

Government Orders

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): Mr. Speaker, my question will be quite short because I know there are others who want to speak. I do not think there is anybody in this House who has any dispute with the process of the United Nations to date.

The government is proposing a motion to go with subsequent resolutions, one of which may be passed tomorrow. One cannot prejudge what those 15 people in the Security Council will do tomorrow.

The government wants us to pass a draft resolution to give it sanction to go ahead. It can then come back tomorrow and say: "We passed that resolution here in this House". I think Canadians are smarter than that.

On top of that, this wording is vague. I do not want to repeat the minister but he referred to No. 2 in the resolution. I want to ask him about "to use all necessary means to uphold the existing and subsequent resolutions". This is the part that galls me. Let us pass that resolution. Let the UN pass it tomorrow, if it goes in this form, to restore international peace and security in the area.

• (2130)

I ask the minister: Are our troops there today for that reason? Is that what the Order in Council said? Or, is the minister going to bring in a new Order in Council next week to change the reasons why our troops are there? There are 26 member states in the gulf. Any one of them can use their interpretation of this and start the war that we are talking carelessly about here. The economic sanctions that were put in place at the UN have not been given the time. I ask him that question for the sake of Canadians out there.

The Order in Council said that it was for economic sanctions in the shipping. I cannot see that we should be even debating future resolutions before they are even passed in the UN. We should not even be talking about restoring international peace when our troops are not over there. They are only 3 per cent. Yes, I know they are good troops. I come from an area where they are trained. I am all for that training.

I think Canadians have a right to know why they are over there. I thought it was to keep the economic sanctions, not for a proposed resolution that may not get passed.

Mr. McKnight: Mr. Speaker, I thought I made it clear, as I concluded my address, that if there were a change in the mandate of the Canadian Forces we would have it raised in the House. I do not know what else I could say to the hon. member.

We have indicated that we will provide an opportunity for further debate if there is a change in the mandate of the Canadian Forces. What we are asking the House, and what we would have expected of the hon. members opposite, would be to support the United Nations and the charter that founded that organization, and not to abuse this opportunity provided by the government after there was a request.

A request came from the opposition suggesting that there should be a debate and the government said yes, we would welcome this debate. We have become involved in the debate, and now the members of the opposition are saying that the debate is taking place at an inopportune time, that this is not a good time for this debate.

I would suggest that the time for the debate and the support of the members in this House should be concentrated on the support of the United Nations which, for the first time in 40 years, has been able to bring the member states together, and take a stand that is totally consistent with the charter on which it was founded.

I would expect hon. members to support the government and the men and women who are serving the Canadian forces, to support the United Nations Charter, and to support what the United Nations wishes to do with the world, that is make it a more stable and peaceful place. I cannot believe that the members opposite do not wish to do that.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Ferland (Portneuf): During the week of November 13 to 17, Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity to visit the Canadian forces in the Persian Gulf along with my colleagues from Victoria and Labrador. I was able to see for myself that the morale of our troops was good and that they were doing an outstanding job. I also had the firm impression that the military are fully conscious of their role and of the significance of their presence there.

When we came back last week, we three decided to hold a small press conference and, in the last paragraph of the release we all agreed on, we said: "We urge the government and all parties to take a unified approach so