

Government Orders

Mr. Brewin: The motion before us calls on the House to support "the United Nations in its efforts to ensure compliance with Security Council resolution 660 and subsequent resolutions".

The amendment of the Liberal Party would have the effect of clarifying the meaning of "subsequent resolutions". It would make very clear that this House only supports those resolutions which have been adopted to date. It does not imply support for the resolution that is going to be coming up before the Security Council tomorrow or any other future resolutions. Our party will support the Liberal amendment.

If we had had the opportunity and if something could have been worked out, we would however have gone further than the Liberal amendment. We would have asked the House for a further amendment, to make it absolutely clear, as follows:

That this House opposes the use of force against Iraq until sanctions and other UN measures have had time to succeed and urges the government to seek amendments to the currently proposed Security Council resolution to that effect.

I had hoped—and I am sure most members of the House had hoped it—that the Secretary of State for External Affairs would have in fact made it absolutely clear that the government had a narrow interpretation of the motion before the House. He failed to do that. He simply said with regard to the motion that he expected there might be further debates on the question of Canadian participation. He made no commitment to further debates before Canadians are committed to war in the gulf.

He further cast his remarks entirely in support of the proposition that Canada should vote for the motion before the Security Council tomorrow, thus making it clear that the government sees this motion as not only endorsing resolutions of the UN Security Council adopted to date but very clearly implying support for future resolutions including the resolution tomorrow. We are going to proceed on that basis. If the amendment the Liberals have proposed is lost, this party will stand in this House and oppose the resolution and the motion presented by the government.

This is a very difficult issue, not only for this House and for Canada, but for the world. I would like to say at the outset that this House is not divided on support for the United Nations, support for the United Nations

system, or support for the proposition that the Security Council is the appropriate forum for the world to be dealing with this crisis.

Our party has from the beginning been the firmest of supporters for the United Nations, and we do not step back from that for one minute. The Secretary of State for External Affairs and the government, however, cannot translate support for the resolution that comes before the United Nations tomorrow into support for the system itself. The very fact that Canada is a member of the Security Council leaves it open.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): What nonsense. It is like your position on the GATT.

Mr. Brewin: The minister says: "What nonsense". The minister simply does not understand that being a member of the Security Council imposes an obligation on Canada to act independently, sensibly and sensitively and, further, for the government to be prepared to accept the advice of this House on the action that Canada should be taking tomorrow.

There is no blank cheque to be given to the Security Council or to the permanent members. It is critically important that Canada, which was elected to the Security Council by the votes of the General Assembly, exercise its independent judgment on the issue that is coming before the Security Council tomorrow. That is not against the UN system. In fact it is entirely supportive of the UN system. We are expected to exercise our judgment. We owe it to Canadians. We owe it to the General Assembly. We owe it to the world to use our judgment and to present our views before the Security Council tomorrow.

It is our submission that that exercise of independent judgment calls on Canada to seek amendments to the presently proposed resolution and, failing amendment, to vote against the resolution in the Security Council tomorrow. That is what our independent judgment must lead us to.

There are a series of arguments presented on how to deal with Iraq, all of which spring from the proposition that the crisis must be dealt with. Let me emphasize that. I have first emphasized our party's support for the UN system. Let me go to a second support.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Except when it counts on it.