

CANADIANS HAVE A RIGHT TO BE PROUD OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS CONDITIONS WE ENJOY IN THIS COUNTRY. WE HAVE NOT ACHIEVED PERFECTION YET BUT OUR EXCELLENT RECORD IN THAT AREA IS ONE OF OUR STRONGEST NEGOTIATING TOOLS. OUR REPRESENTATIVES TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION IN GENEVA AND IN VARIOUS OTHER UNITED NATIONS FORA HAVE THE RESPECT OF THEIR COLLEAGUES BECAUSE OF THE WELL ACCEPTED FACT THAT WHEN IT COMES TO CREATING A HEALTHIER WORLD CLIMATE OF RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, CANADIANS DO NOT ASK OF OTHERS WHAT THEY ARE NOT THEMSELVES READY TO DO AT HOME.

HUMAN RIGHTS IS AT THE CENTRE OF ANOTHER ISSUE THAT I KNOW IS OF MAJOR CONCERN TO YOU - THE ARAB BOYCOTT OF ISRAEL. WHAT IS OF PARTICULAR CONCERN TO THE GOVERNMENT, AS I AM SURE IT IS TO YOU, IS THE POSSIBILITY THAT AN INTERNATIONAL BOYCOTT DECLARED BY OTHER COUNTRIES FOR THEIR OWN PURPOSES MIGHT RESULT IN CANADIAN FIRMS OR INDIVIDUALS DISCRIMINATING ON THE BASIS OF RACE, RELIGION OR NATIONAL ORIGIN AGAINST OTHER CANADIAN FIRMS OR INDIVIDUALS OR THAT SUCH BOYCOTTS MIGHT HAVE OTHER DOMESTIC IMPLICATIONS PREJUDICIAL TO THE CIVIL RIGHTS OF CANADIANS.

I THINK I AM SAFE IN SAYING THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY TO COMBAT THE DISCRIMINATORY ASPECTS OF THE BOYCOTT HAS STRUCK A RESPONSIVE CHORD IN THE CANADIAN PUBLIC. I HAVE BEEN PLEASED BY THE SUPPORT I HAVE RECEIVED FOR MY STATEMENT IN THE HOUSE, ON OCTOBER 21 LAST YEAR, WHEN I OUTLINED THIS GOVERNMENT'S DETERMINATION TO DETER CANADIAN FIRMS AND INDIVIDUALS FROM COOPERATING WITH DISCRIMINATORY INTERNATIONAL BOYCOTTS AND THE MEASURES WE ENVISAGED TO THIS END.

THERE ARE LIMITS TO WHAT THE GOVERNMENT CAN DO. WE CANNOT PREVENT ANY CANADIAN BUSINESSMAN FROM DECIDING TO DEAL WITH ARAB COUNTRIES RATHER THAN WITH ISRAEL. NOR DO WE INTEND TO MAKE COMPLIANCE WITH AN ECONOMIC OR STRATEGIC BOYCOTT PUNISHABLE BY FINES OR IMPRISONMENT. WHAT WE CAN DO, HOWEVER, AND WHAT WE ARE DOING, IS TO TAKE EFFECTIVE STEPS TO DISCOURAGE CANADIAN COMPANIES FROM COMPLYING WITH THE BOYCOTT BY PUBLICLY CONDEMNING COMPLIANCE, WHICH WE HAVE DONE AND WILL CONTINUE TO DO, AND BY PENALISING COMPLIANCE, WHICH IS AT THE HEART OF OUR POLICY. THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY HAS TEETH IN IT BECAUSE IN THE MIDDLE EAST IT IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO DO BUSINESS WITHOUT THE KIND OF GOVERNMENT SUPPORT THAT WILL BE WITHDRAWN FROM ANY COMPANY COMPLYING WITH THE BOYCOTT.

SPEAKING CONCRETELY, IT MEANS THAT BY VOLUNTARILY COMPLYING WITH THE BOYCOTT, A COMPANY WILL AUTOMATICALLY DISQUALIFY ITSELF FOR EXPORT DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION INSURANCE WHICH IS, AS MANY OF YOU WILL KNOW, SO VITAL IN OBTAINING BANK CREDIT. FOR SUCH A COMPANY, EXPORT DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION FINANCING, WHICH IS PRACTICALLY A PREREQUISITE FOR EXPORTS OF CAPITAL GOODS, WILL NO LONGER BE AVAILABLE. LAST BUT NOT LEAST, SUCH A COMPANY WILL EXCLUDE ITSELF FROM THE KIND OF ASSISTANCE GENERALLY PROVIDED BY OUR TRADE COMMISSIONER