

*Oral Questions*

devote one of their days to international affairs, we might accept that suggestion and begin a debate earlier.

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**EXTERNAL AFFAIRS****IRAN—RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS**

**Mr. Maurice A. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi):** Madam Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. In today's *Globe and Mail* the minister is quoted as saying that the hostage-taking in Iran was abominable and a gross affront to all decent, civilized people. He is also quoted as saying that our embassy in Iran will be reopened within weeks. In view of these statements, would the minister explain the haste in re-establishing ties with Iran? Would he assure the House that no Canadians will be posted to Iran against their will so that they will have to serve with these indecent, uncivilized, international bandits?

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Madam Speaker, the hon. member has correctly quoted me on one part of my statement and incorrectly on the other. I certainly did strongly condemn the actions of the Iranians during the period of captivity for the American hostages. I said that we would likely re-establish diplomatic relations on a full scale, not within weeks but within months, some time in 1981. It is certainly not something which we will be rushing into. However, we will be removing the sanctions within weeks, since they were imposed for the specific period the hostages were held captive, just like other countries.

I assume the hon. member knows, as this House knows, that every Department of External Affairs officer is always prepared to go voluntarily to wherever in the world he is needed.

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**ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN****SPONSORSHIP OF CONFERENCE—SUGGESTED REFERENCE OF MATTER TO STANDING COMMITTEE**

**Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon West):** Madam Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Employment and Immigration, who is responsible for the Advisory Council on the Status of Women. It is obvious from responses of the Prime Minister that he does not consider the minister to be worthy to axe.

I would like to ask the minister about a matter which has been bothering me and a great many Canadians. Why did the minister consider that the conference, which was to be sponsored by the advisory council, would be an embarrassment to this government?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Madam Speaker, as I have explained to this House

several times—perhaps the hon. member was not in his chair during those times—when my opinion was solicited as to why I thought the conference might be better held at another time we simply said there were a number of reasons. The most important reason was the fact that the recommendations had already been put forward to the cabinet by the advisory council. They had been accepted by the cabinet and recommended to the constitutional committee. Therefore, there was an opportunity for us to start looking at a second round of issues, particularly those dealing with family law, federal-provincial relations, childcare services and others. After my talks with a number of women's groups across this country, I felt they required more information and discussion so that they could bring those recommendations and ideas before the first ministers' conference, which will be held after the constitution is returned to Canada. That was the primary reason. When the question was posed to me it may be that I said, as part of the conversation, that it was certainly not my primary concern, that it was really to make sure that there would be a proper opportunity for a broad-scale discussion to take place across this country.

I repeat, Madam Speaker, that was an opinion which I offered. It was not in any way an attempt to impose an opinion; it was simply advice that I was giving. I understand the reason for the skepticism of members opposite since they are skeptical about everything, but those happen to be the facts, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** Madam Speaker, the reason I may not have been in my chair is that the answers given by the minister usually cause me to lurch from the chamber to the washroom. On the basis of the minister's statement and the timetable imposed by the Prime Minister, theoretically the constitution is to be passed by the British parliament by the time all this preliminary work has taken place.

In effect, Doris Anderson, the president of the advisory council, has called the minister a liar. Since the minister's integrity has been attacked, I want to ask him whether under these circumstances he will not do the right thing, as he did with the O'Leary matter and with respect to the question of the Royal Albert Arms, and move a motion to have this whole matter referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, where witnesses can be heard under oath?

**Some hon. Members:** Order!

**Mr. Hnatyshyn:** This would give the minister a chance to clear himself with respect to this scandalous interference with the advisory council.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Axworthy:** Madam Speaker, I am not responsible for the condition of the hon. member's kidneys or any other part of his anatomy. I suggest to him that in this case the facts have been put forward. Those who had to make the decision were members of the executive committee and the council. It would be very worth while if members of the opposition