

*Adjournment Debate*

Unless the exact names of companies and the details of their compliance are published, and this is done at frequent intervals, the value of the reporting requirement mentioned in the statement would be just about nil.

Would not the government have been wiser to delay making the boycott policy statement until it had decided both what to do about the boycott and, more important, was also in a position to implement the measures it had decided to take in an immediate and meaningful way? As more and more weeks go by without even the limited steps promised in that statement being put into full and complete effect, the government has put itself in the position where its good faith and credibility in this key policy area are more and more open to question.

The government's delay and vagueness about implementing the measures in question also put the Canadian business community in an awkward position. It would appear that no guidelines have been as yet formally conveyed to it by the government about how firms should conduct themselves now that the statement has been made. The statement itself, I gather, has not been brought by the government officially to the attention either of major business organizations or of individual companies. The measures that the government said in the statement it would take, are not really fully in effect. Yet there are many concerned Canadians who are aware of the statement, and when they learn of activities by firms, and possibly even of continuing action by government in support of these activities, not consistent with the statement, they may well be critical of the firms in question and of the government.

The result of the government's present approach can only be to create otherwise unnecessary tension between the business community and the public at large, and further to erode public confidence in business.

The answer, therefore, is not only the full and immediate implementation of the measures announced on October 21, but also forthright and immediate federal legislation of general application, so that all Canadian companies are put on the same basis, whether they need government supporting services or not. Thus none will have to be put in the position of relying on their own individual decision involving the balancing of a sense of business ethics and fear of a possible loss of profit, though as I have said on other occasions resistance to the boycott, is, on the evidence, unlikely to mean loss of business and profits for a company if it offers goods of the quality and price that are being sought. Only through fully effective federal government action to deal with the boycott will real meaning finally be given to the words about Canadian ethics and what the government stands for, which the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) spoke a year and a half ago, and the words in the government statement of last October 21.

**Mr. Hugh Poulin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce):** Mr. Speaker, may I say that the debate launched tonight by the hon. member for Windsor West (Mr. Gray) demonstrates how valuable these adjournment debates can be. I will insist that the department take very clear note of the words and very many detailed questions

[Mr. Gray.]

posed by the hon. member for Windsor West to ensure that he gets all of the answers to his so carefully researched questions.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I suppose I am indicating that I am not adequately prepared to answer at this time all of the very important questions asked by the hon. member.

**Mr. Stevens:** Shame!

**Mr. Poulin:** No, not shame. I am just indicating that this adjournment debate is a very valuable proceeding.

**Mr. Oberle:** Only if you get the answers.

**Mr. Poulin:** The hon. member has deeply researched his questions, but may I inform him that there have been no actual undertakings, that the department is aware of, by Canadian companies, which are contrary to government policy, that have been reported at this time. The department realizes the importance of putting into full effect practices to implement the statement of policy on international economic boycotts, as is so well recognized. However, the need to provide accurate guidance to the Canadian business community to guard, as far as practicable, against specific actions abhorrent to Canada, as outlined in the Secretary of State for External Affairs' policy statement, and at the same time to safeguard and develop our export opportunities, is also most important and, unfortunately, time consuming.

Officials are drawing up, as quickly as is reasonably possible, guidelines. The purpose of these guidelines is to provide direction to the Canadian business community on observance of the Canadian policy and to provide elaboration for the public on the government's position. The guidelines will explain the coverage and extent of the policy, as well as outline the reporting requirements. It is difficult to be more precise, due to the complexity of the various components of the policy, and the desire to remove, to the fullest extent possible, uncertainties surrounding the government's policy and its implementation.

Canada's stated position is to carry on trade in peaceful goods with all nations. Canada's policy with respect to economic boycotts is designed to protect Canadian companies from being forced to act by foreign regulations in a manner contrary to the best interests of Canada.

TRADE—HIGH LEVEL OF DUTY IMPOSED BY SOVIET UNION ON GIFTS—POSSIBLE BREACH OF TRADE AGREEMENT

**Hon. Martin O'Connell (Scarborough East):** Mr. Speaker, my purpose is to seek the help of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Chrétien) to reduce the problems that Canadians face when sending small gifts to relatives in the Baltic countries and in the Soviet Union.

The situation is this. When Canadians send gift parcels of clothing, household articles, food and personal items to relatives in the Soviet Union, they pay certain standard charges for packaging, postage, insurance, foreign exchange charges and fees to the forwarding agency. One cannot complain of such charges, although they are substantial. It is far different,