

or not commercial transactions should be banned when there is a discriminatory boycott but whether or not commercial transactions in general within the federal jurisdiction should be banned when there is discrimination on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex or marital status. It would be regarded as discriminatory to require a higher standard of conduct on commercial transactions involving foreign countries than in other commercial transactions within the jurisdiction of the Parliament of Canada. Even as the Act now stands the government could request the Canadian Human Rights Commission to initiate an investigation of possible racial or religious discrimination by Canadian firms in complying with foreign boycotts although the government may wish to review the Act before considering such an investigation.

In addition to the question of racial and religious discrimination there is the question of discrimination on grounds of political belief, namely Zionism. I have seen statements made by authorities administering the Arab boycott which are not clear but which suggest that the boycott may discriminate against those who believe in Zionism whether or not they engage in specific activities in support of Israel. There is a clear difference between discrimination against a person simply because of his political belief and discrimination against a person because he is actively supporting Israel, which is the claimed purpose of the Arab boycott. The Canadian Human Rights Act, however, does not prohibit discrimination based on political belief, although some Canadian provinces do. The question to be asked at present therefore is not whether Canadians should be prohibited from discriminating on grounds of political belief in accepting boycott clauses, but whether Canadians should be prohibited from discriminating on grounds of political belief in commercial transactions generally. If Parliament were to take such action the question of whether Canadian firms were accepting boycott clauses involving discrimination on this ground would then be within the jurisdiction of the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

#### Bilateral Relations

After concluding my visits to the Middle East and North Africa I am convinced that bilateral relations between Canada and the countries of these areas can be broadened substantially. As I have mentioned earlier, both in Israel and in the Arab countries a desire for greater friendship with Canada was expressed frequently, as was an appreciation of our technological and managerial abilities. Our francophone associations are also valuable throughout the region, but especially so in North Africa.

I have stated this positive view on the future of our bilateral relations on the assumption that the problems concerning the Arab boycott will be resolved in such a manner as to sustain a favourable climate in which to pursue such relations. I am not adopting this approach because I have taken answers to the boycott question for granted. Indeed, I have emphasized earlier when discussing the boycott