

I would first like to draw to your attention, Mr. Speaker, Citation 425 of Beausnesne, which states:

The object of an amendment may be either to modify a question in such a way as to increase its acceptability or to present to the House a different proposition as an alternative to the original which must, however, be relevant to the subject of the questions.

I would submit that the amendment offered earlier today by the Leader of the Opposition certainly makes the motion much more acceptable to Members of the House who form part of the Official Opposition. I would also submit that the amendment in question, while being an alternative to the original, is certainly relevant to the subject of the motion itself. It is not simply the kind of amendment which has been dealt with on other occasions by other Speakers; that is an amendment which would produce the same result as if the original motion were simply negated. We have an amendment which takes note of a situation in the world political community which has developed since the United Nations resolution—which is quoted in the motion—was brought before the United Nations. The amendment calls upon the present Government to take steps to urge the superpowers in their forthcoming meeting to consider a number of matters, including a verifiable freeze and the reduction of nuclear arms. In this connection, this amendment, if accepted and adopted, along with the adoption of the main motion, would certainly carry the policy of the Government beyond what it was in the past.

I would also like to submit that the amendment proposed by the Leader of the Opposition is acceptable because Citation 428 of Beausnesne states:

(1) A motion may be amended by: (a) leaving out certain words; (b) leaving out certain words in order to insert other words; (c) inserting or adding other words.

● (1540)

Therefore, if some thought should be given to the possibility that the amendment is not in order because its basic thrust is to delete certain operative words in the motion offered by the New Democratic Party and to insert other words, then it is still, by virtue of the citation in question, in order.

I conclude with a comment, Mr. Speaker, on the point which I anticipate may be raised against the acceptability of the amendment, that is, that the amendment may be one which proposes a direct negative or will produce the same result as if the original motion were simply negated. I have dealt with the latter point. I again and further submit that the amendment offered by the Leader of the Opposition is not simply to negate what is in the motion presented by the New Democratic Party. It is not intended simply to produce the same result as if the original motion were simply negated. In that connection, I draw Your Honour's attention to Beausnesne's Fifth Edition, Citation 431, which reads as follows:

An amendment to alter the main question, by substituting a proposition with the opposite conclusion, is not an expanded negative and may be moved.

I have already said, Mr. Speaker, that in my respectful submission, the amendment offered by the Leader of the Opposition is not intended to offer simply a totally opposite conclusion, but to move the policy of the Government forward

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from what it was in the past. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, for the various reasons I have given, I submit that the amendment which was proposed earlier this day by the Leader of the Opposition is acceptable and should be allowed to be brought before the House for a decision.

Mr. Deans: Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief. I want to deal with three questions quite quickly. To begin with, Sir, I would ask you to find that the amendment offered by the Leader of the Opposition is not in order. It is not in order for a number of reasons perhaps but one reason in particular I find peculiar. You will note, Sir, in the original motion as contained on page 9 in today's Order Paper and Notices, the final paragraph states:

—and calls upon the Government to adopt it as policy—

In fact, that is the most relevant phrase within the motion. What we have asked is that the House of Commons look at a motion which is currently before the United Nations, and we have reproduced that same motion. We are asking that the House of Commons vote today to require the Government to adopt that motion as policy. The amendment put forward by the Leader of the Official Opposition eliminates that motion in its entirety. Therefore, it leaves a motion before the House of Commons the end direction of which is quite unclear. There is no directive to the Government. What we would have would be a statement reproducing the motion of the United Nations, together with a statement by the Official Opposition with regard to an agenda which it would like to see, without the House having before it in actual fact any question upon which to vote.

I suggest that if on no other ground, the amendment we have before us should fail on that ground. There has to be a motion to put and the motion we have is that the Government adopt the resolution of the United Nations as the policy of the Government of Canada. That, in fact, is what the Official Opposition has failed—and I hope inadvertently—to put within the context of its amendment.

I would like to say further that I can well appreciate what the Official Opposition is attempting to do. I do not quarrel, in the main, with the addition of many of the directives which the Official Opposition has offered as an agenda for the arms talks, which presumably may take place some time in the year 1985. I am not arguing that there is no place for that particular suggestion within the motion which we have offered. Not for a moment am I suggesting that. We put our motion on the Order Paper many days ago. I would have been prepared on behalf of this Party to enter into discussions with the Official Opposition during that intervening period in order to incorporate, or to agree in advance that the various and many suggestions which it has put forward might be incorporated in the over-all motion when it is put to the House.

There is one final point I would like to make. I can appreciate that perhaps the Official Opposition does not like the idea in the final paragraph in which we have said:

—thereby rejecting the position of the previous administration.