

*Foreign Economic Boycotts*

bill that I wished at the time, and I still wish, the then leader of the official opposition, the present Prime Minister, had not made that proposal.

I hope I am wrong, but everything I have read to date, and the speech I heard by the government whip today, confirmed my fears that because of the very active opposition of the Arab countries to the proposal to move the embassy, hostility will be expressed in the same manner and to the same degree if there is a proposal to implement real anti-boycott legislation. I hope I am wrong and I hope time will prove me wrong, but I am afraid the government will backtrack on the kind of approach it had when in opposition. The government whip shakes his head. I will be the first one to congratulate those on that side if time proves me wrong.

● (1740)

Let us just spend a few minutes considering why we need boycott legislation. I want to say to the government whip that we agree with him completely when he suggests that legislation should not single out any country or any group of countries. That was not the case in the old Bill C-32 proposed by the then minister of industry, trade and commerce, or Bill C-203 proposed by the hon. member for York Centre, or the case in respect of my Bill C-288. My bill is quite a way down the list and I think it is a much better bill. I do not say that because I have any pride in its authorship. Indeed, it is almost word for word the same as legislation enacted by the province of Ontario, which now has Premier Davis, and has had a Conservative government for more than 30 years.

I agree with the government whip that no legislation should single out one country or any group of countries. If we are going to have legislation of this kind, what we want is legislation that applies to everybody in the same way. What we want is legislation which protects the rights of Canadian individuals and companies, and protects them from being discriminated against because of race, colour or creed, or because they do business with one country or another.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, let me say that we are discussing this kind of a bill because there is an Arab boycott against Israel. That boycott has existed since the creation of the state of Israel in 1948; and since 1973 and the sharp increase in the price of oil, together with the fact that Arab countries control so much of the world's oil supply, that boycott has become much more formidable. It operates at several levels.

The primary boycott is a direct boycott of Israel by the Arab states, by which they refuse to do business with the state of Israel. Canada is not involved in that boycott and has no role to play in it. That is their business, Mr. Speaker.

The secondary boycott is an attempt by Arab states, firms and individuals to pressure firms of other countries, in this case Canada, to refrain from dealing with Israel, or to end certain relationships with Israel, as a condition of trade with Arab states, firms or individuals. This, in effect, compels a Canadian boycott of a country with which Canada has friendly relations and against which Canada has not itself authorized a

[Mr. Orlikow.]

boycott. We say that is improper if carried on by another country. Another country should not be interfering with the rights of Canadian citizens or companies.

The tertiary boycott is an attempt to prevent firms of other countries, in this case Canada, from dealing with firms of their own or other non-involved countries because of the latter firm's relationship with Israel, as a condition of doing business with Arab states, firms or individuals.

The secondary and tertiary boycotts constitute direct interference in Canadian economic affairs by the extra-territorial application of Arab laws and regulations. That is what so many people in Canada object to, and we feel that no country has the right to tell us what to do.

As far back as 1975 the then prime minister expressed the views of most Canadians, here in Parliament, when on May 8 of that year he said:

I think it is sufficient to say that this type of practice is alien to everything the government stands for and indeed to what in general Canadian ethics stand for.

Having said that, the then government completely ignored the feelings of the prime minister and simply refused to take any action to implement those feelings and views expressed by the prime minister. Repeated requests for such legislation were ignored or turned down. Requests that companies involved or co-operating with a boycott by the Arab countries should have that information publicized were turned down. It was not until the dying days of the last Parliament, when seized with the realization that there was an election coming and they might have to account to certain groups for their failure to act, did the then government bring forth a bill, to which the hon. member for York Centre has referred and copied.

What does that bill do, Mr. Speaker? That bill simply says that any government or any company in Canada which co-operates in a boycott with another country—we are talking about the Arab countries, but it would be true of any other—should be required by law to report that co-operation to the Government of Canada which would then publicize it. We know from experience that even if we required that, there would be no penalties. Companies would be free to do that. They would get a little bad publicity, but many Canadian companies are used to bad publicity. They get bad publicity when they are found guilty of breaching the anti-combines law. They get bad publicity on many occasions. The desire to make a profit would, I am sure, persuade many companies and many individuals to get involved and co-operate.

It is clear that the former government's frequently reiterated commitment to combatting boycott-related discrimination has become a charade. In the three or four years since the former prime minister stated that the boycott was alien to everything the government stood for, concerned groups and individuals attempted to persuade that government that firm and explicit policies were needed to prevent serious infringement of Canadian sovereignty and human rights. That government contented itself with meaningless statements and some half-hearted policy guidelines which served to obscure the issues and confuse the corporate community. Instead of showing