical to the words I used in the House two hours ago, that we must still hope that there can be a peaceful resolution to this. I sincerely believe that the steps that are being deliberately taken, step by step, is the way to proceed in trying to achieve that.

The hon. member made many observations. I just want to return to one, where he was trying to clarify the meaning of the UN resolution. It struck me, while listening to him, that we had not really progressed in the debate tonight, beyond the exchange that the hon. member for Mount Royal and I had about two hours ago on whether or not this meaning is vague.

The motion refers to resolution 660 and subsequent resolutions. After that earlier exchange and my discussions this afternoon with senior people at External Affairs and elsewhere, and continuing to be concerned that there would be vagueness or uncertainty about this, I spoke this evening with the Secretary of State for External Affairs. He said that he will not support a resolution or resolutions that he has not seen and he will not ask anyone else to do that. One cannot reasonably ask people, including hon. members of the House, to discuss resolutions that do not exist or that no one has seen. This is not what the government is suggesting by its motion before this House. The government is referring to Security Council resolutions which exist or are before us, including the resolution which will be addressed at the Security Council tomorrow. No one has ever suggested that this government will not endeavour to return to this House in the future when the need for that arises. I would say that again because one of the hon. members opposite—

• (2050)

Mr. Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Let's get the Minister of Defence to say that.