

tions that may arise. When this Parliament commenced, I began a file on people from my riding who have written with respect to nuclear disarmament issues. These people from the riding of Comox-Powell River have expressed concern and their belief that the Government should act quickly to support disarmament and a nuclear freeze and look seriously at the peace tax proposals.

Every day an increasing number of Canadians are becoming seriously concerned about nuclear disarmament. When they hear the message from our Ambassador for nuclear Disarmament and the contradictory message from the Secretary of State for External Affairs, combined with the silence from Ministers opposite who should be clarifying a solid position on disarmament, those signals do not instil confidence in the people of Comox-Powell River or in other communities in the country about what the Government is doing.

I cannot pass up this opportunity to comment on the position of the provincial Government of British Columbia with respect to the nuclear-freeze aspect. There is a belief that this is solely a federal Government problem. However, there are villages, towns and cities in the Comox-Powell River riding in which there have been referendums asking their citizens how they felt about the testing of the Cruise missile. In many cases, 80 per cent of the citizens in those communities were absolutely opposed to that testing. In other referendums they have been asked for their opinion about a nuclear-free zone. When those citizens realized that the Government would not take an acceptable position in this respect, they asked their local representatives to declare their area a nuclear-free zone. The village of Gold River is an example. The inhabitants have presented a petition to the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) stating that Gold River would be declared a nuclear-free zone and that he should act to make all of Canada a nuclear-free zone.

The Province of British Columbia refused to allow the Sunshine Coast regional district to erect a sign stating that the district, by its own declaration, has been declared a nuclear-free zone. The provincial Government's role in this incident is almost ridiculous. It is almost a mirror image of the present Government in the length to which it went not to allow that sign to be posted. It is absolutely ludicrous. Nevertheless, those citizens will not forget that at the time of the next election. It will come back to haunt the Government.

In the time I have left, let me reiterate that the motion before the House today should be supported by every Member. It asks the Government to adopt definitely a solid moral position on the nuclear freeze. Let us make a break with the past so that Canadians will receive a signal that the Government and Parliament are convinced about the direction in which the country should be moving, and that the Government will separate itself from the past administration's schizophrenic and occasional negative approach to this issue.

I strongly believe that the amendment moved by the Official Opposition will totally destroy the intent of our motion. I hope it will be disallowed so that we could proceed to a vote on the resolution before us.

Supply

Mr. Stackhouse: Mr. Speaker, having listened to the Hon. Member and other New Democratic Party Members throughout the day, I have been impressed how he, like his colleagues, has spoken about a verifiable freeze without ever indicating or hinting how that verification would be established. This is really the nub of the matter. All the hopes of humanity for nuclear disarmament, since the atomic age began, have founded on the possibility thus far of achieving some acceptable method of verification. For example, the United States has demanded onsite inspection. This has been consistently rejected by the Soviet Union. Neither side has been willing to trust the other with manning such on-site inspection teams. Without that there is no sure hope of finding an acceptable method of verification. It is true that in recent years methods have been developed by which there could be some verification via outer space and by satellite, but that is not adequate, Mr. Speaker. We have to have on-sight inspection if we are to have some verification of further production of nuclear weapons.

● (1740)

We have to think of something new. I am disappointed that the New Democratic Party did not live up to its name and give us some new thoughts, such as multinational monitoring of nuclear weapons production and testing so that we could have some verification by neutral non-nuclear powers that might be acceptable to the Soviet Union and to the United States. It has been a very great disappointment to me that the New Democratic Party would call upon the Parliament of Canada to endorse a nuclear freeze and call it a verifiable freeze without giving us any clear indication of how we and the country could expect that verification to be established.

Mr. Skelly: Mr. Speaker, apparently 111 nations did not feel in committee at the United Nations the same way as the previous speaker. They felt that the application of the systems of surveillance, verification and control already agreed upon in some previous cases would be sufficient to provide a reasonable guarantee of faithful compliance with the undertaking derived from the freeze. That is the first thing.

Second, we should not try to obscure the key point, as the resolution points out to the country in the form of a debate, that the Conservative Party authorized its representatives at the United Nations to vote against the freeze. The previous speaker, the Hon. Member for Scarborough West (Mr. Stackhouse), said it was a problem of verification. The Ambassador said he had two other different reasons, a problem with peaceful nuclear explosions, and the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) says the reason he did not allow it to be voted for was that he was afraid of the United Nations and his NATO allies. What is it, Mr. Speaker? The Conservatives have to sit down and get their game together.

In response to the Hon. Member I will say that there is no doubt that the representatives of 111 nations felt confident enough to support this freeze with the verification methods available and in place today. Certainly there is an element of good faith; certainly a freeze. There is enough power available to blow the world to smithereens. The freeze does not put