

Oral Questions

against hijacking by deciding that we would all act collectively against those who perpetrated any hijacking.

What I want to know now from the government is whether it is contemplating such a form of action or declaration, a declaration of solidarity with the United States indicating that if we do not act collectively against this international terrorism, at least we would support the United States in imposing sanctions on its own against any country like Iran which is perpetrating indignities against the United States.

Mr. Clark: Mr. Speaker, we are, naturally, considering whether sanctions by Canada, by the United States or by anyone else would be effective. At this stage, we think what will be effective is not a show of force in relation to Iran, except the force of international opinion, and we are trying through a variety of initiatives, public and private, to bring to bear upon authorities in Iran the view of Canada and the view of other countries which respect international law that the situation now existing in Iran is not acceptable.

I repeat to the House, and I repeat to the right hon. Leader of the Opposition who, of all members in this House, should understand the delicacy of the situation, that this is not a matter where a desire for domestic publicity should be allowed to interfere with the effectiveness of international action.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

UNITED STATES DECISION NOT TO PURCHASE OIL FROM IRAN—
POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE FROM CANADA

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Cape Breton Highlands-Canso): Mr. Speaker, I will attempt to avoid seeking publicity in putting this question, and follow the modesty of the Prime Minister who has never been known to seek publicity on any subject.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. MacEachen: But more seriously, Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has talked about effective action and a range of influences, especially the necessity of supporting the United States. In view of the fact that a high official in the Carter administration had a statement attributed to him over the weekend, that allies of the United States were prepared to do everything they could to help the hostages, except to hurt themselves—it seems to me that that reflects the feeling of isolation that is growing in the United States—has the Prime Minister explored within his government or with other governments the possibility of assisting the United States this winter because of its decision not to purchase any more oil from Iran by making available, in concert with other nations, some additional supplies?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, we would certainly be prepared to consider that.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, on another point related to that, may I ask the Prime Minister, has he explored or is he prepared to explore, in concert with other nations, taking the

[Mr. Trudeau.]

step which the United States has already taken, namely, to declare that it will no longer rely upon sources in Iran for oil supplies? Would he explore that possibility and consider it possibly with other nations as a way of giving some teeth to his readiness to apply sanctions in this situation?

Mr. Clark: Mr. Speaker, certainly, again, we would be prepared to consider that to see whether it would be effective. I repeat to the hon. member and to the House that what we are interested in here is not simply showing the extent of our support for the United States, for North American reasons, but what we are interested in here is to try to mobilize international opinion in a way that will have an effect upon the authorities in Iran.

It may be that indications of support for the United States, of the kind to which the hon. member refers, would be useful. If so, we will certainly consider them seriously. But I think it is important for me to underline to the House how essential it is, in circumstances like this, for us to act with some calm, to act in a way that is designed to have influence upon authorities in Iran as our primary purpose, and not to let that primary purpose fall prey to any subsidiary domestic purpose.

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● (1425)

NATURAL RESOURCES

CLOSING OF IRON ORE MINES—CALL FOR INVESTIGATION AND ACTION TO PREVENT

Mr. John Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources. In view of the fact that a particularly serious situation exists in the iron ore mining industry in Ontario, with four out of nine iron ore mines closing in the last 18 months, with a loss of over 1,200 jobs, the fact that the Ontario steel industry now imports 58 per cent of its iron ore, most of it from the United States, and the fact that mines in Atikokan and Capreol can still provide this iron ore, will the minister tell the House what steps he plans to take to investigate the situation and to get these mines and men working again?

Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): As the hon. member knows, Mr. Speaker, there has been a downturn in the demand for steel from Canadian producers, as well as with respect to iron ore from mines in Canada. Part of this is attributable to increased production in the United States. We in the department are very much involved in monitoring this situation. In conjunction with my colleagues in cabinet, we will continue to watch the situation in order to see what can be done to improve the circumstances in Canadian mines and with regard to steel producers.

Mr. Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, I will direct my supplementary to the Prime Minister, because trying to get an answer from the minister is like trying to find eggs in a cuckoo clock.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Crosbie: You're the expert on cuckoos.