

to take place, it is not a bill which prohibits the entering into of contracts and so on. It simply requires that Canadian enterprises which are asked to comply with an Arab boycott as a condition of conducting business should notify a government agency. It is a very mild piece of legislation. I have indicated what its direction is, and I have indicated that I would be ready to consider amendments when it reaches committee. In that spirit I urge the government to follow the policy it indicated it would follow, that of not automatically stamping out private members' bills, by allowing this bill to proceed to committee for consideration.

Finally, I note that according to the order paper the bill, if passed, stands to be referred to the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs. It was my instruction that it ought to be referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs, which I think is the more appropriate committee since it deals with civil liberties legislation. I do not want the bill to be held up on that account but, if appropriate, I might at a later stage seek Your Honour's consent to have the bill referred to that committee.

Mr. Bill Kempling (Burlington): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the hon. member for York Centre (Mr. Kaplan) for having the wisdom to resurrect this bill from the order paper of the previous Parliament and present it as a private member's bill.

As far as the draw is concerned, I was there when the draw took place and it is rather interesting that the first two bills were stood and the hon. member's bill is the first to be presented in this Parliament in private members' hour. I would have preferred that the hon. member's bill had been drawn further down the list because that would have allowed time for certain changes the Prime Minister (Mr. Clark) is contemplating in the conduct of private members' business.

I have a great deal of sympathy for this bill. I believe the hon. member for York Centre knows my views on the whole area of boycotts, and economic boycotts in particular. I took a month's trip through the Middle East in the course of which I visited several Arab countries as well as Israel, and on my return I produced a paper for the Prime Minister on the subject of economic boycotts. In fact, I myself put forward a private member's bill in the last Parliament dealing with this subject, but unfortunately it was not in a position to proceed and never saw the light of day.

When this bill of mine was put forward, the internal details of the measure were not presented. I withheld them on purpose. I held them back as long as possible while I was awaiting a call from the desk to tell me that the bill was likely to come up and be sent to the printer. This was a conscious procedure because I know this was a very delicate subject then, as is the case today. I delayed the internal content of the bill from the printer's hands in the hope, first of all, that the central issues would be resolved. I had a great deal of hope when President Carter and Mr. Begin got together; I thought that they and the President of Egypt were really going to make a lot of progress in a hurry. Perhaps I was over-optimistic at that time.

Foreign Economic Boycotts

In trade and commerce we like to see the least possible amount of regulation so that trade is allowed to move in normal fashion. I found varying degrees of concern. I found, first of all, that the Canadian companies which were on the boycott list had apparently been drawn from an old issue of the Directory of Directors put out by the *Financial Post* and that many of the companies listed were no longer in business. Others had been merged and consolidated and their names had been changed, so the list was not very accurate.

When I talked with officials in Iraq and Syria I found varying degrees of concern—the feeling in no way resembled that which I encountered among business people I talked to in Cairo. The attitude seemed to be: if we want what you have, we shall find a way to get it regardless of any boycott. For example, if hon. members would look at the original boycott list they would see that the Ford Motor Company is listed. Yet the Ford Motor Company today has a plant in Cairo where it produces trucks and tractors. We have had an ongoing concern with the progress of events in the Middle East, and with that in mind the Prime Minister, as everyone knows, has sent Mr. Stanfield over to look not only into the proposed move of the embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, but into the whole matter of the boycott.

It is the intention I believe, from the information I have, to introduce a bill dealing with this subject in the New Year. I do not know whether the content will differ greatly from that which the hon. member has outlined. I look forward to having his co-operation and input at that time because I know he has a deep concern with these matters, as we all do. But I must tell the hon. member now that it is our intention to talk this bill out today because we believe the report to be presented by Mr. Stanfield will have an impact on whatever legislation we bring forward in the New Year. Thus, while I have a great deal of sympathy for the hon. member's intentions and appreciate his bringing the bill forward, we cannot at this time refer it to a committee.

From my experience, people engaged in commerce have always considered themselves above the politics of a situation. In fact, if one looks to history one finds that the traders have usually preceded the diplomats. The problem which arises here is that actions taken by certain countries in the Middle East appear to be transgressing the civil rights of Canadians. The hon. member may be interested to know that my first experience with this so-called boycott was when some people who were selling for cash to a Middle East country found that the enforcer of the boycott was actually the bank through which they were doing business. I found it surprising that they had a sale. The deal was completed and they had not complied with any of the boycott requests. They stayed clear of them. They said, "No, we don't want to sign that," but when it came to collecting on the letter of credit and getting their money, in order to get their money they had to sign some documents or they would not have been paid. That was what sparked my interest in the whole matter.