

*Oral Questions*

would the Prime Minister consider, building on his own decision and that of the government of France, trying as a beginning to mobilize support by getting in touch with all the heads of the summit industrialized countries with a view to issuing a common declaration in support of the maintenance of international order?

**Mr. Clark:** That is a very useful suggestion and we shall certainly pursue it. It would carry one step further, to heads of government level, the initiative which the government has already taken in Iran.

**Mr. MacEachen:** In view of the deteriorating situation in Iran, especially in view of the increase by the American navy in its striking power through additional aircraft carriers, and in view of what must be the total unpredictability of what might break out in that country, would the Prime Minister not consider that now is the time to take action to remove Canadian personnel from Iran?

**Mr. Clark:** We are, naturally, preoccupied about the safety of Canadian personnel. We are also aware that there is a role which Canada can play in Iran, one which we can only play effectively if there are personnel present. It is our judgment that for the time being, at least, it is in the interest of securing respect for international law and seeking to secure some resolution of the problem in Iran that representatives of our country remain there.

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## STATISTICS CANADA

REPORTED ERROR IN CALCULATION OF EQUALIZATION  
PAYMENTS

**Mr. Mark Rose (Mission-Port Moody):** Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of Finance. According to recent information, an interdepartmental meeting has revealed a \$60 million error in the Statistics Canada estimate of labour income in the province of British Columbia—an error which has affected the calculation of equalization payments to the provinces. Has the minister decided to take any action either to recover funds or to pay out money to certain provinces to straighten out the situation caused by this error?

**Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Finance):** I am not aware there was an error. If there was one, I have not been informed of it. If there is one, we would make the necessary adjustments. I might say that in connection with federal-provincial programs there are often errors discovered or new estimates or calculations made as time goes on. It usually takes two or three years before the payments are settled.

● (1430)

**Mr. Rose:** Mr. Speaker, I direct my supplementary question to the President of the Treasury Board. Since, in the past several years, criticisms about this agency and its operations have increased rather than subsided, does the minister intend

[Mr. MacEachen.]

to investigate how an error of such magnitude could take place; and is he prepared to tell the House what he will do to see that it does not happen in future?

**Hon. Sinclair Stevens (President of Treasury Board):** Mr. Speaker, in replying to the hon. member, I point out—as my colleague, the Minister of Finance, has indicated—that the difficulty generally arises from preliminary figures being adjusted when more final figures are put in place. The hon. member has indicated that there are certain questions about Statistics Canada. I have already indicated to the House that those questions are being reviewed by my office, and we will in due course be having something more to say to the House concerning Statistics Canada.

**Mr. Rose:** Mr. Speaker, considering what appears to be the appalling state of this vitally important economic agency, does the President of the Treasury Board intend to launch a full-scale parliamentary investigation into Statistics Canada?

**Mr. Stevens:** Mr. Speaker, we have no present intention of recommending a full-scale parliamentary investigation into Statistics Canada, although there may be merit in having a review of Statistics Canada perhaps through a management consultant firm to determine what, if any, are the administrative, personnel and organizational problems within the organization.

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[Translation]

## EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

POSSIBILITY OF EVACUATING CANADIANS IN IRAN—  
GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Mr. Fabien Roy (Beauce):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to come back briefly to the subjects broached by the Leader of the Opposition and the leader of the opposition in the House with regard to the American-Iranian conflict. I should like to ask the right hon. Prime Minister, since he has just told us that the government is not thinking of repatriating the Canadian nationals now in Iranian territory, whether all required arrangements have been made to guarantee their safe evacuation should it become necessary?

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member that we have taken all possible steps, as we know, several months ago, we helped evacuate those Canadians in Iran who chose to leave the country. We decided, as I mentioned earlier, that it is a good thing not only for Canada but for everyone to have Canadian representatives in Iran who can try to play a part in resolving the situation.

**Mr. Roy (Beauce):** I understand the government's proposal or decision, and I certainly agree with it. What I asked the right hon. Prime Minister was whether any measures had been taken in case such action became necessary, and I would also