

HOUSE OF COMMONS

[English]

NEW MEMBER

Mr. Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that the Clerk of the House has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a certificate of the election and return of Stan J. Hovdebo, Esquire, member for the electoral district of Prince Albert.

NEW MEMBER INTRODUCED

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo, member for the electoral district of Prince Albert, introduced by Mr. Edward Broadbent and Mr. Lorne Nystrom.

● (1415)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

IRAN CRISIS—COLLECTIVE STATEMENT DENOUNCING
HOSTAGE-TAKING

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Prime Minister, as we enter the fifth week of the hostage-taking incident in Iran. As, over the last few days, the heads of the European Economic Community have decided to make a collective statement denouncing that incident—I hope they do not have to apologize to the members of the European Parliament, as our foreign minister did when I asked that the statement be made at the heads of government level—I would like to know, and the House would like to be informed by the Prime Minister whether he has taken steps toward getting that type of statement from the seven participants at the Tokyo Summit, which would constitute a reinforcing of our solidarity with the United States.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I naturally welcome the decision taken by the leaders of the European Economic Community at Dublin. I think their statement was strong and unequivocal and indicates that they stand, as Canada does, very strongly in support of the efforts of the United States to have Iran respect international law.

Pursuant to suggestions made by the right hon. Leader of the Opposition and others, I have been in touch with some of the other countries represented at the Tokyo Summit. It is my view that it would not be particularly productive to have the wealthy nations of the world, represented at the Tokyo Summit, gathered together at that forum or as emanations of that forum to add to statements which each of those nations has already made individually, or in other forums.

Mr. Trudeau: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. When it comes to upholding international law, I am not quite

Oral Questions

certain how the Prime Minister thinks the size of one's pocket-book can affect the declaration. Surely the members of the EEC did not look to their pocketbooks before making that statement. The Prime Minister fails to see the point, once again, that it is collective action and collective decisions which are noted and needed at this point, not individual statements by Canada or someone else. The Europeans have understood that.

I should like to ask the Prime Minister, once again, if he could tell us if he is working toward some international statement of co-operation of the leaders of the seven nations. Could he tell us what kind of statement he is looking at? Is it merely a statement of protest at the breach of international law, or is he seeking to get a commitment from various friends and allies of the United States that they would be prepared to impose international sanctions on Iran or any other country which acted in breach of international law?

Mr. Clark: Mr. Speaker, I would have thought that, of all people in this House, the right hon. Leader of the Opposition would have understood that in a situation as delicate and as complex as this, the purpose of Canada and other countries in seeking to uphold international law should not be simply to be heard, but should be, rather, to be effective in trying to bring influence to bear on the Iranian authorities.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark: I am not interested, and I think most Canadians are not interested, in finding a forum for Canada to speak. We have plenty of those forums, and we have been effective there. What I am interested in, and what I think other countries in the world are interested in, is finding a variety of means by which the authorities in Iran can be persuaded to respect international law.

Consequently, we as the Government of Canada have taken a role of leadership, through a variety of the forums open to us, that we believe will have influence on the Iranians. We have done that at the United Nations; we have done that through the Commonwealth; we are doing it through Francophonie. We are doing that individually and bilaterally with other countries. That will continue to be our approach, to try to amass as much as possible a range of influence upon the Iranian authorities to encourage them to respect international law. Our interests will be in the response of Iranian, not the response of Canada.

● (1420)

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I think the Prime Minister is on solid ground when he asks for effective action and not merely expressions of indignation. But it seems to me that that is what the world has been having a lot of in the past month, expressions of indignation, of solidarity for the United States, and the whole point of my question, Mr. Speaker, is that it has not been effective. A month will have elapsed tomorrow since the taking of the hostages. We have not been effective. When we met in Bonn a couple of summers ago, we took effective action