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(HANSARD)

Thursday, February 18, 2016

Speaker: The Honourable Geoff Regan

CONTENTS

(Table of Contents appears at back of this issue.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, February 18, 2016

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

● (1005)

[*English*]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and pursuant to Standing Order 32(2), I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the treaties entitled Protocol between the Government of Canada and the Government of Romania Supplementing the Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Romania for Co-operation in the Development and Application of Atomic Energy for Peaceful Purposes, done at Ottawa on October 24, 1977, done at Bucharest on July 31, 2015; the Audiovisual Co-Production Treaty between the Government of Canada and the Government of Ireland done at Ottawa on February 4, 2016; and the Agreement Concerning the Application of the Arbitration Provisions Under the Income Tax Convention between Canada and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, signed through an exchange of diplomatic notes, done at Ottawa on July 27, 2015, done at London on August 11, 2015. An explanatory memorandum is included with each treaty.

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INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. Earl Dreeshen (Red Deer—Mountain View, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour for me to be able to present to the House, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), in both official languages, the report of the Canadian delegation of the Canada-China Legislative Association and Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group respecting its participation at the 22nd Annual Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, January 12 to 15, 2014.

Hon. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, four reports of the Canadian delegation of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group.

The first concerns the 2015 Annual Summer Meeting of the National Governors Association, held in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, United States, July 23-25, 2015.

The second concerns the 68th Annual Meeting of the Council of State Governments—WEST, CSG West, held in Vail, Colorado, United States, July 28-31, 2015.

The third concerns the Annual Legislative Summit of the National Conference of State Legislatures, held in Seattle, Washington, United States, August 3-6, 2015.

Finally, the fourth concerns the 55th Annual Meeting and Regional Policy Forum of the Council of State Governments' Eastern Regional Conference, held in Wilmington, Delaware, United States of America, August 16-19, 2015.

* * *

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

Mr. Gordon Brown (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I seek the unanimous consent of the House for the following motion. I move:

> That, notwithstanding any Standing or Special Order, at the conclusion of the debate on today's opposition motion, all questions necessary to dispose of the motion be deemed put, a recorded division deemed requested and deferred until Monday, February 22, 2016, at the conclusion of oral questions.

The Speaker: The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

● (1010)

QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

The Speaker: Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[*English*]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—ISRAEL

Hon. Tony Clement (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC) moved:

That, given Canada and Israel share a long history of friendship as well as economic and diplomatic relations, the House reject the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, which promotes the demonization and delegitimization of the State of Israel, and call upon the government to condemn any and all attempts by Canadian organizations, groups or individuals to promote the BDS movement, both here at home and abroad.

He said: Mr. Speaker, at the outset, I seek to divide my time with my hon. colleague and seatmate, the member for Calgary Nose Hill.

I am glad that the House will be discussing and debating this very important issue. For those who are watching or listening in, I will be talking a lot about something called BDS, which is an acronym for the boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement that seeks to delegitimize and isolate Israel, and quite frankly single Israel out around the world.

[*Translation*]

The premise behind this movement is the promotion of the odious narrative that Israel is uniquely responsible for the Arab-Israeli conflict.

[*English*]

Further, the activists who are involved in this movement push for a complete worldwide boycott of the only Liberal democracy in the Middle East, while simultaneously exempting some of the worst human rights offenders in the world from equivalent attention.

These boycotts manifest themselves in many ways, from pressuring consumers not to buy Israeli products to calling on universities to cut ties with Israeli academia, to calling for Israeli athletes to be banned from international sports competitions.

By advocating these things, these activists are assaulting all Israelis of all political persuasions and of all opinions within that country. They use the discourse that is uniquely reserved for pariah states, and apply this standard, uniquely and singularly, to the Middle East's only Liberal democracy and the world's only Jewish state.

[*Translation*]

It is clear that the intent of those in favour of this movement is not to resolve the conflict but to single out Israel and contest the Jewish state's right to be treated with fairness.

[*English*]

I would put it before this House that this BDS movement is actually a form of discrimination. In targeting all Israelis, BDS is a present-day blacklist and a form of discrimination, strictly based on national origin. Just like boycotts have targeted Jews throughout history, today BDS activists call on boycotting people who come from the Jewish state.

I would stress that it is in no way pro-Palestinian; it is in fact anti-Israel. I would put it to my colleagues and members of this chamber that BDS actually undermines peace. It does nothing to bring the two sides together, to promote peace or improve the quality of life for Palestinian citizens. Indeed, BDS absurdly lays the blame completely on Israel, and completely refutes any other responsibilities, including Palestinian responsibilities. If BDS were successful, the livelihood of thousands of Palestinians employed by Israeli companies would be in jeopardy.

In addition, BDS imports the conflict by illegitimately targeting businesses, universities, and civil society institutions. BDS tries to bring the conflict in the Middle East to Canada. Canadian organizations should never be used as a vehicle for social exclusion and the demonization of Canadians based on their national origin.

● (1015)

[*Translation*]

As I said, this movement imports the conflict. By illegitimately targeting businesses, universities, and civil society institutions, it tries to bring the conflict in the Middle East to Canada.

Canadian organizations should never be used as a vehicle for social exclusion and demonization of Canadians based on their national origin.

[*English*]

Already this movement has had some consequences which are injurious. An example of this is the BDS target of the company SodaStream. In September 2015, SodaStream moved its factory out of the West Bank and into the Negev as a direct result of this boycott movement. The Palestinian employees were the victims of this move. Yet these misguided activists claimed it as a win.

This is just one example of how this movement can be used for nefarious purposes. We on this side of the House value our freedoms. We value our rights and value the ability to speak freely and to act freely. This is not what this debate is about. This is not a motion that would seek to shut down people expressing themselves either in the marketplace or in the political commons. We should take a stand. This is an important issue not only for Israelis, but for Canadians of all points of view who value the proper discourse and value a democracy in, let us be frank, a very bad neighbourhood of the world.

I seek all members of all political parties to side with us. This is not a partisan issue. Side with us on this motion. Send a strong message to our fellow Canadians and to freedom lovers around the world and support this motion.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I will have a chance to speak to the motion later.

For now, I would like to ask him if he can assure the House that his party is not trying once again to divide people over this issue, an issue that should actually unite us given the strong friendship between Canada and Israel and Canada's debt to its own Jewish community. He is well aware of that.

The government that he was a part of kept trying to turn this into a partisan issue and dictate how Canadian Jews should vote. That happened yet again in the latest election in my riding and in Mount Royal.

To me, this is further proof that the Conservatives have not learned from their mistakes and are still trying to divide Canadians on issues that should unite them.

Hon. Tony Clement: Madam Speaker, I will reiterate that we do not want this motion to be a partisan issue, not at all.

● (1020)

[*English*]

We are here because we believe it is critically important to support the Jewish State of Israel against a movement that seeks to isolate it in the world. I think this motion accurately reflects Canadian values, Canadian interests, Canadian principles, and Canadian morality. I will take no offence if the hon. members opposite vote for the motion.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Madam Speaker, my colleague mentioned democracy a few times in his speech.

Would my colleague not agree that one of the basic tenets of democracy is freedom of opinion and expression, even for people with whom we do not necessarily agree?

Hon. Tony Clement: Madam Speaker, it is so important to have this discussion here in the House of Commons, which lies at the heart of our democracy. At the same time, it is important to protect a democracy in the Middle East that is being attacked by everyone all the time, by this movement and by other nations that would prefer that the State of Israel did not exist at all.

[*English*]

It is important to protect this democracy because there are forces in the world, in the region, I dare say in our country, unfortunately, but also around the world, that wish Israel did not exist, and that quite frankly support any movement that could eradicate Israel from the face of the earth.

I would encourage the hon. member to support the motion because I think this is an important principle, not only of Canadian foreign policy, but of human rights as well.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Madam Speaker, would my hon. colleague not agree that freedom of expression is also a Canadian value, not to mention an Israeli value? Would he agree that we can have this debate without using invective, without conflating the issue, and without painting everybody with the same brush?

Hon. Tony Clement: Madam Speaker, as I said in my speech in the House, of course we support the idea of democracy and the idea that we can discuss all of the issues surrounding this question here in this country. I must point out, however, that because of the situation facing the State of Israel, it is important to protect that state, both now and in the future.

[*English*]

It is important that we have a proper discussion. No democracy is perfect. No democracy is without rancour or questioning. However, we must not support a movement that seeks the eradication of this democracy.

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, in Canada we enjoy freedom of speech. We can express ideas and thoughts without fear of reprisal. There are lines that are drawn around hate speech, criminal harassment, and speech that incites violence. However, in Canada, for the most part, we can say what we want to say.

However, freedom of speech does not equate to the right for the public to have to support what others espouse. In fact, the freedom of speech that allows people to put forward an idea is the same freedom that allows me and the leaders of our country who sit in this place today to condemn it. It is up to society to pick and choose which ideas we embrace and which ideas we condemn. The motion in front of the House today asks each of us in this place to make such a choice.

The motion is as follows:

> That, given Canada and Israel share a long history of friendship as well as economic and diplomatic relations, the House [all of us here] reject the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, which promotes the demonization and delegitimization of the State of Israel, and call upon the government to condemn any and all attempts by Canadian organizations, groups or individuals to promote the BDS movement, both here...and abroad.

The BDS movement, according to its organizers, from BDSmovement.net, is "[t]he global movement for a campaign of Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions...against Israel until it complies with international law and Palestinian rights". Members will notice, if they read this, that nowhere in this statement of purpose is there a call for peace in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Rather, the words "against Israel" are the core of this movement.

This is no ordinary boycott. In its actions, self-described as "against Israel", the BDS movement seeks global delegitimization of the right of the Jewish people to self-determination and the right for Israel to exist. All parties in this place have vocalized support for the right of Israel to exist, and because this movement is the antithesis of that, because it opposes this, I stand in this place and condemn it.

In a 2011 article, writer Robyn Urback described a BDS-related incident at Carleton University:

> Reports coming out of Carleton University last night allege that chaos ensued at a Carleton University Students' Association...meeting when a divestment motion by Students Against Israeli Apartheid...was shelved. Protesters outside the council room began chanting and yelling after the decision, and some students say they felt trapped and threatened.
>
> "That's when [the association] exploded," says Emile Scheffel, a Carleton student and member of the Ottawa Israel Awareness Committee. "The council took a five-minute recess, but people didn't feel comfortable leaving the room."
>
> "It got pretty intense," Scheffel says. "They started banging on the walls, yelling 'shame' and screaming." Some students also allege they were subject to physical intimidation and homophobic slurs for [supporting] the...motion.
>
> "My personal safety was threatened repeatedly last night, and I am extremely apprehensive about coming onto campus now," [said] a CUSA councillor in the Faculty of Public Affairs....

The BDS movement brings physical intimidation and a spirit of demonization into the Canadian discourse of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict rather than supporting the movement of this discourse in our country of Canada toward peace through actions and learning. It is the antithesis of that. This is not Canadian, and thus I condemn it. The BDS movement calls for the stifling of academic freedom. Many of my colleagues here today will talk about all the aspects of this movement, but this is one that I find particularly egregious.

An article on jadaliyya.com outlines its activities as "not attending conferences hosted by Israeli institutions"; for its supporters not to give lectures at Israeli institutions, not to conduct joint research with Israeli institutions, not to sponsor student visits to Israeli institutions, not to review academic grant proposals for Israeli grant-giving bodies, and not to review articles for academic journals based in Israeli institutions. This movement calls on us as Canadians to silence the ideas of a sovereign democratic nation with which we have long-standing diplomatic and economic relations.

● (1025)

I can think of one that is personal to me. There is a joint initiative with our world-renowned brain institute at the University of Calgary. It hosted Israeli researchers to look at ways to improve brain health. There are so many different things that we can do.

The silencing of academic thought is something that this movement is promoting, and because that is not Canadian, I condemn it.

I know there are many students around the country facing motions that are going forward through their student unions and student councils. I believe this is the seventh time that McGill University will be facing this in as many years. There is a motion calling upon it to support the BDS movement. I asked the students who are facing this decision to ask why this movement is not working collaboratively to fundraise for aid organizations that are providing direct support to building a framework of democracy within the Palestinian state. They should ask why we are not fundraising to do that. They should ask why their movement does not call for peace. These are things that we do as Canadians.

My Liberal colleagues, and everyone in the House, support aid, and preferably not to organizations that support terrorism. However, there is a way to do this that is not what the BDS movement is about. I want those students who have faced violence, shame, and intimidation on their campuses because they stand against the BDS movement to take heart. When we vote on this motion, everybody who stands up to condemn this movement, not to shut down its ideas but to turn our backs to it because there is a better way, stands with them. We stand with them for the right for Canadian academic institutions to promote what we have built as a Canadian country in terms of values, and for what my colleague talked about in terms of how we support Israel and approach diplomatic relationships. They can take heart because we will stand and condemn this movement.

I have spoken to students, and I want to speak to my colleagues in this place.

In 2010, a similar motion came before Queen's Park, and Ontario MPPs voted unanimously to condemn Israeli Apartheid Week. For those members who might be wondering what Israeli Apartheid Week is, it is self-described by its organizers as the following:

> It aims to raise awareness about Israel's ongoing settler-colonial project and apartheid policies over the Palestinian people. [and it seeks to] build support for the Palestinian-led Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions... movement.

We have already had this discussion in a provincial legislature in this country and it achieved unanimous support.

I would like to read a comment from Cheri DiNovo, an NDP MPP, who stated "while the motion, which passed with a unanimous voice vote...was "symbolic," it sent a signal that parliamentarians want to promote positive debate."

We condemn this activity.

I want to read a quote from John Milloy, a Liberal minister and MPP at the time. He was not in the assembly for the vote, but he said:

> Campuses are places for debate and discussion—they often get into areas that can offend people, can challenge people.... I think what the goal has to be is to make sure that there's not hatred on campus—nothing that would make a student feel threatened.

I was in Israel last week with members from the three major parties in this place. We sat in front of Palestinian and Israeli leaders, and the question asked by all three parties was what we as Canadians can do to help.

There is something before the House right now that we can do to help. We can send a message that as Canadians we support peace and condemn and reject the false ideologies and harmful nature of this movement as it relates to promoting peace in this region. We stand for what it means to be Canadian, and we condemn the actions of this movement.

● (1030)

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would say to my hon. colleague that making condemnations is one thing. I have heard her say that there is a way to do this. I would like to go a little deeper and ask her how she would support dialogue and find moderation, even at a time when we are experiencing the extremities of the group we are talking about.

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Madam Speaker, this question was asked of our Palestinian head of mission in Canada during a visit last week. I believe it was she. One of the ways she mentioned was through aid. Some of the people with whom we interacted talked about the Canadian model for aid within the Palestinian community, in which we are supporting aid directly to organizations that are building up economic infrastructure to help the people of Palestine.

For there to be a peace solution, there have to be two peace partners at the table, not one condemning the other or one who wants to incite violence. In order for that to happen, we can help build that up. That is one of many ways.

That is why in my speech I asked why all of those who are sitting on academic campuses keep beating their heads against the wall over this movement. They should unilaterally reject it and start doing something positive like fundraising for these types of movements.

● (1035)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, one of the great strengths of a liberal democracy, whether it is in Israel where there is debate or whether it is in the House of Commons, is the right to debate and the right to hold individual views.

I note that last August the United Church of Canada, which represents two million Protestants, supported the divestment movement. That was a choice it made. This has nothing to do with my colleague's claim that it is delegitimizing the State of Israel. This was a choice it made.

My Conservative colleagues are asking Parliament to stand up in the House and condemn individuals in this country for their right to debate and for talking about stifling academic freedom. We are being asked as members of Parliament, whatever our views are, to deny and condemn individual students for debating politics. We are being asked to deny and condemn their discussions.

We have to look at the right in a liberal democracy, whether in Israel where there is fulsome debate on all manner of issues, or within the House of Commons, to protect the rights of students, to protect the rights of people to debate foreign policies of another country. That is their right.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to remind members that, if they want to ask questions, they can stand up and ask questions, and if they want to make a speech they also know that procedure. When members are speaking in the House, I would hope that members would give them respect to have their views heard. If members want to ask a question thereafter, they would be able to do that.

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Madam Speaker, my colleague is wrong. He is trying to turn this into a debate about free speech. He is saying that we are trying to stifle free speech. We are not.

All of the groups the member mentioned absolutely have the right to say what they said. What I am asking him to do is make a choice and condemn this movement.

I will say what the member is not willing to say. I condemn the decision of the group that he mentioned to support this movement. I condemn the choice of CUPW to support this movement. I condemn the choice of academic student groups to support this movement. I can disagree with them. This movement is not Canadian. As leaders of this country, we should stand up and say that, while they have the right to say this, we have the right not to support it and we condemn it.

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the problem is that between agreement and condemnation there is opposition, disagreement, and mutual debate. For the Conservatives it seems to be black and white, that there are no new answers, because they want to divide everyone instead of building consensus.

My colleague mentioned John Milloy. Was it to praise him or to condemn him? He is a friend of mine and I would like to know.

Hon. Michelle Rempel: Madam Speaker, I raised multi-partisan support for this as a show of the fact that this has been done before in Canada. I am not sure where the member is going with this.

My colleague mentioned nuance. There is a time and a place for nuance, and there is a time and a place to take a stand. This motion is a time and a place. It is a choice for Canada to say we can turn a blind eye to what is happening on our university campuses and within other organizations in supporting the rhetoric of this movement, or we can say it is wrong. I hope that all of my colleagues in this place will find their spine, stand up, and do that.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Prime Minister and the entire government, I will begin by saying that the government will be supporting the motion by the official opposition. We will support it because we agree with the substance of it, although we do have some reservations about its form and about the Conservative Party's real intentions.

● (1040)

[*English*]

The motion reads:

> That, given Canada and Israel share a long history of friendship as well as economic and diplomatic relations, the House reject the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, which promotes the demonization and delegitimization of the State of Israel, and call upon the government to condemn any and all attempts by Canadian organizations, groups or individuals to promote the BDS movement, both here at home and abroad.

Let us review the terms of the motion, “That, given Canada and Israel share a long history of friendship as well as economic and diplomatic relations...”. I will stop there.

[*Translation*]

We agree that Canada and Israel share a friendship and economic and diplomatic relations. Who in this House does not agree with that? Is Israel not more than just an ally, but also a steadfast friend to Canada? How could we not admire a country that is so small in size, but mighty when it comes to courage, determination, resourcefulness, and solidarity? How can we not hope for this democracy to spread in a region that is grappling with all sorts of authoritarian abuses? The Jewish people were persecuted for thousands of years. How can we not be happy for them, knowing they have found a place where they will always feel at home?

[*English*]

We as Canadians have every reason to show solidarity with Israel, first because we bear the burden of history. Canada turned Jews back at its borders; remember “none is too many”. Canada excluded Jews from decision-making bodies and universities and, sometimes openly and sometimes in a covert manner, discriminated against them in many ways.

Let us look at where Jews in Canada stand today. How can we help but congratulate ourselves for having welcomed what has in fact become the fourth largest Jewish community in the world after the United States, Israel, and France?

Moved by the music of Leonard Cohen, amazed by the architecture of Moshe Safdie, enchanted by the stories of Mordecai Richler, convinced by the judgments of Jean Beetz, or inspired by the dedication of Irwin Cotler, we can measure the momentum of the Jewish presence in every sphere of our national life.

Since we owe so much to our Jewish communities, should we not show solidarity with Israel, a country that is under intense military pressure and the constant threat of terrorism, and needs our support? In any case, it is in our interest to do so. We would agree, for example, that it is in our interest to connect with the second-largest research and development investor among OECD countries.

Let us continue to look at the motion before us: "...the House reject the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement...".

[*Translation*]

There again, we completely agree. Rejecting the boycott of Israel is in keeping with Canadian tradition.

[*English*]

Canada has been firm in its opposition to the Arab boycott of Israel since it began in the 1970s.

[*Translation*]

Opposition to the BDS movement was firmly expressed by the Liberal leader and the Liberal Party before and during the election campaign. During the campaign, *The Canadian Jewish News* ran an election ad signed by the Liberal candidate in Papineau, our Prime Minister, and the candidates in Mount Royal, Outremont, Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Westmount, Pierrefonds—Dollard, and Saint-Laurent, which read as follows:

> The Liberal Party of Canada believes that:
>
> Canada has and must always be a friend of Israel
>
> We must fight anti-Semitism in all of its forms
>
> We must oppose Boycott, Divest, and Sanction campaigns in our communities and continue to speak out forcefully against them

The Liberals do not support this boycott movement because we do not believe it is conducive to achieving peace in the Middle East. We must never give up on seeking peace, and we must make no mistakes in our solutions for achieving it.

The status quo is untenable for both the Israelis and the Palestinians. The demographic trends will make the situation in the occupied territories increasingly unsustainable.

We must find a peaceful solution that, through negotiation, will lead to the advent of two states: Israel and Palestine, living side by side in security and peace. Boycotting Israel will not lead to this much-desired just peace.

● (1045)

[*English*]

Peace emerges from building bridges between peoples, not from rejection. Peace emerges from more interaction, more collaboration, not the opposite. A boycott creates victims. Boycotting businesses thrusts workers—Israelis, Jews or Arabs; Palestinians, Christians or Muslims—into unemployment.

Stemming the flow of investment can only create more misery and despair. A poignant example is that a world-renowned Israeli company, SodaStream, was forced through threats of a BDS boycott to close its factory located in the West Bank. This resulted in the loss of hundreds of well-paying jobs for Palestinians. This negative effect on the Palestinian people in this economy is wrong. In itself, it provides nothing good for peace.

Canada believes that supporting the economic prospects of the Palestinian people is a vital goal for ensuring their dignity. It has the valuable side effect of creating stability and security in the region. In this spirit, Canada funds a host of projects to better the livelihood of the Palestinians. Working toward that goal is the sort of activity that will advance prospects for the peace process. The BDS movement, however, is exciting already high tensions between Israelis and Palestinians, to their detriment.

The world will win nothing from boycotting Israel but depriving itself of its talents and inventiveness. It would be unjust and counterproductive to deprive our students of the contribution of Israeli professors, or deprive researchers of the collaboration of their Israeli colleagues, or deprive businesses of their partnerships with Israeli companies. That would not contribute in any way to peace, but would create a lot of injustice and be an affront to free speech.

It is wrong and counterproductive to pressure musicians, writers, poets, and artists not to perform in or visit Israel. Instead of dialogue and understanding, we would only be spreading distrust and intimidation.

There are disturbing reports of Jewish students feeling unsafe at Canadian universities. That is unacceptable.

[*Translation*]

We do not need fewer ties between Canada and Israel; on the contrary, we need more. We must implement the Canada-Israel free trade agreement in order to reduce technical barriers, enhance co-operation, increase transparency in regulatory matters, and reduce transaction costs for businesses. That is the way forward.

We must oppose anything that stands in the way of stronger ties between Canada and Israel.

[*English*]

The one-sided nature of the BDS movement is in itself a problem for the search for peace and justice. It targets Israel alone. It calls on Israel alone to act. Once again, instead of a recipe for achievement of a lasting peace settlement, the BDS movement in fact creates a form of collective punishment at the expense of both Israelis and Palestinians.

As Canada considers the Middle East peace process and seeks opportunities to move to pursue our role in the eventual resolution that meets the interests of Israelis and Palestinians, we should not be asking ourselves how we punish one people. Instead, we should ask ourselves how we can re-motivate these two peoples to get into a dialogue again, how we can start a positive process with the Israelis and Palestinians to relaunch a peace process.

Now let us finish our review of the motion before us:

> ...(BDS) movement, which promotes the demonization and delegitimization of the State of Israel, and call upon the government to condemn any and all attempts by Canadian organizations, groups or individuals to promote the BDS movement, both here at home and abroad.

● (1050)

[*Translation*]

This rhetoric elicits mistrust and it comes from the Conservatives, who in recent years have constantly tried to transform support for Israel into a partisan issue in Canada. Yes, some supporters of the boycott have bad intentions, do not want peace, and are working against Israel.

[*English*]

Their real goal is not to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but to delegitimize and single out Israel.

[*Translation*]

In this movement there are certainly some hate-filled extremists, racists and anti-Semites as well. We must strongly condemn those individuals.

[*English*]

However, it cannot be denied that many of the boycott supporters are mistaken in good faith. Many organizations and individuals in Canada and abroad support the BDS movement out of the belief that it will somehow accelerate the peace process and be a non-violent initiative that leads to a lasting resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Their goal ultimately is the same as ours: a two-state solution with a secure, stable, and democratic Israel, living side-by-side with a secure, stable, and democratic Palestinian state. However, they are mistaken in the way this goal may be achieved.

[*Translation*]

We will not convince the people acting in good faith that they are mistaken by hitting them over the head and condemning them at every turn. Intimidation, name-calling, and accusations will not lead to constructive dialogue with them. We must talk to them with respect and explain why boycotting Israel is a false solution.

We have had this debate and many others, and we will continue to have it, in Canada and elsewhere, with people we respect, who in some cases are themselves Jewish. Dialogue and honest and firm debate, not ostracism and intimidation, will rally support for truly promising solutions.

[*English*]

Canada and Israel are strong, vibrant democracies where legitimate criticism within legitimate discourse is expected and accepted as the way to build consensus.

[*Translation*]

Do our Conservative colleagues have any interest in this dialogue or in seeking consensus? When they were in power, they did quite the opposite. They made threats, hurled invective, and systematically painted people with the same brush for crass partisan purposes. They made support for Israel and the Canadian Jewish community a partisan issue. That did not work for them, but they do not seem to have learned anything from it.

They have come back to us today with this motion, and we are well aware that its purpose is to create division. There are no winners in this type of game.

We would like to tell our colleagues and Conservative friends that many Canadians have had enough of their simplistic Manichaeism and hyperpartisanship. That is one of the main reasons why Canadians relegated them to the opposition benches. It is up to the Conservatives to learn from that. If they do not, they will remain in the opposition.

I would like to close by pointing out what really matters: Canada's lasting friendship with Israel; our constructive, long-term partnership with the Palestinian Authority; the pursuit of justice for all, including the Palestinian people; the pursuit of security for all, including the Jewish people; and the creation of two states that can live side by side in harmony.

Those are the goals that we should be tirelessly and resolutely pursuing, using insight and common sense. We need to work together with all people of good faith to find peaceful and fair solutions that do not involve the boycott of Israel.

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Madam Speaker, the minister's and the government's decision to support today's motion is certainly a step in the right direction and is in keeping with Canada's tradition of fighting against anti-Semitism. Canada is a signatory to the Ottawa Protocol on Combating Antisemitism.

I would also like to quote Irwin Cotler, a former colleague of the minister, who said:

[*English*]

> Yet, Canada can and must be a world leader in heeding the call of the recent UN forum [on anti-Semitism] to renew, reaffirm, and reinvigorate efforts to combat anti-Semitism, and to promote mutual respect, tolerance and understanding.

● (1055)

[*Translation*]

My question for the minister is simple. How does our Minister of Foreign Affairs plan to actively combat the pernicious new forms of anti-Semitism that are attacking the very existence and legitimacy of the State of Israel? How will he prevent people from being misled by entities that have bad intentions?

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

I am glad that he quoted Irwin Cotler, who, as justice minister, launched a number of programs that were effective in combatting racism and developing tolerance, openness, and acceptance in Canada. That is the direction we must take.

However, it is important to avoid painting everyone with the same brush, to avoid driving wedges all over the place with indiscriminate condemnations. One thing we can do is identify anti-Semitism and separate this anti-Semitism from legitimate discourse in which we are looking to find solutions and we can have good-natured disagreements.

The Conservatives did not do that when they were in power. Their prime minister did everything he could to divide Canadians on issues that should have brought them together in order to isolate those who are truly spreading hate.

The current Prime Minister's approach will bring Canadians together to deal with threats to humankind.

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the Minister for his speech, which raised a number of interesting points. I agree with him about the perils of the divisive politics we witnessed under the Conservative government, politics that benefit nobody.

Having said that, I would like to ask the Minister if he thinks it is up to Parliament and the government to tell Canadians what issues they can debate and what ideas and opinions they are allowed to have. One organization that has endorsed the BDS campaign is the Ontario branch of the Canadian Union of Public Employees.

Does the Minister condemn the members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees? Does he go beyond acknowledging that they do not share his opinion and actually condemn them?

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her very good question.

Sooner or later, we have to make choices. We did not draft this motion, but we have to vote yea or nay. The government that I represent here chose to vote in favour of it even though we would have written it differently. I explained why in my speech. The movement is misguided.

I agree with the member that most of the people in the movement are acting in good faith, including many of the organizations, but they are misguided. We therefore support this motion, but we wish to make it clear that we are in no way seeking to limit freedom of expression in Canada or to encourage any kind of bullying one way or the other. We will certainly be very vigilant when it comes to combatting hate speech.

[*English*]

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to say that while I agree with the motion's rejection of the boycott, divest, and sanctions movement, the question that I have for the minister is around the particular wording of "condemn any and all attempts". I find this wording peculiar in that when I think about this movement I also think about apartheid and how, at the time, we had to engage in discourse with persons who agreed and did not agree with something that was quite terrible in our history.

I ask the minister, how can we promote peace at the same time we are looking to engage in discourse with those who are for and against the movement?

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for her question. It is a very valid question, because the Conservatives' aim is to be sure that anyone in the House who votes against them will be considered a dissident. It is what they are trained to do, as we know.

The government has made this call that, all in all, it is better to send a message that the boycott of Israel is a bad solution. However, of course, we will be there to fight any attempt to divide Canadians and to put Canadians of good faith in the same bag with people who are animated by hatred and racism.

● (1100)

Mr. Alexander Nuttall (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Madam Speaker, I find it interesting listening to the Minister of Foreign Affairs talk about divisions being created and saying that the Conservative motion today is creating division. It is not creating division. We are responding to a group that is creating division. That is what leadership is: it seeks to unify when others seek to divide.

As we move forward, I think we need to make sure that what we do in the House matters, and that when we stand up, we stand strong and firm. We welcome the support of the Liberals wholeheartedly, and we thank them for that support, but we ask them to tone down the rhetoric. When will they do that?

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Madam Speaker, I think my colleague should hold up a mirror and ask himself that question too, because that is what he is doing. He is creating a lot of rhetoric to divide people, which is what he just said.

There is a problem that we need to solve. The problem is that peace does not exist in the Middle East, that the status quo is not viable or sustainable for Jews, Iraqis, Palestinians, Muslims, Christians, or anyone.

We need to find solutions. Some Canadians, in good faith, believe that a boycott of Israel would be a solution. We do not believe that is a valid solution for the reasons I mentioned, but we will not insult them. We are not out to tell all of them that they are racist and so on, or that they are not Canadian.

There are racists, there are people who are animated by bad faith, and we need to condemn them. However, the first way to fight racism is to avoid amalgamation, which is exactly what the Conservatives are always doing. It is one of the reasons they are in opposition today.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, a great debate in the House would have been, how do we find peace in Israel and Palestine, how we do the rebuilding in Gaza, and how do meet the UN resolution? However, that is not what we are debating. What we are debating today is a push by the Conservatives to try to divide Canadians and use Parliament to deny and condemn individuals for using their right to dissent.

I ask my hon. colleague, coming from the party of Pierre Elliott Trudeau, why he would stand with the Conservatives and condemn individuals. I ask him that because it is what the member is voting for. He can say whatever he wants to attack the Conservatives, but he is taking the same position he took on Bill C-51, because the Liberals are afraid of the Conservative rhetorical machine, and they will not stand up for the individual rights of Canadians to dissent.

The issue here is not about defining Israel and Palestine, which is a good debate that we should have, and we need that debate within the House. The question that has been put here is about the condemnation of individuals and organizations, including church people, teachers, and all manner of people. Whether the member agrees with them or not, it is the role of parliamentarians to stand up for individual rights.

I am absolutely shocked that the member would stand with the Conservatives on a motion that specifically calls upon us to condemn individuals for their right to dissent.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Madam Speaker, I think my colleague has goodwill, but in the way he phrased his question, I am afraid it is he who is playing a game with the Conservatives.

I have been very clear in my speech that if we support the motion, it is because we want to send the message that a boycott of Israel is not a valid solution. However, I will always respect free speech. I will respect the vote of my colleague, whatever it is. I will not tell him, because he votes differently from me, that he is a bad man or that I cannot shake his hand or be proud to be his colleague.

Unfortunately, we all know that is not the game the Conservatives want to play. They want to create a situation where the people who are not with them are evil. It is as simplistic as that. It is like a bad, c-rated western they are playing.

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Madam Speaker, we have a very bizarre motion in front of us today, to say the least. The first part rejects BDS, and I will come back to that afterwards. Then there is the second part that calls upon the government to condemn any and all attempts by Canadian organizations, groups, or individuals who promote the BDS movement both here at home and abroad.

I have a serious problem with that. It is not the role of Parliament to limit topics Canadians are allowed to debate, or to condemn opinions. The NDP does not support BDS. We think it detracts from the work of achieving real progress in the region.

Let me read a quote of Jack Layton's from 2010. He said, "...our party has never, nor would we ever deny that Israel not only has a right to exist but a right to exist in secure borders in a safe context". Similarly with the BDS proposal, this is not party policy, and we do not support it.

It would be better to work positively with partners for peace on both sides to find a lasting solution for all. As I said, the motion is not about BDS; it is about the politics of division and freedom of opinion.

[*Translation*]

I would like to read the second part of the motion.

> ...call upon the government to condemn any and all attempts by Canadian organizations, groups or individuals to promote the BDS movement, both here at home and abroad.

We are not talking about attempts by extremists. As I just said a moment ago, I firmly believe that it is not the role of Parliament to prohibit anyone from debating ideas or having an opinion. Parliament's role is actually the exact opposite of that. Its role is to defend the freedom of opinion and freedom of expression of all Canadians, whether we agree with them or not.

If we were debating a motion here today that asked me to condemn any group that opposes a woman's right to choose, I would not support it, because it is not our role to condemn people for their opinion. Has it become a crime in Canada to have an opinion? The Conservatives would probably like that, but I do not believe that Parliament should head in that direction.

At the same time, I am not terribly surprised that the Conservatives have brought forward such an idea and such a motion. We have seen similar things from them in the past. Just think of Bill C-51. It is interesting to see that the Liberals, who are going to support this motion, also voted in favour of Bill C-51, which limits our freedom of expression.

The Conservatives are well known for their use of gag orders. Any time the opposition disagreed with their position, they would impose a gag order. They muzzled bureaucrats and scientists, and limited access to information. They kept journalists from doing their job properly, even though that is one of the tenets of our democracy.

● (1105)

They harassed and intimidated a range of civil society organizations, particularly through the Canada Revenue Agency, organizations whose biggest crime was not to agree with the government's policies. This reminds me of George Orwell. What is this world coming to when here in Canada we are attacking the fundamental right to disagree?

Ironically, the Conservatives are the ones who introduced private members' bills to undermine our protections from the hate speech that often targets cultural minorities and those with different sexual orientation. It is rather odd.

This motion is typical of the Conservatives in that it seeks to muzzle those with whom they disagree. Personally, I reject that. In the words of Voltaire, "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it".

There are some who think this is a good idea, but I do not necessarily agree. I think we must focus our efforts on working with partners for peace, from both sides, to come up with a just, lasting, and equitable solution for the well-being of everyone. However, there are people who have other ideas. There are some in Israel and some in my own riding. They know we disagree, but we can talk about it. Discussion and dialogue are the road to moving forward with these thorny issues.

● (1110)

[*English*]

It is very sad to see the Conservatives playing politics with such an issue. I do agree with what the Minister of Foreign Affairs said. They are obviously playing the politics of division again, and that type of policy does not help anyone. It does not help our friends. They have done that so often.

The result of the approach of the Conservatives in the Middle East, in particular, for years is that Canada lost its reputation and it was damaged. Then Canada lost its ability to act as an honest broker and to help our friends, including Israel. Canada has no power and no influence in the region because it has lost its credibility, with too many actors who want to be agents for change and peace and have to be part of the process. The Conservatives have utterly cut off our bridges.

Yes, we must play a positive role, but we will not play a positive role if we adopt politics of interdiction and shutting up debate. Let me give a quote that I quite like and that I endorse:

> I am a Canadian...free to speak without fear, free to worship in my own way, free to stand for what I think right, free to oppose what I believe wrong, or free to choose those who shall govern my country. This heritage of freedom I pledge to uphold for myself and all mankind.

This was said by the Progressive Conservative Prime Minister John Diefenbaker, and I think he would be very sad.

[*Translation*]

If he could see what the Conservatives are trying to do here today, he would turn in his grave.

Instead of creating even more division, let us work together on finding positive solutions to this rather difficult situation and let us stand up to defend our values, our rights, and our freedoms, including the right to free speech and the right to have an opinion. It is for that last right that I will say no to this motion.

● (1115)

[*English*]

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the BDS movement inflames rather than enlightens. *Forbes* magazine reports that BDS sanctions harm Palestine disproportionately due to the trade surplus that flows from Israel to Palestine.

I would like to ask the hon. member this. How does supporting BDS effectively help Palestinians?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière: Madam Speaker, let us be clear, as I said in my speech, no, the NDP does not support the BDS movement.

We believe that there are far more effective ways to help Israel and the Palestinians. However, just because we do not support it does not mean that the House can condemn people who peacefully support another idea. We will find a solution through informed debate and engagement, not by condemning people or disrupting dialogue.

Therefore, we cannot support such a motion.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech given by my colleague, who spoke about a former prime minister rolling over in his grave. The NDP members often change their tune when it comes to BDS Québec.

Today, thanks to the Internet, we can check out what is posted on websites, for example the BDS Québec site, where we learned something rather startling. We learned that the NDP indirectly supports BDS, but today the member is telling us otherwise. How can that be? On September 22, BDS Québec invited its members to a major solidarity rally for the movement. Where was it held? In front of the campaign office of the member for Outremont.

When did the NDP change its position and decide to no longer support the BDS movement?

Ms. Hélène Laverdière: Madam Speaker, I am finding it very hard to understand what my colleague is trying to say. From my understanding, people held a protest in front of a member's office. Does that mean that the member supported the cause?

In my limited experience, when I have seen people protesting in front of a member's office, it was generally because the member did not support their cause. There is always going to be someone who will claim the NDP said this or that. I believe I quoted Jack Layton.

First, I want to reiterate that I find my colleague's argument rather bizarre. Second, that is not the fundamental issue. The fundamental issue is whether Canadians will be allowed to freely express their opinions whether we agree with them or not. That is fundamental. That is part of our fundamental rights.

If we do this, we will truly be heading in the wrong direction.

[*English*]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to ask my colleague about this. What is very disturbing is that the Liberals and Conservatives agree that as parliamentarians we should denounce students, intervene in universities, and attack individuals over an issue about the Middle East, as opposed to discussing where we need to be on the Middle East.

Considering how close the Liberals and Conservatives are on this issue and given the work the member has done on the international front, what steps should we take in this Parliament to talk about bringing peace for our friends in Israel, to ensure secure borders, to ensure the two-state solution for dealing with the tragedy of Gaza, and to ensure the importance of Canada on the international stage, which has been abdicated by the Conservatives and squandered by the Liberals? What is my hon. colleague's vision about how we bring these two peoples together and how Canada can play a role internationally in bringing peace between Israel and Palestine?

● (1120)

Ms. Hélène Laverdière: Madam Speaker, I would like to first say that, in my experience, lack of respect for another party's, country's, or people's positions, lack of dialogue and lack of listening, is the surest path to conflict. That is why this motion is not working toward peace. It is doing the contrary.

New Democrats want two peaceful states, where people can go about their lives without worrying all the time. For that, we must engage in dialogue. Canada must become a bridge maker and also promote economic and social development for all.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for her speech. I respect her vote, but I would also like her to respect mine. I am not talking about her so much as about her colleague from Timmins—James Bay, who wants to lump the Conservatives and the Liberals together on this issue.

Members will vote yes or no. I will respect the member whichever way she votes. I hope that she will never associate me with what was just said by the member for Lac-Mégantic, who is trying to tarnish the reputation of the NDP leader because a protest was held in his riding.

This is the sort of thing that the Conservatives have been doing for the past 10 years. It relegated them to the opposition. I can assure my colleague that that is not at all the government's intention. The government is proposing that members vote in favour of this motion simply because we want to send the message that boycotting Israel is not a constructive solution to the problem. However, we will stand up for the right to free speech for all people of good faith and speak out against any racist comments that are made. I can assure her that we will not paint everyone with the same brush.

Ms. Hélène Laverdière: Madam Speaker, I would like to tell the minister that we completely agree regarding what the Conservatives have been doing and what we have heard so far in the House. There is no problem there.

What bothers me, and I am not painting everyone with the same brush, is that the Liberals voted with the Conservatives on Bill C-51, which limits our freedom of speech. It bothers me that, despite what the minister is saying in the House, he is prepared to support a motion actually saying that we will condemn any attempts by organizations or groups to promote the BDS movement. I am sorry, but that goes against what the minister himself said in his speech.

He is saying one thing and doing another.

[*English*]

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, as my hon. colleagues from Quebec know, I am constantly working on and trying to improve my French.

I want to pick up on a point that my colleague from Mégantic—L'Érable brought up. As I read the BDS website, in translation it speaks very clearly to the fact that this meeting was a show or sign of solidarity in front of the member for Outremont. My hon. colleague said that this was, in fact, just a gathering, but the website clearly states that it was a show of solidarity in front of the member for Outremont.

I want to ask the member whether her recollection of what happened is unclear and whether, in fact, her party was in solidarity with this group.

Ms. Hélène Laverdière: Madam Speaker, does the website say with whom it was a show of solidarity? I think that is a very pertinent question. The NDP policy has been very clear. Through the years, it has not changed. The hon. member should be careful about what he is reading on some websites. Just saying it is a show of solidarity is not sufficient.

● (1125)

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Calgary Shepard.

Madam Speaker, this should not be a partisan debate. However, I must note from the start that our official opposition is the only party that has not had a single member, or would-be member, who supported, or now supports, BDS. Both the Prime Minister and the leader of the third party have spoken forcefully against BDS. I look forward to the eventual vote on the motion to see whether we can, in this House, make the vote on this motion unanimous.

The boycott, divest, sanctions campaigners claim it to be a human rights movement. In fact, it is nothing more than a thinly disguised, multi-dimensional hate campaign.

On one hand, it targets the economy and citizens of the only democracy in the Middle East. It seeks to delegitimize and demonize Israel with hateful, hypocritical anti-Semitic attacks.

On the other hand, on Canadian university and college campuses, the BDS movement focuses the new anti-Semitism on pro-Israel and Jewish students, disrupting with hate what should be a happy, uplifting student experience.

The global campaign, funded and supported by extremist elements against Israel, has worked its ugly agenda on any number of major campuses: Concordia, McGill, McMaster, Ryerson, the University of Toronto, the University of Waterloo, and York University, which sits just on the edge of my constituency of Thornhill. It is very often championed by student unions controlled by the Canadian Federation of Students. Very often, all too often, student referenda involve intimidation to discourage opponents of BDS from voting and a variety of forms of vote-rigging.

In just a few days, now, McGill students are being asked again, for the third time in two years, to support BDS.

However, there is good news to report. One hopes that McGill students will follow the lead of University of Waterloo counterparts, who rejected a referendum proposal to sever ties between that university and Israeli academic institutions. A second-year student, Ilia Sucholutsky, was quoted as saying afterward, “If anti-Israel activists at UW genuinely cared about peace, they would have proposed initiatives that bring the two sides together in dialogue, reconciliation, and cooperation.” Mr. Sucholutsky continued, “Instead, they chose to pursue a one-sided, punitive, and discriminatory effort to isolate Israeli academics.” He concluded, “UW students clearly saw through this charade.”

While we commend the insight and the courage of some student bodies to resist the BDS bullies, I regret that this House, in 2016, must again recognize the pervasive existence of a new anti-Semitism here in Canada, and around the world.

Despite the best efforts of generations of parliamentarians and private citizens, and the vigilance and determination of human rights organizations, such as B'nai Brith Canada and the Friends of Simon Wiesenthal, anti-Semitism, humankind's original hatred, remains alive and hatefully well in Canada, and abroad. B'nai Brith's most recent annual audit of anti-Semitism incidents released last year revealed the highest number of anti-Semitic incidents ever recorded by B'nai Brith and the League for Human Rights. At 1,627 incidents across Canada, the year saw a 28% increase over 2013.

Canadians can remember brief periods in recent decades when we might have thought anti-Semitism was a hateful phenomenon of the past. That was wishful thinking perhaps. However, then came the resurgence of ancient and hybrid hate.

In my riding of Thornhill, there has anti-Semitic vandalism and graffiti, such as swastikas over the Star of David. In Montreal, there have been firebombings of Jewish businesses and desecration of Jewish cemeteries. Anti-Israel rallies during periods of Mideast tension deteriorated into openly anti-Semitic events in Calgary, Mississauga, and Toronto.

Israeli Apartheid Week and the boycott, divest, sanction movement represent hybrid anti-Semitism. Proponents, propagandists for IAW or BDS, say they are not anti-Semites, that they have nothing against the Jewish people, but are merely against Israel the Zionist state.

"Zionist" has become the hateful code word for "Jew".

● (1130)

Now we see a new variation of BDS. The European Union has imposed guidelines for labels of Israeli products made in the West Bank or Golan Heights, regulations that are being widely viewed as soft sanctions. The EU denies the origin labels represent a boycott of Israel, but in an increasingly anti-Israel Europe, labelling could lead to broader damage to Israel's economy.

However, the policy does seem to legitimize the boycott. For example, just a couple of months ago, a high-end Berlin department store removed all Israeli wines from its shelf, not just those from the Golan Heights, but from Israel itself. When the *Jerusalem Post* newspaper reported that the department store had been stolen by the Nazis before World War II the store put the wines back on the shelves.

The EU justifies the soft boycott on the argument that the root cause of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the settlement occupations, and that the origin labels will speed resolution of the two-state outcome that we all in the House wish to see. However, the EU has no plans to label Turkish products from illegally occupied North Cyprus, or to sanction Morocco for its illegal seizure of Western Sahara.

The good news from across the Atlantic is the British government's new legislation that bans city councils, publicly funded institutions, and some university student unions from boycotting Israeli products, or products from Israeli settlements. Those public institutions that continue to impose boycott restrictions on goods and services and products from Israel, or against British companies that deal in these products, will face what are called "severe penalties".

At the same time, the bad news, this time from the United States, is that the State Department and the U.S. Customs and Border Protection agency now intend to sanction products from Israeli settlements. A state department spokesman said the move could be perceived as a step toward a wider boycott. His boss later said the U.S. denies that the origin discrimination represents a form of boycott. Either way, the State Department action is in strong contrast to statements opposing labelling from Congress, and to anti-boycott legislation passed by states, such as California, South Carolina, Pennsylvania, Illinois, and Indiana.

After consultation with my Thornhill constituents and a number of human rights proponents, I considered putting a private member's bill before the House that would condemn BDS. Such a bill would compel the administrations of publicly funded institutions across Canada to take firm actions against all forms of hate speech. It would also encourage development, through the appropriate committees of our Parliament, of legislation that would bar publicly funded higher learning institutions from boycotting Israeli goods and services, in line with the Government of Canada's own trade agreements with the State of Israel.

I am, unfortunately, rather distant on the list of precedence for private members' bills, but I would be delighted if a colleague from either side of the House were to pre-empt my proposed legislation with a private member's bill of their own. As I said in opening these remarks, today's debate should not divide on partisan lines. I hope that when the motion comes to a vote the House speaks with one unanimous voice against boycott, divest, sanctions.

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask my hon. colleague if, by definition, anyone who is proposing the boycott of Israel is animated by hate?

Hon. Peter Kent: Madam Speaker, I am not sure I caught the question. Could I ask my hon. colleague to just finish the sentence?

● (1135)

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Madam Speaker, I will articulate it a little better then.

Is anyone who is arguing for the boycott of Israel animated by hate?

Hon. Peter Kent: Madam Speaker, anyone who supports the boycott, divest, sanctions program, or supports Israeli Apartheid Week is motivated either by hate or by ignorance.

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP): Madam Speaker, I always enjoy hearing from the member for Thornhill. He has tremendous eloquence, undoubtedly honed in his illustrious career in journalism. I assume that background has also given him respect for freedom of speech.

The Conservatives have tried to argue in the House that free speech simply means that we, as parliamentarians, are free to condemn certain viewpoints. That is fine, but this motion is not about that. The motion calls upon the government to condemn individual Canadians for expressing certain viewpoints. Would the member for Thornhill acknowledge that this is not what we do in a free society?

Hon. Peter Kent: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his fond memories of my previous career.

The short answer to this question is that the motion before us speaks against a campaign, based in hate, created by those who would seek the destruction, first economically and then perhaps by other means, of the state of Israel.

The proponents of the BDS campaign, the propaganda for the BDS campaign, will try, as I said in my remarks, to cloak this as a means of speeding the resolution of the dispute between Israel and the Palestinian people.

I have been to Palestine. I have been to Israel scores of times over the last five decades. I realize the problems on the ground. I remember the Palestinian camps when they were camps, when they were tents before they became concrete places of misery. The inhabitants were held in place by their leaders and by surrounding Arab countries, which remain determined today to deny the right of the state of Israel to exist.

Mr. David Sweet (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC): Madam Speaker, is my colleague aware of any other boycott, divestment and sanctions movement against the Syrian regime? Does he know about one against Iran for its atrocious human rights? Does he know about one against North Korea or maybe against Saudi Arabia for its treatment of women?

Is he aware of any other boycott, divestment and sanctions? Is he aware of any other action against Lebanon or Egypt, for example, which bulldozes houses when they want retribution in Gaza, or floods tunnels and kills Palestinians? Does he know of any other movement that actually mentions those kinds of things?

Hon. Peter Kent: Madam Speaker, the short answer is no. Those who support BDS in a variety of forms are true hypocrites in the sense that they selectively, as we see it at the United Nations every year, the group of 77 and others, single one democratic entity for discrimination, for criticism and, I regret, for hate.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my learned colleague from Thornhill, my colleagues, the members from Calgary Nose Hill and Parry Sound—Muskoka, for the contributions so far to this debate. This matter is personal to me. My wife Evangeline has Jewish heritage and my father-in-law, Winfred Winfield, is also Jewish by birth.

The motion before the House deals with the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement, also known as BDS, an acronym I will be using, against the state of Israel. Like I have done before, I am reminded of the Yiddish proverb, "The smallest vengeance poisons the soul".

The BDS movement is vengeful, petty, counterproductive. It poisons the olive branch of peace that individuals on both sides of the conflict are attempting to nurture. It discriminates based on nationality and ethnicity. It undermined peace by endangering Palestinian jobs linked to Israeli-owned companies. It imports a foreign conflict to Canada.

It achieves none of the goals of its supporters. It is not pro-Palestinian; it is anti-Israel, anti-Jewish and, in many cases, anti-Semitic. It poisons whatever potential for goodwill there exists between these two competing sides. It shields the anti-Semites behind a veil a righteousness to pretend to fight for the weak and the downtrodden, while actually promoting hate, a hate that poisons the soul.

In 2011, the Boutique Le Marcheur, a shoe store on St. Denis Street in Montreal was the target of activists in a pro-BDS group who protested owners Yves Archambault and Ginette Auger's inclusion of Israeli made shoes in their stocks. The sheer pettiness of picking on small business owners in Canada, trying to earn a living, achieves nothing toward the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

● (1140)

[*Translation*]

I would also like to inform the House that the Quebec National Assembly rejected any BDS attempts against Israel. François Bonnardel, the MNA for Granby, moved the following motion on February 9, 2011, together with Lawrence Bergman, MNA for D'Arcy-McGee, Martin Lemay, MNA for Sainte-Marie-Saint-Jacques, Éric Caire, MNA for La Peltrie, and Marc Picard, MNA for Chutes-de-la-Chaudière.

I salute these members of the Quebec National Assembly. I will read the motion:

> That the National Assembly of Quebec condemn the boycott that has been held for several weeks in front of Boutique Le Marcheur in Montreal.
>
> That, by virtue of the principles of free enterprise and the free market, the National Assembly support the owner of this business, Yves Archambault, who has been established on this street for 25 years and who pays taxes in Quebec.
>
> That the National Assembly reiterate its support for the Cooperation Agreement Between the Government of Québec and the Government of the State of Israel, which was signed in 1997 and renewed in 2007.

The only member of the Quebec National Assembly who refused to give consent to debate the motion was the MNA for Mercier, Amir Khadir. Mr. Khadir shamefully refused to agree to debate the motion, since he knew very well that his support of the boycott was morally indefensible and, quite simply, repugnant.

Members of the National Assembly strongly condemned the movement to boycott the Boutique Le Marcheur, which is a boycott against Israel. By doing so, Quebec stated in no uncertain terms that anti-Semitism is unacceptable in a free and democratic society.

[*English*]

The impact of BDS reaches university campuses throughout the world and Canada as well, where BDS campaigns become Israeli-phobic events; that is to say Jewish-phobic events.

I am ashamed of Concordia University, from where I hold a bachelor's degree in political science, for its soft response to BDS on campus. The Concordia University student union held a successful yes referendum by-election vote in 2014 endorsing BDS. I am ashamed because it poisons academic freedom, freedom of speech, open debate, and mutual respect.

I agree with Alan Shepard, the president of Concordia University, who said at the time:

> ...[academic] freedom—to think the thoughts we want to think, to test ideas however controversial—is the bedrock of university life. Boycotts by definition foreclose all opportunities for such a free exchange of ideas and perspectives.

BDS on Canadian campuses poisons the learning environment. It creates an environment that welcomes further hatred toward Israelis and Jewish persons.

As Bassem Eid, a human rights activist and commentator on Palestinian domestic affairs, has written for the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. He says, BDS supporters are "creating more hatred, enmity, and polarization". This from a supporter of the Palestinian cause. When he attempted to speak at a University of Johannesburg event to criticize Israel for its settlements in the West Bank, he was taken aback by what he described in his own words as the "raw hatred and the sheer unreasoning aggression" of the BDS crowd.

Mr. Eid went on to write in the Fikra Forum, June 25, 2015, "There is no connection between the tactics and objectives of the BDS movement and the on-the-ground realities of the Middle East." Again, BDS enables a poisonous, vengeful brew of anti-Semitism.

In 2012, Israel accounted for 81% of Palestinian exports, less than 1% of Israeli GDP, but Palestinian purchases from Israel were two-thirds of the total Palestinian imports, or 27% of Palestinian GDP. How will sanctions improve any of this? How will boycotts help the families that need these jobs?

BDS supporters want to obliterate the vast trade surplus Israel extends to Palestine and offer nothing in return. Trade builds understanding. Trade builds trust over time. Trade, especially free trade, builds successes that a future peace agreement can be built upon.

Israel has enjoyed a free trade agreement with Canada since 1997, which has tripled our trade to $1.5 billion in 2015 alone. Israel is our trusted trading partner and a friend when it comes to the fight against international terrorism.

The BDS movement poisons rather than enlightens global dialogue around the peace process. Israel invests heavily in Palestine and the rest of the world typically does not.

BDS targets Israel for special treatment when there are horrific regimes with much worse human rights records. It singles out Israel for special treatment on human rights when no widespread BDS movement exists against serial human rights violators such as Cuba, Russia, Syria, Iran, Pakistan, China, Sudan, Egypt, Yemen, Libya, Zimbabwe, and North Korea. I do not know of any BDS movements against their regimes.

Where is the North Korean BDS movement, a regime that has brutalized millions of its people, generations in fact, for half a century, a regime that openly has used forced labour camps where political pariahs are dispatched, where their children can spend a lifetime toiling in medieval conditions?

Where is the Venezuelan movement for BDS against the Maduro regime, against the Chavistas, a government that intimidates, censors, and prosecutes its critics, jails opposition politicians on spurious grounds? Its police forces engage in arbitrary arrests and violently suppress demonstrations with total impunity. All the while it enjoys a seat at the United Nations Human Rights Council.

BDS is immoral. It begins with a fundamental error for Jewish people. Israelis or Israelites are the indigenous peoples of the region who continue to return to their homeland from exile. The demands of the BDS movement are inconsistent with achieving a durable peace and incompatible facts on the ground in the current conflict.

Israel has agreed in the past, at least three times to my count, to peace. In 1967, it agreed to the conditions in UN Security Council Resolution 242; the Palestinians refused. Prime Minister Ehud Barak, the prior prime minister of Israel, offered peace twice in 2000-01 and 2007. The first time the Palestinian leadership refused and the second time there was no response to its overtures.

Even as BDS fails in its overt goals, it succeeds in eroding the clear moral recognition that Israel has a right to exist as a thriving Jewish state, the only Jewish state of clear Jewish character anywhere in the world.

Palestinians and Israelis need to reconcile. I accept that. It must happen. They do not need to reject and vilify each other. We must not assist in this rejection and vilification by allowing BDS campaigners and campaigns to run in Canada without some rejection of it from this Parliament. I ask members to support the motion to have a clear, unanimous motion in the House.

● (1145)

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the boycott of Israel is not a good idea. It will not help the cause of peace for the reasons I mentioned in my speech and for many of the reasons mentioned in my colleague's speech.

The member has said that it is important to not vilify each other. Does he not think that is exactly what he is doing? A lot of people of good faith wrongly think that the boycott would be a good solution. In order to convince them, does he think it is helpful to call them racists, anti-Semites, hypocrites, ignorant? Does he think that is the way to make progress in Canada and in Israel for Palestinians, for Jews, for everyone? What positive result may come from this simplistic approach?

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, the member spoke very eloquently earlier in his comments.

I just call a spade a spade. I believe in calling it what it is, and if it is racist, it is racist. Not all campaigners for BDS are. There are situations of people through sheer ignorance, like the member from Thornhill pointed out, who support these causes. However, again I ask this. Where is the BDS movement against the Chavistas? Where is the BDS movement against totalitarian regimes across the world? Where are those people standing up for the rights of people who are truly downtrodden? I am a Canadian of Polish heritage. Where was the BDS movement against the Soviet Union?

● (1150)

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member for Calgary Shepard quoted a motion from the Quebec National Assembly on this issue.

I would like to draw a clear distinction between that motion and the motion we have before us today. This Conservative motion not only asks this House to endorse a certain statement, but it calls upon the government to condemn individual Canadians for taking a certain position.

The member for Calgary Shepard talked about the importance of academic freedom and freedom of speech. I would like to ask him how he can stand up in the House and call upon the government to condemn individuals for expressing or promoting certain views.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, it is about leadership. That is what we are asking the House to express, and for the government to express as well.

In this case we are not condemning specific individuals, but are condemning ideas. We are condemning specific movements, not the individuals who take part in them. Like the member for Thornhill said, some of them do it because of sheer ignorance.

Some of them do it because they are motivated by hate, and BDS campaigners provide them with a shield to claim to be self-righteous or to be fighting for a righteous cause. It enables them by not speaking out in this crucible of our democracy and clearly say that such actions, such hate, such hate campaigns do not belong in Canada.

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I can understand the Liberals' discomfort with our motion. It is a motion about principle. The definition of a Liberal is someone who turns opportunism to the level of a principle.

One of the reasons I am so proud to be a Conservative is that we have principles, we defend them, we work for them, and we advocate for those principles.

On the other hand, we have the NDP. Let us not forget their founder, J. S. Woodsworth, who opposed Canada's participation in the Second World War. Where would western society be had we followed what the NDP's founder wanted?

This is a matter of principle. For those who say we are attacking Canadians, that is absolutely false. What is being discussed here is an idea. Debating ideas is obviously something the two other parties are very much afraid of. In this particular case, we are right in standing up for democracy and opposing racism in this situation.

I would like to ask my hon. friend why it is important to have a principled foreign policy and a principled policy regarding the BDS movement.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question.

It is because we Canadians stand on principle. We believe in things; we believe in them, and we speak up for them. I would like to point out that Omar Barghouti, the founder of the BDS movement, has come out against the two-state solution. He has also actively advocated for a violent uprising by any means against Israeli citizens.

When we have the founder of a movement, campaigners on the side of the movement who are motivated, many times, by hate and anti-Semitism, and some by ignorance, who believe that violent action against Israel is the right thing to do, how can we not stand up and say this is wrong and the House does not agree with it, that we are opposed to it? It is very simple: we stand on principle.

Mr. Michael Levitt (York Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for LaSalle—Émard—Verdun.

Today we are debating a motion that the House reject the boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement which, according to the text of the motion, promotes the demonization and delegitimization of the State of Israel.

I would like to begin my remarks today by pointing out to all my hon. colleagues that the motion leaves out the all-important third "D", that notorious double standard applied to Israel.

I believe the Prime Minister said it best:

> I'm opposed to the BDS movement. I think that it's an example of the new form of anti-Semitism in the world...an example of the three "Ds": demonization of Israel, delegitimization of Israel, and a double standard applied toward Israel.

I am proud of our Prime Minister's position. As we have seen throughout human history, when we let intolerance fester and grow, it inevitably leads to tragedy. BDS is about intolerance. It is a broader movement to demonize and delegitimize Israel and collectively punish all Israelis by holding Israel alone responsible for the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Whereas anti-Semites have long targeted Jews throughout the world as the root of all society's ills, this new form of anti-Semitism targets Israel as the Jew among the nations, singling out the Jewish State as the root of all ills in the world.

We do not need to look very far to see examples of this excessive focus on Israel. We see it every year at the United Nations, where the agendas of the Human Rights Council and General Assembly are clogged with one-sided resolutions that condemn only Israel in the most heinous terms, deflecting attention away from the world's most prolific human rights abusers.

I am proud that Canada voted against the annual anti-Israel resolutions at the UN General Assembly this past November, continuing the principled approach initiated by Prime Minister Martin that persisted under the previous government.

I would like to draw the attention of my hon. colleagues in the House to the Ottawa Protocol on Combatting Anti-Semitism, which is instructive in identifying the anti-Semitism that is so pervasive within the BDS movement. Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, for example, by claiming that the existence of Israel is a racist endeavour, that is anti-Semitism. Applying double standards by requiring of Israel behaviour not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation, that is anti-Semitism. Using the symbols or images of classic anti-Semitism to characterize Israel or Israelis, that is anti-Semitism. Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis, that is anti-Semitism. Holding Jews collectively responsible for the actions of the government of Israel, that is anti-Semitism.

The anti-Semitism that is so pervasive within the BDS movement involves discrimination against and denial of Jewish national self-determination and the right of the Jewish state to exist as an equal member of the family of nations, a universally recognized principle enshrined in the UN charter.

It is no surprise that many BDS activists and leaders oppose the two-state solution and acknowledge that their true objective is the destruction of Israel.

Let me be clear, criticism of Israel is not anti-Semitic, and saying so is wrong. If criticism of Israel is similar to that levelled against any other country, then it cannot be regarded as anti-Semitic. However, singling Israel out for selective condemnation, let alone denying its right to exist or seeking its destruction, is discriminatory and hateful, and I encourage all of my hon. colleagues to rise in the House and affirm that fundamental fact.

No one is claiming that Israel should be above the law. The issue is not that universal human rights standards should not be applied to Israel; they should be applied equitably to the same extent they are applied right here in Canada. Unfortunately, this is not the case.

The cause of human rights, for which Canadians care so deeply, is being hijacked and abused, with Israel being denied fair and equal treatment.

● (1155)

The solutions to these issues are not easy. Internationally, we must continue to stand up and denounce this flawed and discriminatory process. Within Canada and as Canadians, we cannot confront hate with hate. We must approach and fight intolerance with civil discourse and education. What the BDS movement attempts to do is to silence dialogue and stifle that education.

The BDS movement referenced today is largely, but not entirely, confined to university campuses across our country. As the Ottawa protocol points out, universities should be encouraged to combat anti-Semitism with the same seriousness they confront other forms of hate. Universities should enforce zero tolerance for discrimination of any kind against anyone in the university community on the basis of race, gender, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, or political position. Too many times on university campuses, small but vocal groups call for a boycott of Israeli academic institutions with hatred and vitriol, espousing exclusion rather than inclusivity on Canadian campuses. If we agree that education and dialogue are the best tools for reducing intolerance, then increasing contact and collaboration among academics is ideal. This dialogue allows for a free exchange of ideas and embraces academic freedom.

However, when groups call for a boycott of Israeli academics, there is a reduction in dialogue and education, and a degradation of discourse and ideas. Rather than increasing understanding and tolerance, it furthers intolerance and xenophobia. The BDS movement's narrow objective of demonization and delegitimization precludes any meaningful conversation. When Jewish students feel unsafe on campus because they are harassed and intimidated, and when non-student instigators are sent to campuses to create this environment of intolerance, we cannot be silent.

As a Jew and a father of two teenagers, I am greatly concerned about the actions I see taking place on university and college campuses across the country. The BDS movement has created a toxic atmosphere on campus for many Jewish students. I worry about what lies ahead. Next Monday, for the third time in less than two years, McGill University students are being asked to support a BDS campaign on delegitimizing Israel. This phenomenon is not limited to one campus, but is happening across our country and internationally. I am proud of the students who stand up and oppose these kinds of attacks. In particular, and as a McGill alumnus, I want to recognize the vote-no McGill campaign and the incredible work being done by the students who initiated this effort. I wish them luck on Monday to resoundingly defeat these recurring BDS motions.

Here I would cite the following: “The BDS movement...has no place on Canadian campuses.” Those are not my words; they are the Prime Minister's. He said that last year about the BDS initiative at McGill, a message he reiterated clearly when BDS reared its head again at UBC.

As we have seen in numerous organizations and on campuses across the country, intolerance does not rest. We cannot rest either in confronting it. Silence is not an option. We must do what we are doing today and condemn it. Every time the BDS movement and other types of intolerance raise their head, no matter what form they take, we must stand up and call them what they are: hate.

I pledge to never be silent in the face of such hate, and it is clear that our Prime Minister will not be silent either. I ask for and thank my fellow members for their support of this motion.

● (1200)

Mr. David Sweet (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, although often in the House there is good deal of cordiality in saying “I appreciate the speech of my colleague”, I really do appreciate the speech of my colleague.

In 1939, Canada had a policy of “none is too many” regarding Jews. The *St. Louis* was turned away and it is a stain on our history. Those kinds of things happened because people said hateful things and nothing was ever said about that.

I would like to ask the following of my colleague in regard to the broader conversation today and with respect, without any kind of partisanship or any effort to rail against another party, but simply to ask on this issue: when do we start saying no? When does the House begin to say loudly that enough is enough, that this is breeding hatred that we do not want to have in this country and that is damaging our social discourse and is moving us toward a hateful situation that none of us wants to see? When do we begin to say strongly, enough is enough?

● (1205)

Mr. Michael Levitt: Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand here and say that our Prime Minister has said enough is enough repeatedly where BDS has been concerned, on Canadian campuses over the last number of years. I know it is something that the House feels strongly about, and I encourage members of the House to vote in support of this motion today.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague from Laurier—Sainte-Marie said earlier in her speech, we should bear in mind the words of Voltaire, who said, "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it."

I cannot understand why the Liberal Party, which is the party that gave us the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, would attack a civil society movement and attempt to shut it up.

Should we not be encouraging people to express themselves peacefully and freely? How can a Liberal Party member think it is up to Parliament to tell people what they can and cannot think?

[*English*]

Mr. Michael Levitt: Mr. Speaker, I think I can best respond to that by quoting the position of the NDP leader on this issue. When asked where he stands on the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement, the leader of the NDP said, "I think it's absurd, and I disagree with it. Our focus is achieving real progress in the peace process – lifting countries in this region up, not putting Israel down". He also stated, "We take decisions together, parties formulate policies together, and to say that you're personally in favour of boycott, divestment and sanctions for the only democracy in the Middle East is, as far as I'm concerned, grossly unacceptable".

I share the leader of the NDP's view on this, and I hope that members of his party will support this motion.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to rise on this motion. I will not be supporting it, but I want to make it very clear that the Green Party and I personally do not support the BDS movement. There is a Green Party in Israel which is consulted with frequently, and its view is that it would prefer that Green parties around the world do not support calls for boycotting Israel. Similarly, Green Party members do call for free speech and respect the right of Canadians to organize as they wish on issues that disturb them.

There is no question that the plight of the Palestinian people is an issue that concerns many Canadians. I do not think that this is tactically an appropriate choice. However, I ask the hon. member—and I think he tried to tread this water carefully in his speech—that we not assume that a campaign for boycott, divestment, and sanctions against the state of Israel is based in hate, nor have we assumed that it is anti-Semitic. If the United Church of Canada carries forward such a campaign, it is not anti-Semitic organization; it is not a hate-filled organization.

I put to the hon. member this interesting vote count from the Israeli Knesset. In July 2011, that parliament of Israel voted on a question of whether to condemn calls for boycotts against Israel as a civil wrong. The vote carried, but it was not overwhelming. There were 47 members of the Knesset who voted for it, and 38 members voted against it. The 38 members who voted against it were certainly not hate filled against the State of Israel.

Mr. Michael Levitt: Mr. Speaker, I have spent time on campuses over the last decade, working with students to oppose the BDS movement who feel the sense of intimidation, concern, and worry when they are heckled walking into classrooms, yelled at as they try to live their lives on campuses.

The BDS movement is anti-Semitism, and I am proud to stand in the House and condemn it as such.

Mr. David Lametti (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak on this motion today and take the opportunity to share with the House the important economic ties between Canada and Israel.

As we know, the Government of Canada believes the BDS movement to not only be unhelpful but also unjust. Canada is proud of its economic and commercial ties with Israel. For example, members will recall that the Prime Minister directed the Minister of International Trade in her mandate letter to prioritize the implementation of the modernized free trade agreement with Israel.

● (1210)

[*Translation*]

Canada and Israel share a strong, bilateral, multi-dimensional relationship that includes close political, economic, social and cultural ties. Support for Israel, especially for its right to live in peace and security alongside its neighbours, has been central to Canada's Middle East policy since 1948.

That relationship is still flourishing, as evidenced by co-operation in many areas, such as public safety, defence, trade, and investment, and by official visits on both sides.

[*English*]

We support Israel, but we also support the Palestinian people and their legitimate desire to live in peace, security, and justice. However, in order to achieve this, we need to remain engaged with all parties in the region at all times.

As with any friendship, as in our case with Israel, we will sometimes agree, sometimes disagree, sometimes be critical of each other, but we will remain friends. BDS will not help the Palestinian people achieve their desire for peace, security, and justice.

Therefore, with that general context being given, I will proceed to tell this House some of the more economically oriented aspects of our relationship with Israel.

[*Translation*]

Canada and Israel want improved bilateral trade and economic relations. Along the same lines, the Canada-Israel Strategic Partnership MOU seeks to strengthen and consolidate bilateral relations in a number of areas, including energy, security, international aid and development, innovation, and promotion of human rights around the world.

In order to meet the objectives set out in the strategic partnership, Canada and Israel signed a joint statement of solidarity and friendship. In addition, both countries signed memoranda of understanding on foreign ministry co-operation and on public diplomacy co-operation and a declaration of intent on enhancing trade promotion.

Various bilateral agreements support Canada's commercial relations with Israel. These include the Canada-Israel Air Transportation Agreement (2015), a renewed and funded science and technology agreement, the Double Taxation Agreement (1977), and the Canadian Space Agency - Israeli Space Agency MOU for Space Cooperation (March 2005).

[*English*]

The Government of Canada is determined to provide Canadian businesses with the tools they need to succeed and compete in a global marketplace. In today's modern, knowledge-based economy, free trade agreements, or FTAs, need to go beyond reducing tariffs on goods. A 21st century agreement must take new trade challenges into account. Israel is an important economic partner for Canada within the Middle East and the North African region, with a full range of commercial opportunities, including trade, investment, science and technology, and innovation.

I have taught or lectured in Israel on two occasions, at three different institutions, in the areas of property and intellectual property. Its universities are excellent, its research and technology sector outstanding, and I can attest to the dynamism of the innovation sector in Israel, often called "start-up nation".

In order to draw on this potential, the modernization of the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement, or CIFTA, is beneficial for Canadian businesses because it eliminates or reduces tariffs on certain goods. In addition, by eliminating a number of former trade barriers, it will open up new opportunities in the Israeli market for Canadian exporters, for example, in the agricultural and agri-food sectors, as well as the seafood sector.

On July 21, 2015, Canada and Israel announced the conclusion of an expanded and modernized CIFTA adapted to the 21st century, which reduces technical barriers, strengthens co-operation, increases transparency in regulatory matters, and reduces transaction costs for businesses.

Israel offers a wide range of technologies in areas of exports, investment, science and technology, and innovation.

● (1215)

[*Translation*]

A modernized CIFTA will enable Canadian companies to take greater advantage of these opportunities. This agreement will also support Canadian businesses and investors, deepen trade and investment linkages, and further strengthen Canada's bilateral relationship with Israel.

This agreement creates new opportunities to further expand on the Canada-Israel economic partnership. This means that Canada and Israel are creating the right conditions for trade in our modern and knowledge-based economies. This modernized CIFTA is truly a 21st century agreement.

Accordingly, the modernized CIFTA includes provisions to address non-tariff barriers in Israel. Building on the strength of the existing Canada-Israel commercial relationship, the modernized CIFTA establishes new mechanisms under which Canada and Israel can co-operate to discuss, prevent, and resolve non-tariff barriers that could have a negative impact on exports.

Canada and Israel will complete their respective domestic processes, with the goal of having the modernized agreement in force as soon as possible, to the benefit of a stronger Canada-Israel economic partnership.

A key element of the commercial relationship is collaboration in science, technology and innovation, or STI. Bilateral STI relations are strong and based on a long history of close collaboration. Currently, a number of Canadian government organizations and some provinces are involved in collaborative research and development with Israel.

[*English*]

Israel has a relatively open investment environment. Foreign investors mostly enjoy equal treatment with nationals, though foreign investment is restricted in some sectors, such as defence, and requires government approval in other sectors, such as banking and insurance. Israel has robust infrastructure, a highly skilled workforce, and it benefits from its qualified industrial zone agreements with Jordan and Egypt. Israel is a rich country with advanced technology and developed agricultural and industrial sectors. Canada and Israel have well-established relationships in trade and investment, a market that offers commercial opportunities in a wide range of sectors.

Indeed, international rating agencies rate Israel as investment grade. In addition, the Canadian Trade Commissioner Service can provide on-the-ground intelligence and practical advice on the Israeli market to help Canadian businesses make better, more timely, and cost-effective decisions in order to meet their clients' objectives in that market. Similarly, Export Development Canada is a partner of choice for Canadian businesses in Israel.

In short, co-operation between our two governments and our two peoples is extensive. Our governments work closely with each other on matters relating to trade, investment, science, technology, innovation, education, and many others. Numerous initiatives along a wide spectrum of co-operation bring together an increasing number of Canadians and Israelis.

Finally, one of the underlying strengths of the Canada-Israel bilateral relationship lies in the extensive people-to-people ties. There are approximately 20,000 Canadian citizens living in Israel, and many Canadians have family in Israel.

These initiatives are proof positive against BDS. By being engaged with Israel, we will help promote peace, security, and justice for Israel and its neighbours, principally the Palestinians.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marjolaine Boutin-Sweet (Hochelaga, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the NDP wants lasting peace. We want a Palestinian state that can live peacefully alongside Israel. Therefore, we obviously oppose the BDS movement.

This morning, the member for Parry Sound—Muskoka said that his motion was not about freedom of speech. I do not agree. I think that the last part of the motion specifically seeks to curtail freedom of speech.

Does the member believe that it is the role of Parliament or even the government to tell Canadians what issues they can or cannot debate?

● (1220)

Mr. David Lametti: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for her question.

As a former professor, I firmly believe in the importance of freedom of speech. We must promote freedom of speech in as many places as possible. However, there are sometimes limits to freedom of speech, when it becomes a real threat to others and a means of inciting hatred. When people cross that line, curtailing freedom of speech is sometimes justified.

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on his speech and I thank him for it. His speech emphasizes that Canada must strengthen its ties with Israel and oppose anything that could turn us away from this friend.

I would like to give him the opportunity to repeat his point of view by asking him what he and the Minister of International Trade are going to do to implement the Canada-Israel free trade agreement as effectively as possible. This agreement is in our best interest because Israel has had such economic success. After all, Israel is the second-largest investor in research and development in the OECD.

We must not miss out on this opportunity. We have to develop the best possible strategy for implementing this agreement in the most effective way possible.

Mr. David Lametti: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. minister for his question.

Yes, this modernized agreement between Canada and Israel is a priority for the Minister of International Trade. We are going to ratify it as soon as possible. We are working with our Israeli partners on this.

By strengthening our economic ties with Israel, we will take another step toward stabilizing Israel's economy and bringing peace to the region. It is a matter of finding permanent solutions to the challenges facing this region.

[*English*]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberty Party recently announced its intention to whip a vote on a very sensitive moral issue that is going to be coming before the House in the next few months. The member talked about the importance of this issue. I wonder if he could clarify. Based on what he has said, will the entire Liberal caucus be voting in favour of the motion?

Mr. David Lametti: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, that is a question for the Prime Minister to answer, not for me.

Ms. Dianne Watts (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time today with the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

I stand in this House today and give my support to the motion that was put forward by my colleague from Parry Sound—Muskoka.

Canada and Israel have enjoyed a long-standing relationship and years of economic and diplomatic relations, including the recently expanded free trade agreement between our countries.

As a former mayor of the City of Surrey, I led two successful trade delegations to Israel, and I have spent time on the West Bank. These missions sought to bolster the relationship and the understanding between our two countries. I was proud to be a delegate from Canada advocating for increased ties between our two countries.

It is also because of my experience with these trade delegations that I stand before the House today and frankly state that the international boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement is actually a vehicle for spreading anti-Semitism and for advocating for the elimination of the Jewish state. Supporting this movement is unacceptable and unsupportable.

My colleagues in this House must recognize and affirm the State of Israel's right to exist and defend itself. Many of my colleagues have stood here this morning and made those statements. I applaud them and thank them for taking that stand. We must rally behind one of our closest allies, do what we can to ensure its success, and not support its demise.

Let me outline what the BDS movement means for Israel, because it is vitally important to understand what is at issue here.

By targeting businesses, universities, and civil society institutions, BDS tries to bring the conflict of the Middle East to Canada. Canadian organizations should never be used as a vehicle for social exclusion or the demonization of Canadians based on their national origin. That is exactly what the BDS movement is doing to Canadians and Israelis.

This goes even further. The BDS movement actually undermines peace. It does nothing to bring the two sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict together or to improve the quality of life for Palestinian citizens. In fact, it does quite the opposite. It jeopardizes the livelihood of thousands of Palestinians employed by Israeli companies.

There are many examples of this already: companies and factories that have moved from the West Bank, and Palestinians who have lost their livelihood. This does not promote peace, this does not better the lives of Palestinians or Israelis, and this does not help Canadians at home, because there is important work going on in Israel, in the West Bank, by all members of society.

When I was in Israel and met with a group of Palestinian business people, the message was very clear. They wanted trade and they wanted to encourage companies to locate on the West Bank. Meanwhile, the BDS movement does nothing to promote trade or create jobs for the Palestinian people. In fact, it does quite the opposite.

This boycott manifests itself in many ways, from pressuring consumers not to buy Israeli products to calling for universities to cut ties with Israeli academia and researchers, and even calls to ban Israeli athletes from international sporting competitions.

Let me give a few examples of the important work that the BDS movement is actively trying to cripple.

In the city of Surrey we have Simon Fraser University, which has ties to the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Israel. We also have a number of research initiatives under way. I am going to highlight two of the main initiatives, to demonstrate the impact of not having the co-operation between Canada and our counterparts in Israel.

● (1225)

Many of you have probably heard Captain Trevor Greene's story. He was a Canadian soldier who was with the Armed Forces in Afghanistan. He was sitting one evening with a group of elders, and out of respect, he took his helmet off and put it on the ground, and he was struck in the back of the head with an axe. His story is really a remarkable one because, while he did survive, he and his family were told that he would never walk again and that he would live his remaining days lying in a bed, unresponsive.

A young neuroscientist, Dr. Ryan D'Arcy, put together a team to work with Captain Greene, and over a number of years they worked to rewire his brain. They worked together. With Dr. D'Arcy, who was one of the individuals who accompanied me on both trade missions to Israel, we partnered with an Israeli company called ReWalk, which produces exoskeletons. Through that work, we had a team come to Canada and fit Trevor with an exoskeleton. I am really proud to say that, about six months ago, he was able to walk in the exoskeleton and get his life back.

This life-changing research continues, and it has changed the course of spinal cord research. Without this important initiative and innovative work being done in Israel today, Captain Greene's story would not be possible.

Briefly, I would say that, in the project we are doing right now between the universities, doctors in Surrey and the Ben-Gurion research team in Israel have been putting together leading researchers who are studying the correlation between diabetes and Alzheimer's, two diseases that affect too many Canadians. This is important work that will change the course of how we deal with populations that have high rates of diabetes. One such is the South Asian population. This important research will also help us better understand Alzheimer's and take us one step closer to battling a disease that affects so many people around the world. We have heard much in recent years about the expected increase of both of those diseases. With partnerships between the universities and the research, we are helping combat these epidemics—again another game-changer.

These are but a few examples of the work that is going on and the innovation and technology breakthroughs between the strong partnerships of our two nations. Keeping this groundbreaking research in mind, can members imagine, if the BDS movement were successful and we actually cut ties, how many people would be impacted not only in Canada but around the world?

The basis on which BDS is found with groups pushing an anti-Semitic agenda is unacceptable, and it goes against everything that we as Canadians stand for. Let me be clear. This motion is not against free speech or free ideas. This motion simply condemns the actions that have had huge detrimental impacts, both here at home and abroad, and that are totally unacceptable.

● (1230)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for some time now, we have been concerned about the extremely unfortunate rise in acts of anti-Semitism in Hungary in particular. This is nothing new. However, the previous Conservative government put Hungary on the safe country list.

Could my colleague explain the Conservative position on this?

[*English*]

Ms. Dianne Watts: Mr. Speaker, I would say that any time there are groups of people who have ideals in anti-Semitic actions they are to be condemned. It is unacceptable. It is not part of who we are as people, as in any country around the world, and it is wrong. It has been wrong, it will be wrong, and will continue to be wrong.

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would ask the hon. member to perhaps explain what signal we are sending to Canadians by adopting the motion that has been put forward.

Ms. Dianne Watts: Mr. Speaker, the message that we are sending is that we are taking a leadership role. We have heard not only from the Conservatives, but from the Liberal side of the House as well, that we are in support of the tenets that make us Canadian. When we look at individuals who have basically stated that they have no right to exist, that is absolutely unacceptable. We are all human beings. We all occupy this world. We need to come together and support one another. That is exactly what we would be doing through this motion.

● (1235)

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member on an excellent speech. I particularly liked how she talked about, specifically, the benefits for her riding.

We support Israel as a matter of principle, of course, but there are also many benefits to our country, through trade, through integration of academic institutions, and others.

I wonder if the member would speak a bit more, specifically, about the benefits to her riding, and also the benefits to Canada in general, of a strong relationship between Canada and Israel.

Ms. Dianne Watts: Mr. Speaker, we have had a very robust relationship with Israel. In terms of the trade delegations that I headed up as the former mayor and also as the CEO of the Health Tech Innovation Foundation, that technology has helped on many fronts, many people in Canada, right across this country. The innovation that has come from Israel and highlighting the exoskeleton from ReWalk is an absolute game-changer for people with spinal cord injury. That is a sample.

We have ongoing relationships with Israel. We have the technology that we have imported and that we are using in our health authorities.

I would say that we continue to strengthen, we continue to work, and we continue to support our friends in Israel.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, members of the House know, as I mentioned before, that my grandmother was a Holocaust survivor, and so I am particularly honoured to be speaking strongly today against contemporary discrimination against the Jewish people.

I am very proud to be a Zionist. A Zionist was defined originally as someone who supported the re-establishment, and now as someone who supports the development and protection, of the Jewish nation called Israel. There is for me an important connection between remembering the lessons of the Holocaust and supporting the modern Jewish State of Israel.

Zionism began at the end of the 19th century, but support for Zionism was not a slam dunk even within the Jewish community. Some liberal-minded Jews perceived the tension between the call for a separate Jewish state on the one hand and the demand for full Jewish equality within existing European states on the other. They saw the call for a separate Jewish homeland as contrary to their project of seeking integration and assimilation.

However, the terrible experience of European Jews during the Second World War demonstrated for most Jews, and most non-Jews alike, the need for a Jewish homeland. As much as Jews everywhere continued to seek full acceptance in nations where they lived outside of Israel, the opportunity to go to an ethnic and religious homeland provided them and provides them with vital security. If and when things go badly, Jews always have somewhere to go. This was not the case at the time of the Holocaust.

My grandmother was part of a mixed family. They were only able to obtain one visa, so her father, the full-blood Jew in the family, left for South America. My grandmother and her mother had to stay behind without him. We all know the tragic case of the *St. Louis*, a boat carrying Jewish refugees from Germany, which Mackenzie King refused to allow into Canada.

Noting this experience, Jews have rightly reasoned that as much as they can hope for goodwill from other nations where they live, they cannot always depend on it. Israel not only has a right to exist, its existence is necessary. Without it, Jews will not have the security that comes with knowing that, if worst come to worst, they always have somewhere to go.

Despite some dark moments, Canada and Israel have had a strong partnership. Certainly, we have much in common. Of course, we disagree on some things. It is a misconception that those of us who are Zionists always agree with policies of the Israeli government. As the member for Calgary Heritage has said, of course, like any country, Israel may be subjected to fair criticism, and like any free country, Israel subjects itself to such criticism with healthy, necessary, democratic debate. That self-criticism is part of what makes Israel a great nation: vibrant, open debate about politics between people of different philosophies and from widely varying religious traditions.

In Israel, the only liberal democracy in the Middle East, all citizens are able to run for government, to attend university, to hold any job, to sit on the supreme court, or represent their country on the international stage, just as Canadians are. Israelis, just like Canadians, can aspire to any goal and are free to work to achieve it. Frankly, Israel's Muslim population enjoy more economic, political, and religious freedom than do Muslim populations in many neighbouring Muslim-majority states.

Canada and Israel have much in common. We are vibrant democracies, we value multiculturalism, we protect the rights of all citizens, and we enjoy robust democratic debate in two official languages: for us it is in English and French, and for them it is Hebrew and Arabic. With these traits in common, it is natural for Canada and Israel to have a very strong bond.

Like Israel, Canada has spoken out in the past about global anti-Semitism, and we must do so again. Let us be clear: anti-Semitism and racism almost never identify themselves as such, but a movement that calls for boycott, divestment, and sanctions, not on the basis of actions, views, or words of the individuals facing the boycott but on the basis of national origin alone, is clearly an example of anti-Semitic racism. We have an obligation to speak out, not only in support of a friend, but to take a principled stand on something that runs counter to our deeply held values of diversity and inclusion.

● (1240)

We are fortunate to live in a country where we do not face discrimination on the basis of things like religion, sex, age, or ethnic or national origin. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms entrenches the fact that everyone is equal under Canadian law. This section of the charter reflects our deepest held values. People should not face discrimination on the basis of religion or of ethnic or national origin.

The boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement, or BDS, advocates for actions that run entirely contrary to these Canadian values. They advocate discrimination against individuals and businesses on the basis of national origin. BDS openly calls for discrimination against and boycotts of Israeli individuals, artists, companies, organizations, academics, universities, research institutions, hospitals, and technology and development projects, again, simply because they are Israelis. BDS advocates for discrimination against those who happen to be Israelis, and also against Canadians who hold dual Canadian-Israeli citizenship. BDS seeks to discriminate against individuals for no reason other than the passport that they hold.

George Santayana said that those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it. Boycotts against Jews have occurred throughout history, based on lies, misinformation, and prejudicial assumptions. We are now seeing boycotts against the world's only Jewish state, and against all citizens of that Jewish state. Is it plausible that this is really simply about a political statement, or is it not obvious that this is something much darker than political disagreement?

BDS does not advocate peace between Israeli Jews and Palestinians. On this side of the House we support negotiations between the Israeli and Palestinian leaders, and we support a two-state solution. However, instead of trying to bring people together and support meaningful collaboration, BDS seeks to silence dialogue and once again single out Jews and Israelis for ill treatment. These actions do not contribute to peace, they only drive people further apart.

Now this motion is one that I would have hoped would receive unanimous support from the House, and frankly, I am perplexed that some members are opposing it. The best that we hear from those who are disinclined to support the motion is reference to freedom of speech. It certainly does not restrict anyone's freedoms for this House to express its support for our collective values of tolerance and inclusion, and to express our opposition to discrimination on the basis of national origin.

In 2010, *Maclean's* magazine ran a cover story calling Quebec Canada's "most corrupt province". This House responded by unanimously passing a motion which expressed "its profound sadness at the prejudice displayed and the stereotypes employed by *Maclean's* magazine to denigrate the Quebec nation, its history and its institutions."

Earlier, in 2006, *The Globe and Mail* published a story about the shooting at Montreal's Dawson College, in which the author suggested that the province's history of linguistic strife contributed to the incident. Following that, the House unanimously passed a motion, "That, in the opinion of the House, an apology be given to the people of Quebec for the offensive remarks of Ms. Jan Wong in a *Globe and Mail* article regarding the recent Dawson College tragedy."

In these instances, members of all parties did not have a problem understanding that the House can express its opinion without limiting free and robust debate. As we must always ask in these cases, why treat Israel differently?

The collaboration between Canada and Israel benefits all of us. Just this past week, my daughter Gianna and I assembled our new SodaStream machine. SodaStream has a plant in Israel, which provides good well-paying jobs to both Israelis and Palestinians. Let us stand today against racism and anti-Semitism. Let us stand in support of tolerance and inclusion, and also in support of delicious fizzy drinks.

● (1245)

Mrs. Celina Caesar-Chavannes (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to say that we are not here debating whether we recognize the legitimacy of the State of Israel, something in which we all truly believe.

The member spoke about healthy, necessary, and democratic debate that exists in Israel and Canada. I ask the member to define what "any and all attempts" means, and if this part of the motion impedes healthy, necessary, and democratic debate in the promotion of peace.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, the motion is quite clear, and the rules of the House with respect to motions are quite clear in this sense as well. We are not legislating as part of this debate today. We are not making any kind of change that would limit people's ability to speak freely. We, as a party, are asking the House to express strongly its opinion on an issue concerning our collective values.

As I have illustrated, the House has not had a problem doing this before. In two cases, the House has unanimously expressed its disagreement with some of Canada's most prominent publications, in one case *The Globe and Mail* and in another case *Maclean's* magazine. If the House, in those instances, did not have a problem expressing its opinion, without limiting freedom of speech, on issues that are important to our collective values as a nation, then let us be consistent and do it in this case as well. If the House is not willing to pass this motion unanimously, I would have to again ask, what makes Israel different?

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, there is really not much point engaging Conservatives on this issue, because they take the crisis of trying to find peace between Israel and Palestine and habitually use it as a wedge issue.

We are being asked in the House to use the power of Parliament to condemn individuals for their right to dissent from the Conservative world view. That was made clear when the Conservatives attacked the leader of the New Democratic Party for failing to condemn a demonstration outside his office.

This morning I read the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the right to picket outside MPs' offices. That is a fundamental right. Therefore, when my colleagues in the Conservative Party ask us to condemn individuals for their right to dissent, I am absolutely shocked and appalled that the Liberal Party, the party of Pierre Elliott Trudeau, would go along with them, because they are playing into the Conservatives' continual attempt to wedge and divide Canadians.

I want to ask my colleagues how we can stand and say we are going to support academic freedom when we would use the House of Commons to condemn individual students for participating in debates about foreign policies in another country. What kind of Parliament will we be if we become some kind of monkey house for Conservative ideology? If we are not willing to stand up for the right to dissent, the right to protest, the right to engage in discussion about what is good policy in another country, then the House is a much shabbier place as a result of these really distasteful wedge issues.

I am looking at the Liberal Party and wondering if it is going to go along with the Conservatives one more time, just like it did on Bill C-51. It should show some backbone and stand up to this kind of game playing.

● (1250)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Mr. Speaker, quite frankly, it is disappointing to hear the hon. member say he is not interested in engaging in this conversation with those of us over here. Of course, we have a very different world view, but I respect the member and think he should respect us and see the value, at the very least, of having this conversation. This is not about a wedge issue. Conservatives want members in other parties to support this motion. Frankly, I think this should be a consensus issue. If there are those who wish to vote against it, they have to account for that decision.

It is very inconsistent, though, for members of the New Democratic Party, because I remember in 2010 the leader of the New Democratic Party, in particular, taking great umbrage with a cover of *Maclean's* magazine about Quebec. The House subsequently passed a unanimous motion expressing its opinion about that cover. The member should explain why it is okay for the House to express its opinion on issues like that, but somehow, when it comes to Israel, the House should not express its opinion.

When we see things that go directly against our collective values, we have to take a strong position. The House should not limit freedom of speech but should express strongly its opposition to this racist—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Resuming debate, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones: Mr. Speaker, I have a question. A Washington Institute article written by a Palestinian man dedicated to peace and reconciliation between him and his Israeli neighbours said that BDS does nothing to help the cause of peace. I am interested to know why the opposition party has not focused—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): We are now in fact resuming debate.

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be sharing my time with the hon. member for Mississauga Centre.

Let me reiterate that we believe that all members of the House should support the motion. The Government of Canada unequivocally opposes the boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement.

Democracy and freedom of expression are important Canadian values that we uphold and defend. Nevertheless, activities such as the BDS movement, and the harsh rhetoric and tactics that often accompany it, operate against freedom of speech. As has been made evident in today's debate, the BDS movement targets Canadian companies and threatens their legitimate commercial co-operation with Israel and Israeli companies. This threatens prosperity and runs counterproductive to the pursuit of a lasting peace in the Middle East.

It is not only Canadian and Israeli businesses that suffer. Palestinian businesses are also made to suffer. As was noted previously, the imposition of restrictions on cultural and academic exchanges only exacerbates tension in the region, instead of enhancing the personal linkages that are our best hope for paving the road to a just and lasting settlement.

Canada has been a close ally and strong friend of Israel since 1948. We know our relationship is both broad and deep, and it encompasses political, economic, cultural, and security co-operation, as well as deep ties between our people and communities.

Canada is also an important partner of the Palestinian Authority. Our development and humanitarian assistance to Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza address the immediate needs of the Palestinian people. This helps to lay the groundwork for the viable, democratic, and secure Palestinian state that will one day exist alongside a democratic and secure Israeli state.

To that end, Canada supports U.S.-led efforts to enhance co-operation between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, through the deployment of Canadian Armed Forces on a daily basis, and toward dialogue and toward functioning well together. Canada looks forward to supporting the direct negotiations that will be required to achieve this two-state solution. We hope to soon see an environment that will allow all parties to return to the negotiating table.

The BDS movement is detrimental to the peace process. A lasting peace requires direct negotiation between the two parties. It is our sincere hope that we will move well beyond condemnation and toward creating a way to return to the negotiating table. Efforts that target and punish one side do not advance this cause. Efforts to attack trade and business links further harm prospects for peace by attempting to punish all elements of Israeli society.

The peace process requires the continual development of close personal links, not efforts to divide. It requires a strong economy, not one weakened by sanctions and boycotts, and a genuine dialogue, not discrimination and isolation.

● (1255)

[*Translation*]

Canada and Israel have been close partners since Israel became independent. Canada will continue to be one of Israel's staunch allies. There is no doubt that Canada takes this operation very seriously.

As we have already heard, our two countries are working closely together in a number of areas, and that includes opposing the BDS campaign. Canada continues to be concerned about initiatives seeking to target and isolate Israel, and this boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement is no exception.

The Government of Canada has long had a policy to oppose any boycott based on race, nationality, or ethnic origin.

What is more, Canada opposes any initiative that seeks to attack Israel on the international stage. For example, Canada defends Israel against any unfair treatment at the United Nations and in other international forums.

[*English*]

My colleague spoke to this earlier. However, I would like to reiterate that as a member state of the Union Nations, Israel has the right to full and equal participation. Furthermore, Canada stands in solidarity with Israel through our commitment to a just and lasting peace in the Middle East and by opposing unilateral actions that seek to undermine the peace process, including unilateral actions taken by either side.

I would also like to highlight that Canada's trade relations with Israel continue to grow. Our two countries continue to collaborate on issues related to trade, investment, science, technology, and innovation.

Canada recently concluded negotiations to bring the Canada-Israel free trade agreement into force. This modernized agreement has been adapted to meet our needs in the 21st century and reinforces our close co-operation with Israel on all matters related to trade. We look forward to working with Israel to bring this agreement into force.

Trade is strong between Israel and Palestine as well. *Forbes* magazine reports that BDS sanctions harmed Palestinians disproportionately, due to the trade surplus that flows from Israel to Palestine and the good jobs that ensue.

To conclude, I would like once again to emphasize Canada's strong relationship with Israel, as well as our support for the Palestinian Authority. We continue to work towards a lasting negotiated settlement to achieve a two-state solution. Our opposition to the BDS movement is not about taking sides in the conflict. It is about supporting dialogue over exclusion.

The BDS movement is not leading to a constructive solution to the conflict. It exacerbates and it inflates. This is why we call on the House of Commons to support the motion put forward today and condemn the boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the member for West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country on her speech. My question has to do with a comment made by one of her colleagues, Irwin Cotler, who was a member of the Liberal government. He condemned some United Nations bodies for their treatment of the State of Israel. He said that only three times in 50 years has a state been singled out, and all three times, that state was Israel.

Given what Canada can and should do, will the government commit to stop the United Nations from ostracizing the State of Israel in the international arena?

● (1300)

[*English*]

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones: Mr. Speaker, it is very important to recognize, first of all, Mr. Cotler's leadership. Everyone in the country has learned and grown together as a result. I thank the hon. member for mentioning that.

With regard to the international arena, our government is completely committed to a two-state solution. We are completely committed to recognizing our strong ties with Israel and our support for the Palestinian Authority, as well.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I have to say I am disappointed to hear from my friend, the hon. parliamentary secretary, that the Liberal government proposes to vote for this motion.

It is not necessary to support the boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement to recognize that this motion seeks to label all of those who support that effort as engaging in the "demonization" of Israel, and labelling them as anti-Semitic.

Surely the hon. parliamentary secretary does not believe the United Church of Canada is motivated by hatred of the State of Israel?

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones: Mr. Speaker, of course the wording of the motion crafted by the opposition is intended to do exactly what she explains. I personally would be concerned about that. However, overall, BDS does not need to be supported. It needs to be pointed out. I think we should join together in doing that.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech. However, the text of the motion does not ask us whether we support BDS. The motion calls on us to condemn all attempts to promote the BDS movement, even peaceful and democratic attempts. It calls on us to condemn freedom of speech and freedom of opinion. For example, the United Church of Canada voted in favour of boycotting products from the occupied territories. Would my colleague condemn the United Church of Canada for its position?

[*English*]

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones: Mr. Speaker, I was married in the United Church 32 years ago, so that is certainly not our intent.

I would refer to the comments I made. A lasting peace requires direct negotiation between the two parties. It is our hope that we move well beyond condemnation and toward creating a way to return to the negotiating table.

Mr. Omar Alghabra (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Consular Affairs), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to speak to the motion and share my thoughts with the House on this important matter.

We all have a constructive role to play in advancing a peaceful resolution to advocate on behalf of civilians on all sides of the conflict by actively pursing a two-state solution.

It is important to respect the right of Israel to exist and the right of Palestinians to have their own independent nation. We can help achieve this by encouraging engagement, dialogue, and respect for all.

I want to be clear. In order to create a hospitable environment for dialogue, we must actively fight against hate, racism, anti-Semitism, and Islamophobia in all of their forms. Our challenge is that we must also ensure we encourage constructive and meaningful conversation.

I do not believe a boycott is a constructive approach. I did not enter politics to promote boycott but to encourage engagement and dialogue between parties for the purpose of reaching long-lasting peace. The question we need to ask ourselves is this. Instead of finding ways to score political points, how can we advance the interests of peace in the region?

Some BDS advocates believe it is an important non-violent approach to raising awareness about the situation over the last years in the region and the lack of progress. As mentioned previously in the House, we must be careful not to paint everyone with one brush. Many BDS advocates are human rights champions who want to see progress on this issue. We should be intolerant toward hate, but find ways to tolerate passionate disagreements.

Yet, we must recognize that some BDS advocates may have anti-Semitic motives. Some are blinded by their passion. I firmly believe that double standards should and must be called out in every instance. For example, criticizing the government of Israel for certain behaviour while excusing it when committed by others is unacceptable. Equally, we should be able to criticize the Israeli government for similar actions that we criticize other governments for.

It is in the mutual interests of Israelis and Palestinians to show progress and to give hope to those who are frustrated by the situation. The Conservatives have failed at offering any constructive approach other than bluster and anti-rhetoric. They want to divide Canadians instead of rallying support for dialogue and engagement.

Let me repeat. I strongly believe in engagement not boycott. I also understand that many students and activists are seeking an opportunity in good faith to find alternative methods to express their concerns and voice their opinions.

While I want to promote a healthy dialogue, I am hesitant to infringe on anyone's right to free speech. We need to encourage an open and safe atmosphere on university campuses. They are sacred places of learning and debate and not places where students should feel threatened because of their background or political beliefs. As always, I encourage us to be sensitive toward each other and listen to what our colleagues say without making them feel uncomfortable or threatened. The goal should not be to create a threatening environment but a co-operative space where even those who disagree can find common ground to advance what we all want to see, which is long-lasting peace and mutual respect and co-operation.

Canada as I said has a crucial role to play. We must remain committed to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, including the creation of a Palestinian state living side-by-side and in peace with Israel.

This has never been an easy matter to discuss. Emotions run high, especially when considering the innocent lives at stake and so many complicated disputes. However, that is precisely why we must resist the urge to use inflamed rhetoric and instead offer thoughtful, objective, and effective alternatives. If we cannot do this in Canada, it is hard to imagine it happening anywhere else in the world.

● (1305)

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his very measured remarks. I agree that this should not be a partisan issue that divides the House. I have been encouraged to hear colleagues make quite clear that they intend to support their opposition of the Boycott Divestment and Sanctions movement. We heard the parsing by the Minister of Foreign Affairs that there were some Canadians who, uninformed, believed that supporting BDS was helpful and not hateful.

Could the member comment on a quote from an American academic? I am sure he is familiar with the writings of As'ad AbuKhalil, who is a leading proponent of the BDS campaign. He has written:

> ...the real aim of BDS is to bring down the state of Israel....That should be stated as an unambiguous goal. There should not be any equivocation on the subject. Justice and freedom for the Palestinians are incompatible with the existence of the state of Israel.

Would my colleague explain to some Canadians who support the BDS campaign that they may be used as tools of hateful propaganda?

Mr. Omar Alghabra: Mr. Speaker, I actually am not familiar with the person the hon. member has quoted. However, I am familiar with the fact that there are voices on all sides that sometimes want to use inflamed rhetoric and want to let perhaps whoever is listening to them feel hopeless and that there is no two-state solution out there. Instead of encouraging a thoughtful dialogue engagement, they want to promote division, hate and perhaps war.

That is where we come in, not only as the House of Commons but as the Government of Canada, to be the voice of reason, to be the voice of peace, to put forward an agenda and encourage all sides to find a way to achieve a two-state solution today before tomorrow. That is how we suffocate those people who want to deny the two-state solution.

I call on my colleagues to join me in calling for a peaceful resolution that promotes coexistence and a two-state solution.

● (1310)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a very simple question for my colleague opposite.

Does he think it is up to Parliament and the government to tell Canadians what they can and cannot debate and what opinions they are and are not allowed to have?

[*English*]

Mr. Omar Alghabra: Mr. Speaker, I do not believe Parliament should be dictating to Canadians what to debate and what not to debate. I believe what is happening right here is a healthy debate. Parliament will have an opportunity to voice its opinion. However, I certainly hope that no one will take any conclusion that Parliament or the government will tell Canadians what to debate and what not to debate.

We live in the greatest country in the world where we encourage dialogue, debate and conversation. We caution against hate. We caution against discrimination, but we want everyone to have a safe space to have a healthy discussion in debate. I have heard many debates happen in Israel that are sometimes more vigorous than we have here. I look forward to having more debates in the House and across the country.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): While I am standing, I want to remind hon. members that if you are asking a question and you are not in your seat, it makes it very confusing and I cannot recognize the person speaking. If you would like to make a comment, please ensure that you are in your seat. It is very difficult from this distance seeing where people are and making them out, when not in their seats. It is okay if you are not sitting in your seat.

In any case, the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let us be very clear. What we are talking about in the BDS movement is discrimination on the basis of national origin, not about the convictions of the entities involved. Surely that is a matter on which the House can and should express its opinion. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms talks specifically about not discriminating on the basis of national origin. If our Constitution can express an opinion on such matters, surely the House can as well.

In this context, does the member believe that Hamas is a terrorist organization?

Mr. Omar Alghabra: Mr. Speaker, that must be a planted question.

Our government put Hamas on a terrorist list. We believe Hamas is a terrorist organization until it gives up terrorist activities and joins us in our call for peaceful dialogue and consultations to reach a peaceful resolution to the two-state outcome that we would like to achieve.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my esteemed colleague from Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, who is over here by me today.

We have been debating the motion before us today for several hours now. In case some people are just joining us, I would like to reread the text of the motion moved by my colleague from Parry Sound—Muskoka:

> That, given Canada and Israel share a long history of friendship as well as economic and diplomatic relations, the House reject the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, which promotes the demonization and delegitimization of the State of Israel, and call upon the government to condemn any and all attempts by Canadian organizations, groups or individuals to promote the BDS movement, both here at home and abroad.

Today we heard that the government plans to support the motion. The real question is how the government intends to act on this motion to ensure that Canada continues to play a leadership role in promoting Canadian values and respecting freedom of expression while also strongly condemning all forms of racism and anti-Semitism.

The reason it is just to speak out against this campaign is that the intentions behind the BDS movement go against one of the two parties involved in this situation in the Middle East, as well as Canada's traditional position, which is to support a two-state solution with both states living side by side in peace.

What is needed now is not to support this motion as an empty gesture simply to score political points, but rather because it embodies Canadian values and should be followed by government action aimed at combatting any form of anti-Semitism.

We oppose this campaign because Canada's position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is clear and supports both Israel and Palestine.

> Canada recognizes the Palestinian right to self-determination and supports the creation of a sovereign, independent, viable, democratic and territorially contiguous Palestinian state, as part of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace settlement.

That is an excerpt from the Canadian policy on key issues in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and I would add "a negotiated peace". That is what is needed. Right before that, it also states:

> Canada supports Israel's right to live in peace with its neighbours within secure boundaries and recognizes Israel's right to assure its own security.... Israel has a right under international law to take the necessary measures, in accordance with human rights and international humanitarian law, to protect the security of its citizens from attacks by terrorist groups.

Again, behind the motivations of the BDS movement, we find no respect for the principle of the State of Israel and Palestine living side by side, which is a Canadian policy. That is why I encourage hon. members to speak out.

Over the course of the day, a number of MPs said that this was a matter of freedom of expression and wondered why we should be taking a position. As elected members, it is our role and that of the government, as leader, to stand up for Canadians' values and principles and to address these insidious forms of anti-Semitism.

We are not the first to do so. We did that here in the House when *Maclean's* accused Quebec of being the most corrupt province. All parliamentarians, including the NDP members, who are dragging their feet today, unanimously spoke out strongly against that statement. Today, we are being called to do so on an extremely important issue. The Quebec National Assembly did so over four years ago on February 9, 2011, as the hon. member for Calgary Shepard reminded us this morning.

● (1315)

The following motion was moved jointly by members from the various political parties in the Quebec National Assembly, including Liberal, PQ, and ADQ—now CAQ—members. I am thinking of Eric Caire, the MNA for La Peltrie, Martin Lemay, the MNA for Sainte-Marie—Saint-Jacques, Lawrence Bergman, the MNA for D'Arcy-McGee, and Marc Picard, the MNA for Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, the riding where I live. At that time, they moved the following motion:

> That the National Assembly of Quebec condemn the boycott that has been held for several weeks in front of Boutique Le Marcheur in Montreal.

Members will recall that an honest Quebec merchant who had been running a business in Montreal for 25 years and selling shoes from all over the world had groups of protesters outside his store threatening his customers.

The Quebec National Assembly said:

> That, by virtue of the principles of free enterprise and the free market, the National Assembly support the owner of this business, Yves Archambault, who has been established on this street for 25 years and who pays taxes in Quebec.
>
> That the National Assembly reiterate its support for the Cooperation Agreement Between the Government of Québec and the Government of the State of Israel, which was signed in 1997 and renewed in 2007.

The right to self-determination is an important principle, particularly for the people of Quebec. The only member of the Quebec National Assembly who refused to give consent to debate the motion was the MNA for Mercier. That is unfortunate. It was shameful, as my colleague from Calgary Shepard said. He used the term "repugnant". It was truly unfortunate that people were attacking a Quebec business as a way of boycotting.

It is important to remember that, with the exception of one MNA, Quebec clearly expressed that anti-Semitism is unacceptable in a free and democratic society. It is unacceptable to Quebec, unacceptable to all the other provinces and territories, and unacceptable to Canada. That is why we have the opportunity to support this motion today. The government has indicated that it intends to support the motion, and that is a step in the right direction.

This is in keeping with Canada's long-standing tradition of leading the way in defending the oppressed and freedom of expression. In November 2010, Canada hosted the second conference of the Inter-parliamentary Coalition for Combating Anti-Semitism. On that occasion, parliamentarians from around the world worked on developing mechanisms to fight anti-Semitism and address anti-Semitic propaganda in the media and on the Internet. Our government took concrete action in 2010. The member for Calgary Midnapore played an important part, and I salute his leadership in that initiative. I would like to quote our former prime minister, the current member for Calgary Heritage, who said that anti-Semitism is "a pernicious evil that must be exposed, confronted and repudiated whenever and wherever it appears, an evil so profound that it is ultimately a threat to us all."

As leaders of this society, we are responsible for confronting and eradicating sources of anti-Semitism wherever they arise, because behind this pernicious evil, this black spot that has manifested itself at different times in history, lies a threat to our humanity.

In closing, I will quote the former Liberal member for Mount Royal, Irwin Cotler, who sat in this place not so long ago:

● (1320)

[*English*]

> "Israel is the only state and Jews the only people today who are the standing targets of state-sanctioned genocide," he said, "while also being the only state and the only people accused of genocide... There is a symbiotic relationship between genocidal anti-Semitism and international terrorism. This convergence represents a clear and present danger, not only for Jews, but for our common humanity.

Our common humanity is what the motion is all about.

[*Translation*]

Today, as Canadians and elected members, we have the opportunity to show the way by standing up and supporting the motion moved by my colleague.

[*English*]

Ms. Kamal Khera (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I believe this motion is supportable. However, I am concerned that the opposition has not focused on the policy authority and how it is harmed by BDS. I would ask the member why that is.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

I thought my speech was clear, and I thought I did a good job presenting Canada's position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which is that we respect both sides, both the Palestinian and the Israeli peoples. We believe that a solution can be achieved through respectful negotiations.

What we know about the BDS movement is that one of the parties is the victim of ostracism. This can lead only to hate, violence, and unproductive debate. That is why we want to condemn this movement.

● (1325)

[*English*]

Mr. Erin Weir (Regina—Lewvan, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis makes the point that this House and the National Assembly of Québec have previously passed motions criticizing certain actions. What is different about this motion is that it not only calls upon this House to take a certain position, it calls on the state and the government to condemn individual Canadians for promoting a certain viewpoint. I wonder if the member for Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis would agree that this is not what we do in a free society.

Hon. Steven Blaney: Mr. Speaker, I humbly disagree with the member, because we have a responsibility as a nation to stand up for the values that are promoted by Canadians. We have to stand up against racism and anti-Semitism because we know that if we do not tackle these threats they may turn into violence and terrorism.

We are being given the opportunity to stand up for what is Canadian, and for our values. That is why I will proudly support this motion.

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I may be repeating the same question but with a slightly different angle on it.

BDS is doing damage to the very parties we are trying to bring to the table to discuss humanitarian issues. How is the language in the motion condemning any and all attempts to bring the parties to the table to have a fair and open conversation?

Hon. Steven Blaney: Mr. Speaker, we recognize that people of good faith may be tempted to give support and take some action. As the leaders of this country, it is our role to tell people what the motives are behind those actions. That is what this motion is attempting to achieve. It is also the responsibility of the government to educate Canadians about the real issues that are at stake here, which are the germs of anti-Semitism and racism.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, to be clear, we are not debating issues of racism and anti-Semitism. That is not what this is about. This is about a political tactic and whether we agree with that political tactic or not.

The House, supported by the Liberal government of the day, is supporting actions for the government to condemn any attempts made by individuals or organizations. Those organizations would include the two million members of the United Church of Canada, who, whether rightly or wrongly, have decided that they support the divestment movement. I would be more than willing to debate that with them. I do not know if this is a tactic that I personally approve of; however, what I will certainly respect is the right of the United Church of Canada to take a position and for their members to vote.

Therefore, I would ask my hon. colleague this. With the support of the Liberal government now, how does he see us moving forward with respect to the condemnation of individuals for any actions to challenge Israeli policy in the Middle East?

Hon. Steven Blaney: Mr. Speaker, my question to the member is simple. Why is he refusing to take a stand against BDS, which is a movement that does not promote peace or a peaceful resolution to that conflict? He has an opportunity to stand for our country. Will he take it or step aside?

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will start by giving a little history of the way in which members of the House have dealt with issues relating to anti-Semitism which overflowed inevitably into the BDS movement, and to events such as the annual campus Israeli Apartheid Week which takes place in February.

Going back to the 40th Parliament, two Parliaments ago, a group of parliamentarians came together and formed a coalition called the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism, or CPCCA. For what it is worth, if one were to use cpcca.ca, one will go to our website, which is still up and contains a report.

This was a multi-party group. We had the co-operation of Conservatives, Liberals, New Democrats, but we did not have the co-operation of the Bloc Québécois, unfortunately. Nonetheless, it included the vast majority of parliamentarians. We operated under a co-chairmanship, with me and Mario Silva, a former Liberal member of Parliament. We were able to work together toward finding what we thought were some useful suggestions as to how Canada could deal with the issue of anti-Semitism.

In fact, Mario Silva and I went on to put together an edited book called *Tackling Hate: Combating Antisemitism: The Ottawa Protocol*, which contains the protocol and numerous essays by people who participated in that conference. There was then an international conference on anti-Semitism in Ottawa, again co-chaired by Mario Silva and me, which took place in 2010, and the report was issued in 2011.

All of this is by way of trotting out my bona fides on the issue of anti-Semitism. However, I say this because I want to focus on the boycott, divest, sanctions movement as, in practice, something which borders on anti-Semitism. In the hands of some people, sometimes it lapses over into anti-Semitism. For others, it is a cover for anti-Semitism. Then there are others whom I think are involved and do not intend to be anti-Semitic but tend to be anti-Zionist. At any rate, they want to sharply clip Israel's wings and are perhaps innocent of how they are providing unintentional aid and comfort to those who are anti-Semitic.

Let me be clear about the issues that deal with Zionism, the existence of Israel, and the Jewish people.

Israel came into existence following the Second World War as a lifeboat, a safe place for the Jews of the world who had discovered what could happen to them in the worst-case scenario when there was no safe haven. I am, of course, speaking of the European Nazi Holocaust, which wiped out 6.5 million Jews along with many other people. However, with 6.5 million Jews, it is the paradigmatic Holocaust of all time. It is the one that serves as a symbol for all other forms of mass race-based, ethnic-based, or religious-based hatred.

Israel was the place where people could go and know that if nowhere else in the world, they could be fully accepted and have a home. That is the fundamental basis for the existence of Israel. It is the basis for the citizenship law of Israel, which says that any person who is a Jew can go to Israel and make an Aliyah, which means to immigrate to Israel. The definition of Jew is the same one that was used in Hitler's 1938 Nuremberg law. The logic is that if this is how those who sought to destroy us define us, then we know that this is the group that must be protected. Therefore, anybody who has a parent who is a Jew, even if they are not a practising Jew, is able to immigrate to Israel under that law. That is the purpose of the existence of Israel.

However, Israel's existence has been opposed from the very beginning of the country, in 1948, by a number of neighbouring states. A review of what has happened in the decade since reveals that the neighbouring states have bit by bit come to accept that Israel has a right to exist. Therefore, Jordan and Egypt now recognize Israel's right to exist and have diplomatic relations. I will not suggest that they are friends, but they are willing to recognize each other's existence, which is not true for Lebanon. As for Syria, there really is no government of Syria at the moment, but it was traditionally a hardline anti-Israel state.

● (1330)

There are other states that are not merely anti-Israel. No one can say this about any other country in the world, but Israel is the state that was singled out as a target for potential nuclear attack by the Saddam regime in Iraq. It attempted to prepare a nuclear weapon and have the ability to deliver it. It based its legitimacy largely on its ability to destroy Israel and wipe out the Jewish people in Israel. The building of a nuclear weapon that could be used against Israel was also attempted by the Assad regime in Syria. Iran has also spoken very openly about using a nuclear program and a missile development program to wipe out Israel and commit genocide.

Therefore, when Professor Cotler, my former colleague and an esteemed parliamentarian and human rights advocate, spoke in the last few parliaments about Israel being the only country that is threatened with genocide, along with its Jewish people, this is what he was talking about, nuclear annihilation. That is something that is not respectable in any quarter ever, but it is amazing that it is actually treated in some quarters as being respectable when dealing with Israel. That does mean Israel is singled out from the rest of the world.

Turning now from Israel's existential threat, a threat that does not exist for any other country in the world, and then saying that Israel, as it attempts to defend itself, is a country that is somehow engaging in a kind of apartheid is not merely offensive; it is obviously, indeed comically, contrary to the facts of the situation.

I do not mean to imply when I say this that everything that Israel does is acceptable. There are lots of people, including lots of Jews and lots of Israelis, who are very critical of the way their government acts in this or that matter. Thank goodness Israel has a free press and a robust democratic political culture in which these things can be debated. That induces a remarkable degree of moderation.

Even if and when the State of Israel acts immoderately, I do not think it is reasonable to do what many of the people who are involved in the boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement expect. They expect that Jews have a moral obligation to stand up and make the same kind of caveat statement that I just made. That is not a reasonable expectation.

Would it be reasonable vis-à-vis the People's Republic of China's policies in Tibet? It is effectively engaged in trying to destroy an ancient culture through mass immigration. It suppresses any expression of dissent. It destroys monasteries. Would it be reasonable for us to say that people in Canada of Chinese descent have a moral obligation to get involved and condemn that, to constantly put caveats on it? No, we recognize that it is legitimate to be Chinese, culturally, and not to be regarded as somehow morally responsible for the actions of the People's Republic of China.

I will add that I do not mean to compare the State of Israel and its actions to what the People's Republic of China does. I not think the People's Republic of China, although it is the home to arguably the greatest and most ancient of the surviving cultures in the world, is part of the family of respectable nations that conduct human rights to a standard that is acceptable to the world, whereas Israel does. I simply want to make the point that this expectation of collective responsibility is the very same argument that has been used to justify every form of anti-Semitism throughout the past 2,000 years.

I have only a minute to conclude, but I want to make the point that it is reasonable for us to be critical of every country in the world. I was the chair of the international human rights subcommittee for seven years. All parties worked together by consensus in that subcommittee, and we were willing to look at human rights abuses in any country. I can say that Israel does not stand out as being anywhere close to the front tier of human rights abusers in the world. It is nowhere near that, yet it gets singled out, unlike any other country, for this BDS movement on campuses in Canada and for the atrocious, outrageous Israel apartheid week that occurs every year. It is shameful. It is a blot. I think we should absolutely feel free to condemn this.

● (1335)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

I completely agree that it is important to deal with the issue of anti-Semitism. We must combat all forms of exclusion or hate, including anti-Semitism.

However, we have unfortunately seen an appalling increase in acts of anti-Semitism in Hungary in recent years, and his government put Hungary on the list of safe countries.

Could my colleague explain the logic there?

● (1340)

Mr. Scott Reid: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure I understand what the member means by the term *pays sûrs*.

[*English*]

If I could quickly ask, I was listening in French and she used the term *pays sûrs*. I do not know what that means because I have not heard it in English. Could I get a clarification on that?

Ms. Hélène Laverdière: Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. The Government of Canada has a list of safe countries, and Hungary is on the list of safe countries, despite what we are seeing happen in that country.

Mr. Scott Reid: Mr. Speaker, my understanding of the safe country designation is that, if a person leaves some other place in the world—say Syria, for example—and finds himself or herself in Hungary, and seeks refugee status there, that person will be regarded as being safe and cannot say he or she is in danger, because of being in Hungary. Let us look at the recent flow of people fleeing Syria across Europe, which was so well reported over the last few months. People were trying to get from countries like Serbia into Hungary. I think that validates the assertion that Hungary is a safe country.

With regard to the rise of anti-Semitism in Hungary, the member is absolutely right. This is a real crisis. In fact, I met with a Hungarian leader to talk about this about a year ago, and he described the situation on the ground as being very grave. It is most unfortunate. I do not think it is a particularly safe country for Jews at this time. That is a tragic difference from the country's past when, for example, at the end of World War II when the Nazis attempted to round up Hungary's Jews, thousands of Hungarians came together to help defend and save the Jews. That is a terrible tragedy, but I do not think it is related to the safe country issue.

Ms. Pam Goldsmith-Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for my hon. colleague. Given the nature of the language used in the motion, how would he propose to actually have this come into effect? How does one condemn any and all individuals? It seems like a stretch.

Mr. Scott Reid: Mr. Speaker, Conservatives are not condemning individuals; we are condemning any and all attempts by Canadian organizations, groups, or individuals to promote the BDS movement here and abroad. We are not condemning individuals for being or existing; we are condemning the attempt to delegitimize or demonize the State of Israel and, I am suggesting, by extension, to imply that there is some kind of complicity between all Jews everywhere, including Canada, and anything that they find inappropriate in the behaviour of the State of Israel.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my question is very simple.

My colleague co-chaired the coalition that developed the Ottawa Protocol on Combating Antisemitism, and I congratulate him for that.

How does today's motion, which rejects BDS, fit with the leadership role Canada must play in combatting anti-Semitism?

[*English*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): In 30 seconds or less, the hon. member for Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston.

Mr. Scott Reid: Mr. Speaker, I do not know what I can say in 30 seconds that can cover that, but happily, there is a report issued by the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism about the kind of leadership role that a country like Canada can take.

I think Canada has been a leader for most of its history, but not always. Back in 1939, Canada turned away a ship full of Jewish refugees from Europe. They could not find homes here, went back to Europe, and many of them died in the Holocaust. We need to commemorate both what we have done right and what we have done wrong, and continue providing leadership by participating in international forums on this issue.

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today in the House to support a very important motion, which is both timely and one that deserves the attention of this House.

Next week, on Monday, for the fifth time in seven years, for the third time in two years, McGill University has a BDS motion in front of it.

I want to talk about the history of the Jews in Montreal and the experience of anti-Semitism in Montreal, because it comes a little bit from personal experience, because it ties to what is happening today with the BDS movement.

Students from McGill, where I am an alumnus, where I went to law school, contacted me last year and this weekend, not only Jewish students, but Christian students, Hindu students, Buddhist students, and Muslim students who are opposed to BDS, and they feel the hatred that permeates on campus. They feel the animosity that is generated by certain groups against them for no apparent reason, other than the fact that they continue to oppose BDS on campus and are trying to lead the fight against it.

The Jewish community in Montreal and Quebec has a long history. Jews could not live in New France because one had to be a Catholic, and those Jews who tried to come there got sent back to France. However, in 1760 with the British conquest, a Jewish community set up in Montreal. In 1768 the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, in my riding today, was founded.

For a long period of time there was a lot of harmony. Jews were among the founders of the Bank of Montreal, the founders of the power company, the founders of many of the institutions we know today in Montreal.

Of course, there were issues. In 1807, they tried to stop Ezekiel Hart from taking his seat in the Quebec National Assembly, because he would not swear an oath on the true faith of a Christian, but by 1832, Louis-Joseph Papineau put forward a motion that was adopted by the Quebec National Assembly, the first place in the British Commonwealth that allowed Jews to be full citizens.

There was a period of harmony in the 19th century. The Jewish community was small. However, in my great-grandparents' generation, that started to change. In my great-grandparents' generation, 1880s, 1890s, 1910, the massive Jewish immigration came from eastern Europe and hit different Canadian cities—Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg—and rural communities. The Jews became a third solitude between the English and the French.

At that point in time, when my great-grandparents were alive and becoming of age, Jews were under quota systems at McGill. They could not get in unless they had better marks. That was not hidden; it was open. Jews were not accepted into the large law firms in Montreal. The Jewish General Hospital was created because Jewish doctors and nurses were not allowed to practise in either English or French institutions in Montreal, so we created a hospital, one of the greatest ones in all of Quebec today.

Things got even worse. In the 1930s, Canada's immigration policy, “none is too many”, under the King government—a Liberal government, by the way, which I accept—was horrendous. We had one of the worst records of accepting Jewish immigrants from Europe at a time of crisis.

We attended the Berlin Olympics, giving the Nazis a chance to showcase their wares to the world, and as my hon. colleague mentioned, when the SS *St. Louis* came up the coast and was refused by Cuba and refused by the United States, it was refused by Canada. People were sent back to Europe and many of them perished in the Holocaust.

After the war, Canada started changing. In my grandparents' generation, anti-Semitism was less overt, but they had a house in Val-David, and right next door in Sainte-Agathe there were signs saying, “No dogs or Jews allowed in this location”.

It is ironic that my colleague, the hon. member for Laurentides—Labelle, is a Jewish member representing that same district where no Jews or dogs were allowed in the 1940s and 1950s.

That heralds the change in Canada. As things evolved over time, things got better. When my parents were coming of age, overt anti-Semitism was gone. There had still not been a Jewish cabinet minister federally. There had still not been a Jewish justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, but anti-Semitism was confined to polite statements when a Jewish individual tried to apply to a golf course, such as "Oh, our membership list is full".

When I was coming of age, when I was at school in the 1990s, there was no anti-Semitism that I ever felt. I went to McGill campus. I was there for my four years of law school, and never once did I feel targeted or uncomfortable because of my faith or background.

Today, unfortunately, because of BDS and Israel apartheid week, that is no longer the case for Jewish students and other students who support Israel on our campuses here in Canada. That is shameful, because all students in this country should feel safe when they go to school and go to campus.

● (1345)

Let us come to the principles of this so-called BDS movement, a movement that justifies itself by saying that it is somehow going to stop us from doing business with and engaging in exchanges with Israel, and letting Israelis come to sporting events outside of Israel, in the name of helping the Palestinians. In my opinion, BDS in no way helps the Palestinians, in no way advances the peace process that all of us in this House believe is important, and in no way advances a two-state solution. Rather, as my learned mentor, Irwin Cotler, who represented my riding before me, said, it is simply part of a new anti-Semitism that stigmatizes and vilifies Israel by holding it to a different standard than every other country in the world.

Let us go through the reasons why BDS is wrong.

BDS misinterprets history. BDS seems to allege that the entire fault of the Arab-Israeli conflict lies with Israel. It places no fault whatsoever on the other side and makes no condemnation of it at all. Let me tell members something: In 1948, when the United Nations partitioned Palestine and said there would be a Jewish state and an Arab state, it was not the Jewish state that started a war. The Jewish state was content to live side by side with its Arab neighbours, but all the Arab countries ganged up and said no, they were going to drive those Jews into the sea. We ended up having a situation where Palestinians became refugees because they left the territory that was then going to be Israel, because Arab states started a war.

In 1967, Israel was attacked again, and the borders of Israel expanded, not because Israel was expansionist and seeking to grow its borders, but because it was again attacked by a grouping of Arab states. The same thing happened in 1973.

Israel is not blameless in this conflict, and no one should say that it is. Nor do I believe that everything Israel does is right. However, to allege as BDS does that all of the fault in the Arab-Israeli conflict is due to State of Israel is a simple distortion of history. For that reason alone, BDS is wrong. It singles out Israel and does nothing to condemn all those Arab states that started wars against Israel or condemn the terrorist actions or atrocities perpetrated by Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Palestinian Authority's leadership. Nor does it even condemn the mass atrocities happening in Israel itself, where innocent Israelis are being stabbed.

The BDS movement as well is wrong because the thrust of what it is asking for is the disappearance of the State of Israel. Israel is the only majority Jewish state in the world. Israel exists as a pluralistic state. People of all faiths and backgrounds live in Israel and are open, free citizens of Israel. They have the right to vote in elections, be represented in Parliament, be on the supreme court of Israel, and represent Israel abroad. It is not only Jews who represent Israel's diplomatic force or Israel's parliament. Israel has a free press and is a democracy.

Then we get to the fact of what BDS is asking for. It is saying that all Palestinian refugees must have the right of return to what is today Israel, which would automatically create a situation where we would not have a two-state solution. We would have a one-state solution where Israel was not a majority Jewish state. One of the three things that BDS is asking for is actually to make Israel disappear as a majority Jewish state, the only one in the whole entire world, and that is wrong.

Why else is BDS wrong? BDS, which again singles out Israel, is not looking at all those other countries in the world that engage in egregious human rights violations.

When these students come onto a campus and tell us that they want to pass boycott legislation against Israel, why are they not turning their attention to the State of Iran, which last year executed more than 1,000 people, that has political prisoners in prison for all kinds of things and who do not agree with the state, that is sponsoring terrorist organizations like Hamas and Hezbollah abroad, and that has declared that it wants to wipe out the State of Israel?

● (1350)

Why are they not condemning Saudi Arabia, which does not even let women drive, and does not let women have any kind of rights? Why are they not condemning Syria, where the Assad regime has killed thousands and actually displaced millions of its own people? What about China? What about North Korea?

There is not a word from the BDS movement about any of these other countries. Only Israel is condemned, as BDS holds it to a complete double standard. Indeed, I have been to many meetings where there is talk of BDS. I have heard that Israel should be held to a higher standard, that people do not think it is like other Arab countries.

That is the new form of anti-Semitism. The whole idea of holding Israel to a higher moral standard than anyone else is clearly anti-Semitic.

Again, I want to clarify that there is absolutely nothing wrong with disagreeing with a policy position of the State of Israel, with disagreeing with the Israeli government, with disagreeing with an expansion of settlements, even. What is wrong is saying that we are going to boycott this one country, that we are going to tell academics from this one country that they cannot come to our universities, and telling athletes from this one country that they cannot compete in our sporting competitions no matter what their political views are.

There could be Israelis who hold those views. There are many Israelis in a free country who may agree with many of the themes of helping Palestinians and wanting a Palestinian state and doing things to advance that cause. However, the BDS movement is seeking to have us block those people as well from attending international conferences. It is a ludicrous double standard against the State of Israel.

Then I turn to the question of how it would help Canada. Canada's trade with Israel and the free trade agreement that was put in place originally in the 1990s and then expanded by the previous government, and that hopefully will be expanded even further by the current government, is good for Canada. Israel is a good trading partner. It is a sea of innovation in the Middle East.

It is a country. If we took Silicon Valley and transplanted it into the Middle East, we would have Israel. Intel is there; Dell is there; Hewlett Packard is there. The company Dialogic, which I used to work for, is there. Having had the experience of working in and with Israel, I know this is a country of innovation, a country where Canada as a trading partner would advance our own interests by continuing to partner with Israel.

What else is bad about BDS? Let us look at what it is drawing attention away from. Right now, we have all kinds of human rights abuses in the world. There is slavery going on in Mauritania. However, BDS focuses our attention away from political prisoners who are being held in all kinds of countries in the world, in North Korea, in Mauritania, in Venezuela, and focuses attention only on Israel.

When the world only has a small amount of time to capture issues, to learn about issues, BDS is taking our focus away from where it is the most important, to where it is the least important. I say this because Israel is a country that does have a court system and a supreme court, and a government that respects and upholds human rights.

Then, does it help Palestinians? How would BDS impact the Palestinians who are in the West Bank right now? How would it impact Arab communities in Israel? The goal of BDS is to harm the Israeli economy, to tell businesses to displace themselves from Israel. If we do not invest there, we are telling businesses to move. In the end, if we are telling businesses to move out of Israel, how does this help Palestinian workers working in factories in the West Bank? How does it help Arab Israelis? It does not. It does not at all.

Another issue is that the BDS movement is never really going to achieve its goals. The goal of having the Israeli government somehow capitulate to what BDS is asking for is never going to happen. It is counterproductive. What we need to look at is how we can advance the peace process, how we advance a two-state solution, where we are able to work together with our allies across the world to help Israel and Palestinians find peace.

● (1355)

When we take one side and make it the only guilty party, the only aggressive party, the only party we are blaming, and we say to the other side, "You've done nothing wrong, you're the ones we're trying to help and we're not passing any blame on you", we are getting into a very dicey situation.

[*Translation*]

As a Jewish Canadian and Jewish Quebecker whose family has been here for generations, I am proud to have the opportunity to rise in the House to speak out against the BDS movement and in support of the motion. I think this is a very Canadian discussion. The Canadian Jewish community has 400,000 members, and I am one of the few who has the right to rise in this House and speak out against someone who is attacking our community. I am very grateful to have this opportunity.

● (1400)

[*English*]

In conclusion, I want to say that in December, I was lucky enough to attend the conference of the International Council of Jewish Parliamentarians in Israel and was able to talk about BDS with my colleagues from all over the world. I felt so lucky to come from a country like Canada where BDS was not a question, where BDS was a movement that our government would condemn, that the opposition would condemn, that almost all parliamentarians would condemn. That is not the case in most countries. As a Jewish Canadian, I never felt more proud to be Canadian that being in that room and telling them that in my country we are almost unanimous in saying that BDS is wrong.

Mr. Speaker, when we resume debate, I will speak to the free speech issue.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

ENERGY EAST PIPELINE

Mr. Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Christiane Crevier, a caring woman from my riding, was with us this morning as we launched civic action against the energy east pipeline project.

The pipeline debate should cross party lines. That is why the leader of the Green Party and author and activist Jici Lauzon also took part in launching the petition. This pipeline project flies in the face of the commitments made by this government at the Paris conference. This project would increase current production by 40% and the output would be entirely destined for export. The project would do nothing to reduce the transportation of petroleum products by ship, rail, or road in Quebec. It jeopardizes our environmental heritage, our waterways, and our farmlands. The federal government needs to realize that this pipeline project does not have social licence in Quebec. What happens within our borders should be decided by us. It is up to the people of Quebec to decide its future.

I invite everyone who cares about their environment to go to www.petitioncontrenergieest.quebec now and sign the electronic petition.

[*English*]

OPERATION PROVISION

Mr. Matt DeCourcey (Fredericton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last month constituents throughout Fredericton, New Maryland, Oromocto, and the Grand Lake region were proud to welcome home troops serving in Operation Provision.

On January 12, in the wee hours of the morning, 58 soldiers arrived at 5th Canadian Division Support Base Gagetown after working in Beirut and Amman to process Syrian refugees destined for Canada.

Military personnel spent months supporting staff in the Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, aiding the security personnel with data entry and with medical screenings.

[*Translation*]

We were proud to see these soldiers contribute to this operation and proud to see them reunited with their loved ones and colleagues. I would like to personally thank these men and women for their service and congratulate them on their work.

* * *

[*English*]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians from across this nation continue to step up to assist refugees arriving here from Syria.

I hope all members in the House share my appreciation for the many welcoming organizations that have sprung up across Canada to undertake this extraordinary task.

This is true in my riding of North Okanagan-—Shuswap where multiple organizations have been planning and fundraising since October to pull together the necessary support systems to welcome these families.

Sadly, welcoming committees in my riding such as Trinity United Church in Vernon and St. Andrew's Church in Enderby find themselves waiting while refugee families are also forced to wait in limbo due to the government's processes and policies.

It is time for the government to get serious about removing refugee families from limbo, connecting them with the organizations waiting to welcome them into their communities, and supporting them in their transition ahead.

* * *

● (1405)

FLOYD WIEBE

Mr. Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize today in the House the passing of Floyd Trevor Wiebe in late 2015.

Mr. Wiebe grew up in the Winnipeg South community of St. Vital. He was a successful entrepreneur and businessman, but will be best remembered for his work helping and protecting young people.

Floyd's son T.J. was tragically murdered in 2003. Instead of withdrawing into bitterness and despair over the loss of his child, Floyd instead chose to focus his considerable energies and charisma in supporting victims of violence, including becoming involved with the Manitoba Organization for Victim Assistance.

Floyd eventually founded the TJ's Gift Foundation, an organization dedicated to support young Manitobans and steer them away from drugs. He became a passionate advocate for youth, and commanded the attention of all who heard him speak powerfully against the perils of drugs and violence.

It is right that the House recognize the contributions of citizens who, through their dedication and effort to their communities, make Canada a better place for all. It is in this spirit of recognition that I ask us to remember Floyd Wiebe.

* * *

LOUIS RIEL

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today we join the Métis Nation, Manitobans and Canadians across the country in commemorating Louis Riel, a courageous national leader and an advocate for justice for the Métis people.

Riel is also regarded as a founder of the province of Manitoba. He was executed unjustly for defending the rights of his people.

Today, we recommit to working with the Métis people in the pursuit of justice. This includes immediately establishing a negotiation process between Canada and the Manitoba Metis Federation to settle the outstanding land claim.

[*Translation*]

We are in favour of a federal claims settlement process for the Métis, stable funding for core activities, and significant investment in education and training.

[*English*]

If we are going to move toward true reconciliation, we must establish a nation-to-nation relationship with the Métis nation.

The NDP remains committed to establishing that nation-to-nation relationship. We will continue to work with the Métis nation to achieve Louis Riel's vision of a fair and inclusive country for all.

* * *

SERGIO TAGLIAVINI JELLINEK

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the iconic Italian-Canadian journalist, Sergio Tagliavini Jellinek who passed away on January 25.

Sergio was passionate about his profession which spanned over four decades in serving the community. His contributions were many and lasting, including managing editor at the *Corriere Canadese*, the founding of *Lo Specchio*, and recently the establishment of the monument to Italian Canadian workers killed on the job.

Sergio was awarded one of Italy's highest honours, the Cavaliere della Repubblica Italiana, as well as journalism merit and special achievement medals from Canada, Ontario, and the city of Vaughan.

I was lucky to meet and know Sergio. He had a deep understanding of current affairs and his community, and was a warm and thoughtful individual.

On behalf of the constitutions of Vaughan—Woodbridge, I want to extend my condolences to his family. He was a remarkable person who will be greatly missed.

* * *

NICOLE MARCHAND

Mr. Alexander Nuttall (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, on February 16, after a long battle with cancer, Barrie resident Nicole Marchand passed away at the young age of 30. She was born the same year as I was and was a fellow student at Innisdale Secondary School.

Nicole has been recognized as a hero, her positive attitude, her constant fervour to give others hope, and the number of lives she has changed through the courage shown and displayed in such a public fight in Barrie.

I do not believe it is quite fitting just to say that her memories will live on, for it is the legacy Nicole has left of courage in the face of fear, strength to give even more when so much has been taken, and positivity in times that have been cut far too short that will live on in the lives of those whom she has touched.

I thank Nicole and her incredible family.

* * *

[*Translation*]

JEAN-MARC LALONDE

Mr. Francis Drouin (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Friday, a prominent leader in my riding received the country's highest civilian honour, the Order of Canada.

Jean-Marc Lalonde is a luminary in the Franco-Ontarian community. Active in municipal and provincial politics for over 40 years, including 15 years as the mayor of Rockland, he has worked tirelessly to promote and preserve the vitality of the French language. He is still serving as a municipal councillor.

His list of achievements is long: cofounder of the Association française des municipalités de l'Ontario and founder of the Parlement jeunesse francophone de l'Ontario, he boosted Franco-Ontarian pride by obtaining Queen's Park's recognition of the Franco-Ontarian flag as the community's official emblem. Mr. Lalonde is an exemplary leader and an inspiration to our whole community.

If I accomplish half of what Jean-Marc has accomplished in his political career, I will consider that a success. Once again, congratulations.

● (1410)

[*English*]

VOLUNTEERISM

Mr. Marco Mendicino (Eglinton—Lawrence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to acknowledge the ongoing efforts of the good people in my riding of Eglinton—Lawrence to provide meaningful support to the Syrian refugees, many of whom are arriving with nothing more than the clothes on their backs and the hope for a better life.

[*Translation*]

One fine example is Grace Besar. Grace is a 13-year-old student at the Sts. Cosmas and Damian Catholic School who is involved in the Girl Guides of Canada Pathfinder program.

[*English*]

For Grace, showing leadership means many positive things, including lending a hand in Canada's response to the Syrian refugee crisis. Knowing that our winters would be difficult for the refugees, Grace focused her efforts on collecting winter coats, hats, scarves, mittens, and other accessories that would help keep them warm as they acclimated to their new home.

[*Translation*]

Grace's clothing drive received incredible support. More than 300 articles of clothing were collected to be handed out to newly arrived refugees.

[*English*]

I am so proud of Grace. She reminds each and every one of us that making a difference is as much about the leadership shown by individual volunteers in their communities as the important decisions we take in the House.

* * *

BRANDON WINTER FESTIVAL

Mr. Larry Maguire (Brandon—Souris, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I congratulate the volunteers and organizers of the 13th Annual Brandon Winter Festival. I am proud of how our winter festival has grown and thrived over the years. None of it would be possible without the volunteers and countless residents who participated and attended this end-of-January ritual in Brandon.

It was a beautiful weekend as thousands of Westman residents lined up at the eight pavilions to enjoy a snapshot of the music, art, dance, and fine cuisine of each culture. Our winter festival brings the entire community together to celebrate Canada's rich and diverse cultural heritage.

I am especially pleased to see how Westman embraces our diversity, and to see neighbours and friends come together to showcase our cultural mosaic, which makes us distinctively Canadian.

As we continue to work here in the people's Commons, let us renew our enthusiasm and strive to make Canada the most inclusive and welcoming country in the world.

WORLD SLEDGE HOCKEY CHALLENGE

Mrs. Bernadette Jordan (South Shore—St. Margarets, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to rise in the House today to share my congratulations for the Canadian sledge hockey team for its silver medal win at the World Sledge Hockey Challenge that took place last month in Bridgewater, Nova Scotia.

Sledge hockey is the paralympic version of ice hockey. The first world cup was held 25 years ago in Norway.

I would like to thank Events Lunenburg County, businesses, municipal, provincial and federal funding partners, and the 112 volunteers who put in many hours of work to make these world-class athletes feel at home on the south shore of Nova Scotia.

The impact of this event will live on with the workshops on increasing the awareness of disabilities. Many schools and young students also learned about building active and supportive communities.

The sold-out gold medal match was a nail-biter as Canada narrowly lost in overtime to the United States.

Once again, I congratulate all the players, organizers and volunteers for a fun and exciting tournament.

* * *

NORTH EAST WINTER GAMES

Mr. Terry Sheehan (Sault Ste. Marie, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I am honoured to stand in the House of Commons to wish the organizers, volunteers and participants in the Special Olympics North East Winter Games all the best as they begin the competition in Sault Ste. Marie on February 20.

Over the past 40 years, Special Olympics has provided people with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy, and develop their relationships with friends, family and community through sports. It has been dedicated to promoting values such as respect, acceptance, inclusion and human dignity.

As the member of Parliament for Sault Ste. Marie, I am delighted to have this opportunity to congratulate my community on the opening of the North East Winter Games.

Special Olympics Ontario does important work. I encourage it to continue that work for years to come. I thank it for all it brings to our communities and wish this year's participants good luck. Let the games begin.

* * *

● (1415)

BERNARD CAMERON

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a week ago today in the beautiful and peaceful town of Almonte, Bernard Cameron was shot and killed in his own home while defending his family. The details of his death are well-known, and all that needs to be repeated here is that he died a hero, protecting the lives and safety of those he loved.

It is tempting when one learns of this kind of extraordinary courage to dwell upon that final moment, rather than on the life that preceded it. That would be a shame, for Bernard Cameron's life was characterized by the same strength, love and resolution that he showed in his final act.

He was a much loved high school teacher and a deeply committed member of the Almonte community. He served as a scoutmaster, served two terms as a municipal councillor, and he spent nearly two decades on the board of the local museum.

The Camerons were also adoptive parents, and loving grandparents as well. It was while defending his grandchildren, as well as his daughter, that he was killed. A week later, Almonte is still in shock.

Let us join with the community in praying for the well-being of the entire Cameron family at this most difficult time.

* * *

CONGENITAL HEART DEFECT AWARENESS WEEK

Mr. Frank Baylis (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last week was Congenital Heart Defect Awareness Week. Pediatric congenital cardiologists were the first to perform open-heart surgery in 1944, thereby starting the modern era of cardiac surgery.

We Canadians should be particularly proud to know that we have world leaders in this field, including Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children with renowned physicians such as Dr. Lee Benson and Dr. Gil Gross.

[*Translation*]

In Quebec, the Sainte-Justine university hospital centre conducts humanitarian missions every year under the direction of Dr. Joaquim Miró and Dr. Nancy Poirier. Medical teams travelled to Morocco, Egypt, and Ethiopia to perform heart surgeries and teach their skills to local doctors.

[*English*]

In summary, anyone who has been touched by heart disease should know that we owe an enormous debt of gratitude to the wonderful men and women who work in the field of congenital heart disease.

* * *

SYRIAN REFUGEES

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in November, when the government announced it would recognize LGBT refugees as among the highest-risk Syrian refugees, I was among the first to praise the government for changing Canada's policy to recognize the fact that LGBT refugees are subject to extra risks simply because of who they are.

When it quickly became clear that LGBT refugees were not actually getting through the system, I approached the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, and he asked me to work with the government to find a solution.

Three obstacles still remain: getting access to the Canadian system from the region, meeting the unique settlement needs of LGBT refugees, and making links with the local LGBT groups in Canada waiting to sponsor them.

In December, I presented the government with a plan to work with Egale Canada and private sponsorship groups from across the country to get those at risk here as quickly as possible. Now, nearly three months have passed. The government continues to express its good intentions while the lives of LGBT Syrians remain at serious risk.

I call on the government to act to create a path that will allow LGBT Syrian refugees to find the safety and support they need here in Canada and to do so now.

* * *

UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, UNRWA, was created in 1949 to support Palestinian refugees, but UNRWA has been politicized by the corrupt Hamas government in Gaza in flagrant violation of the UN policy of neutrality.

Human rights organizations in Canada and abroad cite redirection of aid funds and material, storage of weapons, and incitement to violence against Israel in UNRWA-operated schools. B'nai Brith Canada says Canadian aid for Arab Palestinian welfare should go only to specific humanitarian programs and peaceful infrastructure projects. UN Watch has accused dozens of UNRWA staffers of using their official positions to incite Palestinian stabbing and shooting attacks against Israeli Jews.

My Thornhill constituents ask: Why can the Liberals not find more appropriate ways of delivering humanitarian aid rather than simply handing it to terrorist sympathizers?

* * *

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN SCIENCE

Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, today I rise in the House not only as a member of Parliament, but also as a woman who has worked hard to champion the cause of gender equality, particularly in science, engineering, technology, and mathematics.

I have worked in a traditionally male-dominated industry my whole life, and I have seen gender inequality in many forms. Today, only 18% of female students versus 37% of males are likely to graduate with a bachelor's degree in a science-related field. This statistic is simply unacceptable. That is why I am applauding the United Nations for marking February 11 as International Day of Women and Girls in Science.

This is a significant step, because it helps women, including women like Victoria Kaspi who just won the Herzberg medal, to harness their greatest potential and contribute to society in the field of their choosing.

I invite all Canadians, women and men alike, to join me in celebrating this important achievement.

ORAL QUESTIONS

● (1420)

[*English*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, mistakenly, Canadians actually believed that the Prime Minister wanted to do things differently, but last night, on the first night of our debate on pulling out the CF-18s, we find out that the fighter jets had already actually flown their last mission. He did not even wait for the debate or wait for Parliament to vote.

My question is simple. How could the Prime Minister show so much disrespect for parliamentarians?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have participated in this debate that is ongoing in our continuing engagement in the fight against ISIL, our strong role as part of the coalition.

As we know, Canadians got an opportunity to weigh in, in the last election, on what they wanted for Canada to engage in ISIL. They rejected the Conservatives' military emphasis, they rejected the NDP stepping back. They accepted that we have the best plan for a whole-of-government approach that steps up our involvement in ways that Canada can best help.

* * *

[*Translation*]

NATURAL RESOURCES

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, Bombardier announced it was cutting 7,000 jobs. My heart goes out to the families.

Similar cuts affected tens of thousands of other Canadians in the energy sector, but no Liberal minister rushed to make a statement in front of the cameras for them. Nothing is being negotiated to help them. Instead, the Prime Minister is refusing to support energy east.

Why this double standard?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we lament the job losses. We want to encourage the families who are suffering and going through tough economic times. We are here for them.

That is why we are taking a different approach than the previous government did. We truly want to export our resources in a sustainable way. We can only do this by respecting the environment and the communities, and not by working against the communities and environmental concerns because that approach achieved nothing for 10 years.

[*English*]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Hon. Rona Ambrose (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Statistics Canada shows that the number of people on EI in Saskatchewan is up nearly 40%. These are people who depend on the resource sector. They do not want a bailout and they do not even ask for a handout. All they want is an opportunity to get back to work, but what they are getting instead are roadblocks to pipelines and new carbon taxes, or they are being told to just hang in there.

Does the Prime Minister understand that what he is doing does actually more harm to the economy than good?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is actually quite interesting to me to hear the member opposite talk about the need to strengthen EI. It was this party that campaigned on a platform to do exactly that. Her party stood against the kinds of strengthening to EI that we know is going to make a difference in the lives of people facing economic downturns and job losses right across the country.

We are working very hard to improve the EI system that the Conservatives have neglected for so many years and we look forward to having good news across the country in the coming weeks.

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[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, in the House, we saw that the government has completely lost control of the public purse.

Today, it is clear that the Prime Minister has no plan to help Canadians who lose their jobs, only sympathy. The most recent company to falter is Bombardier: 2,400 Quebec breadwinners will lose their jobs.

What direct action will the Prime Minister take to ensure that Bombardier can sell its planes around the world? Does he have an idea, a proposal or a plan?

● (1425)

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, for 10 years, we had a government in this country that did nothing for the manufacturing industry, did not look after those in need, focused entirely on the oil industry, and did not even prepare for the difficult times ahead.

After 10 years of neglect by that government, we are pleased to be working productively with the provinces and the different sectors to ensure that we build a strong economy for everyone.

* * *

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the 2,400 breadwinners in Quebec who are going to lose their jobs have just realized that the Prime Minister is not thinking about them because he has not said a word about Bombardier.

If he does not have any ideas, we have one: he should let CSeries jets land at the Billy Bishop airport in Toronto. Yesterday, I listened to the Minister of Transport say that this was the best airplane in the world and describe how nice it was inside the cockpit. I take him at his word.

Will the Prime Minister allow the Minister of Transport to take back the orders preventing CSeries jets from landing at the Billy Bishop airport? He will see that it is possible, that it will not cost taxpayers anything, and that it will create jobs.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, we see that the Conservative Party is trying to sow division by pitting one part of the country against another. It is this type of irresponsible behaviour that relegated the Conservatives to the opposition benches.

The reality is that we are still working with Bombardier to ensure that we have good news from Air Canada, as we saw yesterday, that we are helping families in need, and that we are seeking to make sound investments for the economy and for taxpayers. That is what we are going to do.

* * *

[*English*]

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, today, officials confirmed to the trade committee that they have not completed a study of the TPP's impact upon Canadians.

Experts are saying this deal would put thousands of jobs on the line, give foreign companies the power to challenge our environmental laws, and make medicine more expensive.

How can the government expect Canadians to believe that they are being consulted in a truly meaningful way when Liberals have not even studied the impact of this deal upon Canadian families?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary. Our international trade minister has been engaged in consultations right across the country and, indeed, we have committed to bring forward the TPP to a debate and discussion here in the House so we can hear from the different sectors that will have advantages and from the sectors that have concerns.

The fact is we have committed to open consultations. We made that promise during the election campaign, and we are going to be keeping that promise.

Ms. Irene Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, he should tell that to the trade officials.

Liberals think that we can consult Canadians without even letting them know what the TPP would do. It gets worse. Liberals say they will review the temporary foreign worker program, but fail to mention that the TPP would create new loopholes to make it easier for companies to bring in foreign workers.

How do they expect to fix the broken temporary foreign worker program while they ram through a trade deal that would create new loopholes?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once again, we have committed to openly consulting and engaging with Canadians and, indeed, parliamentarians. The NDP will have an opportunity to make its anti-trade positions heard loudly and clearly in this Parliament.

The fact of the matter is we are going to engage responsibly around files that matter to Canadians to ensure that they actually have the opportunity to make decisions about what is in our best interests as an economy.

* * *

[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, yesterday we learned that 7,000 workers, including 2,400 in Quebec, would be losing their jobs. The Prime Minister, however, did not seem even remotely concerned. He, quite frankly, had nothing to say to them, aside from his usual platitudes. The employees and their families are worried.

The government's silence on assistance for Bombardier has gone on long enough. When will the Liberals understand that thousands of good jobs are at stake here? When will they take action for workers and their families?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Quebeckers and all Canadians expect the government to be responsible in its investments and partnerships. We have been working with Bombardier for many months to ensure that the investments we can make will be in the best interests of workers and Canadians.

We obviously lament the loss of jobs, which is why we are focused on creating jobs and investing in growth. That is why Canadians voted for us, and that is what we will do.

● (1430)

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, 2,400 Quebec families will be affected, but the best the Prime Minister can do is shed a few crocodile tears.

We have already lost enough jobs, and this is more bad news. Maybe the government is planning to amend the Air Canada Public Participation Act. We have already lost 2,600 jobs because of that, which two court rulings confirmed. I sent the minister a letter before Christmas, and I have not heard back yet.

Is the government really planning to release Air Canada from its obligations? Are the minister and the government telling 2,600 people that they can kiss their jobs goodbye? Is that what it means to be responsible? We do not think so.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one thing we know for sure is that overheated NDP rhetoric will not lead to solutions or create jobs.

On this side of the House, we are working in a responsible fashion to build a strong economy and a strong future for Quebeckers, Canadians, and people who are worried about job losses and want a better future for their children.

That is why we were elected, and that is what we will be putting forward in the budget a few weeks from now.

* * *

[*English*]

FINANCE

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, a minister's fundamental job is to fulfill his or her mandate letter, and the Minister of Finance's letter tells him that he has to implement campaign promises.

What do we have so far? So far, we have discovered that the Liberals' tax scheme would cost Canadian taxpayers a billion dollars. We know that they have blown through their deficit cap of $10 billion. We also know now that they have no plan to return to a balanced budget, ever. Those are three broken campaign promises, and the minister is not fulfilling his mandate letter.

My question is simple. Is the minister just making this up as he goes along, or is he actually going to execute on the letter from the Prime Minister?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the hon. member that we were elected on October 19 by Canadians who elected us on a plan to grow the economy. We made it very clear what we were going to do.

We said that we were going to reduce taxes for middle-class Canadians, who needed tax reduction. We have already moved forward on that. We said that we are going to move forward with a Canada child benefit that would help nine out of ten families and hundreds of thousands of children. Then we are going to move forward on infrastructure investments that are going to help us grow this economy, all the while by being very prudent with our expenses along the way.

Hon. Lisa Raitt (Milton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that was a selective reading of his campaign promises.

Nonetheless, the minister's mandate letter goes on to say the following as well: “It is our collective responsibility to ensure that we fulfill our promises, while living within our fiscal plan.”

My question is again for the Minister of Finance. Is a $30 billion deficit living within his fiscal plan?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we have put forward a plan for Canadians. It is a plan that will be laid out in more detail during the course of our upcoming budget. What we have told Canadians, especially those middle-class Canadians who want to do better, is that we have a plan that will make a real difference in growth. We will do it by being fiscally prudent along the way. We will do it by making sure that our level of debt to GDP over time reduces. Yes, we aim to get to a balanced budget over time, recognizing that our economy makes that more challenging. That remains a very important goal for this government.

[*Translation*]

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 3,000 jobs were lost in Quebec in January, after more than six months of stability under the Conservative government. We are now starting to feel the effect this government is having on the economy. Jobs are being lost at Bombardier, at Rio Tinto, and in the forestry sector.

What is the minister responsible for economic development doing about it? He has posted an online questionnaire, and the first question is "...what are the main economic strengths or assets of your region...?" I hope the minister already knows the answer.

Is he trying to familiarize himself with Quebec's regions and learn about the expertise of its workers?

● (1435)

[*English*]

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, this government is very committed to growing the economy across the country from coast to coast to coast, particularly in Quebec.

We have a very strong regional development agency there that is making sound investments in different parts of the Quebec economy. I was there most recently making investments in the Canadian Space Agency, and Quartier de l'innovation in Montreal.

We are going to continue to diversify the economy and create jobs, particularly in Quebec and across the country.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Joël Godin (Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister's silence is very disconcerting.

I repeat, 3,000 jobs were lost in January. Is there anyone at the controls?

This government has no plan to help the regions of Quebec. I would like the minister to clarify his intentions with respect to the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec. Is he aware of the positive impact this agency has on all regions of Quebec and the businesses and the thousands of workers who benefit from it?

Can this government show through concrete action that it takes the economic development of all regions of Quebec seriously?

[*English*]

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this government has a plan, and we articulated that plan during the campaign.

We are making historic investments to create jobs. Let me remind the member opposite that we are making investments in shipbuilding, and not only in shipbuilding but also in jets. We are making investments across the country, particularly in Quebec. We are going to make sure that these investments create good, long-term, high-quality jobs. We are going to work with the regional development agencies to diversify the economy.

FINANCE

Mr. Phil McColeman (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal platform promised Canadians a balanced budget in 2019, but even before their first budget, the Liberals are throwing their entire fiscal plan out the window. Economies are often unpredictable, but serious governments keep their promises and fiscal targets. Why are the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance betraying the promise of balancing the budget?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians expect us to take actions to make their lives better. We recognize that middle-class Canadians have not had a fair increase in income for many years. The most vulnerable really need to be helped in our society.

We have put forward ideas that we know we can put into our budget in 2016 that will make a real difference for Canadians. We know that we can deal with an economy that is more challenging than we expected, and that is what governing is all about.

Mr. Phil McColeman (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it was not just the Liberal platform that promised a balanced budget. I will remind the finance minister that the Prime Minister explicitly directed him to balance the budget in his term. The very first point in the mandate letter from the Prime Minister was to meet "our fiscal anchors of balancing the budget in 2019/20".

Will the finance minister confirm that he will do as the Prime Minister has directed him and balance the budget in this term? If not, what was the point of the mandate letter?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadians elected us on October 19 because they had confidence that we were ready and willing to put forward ideas that could make a real difference in their lives.

We are facing the past 10 years of low growth. We now realize that the economy is more challenging even than we expected when we were elected. We are moving forward with a plan that will be prudent, that will remain focused on reducing our net-debt-to-GDP ratio over time, and that will aim to get us to a balanced budget over the term, recognizing how challenging that will be in our economic environment.

* * *

[*Translation*]

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Robert Aubin (Trois-Rivières, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the economy is in a downturn and there are more job losses all the time. Just yesterday, Bombardier announced it was cutting 7,000 jobs, including 2,400 in Quebec.

While thousands of families are anxious about not being able to make ends meet at the end of the month, employment insurance is becoming harder to access. According to the latest statistics, only 36% of those in need of employment insurance have access to it.

In its budget, will the government finally help workers and create a universal eligibility threshold at 360 hours?

[*English*]

Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, employment insurance has failed Canadians. The number of working Canadians that are eligible to receive employment insurance declined year after year under the previous government. It is important for us, and we have committed to do so, to review the whole program to make it accessible for Canadians. That is exactly what we intend to do.

● (1440)

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canadians do not want a review. They want immediate action so they can access employment insurance in their communities.

Let us turn to what fishers in Norway House, Manitoba are facing. They are being treated like criminals for receiving EI. They are being interrogated, intimidated, and even being told to hand over the records of people who have died. People are being cut off from their benefits without even having the chance to plead their case.

We are talking about some of the poorest people in Canada. Will the government work with Norway House fishers to resolve this situation immediately?

Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this is a very sensitive case. Individuals are going through an investigation. It is ongoing, and I cannot comment.

* * *

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Mr. David Yurdiga (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in late December, the Minister of Finance announced that the territorial governments would be facing major federal funding cuts due to the rejigging of the territorial funding formula. Now, under mounting pressure, the minister is saying he will restore the funding, but only partially.

The territorial governments are still facing millions of dollars in cuts. When will the government fully restore the funding and stop leaving northerners out in the cold?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to answer this question.

We found that Statistics Canada made a change in the way it calculated the territorial financing formula, a change that impacted the northern territories. We worked collaboratively with the northern territories. I would like to thank the members on this side of the House who helped me as well.

We came up with a solution that gives them stable and predictable funding over time. It brought them back, very close to where they were before. We dealt with it appropriately.

Mr. David Yurdiga (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, in northern communities the cost of shipping goods drives up costs tremendously. The territorial governments are also facing high costs when delivering services such as health care to remote communities.

With the government already shunning natural resources, the biggest industry in the north, how does it expect territorial governments to budget and deliver key services after cutting vital funding?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, again, I would like to say that we will continue to work collaboratively with the territories in the north.

We recognize that provinces and territories across this country have challenges when we deal with difficult economic times, especially times when commodity prices change. We believe that in the instance of the territorial financing formula, we came up with a solution that helped those territories to understand their future situation.

We will continue to work together, dealing with the challenges that people across this country face.

Mr. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Finance dismissed the concerns of Saskatchewan and Alberta.

Despite the calls by Premier Wall to address the problems in the equalization formula, the Liberals are doing nothing. Saskatchewan is being forced to pay into equalization as if oil were still at $100 a barrel, despite the fact that oil is clearly trading closer to $30. This is so obviously unfair.

The Minister of Finance agreed to make some changes to other calculations for Yukon, Nunavut, and the Northwest Territories. Will he provide the same fairness to Alberta and Saskatchewan?

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by confirming again that the territories in the north were dealing with a statistical change through Statistics Canada.

We are talking about how we can help people who are facing real challenges across this country, middle-class families across the country, people in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Newfoundland and Labrador.

We are putting forth a program that will actually help them, including tax cuts for nine million Canadians, and the Canada child benefit for those most vulnerable. We are going to make investments in infrastructure that will help the middle class, that will help those most vulnerable, and that will improve our economy.

Mr. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, leftover money for infrastructure does not make up for the unfairness in the formula.

Saskatchewan is paying millions of dollars to other provinces, despite the crash in the price of oil. If the minister thinks that paving some roads is going to make up for the massive amounts of wealth being transferred, he obviously does not understand how equalization works.

All we are asking is that he provide the same fairness to western provinces. Based on his last answer, clearly he will not.

Can the minister at least explain to the people of Alberta and Saskatchewan why they do not deserve equal treatment?

● (1445)

Hon. Bill Morneau (Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would again like to say that we are working hard to improve our economy for all Canadians.

We are working hard to improve the economy for middle-class Canadians who are challenged. We are working especially hard to work with those provinces that have been particularly hard hit through the change in commodity prices.

That will be a continuing endeavour of this government. We will see initiatives in our budget that will make a real difference. We will focus on making that difference in the weeks and months to come.

* * *

[*Translation*]

HEALTH

Ms. Brigitte Sansoucy (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in Quebec and Canada, we must provide care based on needs and not on means. The NDP has twice written to the Minister of Health, and I must rise again to ask her to address the matter of ancillary fees in Quebec. Few people, in every one of our ridings, can afford to pay $300 for drops or $500 for a colonoscopy. The Canada Health Act is clear on this, and the minister has a duty to enforce it.

When will the government take action and put a stop to this two-tiered system?

[*English*]

Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have been pleased, over the time that our government has been in power, to work with my colleagues in the provinces and territories to address modernizing our Canada health care system.

We know it is a system that Canadians are proud of, but we also know that it is a system that needs to be fundamentally modernized. I will be working with all of my colleagues, including my colleague, the minister of health, in Quebec. I will continue my conversations with him and other colleagues. We will work together to reach new agreements as to what the health care system needs to meet the needs of Canadians.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if the minister supports the Canada Health Act, she should enforce it.

The tainted blood scandal of the 1980s affected 30,000 Canadians and infected them with HIV and hepatitis. It cost billions in compensation. The Krever inquiry found that for-profit, paid blood collection puts the safety of Canadians at risk, yet today, a private for-profit plasma clinic is opening in Saskatchewan, directly contrary to the Krever findings.

Will the minister stand up for safety in Canada's blood supply system and close this clinic, or does she disagree with Justice Krever?

Hon. Jane Philpott (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to stand up in the name of safety for the blood supply system in Canada. It is recognized internationally as one of the safest systems in the world, and maintaining the safety of that system is an absolute priority of our government.

We are committed to using evidence-based policy. While this is a sensitive matter that my colleague has addressed, we have examined it in great detail and have confirmed that we are approaching this matter by looking at the science and making sure there are no compromises to the safety of the blood system.

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EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Michael Levitt (York Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in recent years it has become more and more difficult for students to find summer work. Last summer alone, nearly 300,000 students could not find summer jobs. This simply cannot continue. We need to invest in young Canadians together, to help them build a stronger future and obtain the skills and experience they need to contribute to our collective economic growth.

Will the minister explain what the Government of Canada is doing to help Canadian youth find summer employment?

Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, help is finally on its way. We are proud to have doubled the funding and the positions for Canadian students this summer. Over 35,000 new jobs are going to be added, and those young people will have the experience they need to get into our workforce.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Canadians want to buy and use Canadian oil, and that is because they support the over 450,000 jobs that the Canadian energy sector brings.

Folks in New Brunswick and Quebec are offended that foreign oil is being given better treatment than Canadian oil. Canadian oil is extracted responsibly and it is transported responsibly.

When will the government start to support the Canadian energy sector and the jobs it brings rather than undermining it, creating roadblocks, and giving foreign oil special treatment?

● (1450)

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the Prime Minister has said many times, it is the responsibility of the Government of Canada to move our natural resources to tidewater sustainably. This is an objective end result that the former Conservatives could not achieve, not building one kilometre of pipeline to tidewater when they had a majority government from 2011 until election day.

Rather than following a failed path, we are starting a new path that will end up in the credibility of a process we are confident will be in the best interests of—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Portage—Lisgar.

Hon. Candice Bergen (Portage—Lisgar, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have a difficult time supporting Canadian oil and gas. It is like they believe Canadian oil and gas is bad and the jobs connected with them are bad.

Can the minister stand up today and agree with what millions of Canadians believe and what the evidence shows, that Canadian oil is responsibly extracted and Canadian pipelines are the safest in the world?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have had the pleasure of consulting with the energy sector in Calgary, twice.

The oil sector in Canada is leading the world in responsible practices in the development of new technologies. It was innovation that led to the development of the oil industry in Alberta in the first place.

We will be working with those responsible entrepreneurs as we transition over time to an energy economy that is more dependent on renewables and on sustainable development.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, last week, the National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations stated at a press conference that pipelines will need an indigenous licence to proceed. I would like to ask the minister this. Does she agree with giving a veto over the development of Canada's natural resources?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, over the last number of weeks, I have had the pleasure of having meaningful conversations with indigenous leaders, in Halifax, in Winnipeg, and only last week in Vancouver, in meetings with leaders from the north coast, the Okanagan, and the Vancouver area itself. What they have been telling me time and time again is how refreshing it is for them to actually have a conversation with the Government of Canada, which they have not had in 10 years.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has confused this issue for both industry and first nations. During the election campaign, he said that no meant no. More recently, he backtracked from that commitment. Uncertainty hurts both prospective development and indigenous communities.

Can the minister stand in the House and provide clarity? Does no mean no, yes, or maybe?

Hon. Jim Carr (Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the message we received from indigenous leaders from virtually every region of the country is that they want to be involved in responsible and meaningful ways as we develop the natural resource sector in Canada. That has not happened and these projects will not be built unless it does. That is why a leading principle in the new way of doing things is to have conversations in a meaningful way with indigenous communities from coast to coast, something the previous government failed to do.

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FORESTRY INDUSTRY

Mr. Richard Cannings (South Okanagan—West Kootenay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the softwood lumber agreement expired last year, but the government has shown no signs of working to get a new deal. There are thousands of jobs on the line in forestry communities throughout British Columbia and across this country. The clock is ticking on these good, family-supporting jobs, and communities are looking for action.

When does the government expect to have a new agreement in place to protect Canadian forestry jobs?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Minister of International Trade, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the forestry industry is incredibly important across this country. We are very aware of the significance of the softwood lumber agreement and we are working very hard on it.

I am proud to inform members that at our very first bilateral meeting with President Obama, I was fortunate to be there and our Prime Minister proactively raised this agreement. My officials and I are negotiating very actively. My officials were in Washington last week. We are working very hard on this deal. It is essential for Canadians.

* * *

● (1455)

FISHERIES AND OCEANS

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government promised change, but it does not seem to understand what the word means. Instead, it is adopting parts of the Conservative agenda. It seems that it is about to carry out the Conservatives' ill-conceived plan to close the Marine Communications and Traffic Services Centre in Comox. Experts have warned us that this puts the safety of our coastal waters and the public at increased risk.

Can the minister tell us exactly when the Liberal government plans to shut down the Comox MCTS?

Hon. Hunter Tootoo (Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Coast Guard, as I have mentioned before, has modernized its marine communications and traffic services centres with 21st century equipment. The equipment had not been replaced in over 30 years. It is like moving from a dial phone to a smart phone. This new technology is more reliable and is helping Coast Guard officials deliver critical safety services more efficiently.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today the defence minister left the impression that the F-35 could be an option to replace our CF-18 fighter jets.

In the Liberal platform, it says, "We will not buy the F-35 stealth fighter-bomber." I will give the minister a chance to explain himself here in the House. Will the F-35 be excluded from the bidding process to replace our CF-18 fighter jets? It is a simple answer, yes or no.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the constant discussion is about F-35s. I am committed to actually replacing the F-18 to make sure we have the right capability for our air force that will be moving forward in the next 10 to 20 years and will meet the needs of Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberal government's plan for combatting ISIS is very simple: Canada will be a spectator. Furthermore, we will do less and it will be more dangerous. The Liberals have already withdrawn our CF-18s, even though we are currently debating their motion, and this puts our armed forces in a vulnerable position.

Will the Minister of National Defence confirm whether or not our Canadians soldiers are vulnerable on the ground?

[*English*]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the safety of our personnel, our generals take this extremely seriously. When we deploy any type of personnel, the full rules of engagement and the appropriate defensive measures will always be there.

I can assure the member that our current members have the full array of support that the coalition has, and we have even added additional capability.

I would also like to remind the member that defeating ISIL will only happen on the ground, and that is the reason we have tripled our training capacity.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am proud to represent the women and men of Garrison Petawawa, home to the Canadian Special Operations Regiment.

Yesterday we learned that the Liberals have already withdrawn the CF-18 air cover for our troops on the ground.

The families of CSOR, those who provide the boots on the ground for this change in mission, want to know is the minister prepared to take full responsibility for putting their loved ones at increased risk just to fulfill a campaign promise?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member also knows, I have served alongside members. I know the families are ultimately impacted. When it comes to the safety of our personnel, I take it very seriously.

Having travelled into the region twice, I can also mention some of the capabilities that were not brought in, and one was anti-armour capability. This is one of the reasons I have taken meticulous effort to making sure we have the right capabilities for our deployed personnel, making sure they have everything they need and they have full capability.

I can assure the member that they are well trained because I have been alongside them in the past.

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● (1500)

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it was my privilege to have the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development visit the Halifax area during constituency week.

While at Volta Labs, the minister announced over $2.7 million in funding from ACOA to seven companies and organizations, representing the ICT, clean tech, and fisheries sectors in Nova Scotia.

I am proud to also mention that Pantel International, located in my riding of Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, was one of several companies to receive funding.

Can the minister kindly update the house on his recent ACOA announcements?

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, members may be familiar with Atlantic Canada, where I saw first-hand the great work that ACOA is doing to support the local economy.

In Halifax, the government announced seven projects, as the member mentioned, under ACOA's business development program, which of course included investments in both the labs and ICT hub, and investments in Pantel International, an innovative communications company in Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Nova Scotia.

Advancing an innovation agenda that will create jobs is a priority for this government, and I was glad to be there. We will continue to make those investments.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Hon. Tony Clement (Parry Sound—Muskoka, CPC): Mr. Speaker, yesterday in this very place, the Minister of Foreign Affairs said, and I quote:

> ...the government has very stringent criteria for determining [who will be provided] humanitarian aid. We control every aspect from A to Z.

This is in stark contrast to an interview given by the Minister of International Development last week, who acknowledged that aid could go to Islamic State fighters.

Is the Minister of Foreign Affairs confused? Are Canadian tax dollars going to terrorists?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the only confusion is in the minds of the Conservatives.

We obviously ensure that aid provided by Canadians through their taxes addresses humanitarian needs and is not diverted by terrorists. We do that. At the same time, when a doctor from Doctors Without Borders treats an injured person, it does not matter what side the injured person is on. The doctor will treat the injured no matter what side they are fighting for. That is the doctor's mission.

The Conservatives' mission is not to ask confused questions.

* * *

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP): Mr. Speaker, our rural regions are having an increasingly hard time getting services for residents. They deserve to be treated equally.

Access to high-speed Internet and a good mobile phone network is essential for regional development and security. The Conservatives never fixed this problem because they did not understand the regions.

Will the Minister of Innovation commit to finally fixing this issue by offering programs adapted to regional realities?

[*English*]

Hon. Navdeep Bains (Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course, the Internet touches every part of our lives, and connecting Canadians is a priority for this government. That is why we are very confident in the program we have, connecting Canadians from coast to coast to coast, which allows us to make investments in these remote and rural regions. It is really about promoting the digital economy. It is about looking at and addressing in a meaningful way the digital divide that currently exists. This government is committed to this agenda, and I will work with the member opposite to make sure we continue to make these investments.

* * *

[*Translation*]

AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD

Mr. Pierre Breton (Shefford, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canada's dairy industry is second to none. It has more than $6 billion in farm gate sales and $15 billion in sales in the processing sector and supports more than 100,000 jobs across the country. Furthermore, the industry is a leader when it comes to environmental concerns.

Can the Minister of Agriculture tell us about what he is doing to invest in this important industry?

[*English*]

Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I recently announced $1.75 million in new funding for the dairy research cluster. This will help boost milk yields, increase farm production, and improve knowledge around the health benefits of milk products.

Our government will continue to invest in the dairy industry and agricultural science and research, to ensure this great industry thrives.

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Mr. Brad Trost (Saskatoon—University, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member for Cypress Hills—Grasslands stood in this place and asked what the government is doing to secure the release of Kevin Garratt and his wife Julia. They have been held, now, by Chinese security forces for over a year.

What did theMinister of Foreign Affairs say in response? He said, “We have communicated how much we disagree with the situation...”.

I am not sure that the minister's bureaucratic tone is grabbing the attention of the Chinese.

When is the Minister of Foreign Affairs going to make the Garratts' release a priority?

● (1505)

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course it is a priority. The only goal I have in this is to free Mr. Garratt. It is something on which we have worked very hard. I want to assure my colleague that I am ready to co-operate with him, and with everyone, to find a way to free Mr. Garratt. I am not here to be the hero of the story and to pretend that I am doing a lot of things that may not be helpful. The only goal is to free every Canadian in trouble around the world, and it is what we will work upon.

* * *

[*Translation*]

NATIONAL DEFENCE

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, last week, the government shared its plan for combatting ISIS.

Although we are pleased with the Prime Minister's intentions on the humanitarian aid front, his plan falls short, and here is why: without a direct military contribution, the humanitarian aid that we are planning to provide may never reach the people hardest hit by the conflict.

Is the government prepared to reconsider its plan? Too many lives are at stake to turn this into a partisan issue.

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague is right: this is not a partisan issue.

That is why I invite him to examine the plan, which strengthens Canada's role in fighting the so-called Islamic State. We are tripling the size of our training mission, doubling our intelligence gathering efforts, enhancing humanitarian aid, adding development assistance, and supporting Lebanon and Jordan. I hope he will support this excellent plan and read it carefully.

Mr. Michel Boudrias (Terrebonne, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government's plan for the fight against ISIS sends the military mission in Iraq and Syria in a whole new direction.

Yesterday the Minister of National Defence announced that we would be tripling our military forces on the ground in order to enhance training and provide technical support to the Iraqi army and Kurdish forces. However, pulling out our CF-18s will deprive our troops of an important protective element.

Can the government tell us if it is planning to deploy other kinds of protection on the ground in order to secure the humanitarian assistance first, but more importantly, to protect our troops in the theatre of operations?

[*English*]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the hon. member that, when we work as part of a coalition, the coalition has the full capabilities. The coalition will have air strike capability. We are adding our own additional capability. We are adding exactly what the coalition needs, because the defeat of ISIL can only happen on the ground. That is also why the intelligence assets are needed. Canadians have a tremendous amount of experience that has been gained, and this is exactly what we are going to be providing.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Mr. Speaker, now for the question everyone has been waiting for: can the government House leader update the House as to what the business will be for the rest of this week and the following week?

Hon. Dominic LeBlanc (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I know colleagues look forward to this every week. I will be brief.

This afternoon, we will continue with the debate on the Conservative opposition motion.

Tomorrow, we will resume debate on government Motion No. 2, which was moved by the Prime Minister yesterday, concerning Canada's fight against ISIL.

[*Translation*]

I am currently negotiating with the House leaders of the other parties to come to an agreement on the length of the debate. We will continue debating that motion next Monday and Tuesday. If we manage to conclude the debate on Tuesday evening, on Wednesday we will proceed with second reading of Bill C-2, an act to amend the Income Tax Act.

[*English*]

Finally, Thursday of next week will be an allotted day.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

● (1510)

[*English*]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

OPPOSITION MOTION—ISRAEL

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

The Deputy Speaker: I would ask all hon. members who have other business than the debate this afternoon to make their way to their respective lobbies.

We are back on orders of the day. The hon. member for Mount Royal had three minutes remaining in his time for his remarks.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Mount Royal.

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to resume. It is difficult sometimes to split a speech in two. If I had not convinced everyone in the House that BDS is a bad thing by the time we started members' statements, then I have failed in my mission. Therefore, for the balance of my time I would like to explain why the motion is not a violation of freedom of expression. I would like to convince members on that side of the House that they should join with us in the government and in the official opposition in supporting the motion, because what is not being asked is to ban free speech.

The motion reads:

> That, given Canada and Israel share a long history of friendship as well as economic and diplomatic relations, the House reject the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, which promotes the demonization and delegitimization of the State of Israel, and call upon the government to condemn any and all attempts by Canadian organizations, groups or individuals to promote the BDS movement, both here at home and abroad.

It does not say that we are not allowing people to have freedom of speech. It is not saying we are putting this in the Criminal Code and throwing people into prison because they promote BDS. It is not saying that we are not allowing people to go forward and promote their views. What it is saying is that the government will condemn those views, which are views we should oppose, because BDS is a new form of anti-Semitism.

I would ask the members of the NDP, and the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, to look at the resolution and to substitute the word "anti-Semitism" for the word "BDS". If you called on the government to condemn any and all attempts by Canadian organizations, groups, or individuals to promote anti-Semitism, both here at home and abroad, would you not vote in favour of the motion?

BDS is clearly singling out Israel. It is clearly a new form of anti-Semitism. We in the House have always condemned racism. We have always condemned xenophobia, and we condemn those who promote it. It does not mean that everyone who supports the BDS movement is an anti-Semite, but the movement itself is anti-Semitic. The end result is, that is what it does. It makes Jewish and pro-Israel students feel uncomfortable on Canadian campuses. It makes them feel uncomfortable to go to school. That is not right.

Therefore, in the end result, I would ask those people who are opposed to BDS to support the motion and not to say they are not doing so because of a violation of freedom of expression.

● (1515)

The Deputy Speaker: Just before we go to questions and comments, a reminder to all hon. members to direct their commentary, questions, and speech in general to the Chair and not to other hon. members.

Questions and comments. The hon. member for Calgary Nose Hill.

Hon. Michelle Rempel (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this morning, the parliamentary secretary to the prime minister asked a question about this. She said, "I find this wording peculiar in that when I think about this movement I also think about apartheid and how, at the time, we had to engage in discourse with persons who agreed and did not agree with something that was quite terrible in our history."

I am sure my colleague opposite knows that members who are familiar with the BDS movement would probably also take offence with the use of the term "apartheid" in discussing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I was wondering if perhaps he would provide some advice to his colleague on the use of this term in this particular context.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Mr. Speaker, what I think is important with the motion is that we in both parties agree that BDS is a bad thing. We should look at the unity this brings as opposed to trying to divide. Therefore, I am not going to start speculating about what one person said or did not say.

As to the substance though, I am very pleased to agree with my hon. colleague that there is nothing in this that leads to an analogy with apartheid. Israel is the furthest thing from an apartheid state. Arab citizens in Israel, non-Jewish citizens in Israel, have full civil and equal rights if they are citizens of Israel living within the borders of Israel proper. They have a right to vote. They have freedom of speech. They can go before the courts. Therefore, any attempt to claim that Israel is an apartheid state is absolutely unacceptable and beyond the pale.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to my colleague's passionate expression of his opinion, and I fully respect that opinion.

There are many people on this side of the House and in our party who share his view that BDS is not an appropriate response to Israel's activities in the Middle East. However, I must say that the issue, from my point of view, is that not everybody shares that position.

My friend says that when we look at this motion we substitute the word "anti-Semitism" for those who advocate a BDS approach as a way of influencing Israel's behaviour in the occupied territories, as an example. I would remind the member that it is the official position of Canada that Israel's occupation of territories after 1967 is a violation of international law, and that everybody in this House does call on Israel to withdraw from those territories in a negotiated settlement with the Palestinians and we support that.

No doubt there are some people who espouse BDS who may have anti-Semitic feelings, but I also happen to know that there are those who do not have any anti-Semitism in them whatsoever, who do espouse BDS as an approach to put pressure on the Government of Israel. While I do not share that approach, I do respect their right to hold that opinion. Does the member not feel that in Canada, a nation founded on the rule of law and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, where we have freedom of expression and opinion in this country, that this House should not condemn people for holding a political belief honestly held about a particular political issue that he may respectfully disagree with, but that both can hold in good faith?

● (1520)

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Mr. Speaker, certainly I agree that there should be freedom of expression. Condemning someone's speech does not mean that I am stating that their speech should be taken away. I want to clarify that, and I believe that is the intention of all the members who would be supporting this motion.

With respect to that issue, my mentor Irwin Cotler has declared that BDS is indeed a new form of anti-Semitism. I agree with him. It is not the old religious anti-Semitism that used to exist saying that the Jews killed Christ, and it is not the racial anti-Semitism that used to exist that was promulgated by the Nazis. However, it is singling out the State of Israel for vilification.

In order for BDS to not be anti-Semitic, then that movement in some cases would have to take all of the states that violate human rights around the world and all of the disputed territories, and lump them all together in the hundreds and advocate for each of them equally. That is not what the BDS movement is currently doing. The BDS movement is currently singling out the only Jewish state in the world for vilification.

With respect to the comments about the territories occupied after 1967, BDS does not only support that this applies to the territories occupied after 1967. It is saying to boycott goods made in the State of Israel in the pre-1967 borders and to not allow Israeli citizens who are academics or athletes who were living in the state before 1967 to go to international conferences. It has nothing to do with the territories. It is all of Israel that BDS seeks to vilify, and for that reason—

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the position, whether it is our Prime Minister or the Minister of Foreign Affairs, on this issue in terms of explaining the position of the government.

One of the things I want to highlight and ask the speaker to provide comment on is that in an ideal situation this particular resolution could have been worded better. Could the member provide some of his thoughts on whether he believes there could have been some modifications on the words that would have made the motion that much stronger for the House to debate today?

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Mr. Speaker, again I am going to give the same response for my own colleague as I did for the member from across.

To me, this is a motion that should unite, not divide. I am not going to seek to reflect different wording for a motion that was provided. Maybe I would have personally worded it differently. Maybe the member would have. Maybe the government would have. However, in the same respect, this is a motion that is important, it is a motion that is clear, and it is a motion that I support.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the member on what I thought was an excellent speech, the best speech I have heard from a Liberal in a very long time.

I dare say he got much more applause on this side of the House than he did on his own. We have heard some very concerning things from the government benches about this motion. The Minister of Foreign Affairs said this was a divisive motion. While I congratulate the member for acknowledging how important and necessary this motion it is, it should unite us.

I wonder, just in light of some of the things that members of the government have said about this, their equivocation on this issue, and their effort to establish new relations with Iran, how he feels about the actions of his government in that regard, and why Canadians should have confidence in the government when it comes to Israel.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Mr. Speaker, I am going to say the same thing back to the hon. member.

That was clearly a question meant to try to divide me from my party, to divide all of us. This is a motion that should be uniting us against something that is not good, which is BDS.

I am fully confident that our Prime Minister and our government support the State of Israel. Our Prime Minister has stated it unequivocally in my riding and across the country. Our Minister of Foreign Affairs has said that we are friends with the State of Israel. The government itself is backing this motion.

Let us unite in agreeing we support Israel; let us unite in fighting anti-Semitism, which I know the hon. member agrees with me on, and fighting racism. Let us try to unite ourselves in all parties, as much as we can, and not divide ourselves.

● (1525)

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time today with the hon. member for Calgary Midnapore.

I, too, would like to congratulate the member for Mount Royal on his fabulous speech. I would like to cut and paste his speech over to my time if I could, but I do not think our technology is there yet.

I am pleased to rise in the House today to support the motion of my colleague:

> That...the House reject the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, which promotes the demonization and delegitimization of the State of Israel, and call upon the government to condemn any and all attempts by Canadian organizations, groups or individuals to promote the BDS movement, both here at home and abroad.

As the Member of Parliament for Edmonton West, with a population of some 5,550 people of the Jewish faith in my city, many of whom have ties to Israel, I am proud to stand in support of this motion.

As a member of the organization called CUFI, the Christians United for Israel, I am extremely proud to stand here today.

Not too long ago I attended a service at the Beth Israel Synagogue in my riding of Edmonton West. My personal friend Rabbi Daniel Friedman is a leader of the interfaith community in the riding. He has reached out to the leadership of the local Christian churches and our mosque so they can work together to promote harmony among the faithful.

That morning after the service, he came to me to tell me that the night before the synagogue had been defaced again with hateful graffiti. Anti-Semitism still exists and BDS promotes this.

What the people behind BDS will never tell us is this: Israel is multicultural, multiracial, diverse, and tolerant. This truth is the most powerful antidote to the apartheid lie. We are devoted to aggressively disseminating this truth to everyone.

BDS activists promote the false idea that Israel is solely responsible for the Arab-Israeli conflict and in turn push for a boycott of the only liberal democracy in the Middle East, while exempting the world's worse human rights violators from such attention. These boycotts take many forms, such as telling consumers not to buy Israeli products, calling for universities to cut ties with Israeli professors and academics and for Israelis to be banned from international sports competitions.

By advocating economic coercion against Israelis, BDS is an assault on all Israelis, ironically including those Israelis who are staunch peace activists. BDS uses the kind of language and imagery reserved for pariah states.

There are several reasons why we must reject BDS in all of its forms.

For one, BDS is a form of discrimination. In targeting all Israelis, BDS is a modern-day blacklist and a form of discrimination based on national origin. Just as boycotts have targeted Jews throughout history, today BDS activists call for a boycott of the citizens of the world's only Jewish state, and the only liberal democracy in the Middle East.

Many leaders in the BDS movement openly declare that their goal is not a peaceful, two-state solution but rather the destruction of the state of Israel.

The BDS movement is not pro-Palestinian; it is simply anti-Israel. It is not about helping the people of Palestine; it is about punishing Israel and punishing Jews.

To further this, BDS undermines peace, something that all members in the House want. BDS does nothing to bring the two sides together, to promote peace, or to improve the quality of the life of the average Palestinian. Instead, BDS lays all blame for the conflict on Israel, and removes all responsibility from the Palestinians.

Were BDS successful, it would threaten the livelihood of thousands of Palestinians employed by Israeli companies.

BDS also imports this conflict into Canada. BDS does this by illegitimately targeting businesses, universities, university students, and civil society institutions. Canadian organizations should never be manipulated as a platform for social exclusion and the demonization of Canadians based on their national origin or their religious beliefs, both of which are at odds with Canadian values.

BDS has already failed. Boycotts of Israeli companies are ineffective and, time and again, have only mobilized the Jewish and pro-Israeli communities to buy the very products targeted for boycott. Despite calls for BDS, the Israeli economy has experienced immense growth, as have business, academic, and cultural ties between Israelis and Canadians.

Even more so, BDS hurts those it claims to be helping.

Kristin Lindow, senior vice president at Moody's Investors Service, and Moody's lead analyst for Israel, has pointed out this very fact. She made this point in an interview with *Forbes* magazine. She said:

● (1530)

> The impact of BDS is more psychological than real so far and has had no discernible impact on Israeli trade or the broader economy...the sanctions do run the risk of hurting the Palestinian economy, which is much smaller and poorer than that of Israel, as seen in the case of SodaStream.

I would like to move away from the politics of the Israeli-Palestinian relations for a moment, to bring to the attention of the House the economics of the relationship between the two.

Regardless of what our personal thoughts are on Israel or Palestine, the numbers speak for themselves.

Israel, with a population of just eight million people, has a GDP of just under $300 billion. The Palestinian Territories, with a population of four million people, has a GDP of $11 billion.

Israeli sales to the Palestinian Authority were $4.3 billion, about 5% of Israeli exports, which is less than 2% of the Israeli GDP.

In 2012, Palestinian sales to Israel accounted for 81% of Palestinian exports. Palestinian purchases from Israel were two-thirds of total Palestinian imports.

Palestine enjoys a trade surplus with Israel that has tripled over the past several years. Such trade flow asymmetry shows Palestine needs Israel, that the BDS crowd would impair economic ties between these areas, which is something that would hurt Palestinians.

Additionally, despite evidence that trade actually brings people closer together and closer to the ultimate goal of peace, BDS supporters want to obliterate the vast trade surplus Israel extends to Palestine and offer nothing in its place, something that would damage relations between Israelis and Palestinians and something that would lessen peace in the region.

While I know some members in the House may claim that the economic benefits Palestinians receive are grossly overstated, even the Palestinian National Authority's newspaper *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida* found that salaries and benefits were vastly higher across the board for Palestinians who worked for the Israeli companies. Why? Because Israel does not discriminate.

Israel and Israelis alike do not care where people come from, their religion, or their societal group. Instead, they focus on the hard work, perseverance, and diligence that individuals bring to the job. Israeli companies open doors for Palestinians and provide opportunities for them, despite the political conflicts that may be ongoing.

I know some members may find the arguments being presented to be rather one-sided. I will quote a gentleman, who has been quoted earlier today, Bassem Eid, a Palestinian human rights activist, political analyst, and commentator on Palestinian domestic affairs. He wrote an article on the BDS movement and how it did not in any way quell the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Part of his article states:

> Unfortunately, almost all of those so ostensibly dedicated to finding a solution have their own agendas, and these may not be to the advantage of either Palestinians or Israelis. A prime case in point is the boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) movement. As a Palestinian dedicated to working for peace and reconciliation between my people and our Israeli neighbors, I do not believe that the BDS advocates are helping our cause. On the contrary, they are just creating more hatred, enmity, and polarization....
>
> There is no connection between the tactics and objectives of the BDS movement and the on-the-ground realities of the Middle East. Israelis continue to come to the West Bank to do business, and most Palestinians continue to buy Israeli goods. Indeed, if you ask Palestinians what they want, they'll tell you they want jobs, secure education, and health.

He goes on to say:

> BDS spokespeople justify calling for boycotts that will result in increased economic hardships for the Palestinians by asserting that Palestinians are willing to suffer such deprivations in order to achieve their freedom. It goes without saying that they themselves live in comfortable circumstances elsewhere in the world and will not suffer any such hardship. It would seem, in fact, that the BDS movement in its determination to oppose Israel is prepared to fight to the last drop of Palestinian blood. As a Palestinian who actually lives in east Jerusalem and hopes to build a better life for his family and his community, this is the kind of "pro-Palestinian activism" we could well do without. For our own sake, we need to reconcile with our Israeli neighbors, not reject and revile them.

Israel is among the freest and most democratic nations in the world. It is certainly the freest and most democratic nation in the Middle East.

That is why our Conservative caucus is putting forward this motion, a motion calling upon the House to support Israel by rejecting boycott, divestment, and sanctions and condemning organizations that promote this ludicrous movement.

● (1535)

As the only liberal democracy in the Middle East, Israel reflects the values and beliefs that we Canadians hold near and dear to our hearts, values like respect for a democratic role, tolerance of a multi-racial and multi-religious society, and respect for the rule of law. Israel's Arab citizens enjoy more rights than Arabs in any other country in the world. They serve in the Knesset, Israel's version of our Parliament, the judiciary, foreign service, and in all facets of Israeli society.

Sadly some Canadian universities—

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The time has expired for the member's remarks. We will now go to questions and comments.

The hon. member for Mount Royal.

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would note that one of the things that is very interesting is that Arab women in Israel got the right to vote when Israel became independent in 1948 before Arab women were allowed to vote in any Arab state.

I know my hon. colleague did not get the chance to quite finish what he was going to say. Would he like to tell us what he would have said had he been able to wrap up?

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Mr. Speaker, I wish I could have more questions like that, perhaps from my own family as opposed to being told to just be quiet.

I strongly encourage all members of the House to support this motion condemning the BDS movement. Supporting the motion will send a signal to Canadians and the world that we as a nation stand tall with our friend and ally, Israel, a nation of peace, prosperity, tolerance, and one that has a track record for sound human rights.

The member is right. Arabs, minorities, gays, Christian minorities, Yazidis, Maronites, all enjoy rights and privileges in Israel that are not enjoyed anywhere else in Middle Eastern countries. It is one of the reasons why I and my colleagues, and plenty of members across the way, support that country and the motion to denounce the BDS movement.

Mr. Bob Bratina (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure, as the mayor of Hamilton, to entertain a delegation of Israeli mayors. Some were Jewish and some were Muslim. I still have a commemorative plate from the mayor of Zemer, an Arabic-speaking Muslim, who came with a delegation, as I have said, of both Jewish and Muslim mayors to the city of Hamilton.

I want to reflect on my hon. colleague's remarks about the hardships that some people are willing to impose on other people. The discussions we had dealt with co-operation among those Israeli municipalities of both Jewish and Muslim origins in terms of the mayors and the populations. Would the member across the way comment on the sensitivity in Israel of outside oppressive acts which would tend to disrupt a society that is moving toward a peaceful existence?

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Mr. Speaker, obviously it is a very difficult situation over there, and Israel has a role to play in the peace movement.

In my community, working with my friend Rabbi Daniel Friedman, the people from our local mosque and Christian churches in our area, there is desire among the interfaith group to work together for peace and move forward. I very much think the path the member's associates from Israel are taking is the way to go: working together, working toward peace and prosperity for their people, and without outside influence.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, one of the arguments we have heard against this motion was from those who claimed that somehow it would limit freedom of speech. Yet, in the House in 2006 and 2010, we had motions where the House strongly expressed a disagreement with things that were published, in one case in a newspaper and another case in a magazine.

We know there is a difference between limiting freedom of speech on the one hand, but on the other hand, the House expressing itself strongly on behalf of shared values.

Could the member share a bit about why the motion does not actually violate freedom of speech and really highlight that distinction between something that limits freedom of speech on the one hand but something else, such that this motion is, which is the House expressing itself in a collective way about the problems of the BDS movement?

● (1540)

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Mr. Speaker, the BDS movement is not an issue of free speech; it is an issue of promoting hate.

It is defining a very specific defined line between public discourse, which we are enjoying here in the House today, and what is promoted by the BDS. We have seen it in universities and we have seen it on the streets, where the BDS movement shuts down all discourse.

It claims to speak for freedom of speech, when in fact it is used to shout down people who wish to speak on it. It is used to prevent students at universities from speaking and expressing their own free will.

Hon. Jason Kenney (Calgary Midnapore, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as I am rising for the first time in this place since the last general election, I would like to begin by thanking my constituents in Calgary Midnapore who have given me the great honour of representing them for the seventh time in this place, previously in the constituency of Calgary Southeast, many of whose members I now represent in the new electoral district of Calgary Midnapore.

As well, I would like to congratulate you on your re-election and re-nomination to the august post of Deputy Speaker. I would also like to congratulate the member who preceded me, the member for Edmonton West, on his thoughtful remarks.

[*Translation*]

The motion now before the House states:

> That, given Canada and Israel share a long history of friendship as well as economic and diplomatic relations, the House reject the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, which promotes the demonization and delegitimization of the State of Israel, and call upon the government to condemn any and all attempts by Canadian organizations, groups or individuals to promote the BDS movement, both here at home and abroad.

One reason that today's motion is so important is that the BDS movement represents a new wave of anti-Semitism, the most pernicious form of hatred in the history of humanity.

[*English*]

Anti-Semitism is the most durable and pernicious form of hatred in human history. That is why we, as parliamentarians in this liberal democracy, are called upon to reject and condemn these manifestations of the new anti-Semitism.

We are all familiar with what is sometimes called the old anti-Semitism, traditional anti-Semitism, which was sadly expressed through much of European history against the Jewish people and led to pogroms and ultimately created the ideological backdrop for the Shoah, the Nazi attempt to eradicate the Jewish people from the face of the earth.

Sadly, in recent decades and years, we have seen the development of a new form of anti-Semitism, which often takes the form of a kind of ideological fusion between movements of the extreme left and Islamist movements that seek, together, to obliterate the Jewish democratic State of Israel as a representation of what some call the "collective Jew".

This is not the first time that our House has taken up these issues and, indeed, I am pleased to say that I played some small role in helping to bring together parliamentarians internationally to Ottawa through the Inter-parliamentary Coalition for Combating Antisemitism. We hosted a gathering of parliamentarians from some 54 countries in 2010 to grapple with these questions.

Further to that, an all-party panel was created, the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism, which held exhaustive hearings across the country and here in Ottawa for the better part of two years, of which the member formerly of Lanark—Carleton and the former Liberal member Mario Silva were co-chairs. I would like to commend them for their work and recommend the report they submitted to the House in 2010 as an essential reference point for the reality of anti-Semitism and, in particular, its expression in the boycott, divestment, and sanction campaign.

One of the questions that this motion begs is this. What is anti-Semitism? The Inter-parliamentary Coalition for Combating Anti-semitism produced the Ottawa protocol, which I was pleased to endorse as a minister of citizenship, immigration, and multiculturalism on behalf of the Government of Canada. We were, parenthetically, the first and only executive branch of a government in the world to have done so.

That report adopted the working definition of anti-Semitism that has been proposed by bodies in the European Union that have studied the phenomenon of the new anti-Semitism.

● (1545)

This comes from the EUMC and has been adopted by our own parliamentarians in the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism. Let me quote in part its definition of anti-Semitism:

> Contemporary examples of anti-Semitism in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:...
>
> Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination (e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavour).
>
> Applying double standards by requiring of it behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation....
>
> Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.

The ICCA and the Canadian equivalent went on to say that: "Criticism of Israel is not [in and of itself] antisemitic, and saying so is wrong".

Indeed, if criticism of Israel were anti-Semitic, then there would be anti-Semitism expressed in the Israeli Knesset every single day in that pluralistic democracy.

This I say to my friends in the NDP who have reservations about this motion. Criticism of Israel is not anti-Semitic and saying so is wrong, but singling Israel out for selective condemnation and opprobrium, let alone denying its right to exist or seeking its destruction, is discriminatory and hateful, and not saying so is dishonest.

Through this motion hopefully we can collectively say that singling Israel out for selective condemnation and opprobrium and denying its right to exist, or seeking its destruction, is discriminatory and hateful and is a virulent expression of the new anti-Semitism.

How do we see this manifested? Sadly, in many of our university campuses it is expressed in the so-called Israel apartheid week. The member for Edmonton West talked about people getting shouted down on campus if they dare to defend the democratic nature of that Jewish state.

I have travelled campuses across the country to encourage Jewish students and other allies and supporters of the democratic State of Israel, and I have been harassed physically, shouted down, and rendered unable to speak against Israel apartheid week at Canadian university campuses.

It is not just deplorable to find passionate, neo-Marxist undergrads, who perhaps do not know better, being whipped into a frenzy in their hatred for the Jewish state, but it is deplorable to see tenured professors at too many of our academic institutions encouraging and inciting this form of collective anti-Semitism through, in part, the academic boycott movement. That is why I am proud to say that, in the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism report of 2010, recommendation 9 reads:

> The Inquiry Panel agrees with the conclusion of the UK Inquiry that "calls to boycott contact with academics working in Israel are an assault on academic freedom and intellectual exchange."

My time is drawing short, so let me say how important action is, not just symbols such as this condemnatory motion before us today. The previous government, of which I was proud to be a member, took the position that we must reflect a zero tolerance approach toward expressions of anti-Semitism, in part by removing public funding from organizations that give voice to such sentiments that support the BDS movement.

That is why, as minister of citizenship and immigration, I removed government funding from Palestine House in Mississauga and from the Canadian Arab Federation, which had been, under the previous government, receiving settlement funding to integrate newcomers but whose leading members had repeatedly given expression to the most vile anti-Semitic sentiments, including support for the BDS movement. I sincerely hope that the new government does not revert to funding such organizations. I think there has been some ambiguity about that.

● (1550)

Finally, for those who are interested in practical individual ways that they can demonstrate their solidarity for one of the great underdogs of history, the Jewish state, which rose out of the ashes of the Shoah as the final refuge and home of the Jewish people, whenever we see a boycott against Israeli products, we should launch our own "buycott". That is what I have done.

[*Translation*]

Le Marcheur is a shop on Saint-Denis, in Montreal. That is where Amir Khadir started a boycott. I go to that store to buy my shoes. When there was a boycott against SodaStream, that was the first time I bought SodaStream products. One way for average Canadians to reject this campaign of hate is to do the opposite and support Israeli producers in their efforts to create a prosperous, free, and democratic society.

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate a number of the comments from the member. There is an issue on which I would ask for his thoughts. The member for Mount Royal spent a great deal of effort trying to explain to the House how it is that Israel as a nation is actually being singled out by the BDS movement. That, in itself, speaks volumes in terms of the whole anti-Semitic approach that many actually have with regard to the BDS movement.

My question to the member is this. Can he provide his thoughts or comment on how Israel is the country being singled out by this movement and how that, ultimately, promotes racial issues in this whole debate?

Hon. Jason Kenney: Mr. Speaker, as I have said, as our own Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism and as the Inter-parliamentary Coalition for Combating Antisemitism have all said, criticism of individual policies of any Israeli government does not and cannot constitute anti-Semitism. However, when a double standard is applied, when such criticism is solely and singularly focused on the only Jewish state in the world, when such organizations are obsessed with condemning, delegitimizing, and marginalizing the only Jewish country in the world and when they do not direct similar criticism about policies to other governments with manifestly worse human rights records, there we see the clear evidence of a double standard. There we see the anti-Semitism of treating Israel as a collective Jew.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the BDS or Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement is a citizens' response that is non-violent and not anti-Semitic. It does not target Jews for being Jewish. It targets questionable policies of the State of Israel. For example, this could include all the successive governments' policies on the Palestinian people: occupation, colonization, blockade.

The Bloc Québécois recognizes boycotting as a democratic right of people who want to criticize a state's policies in a non-violent way. Disagreeing with the colonization of Palestine, for example, is not anti-Semitic or anti-Zionist. It is a legitimate political opinion that one can agree with or not.

There has been a lot of talk about demonization. Are we not in the process of demonizing anyone who does not think the way we do?

● (1555)

Hon. Jason Kenney: Mr. Speaker, quite frankly, to say that the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement is not anti-Zionist is absolute nonsense. This movement believes that Israel does not have the right to exist as a Jewish state, with a Jewish identity.

I find it appalling that a provincial ally of the Bloc Québécois, Amir Khadir, the co-president of Québec solidaire, a party that unfortunately has some NDPers among its members, organizes a protest every weekend in front of Le Marcheur, a shoe store on Saint-Denis Street, because the store sells a product made in Israel.

By the way, MNA Amir Khadir's constituent is a Jew, a Canadian Jew. I find it appalling that a Canadian politician is organizing the boycott of a store in his own riding because it sells goods made by Jewish men and women. If that is not anti-Semitic, I do not know the meaning of the term.

[*English*]

Mr. Murray Rankin (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to rise to speak on this important motion.

I wish to announce at the outset that I will be speaking in opposition to the motion. I do so for a fundamental reason, because it proposes to have the government place limits upon what topics Canadians can debate, which I believe strongly is absolutely not an appropriate role for government. Let me examine the text of the motion to demonstrate why I believe that is so.

After the preamble's language talking about the boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement, it then asks the government to do the following: "to condemn any and all attempts by Canadian organizations, groups or individuals to promote the BDS movement, both here at home and abroad."

Let me state at the outset that I am not speaking about the BDS or Israel when I speak against the motion. I have no quarrel with the preamble's language about the positive relations between Canada and Israel. I embrace that. This is not a question of foreign policy before us in the motion. It calls upon us to condemn individuals who promote a certain position.

Let me be clear on the BDS movement from the outset. The New Democratic Party does not support BDS. The New Democratic Party does not support policies on boycotting, sanctioning, or divesting from Israel. As long ago as 2010, the late Jack Layton said:

> ...our party has never, nor would we ever deny that Israel has not only the right to exist...in secure borders in a safe context and similar with this BDS proposal (the Israel boycott) this is not party policy and we don't support it.

We do not think it is the job of Parliament to tell Canadians how they should express themselves. They have the right in a free and democratic society to make their own choices and to exercise free expression.

Everyone knows what the Conservatives are trying to do in tabling this motion. They are trying to exploit genuine foreign policy differences among Canadians and use wedge politics in the most egregious way possible.

One can strongly oppose the BDS movement, but to say that our government should apparently take measures to condemn Canadians who speak out against a particular policy is something entirely different. I am angry and saddened by what the Conservatives are doing here. They are exploiting a highly charged foreign policy issue to divide Canadians for partisan purpose. It saddens me and it angers me.

We have spent the entire day dealing with this opposition motion. Would it not be better if we worked together to fight racism and anti-Semitism and intimidation on our university campuses? That is what we should be worrying about. We should be providing positive solutions to these legitimate problems rather than talking about ways to divide Canadians in the House.

Today I had the honour to join my friend Mr. Irwin Cotler, a former member of Parliament for Mount Royal, as we started an all-party Raoul Wallenberg parliamentary caucus to deal with, among other things, the elimination of racism and anti-Semitism. This caucus is in honour of a wonderful humanitarian, Raoul Wallenberg, who disappeared after the Second World War. The group is named in his honour. I am so proud to represent the New Democratic Party in this organization.

That is positive action. That is dealing with real problems as Canadians work together across party lines to do what Mr. Cotler taught us we can do so well in Parliament, rather than debating a motion that would condemn free speech. Let me explain why I say that.

I looked at a couple of dictionary definitions when I saw this motion. I looked at the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* and in it the word "condemn" means to declare to be reprehensible, wrong, or evil, usually after weighing evidence and without reservation.

What does the word "promote" mean, because we cannot forget we are condemning people who promote a certain position? The Cambridge University Dictionary says that the word "promote" means to encourage people to support something, that is, to promote.

I am a lawyer. I am proud as a Canadian of our Charter of Rights and Freedoms, section 2 of which guarantees all of us the freedom of thought, belief, opinion, and expression subject only to such reasonable limits as can be demonstrated as prescribed by law that can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society. That is what we should be talking about, the violation of those core charter principles in this motion, and I say it is simply wrong.

● (1600)

What Canadians have done is passed sensitively balanced laws to address hate speech and other restrictions on free speech in our country, which are set out in the Criminal Code and the Human Rights Act, to deal with the propagation of hate. We have set those delicate balances. Our courts have addressed them in cases like Keegstra and Zundel, and we have come up with jurisprudence that Canadians should be proud of. In some cases they have struck down sections of the Criminal Code, and in others they have sustained them. We have the balance right.

Freedom of expression is a sacred value. After the Second World War, the nations of the world came together in the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was promulgated. Article 19 includes these powerful words, to which Canada has subscribed:

> Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Of course there are restrictions on free speech in certain circumstances, such as libel, slander, trade secrets, and privacy. We know they exist in every democratic country. These are very limited in the United States because of its first amendment. In 1969, in the case of Brandenburg v. Ohio, the U.S. Supreme Court said that the "clear and present danger" test that used to exist no longer applied to one's right even to speak openly of violent acts and revolution, unless there were an imminent danger of lawless action. Therefore, the Americans have the high-water mark in the world. They do not have the kind of balanced hate speech provisions that we have come up with as Canadians.

In 1966, Professor Maxwell Cohen of McGill University submitted a report to this House on hate propaganda, which was a very sensitively balanced report, long before the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It recommended legislation to combat hate propaganda, and it did so in a balanced way.

There are four sections of the Criminal Code that address the issue of hate propaganda, if I can call it that. The word "promoting" is used in section 318 of the Criminal Code, just as it is in the Conservative motion, for example, with respect to the public incitement of genocide of an identifiable group. Advocating or promoting that is a crime in Canada. It would have never passed muster in the United States, but Canada did it differently. We came up with a balanced solution to these problems. There are other sections as well that came up in both the Keegstra and Zundel cases.

As we all know, Keegstra was a teacher in Alberta who promoted vicious anti-Semitism in his classroom. Essentially, the more anti-Semitic propaganda the students could spout back at the teacher the better grades they got. He was convicted, and that conviction was upheld by the Supreme Court of Canada as a legitimate restriction on free speech. I am proud of that decision.

In the Zundel case, Zundel was accused of spreading false news. There is a section of the Criminal Code that has since been held unconstitutional as a result of that case.

My point with respect to all of this is a simple one, that Canadians have chosen to carefully and delicately balance free speech issues. We have a charter that puts meat on the bones and backstops the defences available in the Criminal Code.

However, this motion would simply have us baldly say that we as parliamentarians should "condemn" those Canadians who promote views with which we disagree. I cannot support such a proposition. If we want to do these things, we have every right as parliamentarians to amend our Criminal Code, balance it carefully with our Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and come up with laws that work for Canada. However, to baldly say that we should simply "condemn", to use the words of the motion, those views with which we disagree, and to think that we should be thinking along those lines, is something that all parliamentarians should look at with horror.

● (1605)

John Milton, back in the 17th century, made an impassioned plea for freedom of expression, even tolerance of falsehood. He said this: "Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties."

Later, in the 19th century, John Stewart Mill argued that "there ought to exist the fullest liberty of professing and discussing, as a matter of ethical conviction, any doctrine, however immoral it may be considered."

However, we are prepared to pass a motion on a controversial subject to condemn people for promoting speech with which we disagree. That, to me, is simply un-Canadian and contrary to the careful balancing that we have done over time in this place. We should be proud of our legacy and we should not depart from it for a moment, unless we are prepared to put into question the delicate balances that we have created after the Cohen report, after the hate propaganda laws, and after the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Only then can we talk about whether we want to curb free expression further in this country.

We have, as I mentioned, not only the Criminal Code but also human rights tribunals. The Canadian Human Rights Act used to have a section in it, section 13, the "hate speech provision", as it was called. It was criticized by free speech advocates. Maybe it went too far, maybe it did not, but it was repealed. A Conservative member from Alberta in 2013 brought a motion forward. The House passed a law and basically repealed this particular section 13. It dealt with the communication of hate messages by telephone or on the Internet. Parliamentarians looked at it and said it went too far and did not strike a balance, and they struck it down. The Conservatives are all in favour of free speech until they are not, and that is what is troubling about this particular measure.

I was in the last Parliament, thinking about how the Conservatives went after birdwatchers. They were concerned that these charities were doing too much advocacy work of the kind that did not suit the agenda of the Conservatives. To the great consternation of many Canadians who came to my door, the Conservatives continued to do that. We are looking to the new government. There is a promise that it is going to change that. The Conservatives did not like advocacy of that kind. It was against their particular proposals, insofar as those activities maybe took issue with some of the Conservative environmental agenda, or the like.

They have been severely criticized. In fact, there is a study before the Information Commissioner of Canada right now about muzzling scientists and preventing their free speech because they might be using research and going to the media, which they should not be doing. That was the kind of free speech that the Conservatives did not like. Today, the Conservatives are condemning another kind of free speech.

Another Conservative, whom I have always admired, was John Diefenbaker who gave Canada the Bill of Rights. In 1960, here is what that Conservative Prime Minister said:

> I am Canadian, a free Canadian, free to speak without fear, free to worship God in my own way, free to stand for what I think right, free to oppose what I believe wrong, free to choose those who govern my country. This heritage of freedom I pledge to uphold for myself and all mankind.

That was a Conservative Prime Minister in 1960. I wonder how John Diefenbaker would feel about what we are debating today.

Before I conclude, I just want to reiterate that on the merits of the BDS issue, we believe as New Democrats that a just peace in the Middle East is possible and that it is our responsibility to work constructively to help secure that. We do not believe that the difficult task of achieving peace, with which we want Canada to be engaged fully, is about scoring political points or dividing Canadians. We think those policies are wrong. Nevertheless, we believe that Canadians have the right to speak out as they see fit on issues of public debate. However, what we will not tolerate is intimidation on campuses. What we will not tolerate is restrictions on free speech at the same time. What we will not tolerate is anti-Semitism and racism.

● (1610)

I would love this House to work positively to deal with this issue. The United Nations has asked us to. We can make a contribution. Given our multicultural commitment, Canada is a shining example to the world of how we can do this. However, to divide people along lines of foreign policy issues and so forth is disconcerting and saddening.

I have personally visited Israel, Palestine, the West Bank, and other areas, and I have seen how difficult the task can be. However, I want my country to play a considered role in trying to find a two-state solution that works in that country. I am not naive enough to think it is easy, but I am not naive to think that Canada has not made those kinds of contributions in the past and can do so again.

As I said earlier, there is the new Raoul Wallenberg all-party caucus that is going to be dealing with issues of this sort, not just defending political prisoners abroad and their freedom of speech, which is being restricted in so many areas. The centre that Irwin Cotler has been involved in which is just starting in Canada, the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights, is an example of parties of different kinds coming together to combat racism, hatred, and anti-Semitism by promoting education, awareness, research and advocacy, and co-operating with universities and academic institutions to address issues of racism and anti-Semitism. These are tools that are so much more important.

As we found the blunt instrument of the Criminal Code was not enough to deal with racism, we passed human rights codes from coast to coast to coast to allow us to find ways to address discrimination on the basis of race and the like. This is the sort of way that we can do better than simply using the blunt instruments that are in the Criminal Code and the like.

In conclusion, I oppose a motion that would "condemn" Canadians who "promote" certain views, even if those views are not views that I share. It is not the role of government or Parliament. The idea of condemning Canadians for expressing their views goes against our fundamental freedoms. I am proud to stand with my NDP colleagues to vote against the motion.

I resent that we are using our time as parliamentarians to deal with the motion as opposed to addressing racism, anti-Semitism, and intimidation. I wish we were not here in that context, but we are. I just want to say again that I am proud to stand in favour of free expression.

● (1615)

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, frankly, I am exhausted after listening to that speech.

Just moments ago, I listened to my good friend, the member for Mount Royal, speak so eloquently about this not being a partisan issue. I myself believe that this is not a partisan issue. Therefore, it is really important to listen to this member speak about it and remember the human rights that we are discussing. I thank the member over there so much, because he brought to us a real lesson and something that we should admire. I appreciate all of his words.

Omar Barghouti, the founder of the BDS movement, and ironically an alumnus at the Tel Aviv University in Israel, has come out against a two-state solution and actively advocates for a violent uprising by any means against Israeli citizens. Can the member justify the lack of condemnation against the movement in light of what this movement truly stands for at its core?

Mr. Murray Rankin: Mr. Speaker, Canadians have an obligation to speak up for free expression. I can condemn views with which I disagree, but that is not what the question is. The question is whether we as a government are being called upon to "condemn any and all attempts by...groups or individuals to promote [a certain issue]...both here at home and abroad".

That is what I am concerned about. The words I focused on were words like "promote" and "condemn". That is about free speech, and that is what I was trying to say during my remarks.

Mr. Arnold Chan (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my friend for Victoria for his speech, and I have a significant amount of respect for the position that he advocates in this House.

To be frank, I too am struggling with the motion that is before this House. I want to know if the member would be supportive of this resolution if we simply deleted the last part of the motion before the House, which reads, "call upon the government to condemn any and all attempts by Canadian organizations, groups or individuals to promote the BDS movement".

I think we all agree that we have opposition to BDS, but it is the latter part of the motion, if that part were deleted, would the member and his caucus colleagues support the motion?

Mr. Murray Rankin: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the suggestion and comments of my hon. friend from Scarborough. We have a lot in common and I appreciate very much his thoughts.

The problem with doing so, I think, is just from a legal point of view, that it is the gravamen of the section. After the initial language, it talks about calling upon the government to condemn thus and so and individuals who promote that.

It seems to me that is the burden of the motion. That is why we are here primarily, after the hortatory language, with which I totally agree, by the way. That is why it is difficult to sever it in any way that would make any sense and leave any meaning on the table. That is why I found it so difficult to accept the idea of simply severing it.

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am struck by my colleague's eloquence and thank him very much for a very strong speech.

A couple of things struck me. First, I am surprised the Liberals have indicated they will support what is a badly worded motion and is really doing a disservice to the House that we have to waste time. I would much rather see more government bills. We have not seen any of those yet, so I am hoping that we will get an idea of what the government's agenda is very soon.

I was trying to figure out the mechanism by which a government would condemn an individual's questions. What is the mechanism? Say this motion passes, and it looks like the government side will support this, what is the specific mechanism? How are we to condemn individuals for supporting or opposing a particular motion? Does the hon. member have any idea or is it just kind of a poppycock motion on which we have wasted a whole Thursday?

Mr. Murray Rankin: Mr. Speaker, I struggled with the question that my hon. friend posed. I do not know the instrument by which the Conservatives believe we should action this motion.

Do we put a newspaper ad with the Government of Canada logo on it? I do not know. It is unclear, it is vague and it goes back to the point with which I started my remarks, not that I wish to be provocative, not that I wish to term what I fear has become a partisan debate. This is about trying to divide Canadians for political purposes. I resent, and I am angry and saddened by where we are as a consequence.

● (1620)

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my friend's speech was indeed very eloquent and passionate. Sadly, it was very wrong as well at law, which surprises me from this learned member who is a lawyer.

He would know well that the Keegstra case of the Supreme Court of Canada, which dealt with anti-Semitism itself, said that there can be a reasonable limit to free speech when there is a promotion of hatred toward an identifiable group. Why he is really wrong is not the Supreme Court case, it is that this is not limiting freedom. This is actually rejecting and condemning.

As parliamentarians who represent all Canadians of all faiths, we have a duty to condemn conduct that is clearly the thin edge of the wedge, promoting hatred toward an identifiable group by dressing it up in other ways.

Would that member tell this House, especially given his background, working in national security, how some of these legitimate fronts to hate groups, like a business boycott, are actually the mechanisms to try to normalize hate?

Mr. Murray Rankin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend, a fellow lawyer. I know he has studied these issues as well.

The Keegstra case, the 1990 Supreme Court of Canada case, was a four-three split in the Supreme Court in which, as I thought I said, the Supreme Court upheld Canada's hate speech restrictions. There was a strong philosophical difference between the judges in that case.

As for section 2(d) of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act, which he just referenced about subversion and other issues of speech, there is a careful balance that was the subject of months of debate in this place before they got it right. That is what I say needs to be done in this context as well.

If we want to criminalize speech, let us do it right in the Criminal Code. We have done it before. Let us use the charter and let us find the right balance rather than a bald statement about why this is bad.

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Victoria for his statements. In many respects we agree on a lot of issues. We obviously do not agree on this one.

He talked about Brandenburg, but Brandenburg was trying to put a guy who was at a Nazi rally in prison for one to 10 years. Keegstra was an attempt to put somebody in prison for speech.

This is where we are going all wrong. The Conservative motion that was put forward, with which I agree, is not trying to put anyone in prison. It is not trying to say that speech goes in the Criminal Code. It is simply trying to say that we denounce speech or condemn speech that is, to me, anti-Semitic, racist, or xenophobic, and I think that is perfectly appropriate.

The hon. member said, and in that I agree, "We will defend to the death somebody's right to say something". If the hon. member had in this wording, instead of "BDS" the word "anti-Semitism" or "racism" or "homophobia", would he then also be against the motion?

Mr. Murray Rankin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend and respect enormously the contribution he made to this debate earlier today.

I want to say, in general terms, my reference to the Brandenburg case was simply to point out the high-water mark or the low-water mark of the United States by contrast to Canada, which, after the Maxwell Cohen recommendations, came up with a very balanced, thoughtful arrangement, which was upheld in Keegstra in one case and struck down in Zündel in another.

I am saying that to simply have a bald statement condemning speech is wrong. That is not the way Canadians do business. That is why I thought I needed to ground this motion in a broader description of the Canadian legal system, so that Canadians would know that freedom of expression remains a protected value in our country, but that if there is violence involved or if there are other aspects, yes, we should condemn it. We have, and we have laws to deal with it, not a bald statement about views with which we disagree.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I often like to say that all people are democrats when they win, but the true test of democrats is how they act when they lose. It is easy to support free speech with which we agree, but the true test of whether we actually believe in the right to free speech is how we act and react to speech with which we disagree.

I am listening to this argument that says this is just a motion to have the government condemn a belief or expression of a Canadian and we are not actually doing anything. The road to erosion of rights always begins with a wedge in the door. It first is about condemning; next, it is about restricting; then it becomes about punishing; then it becomes about banning. It is always a slippery slope. I reject this notion that by just having the government condemn something, we do not start down a road where the government, as is called for by this motion, starts to tell Canadians what they can and cannot agree with.

I would like to ask my friend this. Does he agree with the positions expressed by some members of the House that merely having the government condemn things is a harmless act of government?

● (1625)

Mr. Murray Rankin: Mr. Speaker, that is a thoughtful question. It is, indeed, problematic. "Slippery slope" is an old cliché, but I do worry about it. If we start making blanket condemnations of views that are impossible or, indeed, abhorrent in certain places, it is a slippery slope because then people will ask what we are going to do about it. An earlier question raised the same thing, how we are going to action this particular condemnation.

The question is an excellent one, with which I agree.

The Deputy Speaker: It is my duty pursuant to Standing Order 38 to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, Indigenous Affairs; the hon. member for Timmins—James Bay, Indigenous Affairs.

Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise in this important debate on a motion today. I will be splitting my time with my colleague from Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock.

Despite what was just said in a question and comment by a friend in the NDP, this is not about a motion that might exist in the future. When we are having a debate in Parliament, it is on the motion on the order paper today, not some hypothetical slippery slope that they would prefer to debate.

What we are debating, clearly are two central things: that as parliamentarians we are not crafting new law but debating an important subject for the nation, and the motion brought forward by the Conservative opposition today in relation to the State of Israel, an ally and friend. It has two central elements. First is our traditional historic ties of friendship and alliance with the State of Israel from its early days, and I will explore some of that in my speech today.

However, the pith of this motion, the critical part of it, was carefully missed by my friend from Victoria. I have the utmost respect for the MP from Victoria. He is a smart gentleman. We practised at the same law firm for a time. However, he wanted to debate a motion that did not exist, as if this was about barring speech. This is not about barring speech; this is about the responsibilities that parliamentarians have to condemn actions that are a cover for hate speech. That is what this motion intends to do. The words are not banning or eliminating free speech. If the hon. member for Victoria and his colleagues looked at the motion, they would see the language is that we "reject" and "condemn" the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement, which in many ways has been a very clever front for anti-Semitic propaganda around the world.

It is sad that some organizations, some groups in Canada, even some labour movement leaders and folks, have supported what is really the thin edge of the wedge of hate. If there is a slippery slope at all here, it is not the slippery slope of this motion; it is the slippery slope of tolerating this type of conduct by the boycott movement. Words like apartheid Israel and things like that are the slippery slope, allowing people to mask their anti-Semitism in some sort of boycott language as if this is a business transaction. In many ways, this movement has been an attempt by people who are opposed to the very presence and existence of the State of Israel to promote intolerance, to promote the economic disruption of a country that happens to be the only true democracy in a region of the world that desperately needs more democracy, more freedom, and more respect for the rule of law and rights.

With regard to this movement, as parliamentarians we have the ability—and hopefully all whips will allow each MP—to not just state our views, but on the motion itself to stand and say whether we condemn this type of conduct, which is the thin edge of the wedge of hate. There is no other way to describe it. It is discrimination and intolerance dressed up as trade sanctions and economic language, in many ways like some groups in the United States that for years tried to legitimatize a front for groups like the Ku Klux Klan and others, having people run for office, clothed in the appearance of debate when it was the advancement of a message that singled out a group of people for hatred and discrimination.

As parliamentarians on all sides of this House, and I am glad that the member for Mount Royal and others have called this what it is, it is our duty to say whether we do condemn this type of dressing up for anti-Semitism. I know that I and many of my colleagues on this side, and clearly many on the other side, see this for what it is. It is the thin edge of the wedge of discrimination.

● (1630)

This is the balance. This is not, as I said, about banning speech. However, our courts and our society have looked at this issue of free speech in the years since the charter. Section 1 of the charter is the attempt for our society and our courts to balance that fundamental freedom of freedom of speech, which is critical, with hate.

Where is the appropriate balance? Courts and jurists have looked at this and tried to strike the right balance when it comes to speech and when it comes to incarceration, as my friend from Mount Royal talked about. The courts have looked at this responsibly to say that we need a society that promotes the freedom of expression, even expression that turns the stomachs of others, provided it does not promote hatred directly against an identifiable group. That is free speech.

Our motion today is about condemning a movement that is dressing up hate speech. We are not banning it, but we are calling it for what it is. I think that is what parliamentarians have a duty to do for their constituents and for the free diverse society that we have. I remember in this place that the Aga Khan talked about how cosmopolitan Canada truly is as a beacon to the world, because of our diversity. People come here to embrace the freedoms and reject the conflicts and hate of other places in the world.

As parliamentarians, it is our duty to ensure that we do condemn, we do reject, we do point out movements that we think are disruptive to our cohesiveness as a diverse society.

The Keegstra case, which the Supreme Court looked at two decades ago, did look at this specific issue. Do members know what the issue was? It was once again anti-Semitism, which sadly is something we cannot stamp out in our society. This was related to a school teacher wilfully promoting conspiracy theories and ridiculous notions that promoted hatred toward the Jewish people. The Supreme Court balanced that fundamental expression issue two decades ago. Therefore, clearly we can balance the fact that parliamentarians can condemn and call conduct for what it is.

I said the motion has two things in the boycott, divestment and sanction movement, which I think many people in this House have said are discrimination and anti-Semitism by other means. It is a way that people are infiltrating the willingness to single out a group of people and promote hatred, whether it is on campuses, in groups, or through organizations. We should call this for what it is.

The other part of the motion today started off with our historic relationship with the State of Israel. It is a very long and proud relationship that I think bears notice in this debate. Canada was one of only 33 countries in the United Nations, in 1947, that supported the creation of what became the State of Israel. We should be proud of that fact, that we stood for friends, for people, particularly after the horrors of the Holocaust.

This is the second time that I will be talking about Lester Pearson in debate this week. My friends will be questioning my Conservative bona fides very soon. Lester Pearson came up in the discussion of withdrawal of the ISIS mission. Pearson would not have supported the move of this current Liberal government. Lester Pearson was the UN special committee chair that looked at issues related to the borders of the State of Israel. He was awarded the Medal of Valor and the Herzl Award for that role. That is good. We remember the shameful slogan that came from the time when Mackenzie King was prime minister. Sadly, it was sometimes said that it was King who said it. It was not Mr. King, but it was someone in his party who said that "none is too many", talking about accepting Jews into Canada who were fleeing persecution and ultimate death in Europe.

We should be proud that we are condemning such a viewpoint, such exclusion, and such discrimination today with this debate in the House. I was also very proud of the strong stance that the last government took with respect to our friend and ally in Israel.

● (1635)

As an ally, we do not flee our allies when international opinion and discrimination is swarming around them. We work with them. We trade with Israel and we share values with Israel. We protect areas of the world with Israel. We have to remember that friends and allies need to see Canada taking a leadership position. That is why we are here today, not to ban speech but to condemn veiled attempts at anti-Semitism.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let me repeat a question that I asked one of the member's colleagues, and that is in regard to the whole BDS issue. The movement has singled out the country of Israel. That in itself has raised the issue of a racial profile of a country in which Canadians from coast to coast to coast are very much concerned. It is maybe something in which we could be and should be concerned, as the member for Mount Royal emphasized a great deal, and justifiably so, on how the BDS is focused on one country. I am wondering if the member might want to provide some comments on that issue.

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary referenced comments today in debate by his colleague from Mount Royal. This is a singling out of one state, and by impact one people, which is really the veiled attempt here.

The irony of the BDS movement is the ultimate economic impact, if there is some. Fortunately, people see this for what it is, and it is not as successful as some of these groups might like. However, the people who could be ultimately hurt by such an economically skewed approach to attacking the State of Israel are Palestinians who work in some of the plants and facilities of these international companies that trade products around the world, including here in Canada.

We have heard the story of SodaStream and others that employ people of all faiths in Israel. That is what is exciting about the State of Israel. It is a democracy and it has rights for all. What I think we see with this movement is an attempt to single out and hurt a state, but behind that is singling out a religious faith and group of people. That is what should be condemned.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the sponsor of the motion, and I appreciate that one of the essences of the debate that has arisen today is that it allows us to focus on the issue of racism. That is something that every member in the House, from all parties, of course, deplores. One of the essences of racism is stereotyping. It is that whenever we adopt a position that attempts to brand a group of people with a certain conclusion, without any regard for the individuality or individual expression within that group, that is an essence of racism.

I am troubled by the element of that which is present in the motion, when it says "the House reject the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, which promotes the demonization and delegitimization of the State of Israel..." We attempt to say that every proponent, every Canadian, who might have a position on BDS and Israel is automatically branded and stereotyped as someone advocating the delegitimization and dehumanization of Israel.

I happen to know that it is not case. There are people who hold the belief. It is not one that I share, because I am not a proponent of the BDS movement. However, there could be a person, in good faith, who thinks that advocating economic sanctions against the Government of Israel as a means of pressuring it to take different foreign policy decisions, particularly in the occupied territories, may be a legitimate political action. It may not be that they are trying to dehumanize or delegitimize Israel; they are trying to pressure it—

● (1640)

The Deputy Speaker: I appreciate the hon. member, but we are running out of time and we have five minutes.

The hon. member for Durham.

Hon. Erin O'Toole: Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Vancouver Kingsway for talking about racism. Canada has to learn from our past. I am an Irish-Canadian. Probably the first group to be discriminated against was the Irish: "No Irish need apply". Then we saw it with Ukrainians, Japanese, Italians and Sikhs. We have seen discrimination, and that is something we should all condemn, which is sort of the language of the motion.

However, with the BDS movement, we see groups that really want to promote hate dressing it up. We saw similar efforts to tarnish the gay pride parade in Toronto by entering a float related to attacking the State of Israel. It had nothing to do with celebrating diversity, and the parade was about that. These groups are trying to use legitimate organizations, or covers, to promote their underlying objective, which is anti-Semitism and a rejection of the right of the State of Israel to exist. We should call these things what they are.

We have a tolerant and open society. People can have opinions on a whole range of things, and that is encouraged. However, when it is creeping into hate and discrimination, and we do not go so far in the motion to do anything like banning it, as some in the NDP suggest, it is a responsibility of parliamentarians to condemn a conduct that is fuelled at anti-Semitism and rejection of our ally.

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this important issue affects Canadians all across the country.

I would like to thank the member for Parry Sound—Muskoka and the member for Calgary Signal Hill for bringing the motion to the House.

As we all know, Canada and Israel have enjoyed a long-standing friendship since May 11, 1949, when formal diplomatic relations were established. This is undoubtedly due to the approximately 20,000 Canadians living in Israel and 350,000 members of the Canadian Jewish community. The strength of our relationship with Israel cannot be overstated.

Most recently, in 2014, our Conservative government sent a delegation, including the former prime minister along with six other ministers and Canadian business leaders, to Israel. During this visit, the former prime minister became the first sitting Canadian prime minister to address the Israeli Knesset. There are very few countries that share such a strong and lasting relationship as we do. As I mentioned earlier, this has gone on for almost 67 years now.

Let us take a long look at the trading relationship between our two nations. In 2014, Canada exported 449 million dollars' worth of goods and imported $1.1 billion worth. These exports and imports to Israel and to Canada provide crucial employment opportunities for Canadians right across the country, including for constituents in my riding.

Israel is a leader in innovation and technology. In fact, in 2015, six of the ten companies on *Forbes* top 10 health technology companies were Israeli.

Canada has signed numerous bilateral agreements with Israel, including, but not limited to, the Canada-Israel strategic partnership memorandum of understanding, an MOU on foreign military co-operation and public diplomacy co-operation, among many others. Negotiations to modernize and expand the Canada-Israel free trade agreement are ongoing.

Israel also has numerous agreements with provincial governments, including my home province of Ontario, and Saskatchewan.

It is because of this relationship that I encourage all members to support the motion, to reject the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement.

I will now specifically turn to the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement.

The BDS movement seeks to delegitimize and isolate and single out Israel from other countries across the world. It is an affront to Canadians by claiming a narrative that Israel is uniquely responsible for the Arab-Israeli conflict.

This movement to boycott Israel is an attack against the only liberal democracy in the Middle East and it completely disregards human rights offenders around the world.

The movement not only targets Israel politically, the movement targets the Israeli population, anywhere from pressuring consumers not to buy Israeli products, to calling on universities to cut ties with Israeli academia and for Israeli athletes to be banned from international sports competitions.

This movement is not pro-Palestine. It is not supportive of a two-state solution. It is just simply anti-Israel. By boycotting our relationship with Israel, this movement will not only negatively affect Israel, but also Canadians who rely on the importation and exportation of Israeli and Canadian goods.

This movement is anti-Semitic. It promotes anti-Semitism in Canada and abroad, it targets Israel and the Jewish community, and we as legislators must continue to fight against this. It is a form of discrimination based strictly on national origin. BDS activists call on boycotting people who come from the Jewish state. It is no way pro-Palestinian. It is just, again, anti-Israel.

The BDS movement is yet another message, as I said, for spreading anti-Semitism and advocating for the elimination of the Jewish state. It forces the blame of the Arab-Israeli conflict on a single actor, completely disregarding the multitude of issues and the actors involved.

It is clear that the intent of those in favour of BDS is not to resolve the conflict, but, again, as I pointed out, just to single out Israel.

BDS is a movement which seeks to target all Israelis without discretion. It isolates Israel and it serves as a means to collectively punish a diverse population.

We as legislators must recognize and reaffirm the State of Israel's right to exist and the right to self-defence.

● (1645)

As we all know, this movement has in fact been condemned by those of us on this side of the House and by members of the other side as well. Again, I encourage all members of the House to support the motion.

BDS undermines peace efforts and brings the Arab-Israeli conflict to Canada. It does nothing to bring the two sides of the conflict together, or promote peace or improve the quality of life for Palestinian citizens. We cannot allow Canadian businesses to be used for social exclusion and discrimination of people based on their national origin.

In the past, movements similar to BDS have been ineffective and historically have only mobilized the Jewish and pro-Israel community to buy the products that have been targeted. Israel's economy is continually growing, and we should be encouraging investment and growth opportunities for Canadian businesses rather than trying to restrict them.

The Canada-Israel relationship is one of Canada's strongest and most enduring, and it is for that reason that I once again call on all members of the House to support this motion.

To quote our former prime minister, the right hon. member for Calgary Heritage:

> In the democratic family of nations, Israel represents values which our government takes as articles of faith, and principles to drive our national life.
>
> And therefore, through fire and water, Canada will stand with you.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to questions from my honourable colleagues.

● (1650)

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I agree completely with what my friend from Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock has said.

A lot of us are looking at this now in the lens of anti-Semitism and how this singles out Israel. However, I liked what the member has said about the fact that this also harms Canada because it takes away trade from Canadian companies in what I really do believe is the Silicon Valley of the Middle East.

Would my hon. friend be willing to expand on how this motion hurts Canadian businesses and Canadian universities, as well as ordinary Canadians?

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Mr. Speaker, I was glad I was able to listen to the eloquent speech of my colleague from Mount Royal. It was very moving. When he finished, members on this side of the House and I know on his side gave him a standing ovation. I congratulate him on that.

Yes, it is a shame what happened to a number of Israeli businesses that were targeted by BDS, but as I pointed out in my speech the movement to continue to support these Israeli businesses remains strong. That tells us something. It tells us where we are going with this. As legislators, we need to stand up. We need to promote opportunities and businesses for Canada and for Israel.

To not fall victim to this, we need to take a stand. It is about principle. By condemning this, it shows leadership as a nation, as a Parliament, that we will not tolerate what BDS stands for.

Mr. David Sweet (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for enlightening us on our great ties, not only as friends democratically but also in our institutions, as well as our agreements for research and development.

Is he aware of any other boycott, divestment and sanctions movement that would be against the Syrian regime; or against Iran, a terrible tyrant and human rights abuser; or North Korea. Does he know if these folks in the BDS movement are speaking out for the rights of women in Saudi Arabia? Is the member aware of any movements like that, or of people inside the present BDS movement, who are voicing concern on the human rights issues of these other major offenders?

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Mr. Speaker, my colleague is absolutely right. He is missing a whole slew of countries that are human rights abusers and are not even being mentioned. BDS singles out the only liberal democracy in the region, and completely ignores everything else. It is a stable democracy. We have business ties to it. It has a growing economy. BDS completely ignores everyone else. It goes against Israel.

Again, as I said in my speech, this is not looking at other issues. It is just anti-Israel, full stop. There are not options. We need to take a stand in the House, so I encourage all members to support the motion.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Xavier Barsalou-Duval (Pierre-Boucher—Les Patriotes—Verchères, BQ): Mr. Speaker, anyone who looks at the territorial changes that have been made since 1967 will see that Israel is invading the territory of Palestine, against which it is literally waging war. The fact that Israel is a Canadian ally is no reason to turn a blind eye to the atrocities that are happening in that region.

What else does my colleague propose? What does he think we need to do to resolve the conflict in that region, if not impose economic sanctions? Everything Canada has tried so far has failed.

[*English*]

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Mount Royal who asked the first question actually addressed that in his speech. I encourage the member to listen to that. That is actually not what happened. I do not even know where to start in my answer on that one.

We need to make a stand as a friend of Israel, to show the world that Canada stands up against this type of action, this type of anti-Semitism. This cannot be tolerated. Condemning it is the first step in showing that we mean business. I, unfortunately, disagree with the member from NDP, but, again, if he looks at the comments by my friend from Mount Royal in the blues, he pointed that out very eloquently.

As I said, this is a group that is anti-Israel, full stop. I cannot adequately express how we as a country and as a Parliament need to make a stand. It is very important for the region and our ties and relationship with Israel that we point out that we support liberal democracies, especially in the Middle East, when around it human rights abusers are being given a free pass.

● (1655)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I rise today to address a very important issue, and I want to take a different perspective on it.

First, I will start by making it very clear that Canada is indeed a friend of Israel. It has always been and will continue to be. I am very happy to make it clear that the relationship even between the current Prime Minister of Israel and our Prime Minister here in Canada is very positive. We have heard that from both prime ministers.

I listened to the debate today, and at times it did get somewhat political. However, the point was made very clearly that we recognize as a House the important role and friendship between two great nations.

In listening to the debate, a number of thoughts came to mind. I have been a parliamentarian now for about 25 years, both here and inside the Manitoba legislature. Shortly after I was first elected, I became the critic for multiculturalism. One of the privileges of being the critic was attending what we call "Folklorama" in the province of Manitoba, where I got to experience the many different heritages that make up our great nation through the 50-plus pavilions there. Of course, Israel has long had a pavilion in the city of Winnipeg, and I have participated in that pavilion over the years as an observer, and on one occasion getting more engaged.

What I have found is that we should not assume that the majority of Canadians have the understanding that is our privilege to have, from dedicating so much of our lives to serving them and trying to get a better understanding of the wide variety of issues out there, particularly in the foreign affairs field.

I listened to many speeches today, as other members have, and I was really impressed with the Minister of Foreign Affairs as he provided balance to the debate and emphasized the importance of the relationship between Canada and Israel, and of making sure that when we talk about the relationship today, we have balance in the debate.

I listened to the passion of the member for Mount Royal as he spoke eloquently and articulately the importance of the bias of the BDS movement and how it has singled out Israel. I hope to add more comment in regards to that.

We have been privy to more information and understanding, whether today or in the years we have served, given that we are different people with different positions prior to being elected. Therefore, we might be better informed than many other Canadians.

I can recall that when I first travelled to Israel, I did not understand the concept of a two-state situation. I did not understand Middle East politics. It took time for me to appreciate, as I do today, that it is a very complicated issue. I wish those who have the influence and ability to contribute to resolving that problem the very best in doing so.

I have heard government member after government member stand in the chamber and say that this is not a wedge issue, that it is about standing with our friend in Israel. I will respect, to a certain degree, that in good part there might be some good faith in bringing in the resolution as it is currently worded. However, I am not convinced that it has been worded to the degree to which it could have received unanimous support in the House, because when I listen to the Green Party, New Democrats, and definitely government members—although I am not sure of the Bloc Québécois—everyone seems to recognize that the BDS movement has fundamental flaws, and we need to talk about that. I suspect that had the opposition day motion dealt with that as the core issue in opposition to BDS, we might have had the unanimous support of the House.

● (1700)

We do not have to tell that to the citizens of Canada, and at the end of the day it is not only the citizens of Canada, obviously, but also the nation of Israel. Indeed, from what I understand, Canada has the fourth largest Jewish heritage population in the world, after the United States first, followed by Israel, then I believe France, and then Canada.

We have a vested interest not only from a heritage point of view, but also because what takes place in the Middle East is of interest to the world, including Canada. Canada has a place at the table, as it should.

I believe at my core that the approach we need to take is what we witnessed in question period today by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the consistent approach by past leaders of the Liberal Party, and today the Prime Minister of Canada. He has been very clear in his stance, no matter how others might try to confuse it, both as Prime Minister and as leader of the Liberal Party.

Let me give a couple of specific quotes. For example, in October 2015, when the Prime Minister was the leader of the party, he referred to his opposition to the BDS movement, which he clearly stated was unfairly targeting Israel. He said:

> I'm opposed to the BDS movement. I think that it's an example of the new form of anti-Semitism in the world, as Irwin Cotler points out, an example of the three "Ds": demonization of Israel, delegitimization of Israel, and double standard applied toward Israel.

I would like to pause there. We should realize that it was the government of his father, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, that brought in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which is possibly one of the greatest treasures, next to our health care system, that Canadians take a great deal of pride in. Canadians love the charter of rights. One cannot accuse the Liberal Party, of all political parties, of questionable actions that would infringe upon our individual freedoms, especially freedom of speech, and the freedoms of others around the world. We are the party of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In fact, on one occasion when I was in Israel, I entered into a discussion because I saw a plaque outside Old Jerusalem that made reference to the Canadian charter of rights and a tour guide was so proud of the fact that Canada had the charter.

I respect the New Democrats when they talk about freedom of speech. I too believe in freedom of speech, but we need to recognize that there are some limits to freedom of speech. There are some responsibilities that we have to take into consideration.

I will get right back to the quote of the Prime Minister from back in 2015. He stated:

> I'm all for freedom of speech and expression in Canada, and we need to be sure we're defending that. But when Canadian university students are feeling unsafe on their way to classes because of BDS or Israel Apartheid Week, that just goes against Canadian values. And I have said so, not just in news interviews, but in person on university campuses.

● (1705)

Whether in the office of the Prime Minister or prior, the Leader of the Liberal Party has been consistent in regard to BDS. Each member who has stood up inside this chamber has been consistent in regard to BDS, maybe not quite unanimously. The Liberal members understand the issue and the motivation behind BDS.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs raised the issue of education, when the Conservatives introduced the motion. For the many Canadians who just want to see peace in the Middle East and hear about a boycott for the first time, we need them to understand what is behind the motivation of the boycott request. That is very much anti-Israel.

Going back to the days when I was the multicultural critic, I talked about the importance of cross-cultural awareness. I take a great sense of pride in the fact that in Winnipeg we are now home to a national museum. I believe it might be the first national museum outside Ottawa. The birth of the idea actually came from Israel Asper, a great Canadian, who ultimately shared his idea. It is just a few minutes' walk away from The Forks in Winnipeg, where the Red and Assiniboine rivers meet.

I would encourage not only members but Canadians as whole to take advantage, and go down to the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in downtown Winnipeg. It is a national museum. It is something we should all be proud of. We believe it will make a difference at the end of the day.

When I was a critic, many years ago, time and time again I talked about the importance of cross-cultural awareness. It was not me who came up with the idea. It was a committee of individuals of all different ethnic and faith backgrounds. Canadians as a whole understand the importance of doing what we can to combat racism in whatever way we can. They expect our national government to play a leadership role in doing that. The message I would give is that the Government of Canada today is very clear on that issue. We are prepared to do whatever it takes to promote and encourage tolerance and racial harmony. I can appreciate that there are aspects of it that are very sensitive, even within the Liberal caucus.

Let us not underestimate what the BDS movement really is. I will defend a person's right to speak on a wide variety of issues. Freedom of speech is really important to me, as I know it is in the hearts and souls of most, if not all, people inside this chamber.

I do believe there are times when that line is crossed. I guess the best way I could articulate that would be to take the message that my colleague from Mount Royal gave not that long ago, in terms of just talking about how Israel as a nation has been singled out.

What is BDS? It is boycott, divestment, and sanctions against a nation.

● (1710)

The boycott that is being suggested would, ultimately, do far more harm than good. As other members have talked about and as I have raised in the form of questions, let us not kid ourselves. This is targeted at Israel, and Israel alone. That should be raising the eyebrows of all members in the chamber. We should ask why. If we compare Israel to other countries, especially in the Middle East, there are many other countries upon which one could take this sort of a stand.

Why is Israel being singled out? I believe the motivation originally behind the BDS is, in fact, anti-Semitic. That is something all of us should be recognizing, at least from my perspective. I would encourage all members to do that. We can justify all sorts of things through freedom of speech, but at the end of the day, that is probably one of the strongest arguments.

On this whole idea of sanctions, I will talk about the Minister of Foreign Affairs' reference to SodaStream. I heard another member make reference to it. SodaStream was a company located in the West Bank. It employed 100-plus employees of Palestinian background. They were good-paying jobs, but because of BDS, if not directly then indirectly, it ultimately had to close. Who did that help and who did that hurt?

There is no winner in what BDS is proposing. I truly believe that. If we read the motivations in it, then I suspect that there is good reason for us to be very concerned about it having a lot more to do with hatred and racism. These are the types of things that all of us should not only be aware of but play whatever role we can. We represent varying population bases of anywhere from 40,000 to 140,000, depending on the region. I represent Winnipeg North and I thank my constituents for entrusting me to represent them. I will do the best I can in the chamber.

Our responsibility is to look at what is being proposed in the motion. Even though I might have changed a few words here and there, I would have rather attempted to achieve unanimous support, if it was achievable. Based on what I was hearing from some New Democrats, I believe that it could have been achievable. We would have been better served doing that. However, I have to vote based on what is being presented. We have seen solid leadership from the Government of Canada on this issue.

I clearly indicated at the beginning of my speech that Israel is a friend of Canada. Canada, in many ways, has been there in the past for Israel and will continue to be there. We want to play a proactive leadership role in the Middle East, which is different from the previous government. I believe that we can make a difference and I would encourage members to read what has been said today in the chamber. At the end of the day, we can send a strong message with regard to the BDS movement. Its motivation is all wrong. It is not good. I believe it has crossed the line. Even if there are aspects that members feel a little uncomfortable with, it is a motion that we should be voting for.

● (1715)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was extremely happy to hear that the hon. member's government will do whatever is needed to restore tolerance. What action does he think his government should take to stop the discriminatory BDS practices on Canadian university campuses?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, as government or opposition members of Parliament, we have tools to communicate, whether through our websites, our householders, or our ten percenters. It is about education. If we receive an invite to attend a post-secondary institution, a high school, or an elementary school, we should take advantage of that opportunity to speak at special events. For example, today I had a wonderful opportunity to talk about the *Komagata Maru*, as the Liberal government is aggressively pursuing an apology. We should take advantage of these opportunities. We should talk about them and let others know about them. It is about education.

I suspect there is only a minute fraction who would support the original BDS movement in terms of what it is trying to preach. Education is the best way to deal with this issue.

Mr. Kennedy Stewart (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I must say that was an astounding speech. This member was a former member of the provincial legislature and has been in this House for a long time. He stood up here and said that there were a few words that the Liberals do not agree with, but that we should pass it anyway. Words are all we have in this House, and this motion is clearly poorly worded. We have pointed that out a number of times in our debate.

The Liberals are trying to wriggle off the hook here. What they should be doing is voting against this motion and putting forward their own motion that better expresses their views.

With respect to this notion of we will just pass it and move on, the motion is asking to condemn individuals for speaking freely in Canada. We know that is a mistake. Will the member agree that the best thing to do is to vote against this motion? We have a whole government here. There are hardly any bills on the docket. Why do the Liberals not put forward their own motion to express what they think should happen on this issue?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the member himself will have to deal with why, from what I understand, the NDP will be voting as a bloc against the motion.

I understand that he is talking about freedom of speech. Where we might differ is that the New Democratic Party may not believe there are any limits to freedom of speech. That is something I would have to agree to disagree on.

In a responsible democracy, where we have the rule of law and the Charter of Rights, there is still some responsibility. When we look at the motion itself, there is a very strong message that needs to be sent here. At the end of the day, I believe that it would be a stronger message if we had individuals from all parties voting in favour of it.

With respect to changing it, one of the things we want to be careful of is changing opposition motions. He is suggesting that we should change the motion. I do not think he would want us to change an NDP motion. That is just part of the tradition we have here.

It is not the perfect wording, I will grant him that much, but I do not think it would be appropriate for us to change the motion, unless the opposition would give us unanimous consent, at which point I am sure we would.

● (1720)

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, freedom of speech has been referenced numerous times during this debate, and it was just referenced again. I was wondering if the member would like to comment on the fact that in freedom of speech debates there is a very important distinction between "condemnation" and "prohibition".

Would the member like to expand on that important point?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. I would rather provide comment on the fact that I highlighted the importance of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Within the charter, it guarantees fundamental freedoms and individuals' ability to have rights of speech. There are very few, but there are some limitations, and even courts in Canada have made that determination.

One of the words, which the member makes reference to, distinguishes the difference: where as much as possible, we should encourage and promote freedom of speech, and where there are times, and I suspect they are very rare, that we should not be intimidated into saying how we truly feel about a statement or about a line that is being taken in the public or anywhere in the world.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one thing that is unhelpful in this place is the practice of wedge politics, where the purpose of the legislative initiative is not to advance dialogue or make better policy for this country, but rather to embarrass or wedge people into positions that are simplistic. We have seen the Conservatives do that repeatedly for 10 years. My hon. colleague on the other side has seen that as well.

I remember the Conservative minister of public safety who said we were either with the Conservatives on their crime agenda or we stood "with the child pornographers". This was an approach to government that I think Canadians soundly rejected in 2015. They want people in the House to put forth thoughtful policy that will advance the interests of Canada and Canadians.

Instead of a very controversial motion that seeks to condemn and separate Canadians, saying we are either racist or we are not, would the member not agree that it would be productive for his government to put forward a plan before the House to show how we can assist the Israeli government and the Palestinian government to get back to a table and negotiate a resolution, so that there is no more blood spilt in that region and those people can live in peace and security in the years ahead?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I suspect that if we had the number of days of sitting that would allow it, I could probably come up with a dozen or so resolutions and motions myself that I would like to see debated and voted on in the House. A couple or a few of them might even come from Foreign Affairs. There is a limited amount of time. The government is committed to implementing a series of platform issues. That is the type of legislation we have here today. Time allows for opposition members to bring forward ideas that they have. If they are prepared to forfeit one or two of their opposition days, I am sure we could even come up with a consensus on some things that we could bring to the chamber. Time is a scarce commodity in the chamber.

I get the general gist of what the member said in terms of the past, and that is why I made reference to the contrast, whether or not it is the Minister of Foreign Affairs trying to tone down the issue, trying to be a broker. I think that is the right attitude that we should be taking. The member for Mount Royal talked about the importance of trying to apoliticize this. I suspect he would have loved to see a motion that everyone in this chamber would get behind and support.

There will be motions that come before the House on which we will get unanimous support, and sometimes we will not. I would suggest that the author has a lot to do with it. If the author really wants to have unanimous support and it is potentially there, it is worth investing the time and energy in talking with other parties to try to achieve it. If they are prepared to do that, I suspect we will see unanimous support on opposition day motions. If they are not prepared to do that, then it will be kind of a hit and miss thing.

● (1725)

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time today with the member for Flamborough—Glanbrook.

I am standing in this House today to stand with Israel, a free and democratic country that is besieged by the boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement.

Fundamental to the discussion today is my belief that our charter of rights, our long history with Israel, and the many signed agreements we have with Israel demand that we disallow the operation of the BDS movement in Canada on the basis of discrimination.

Israel was established as a free nation in 1948. Canada has had a long-standing friendship with Israel from the beginning. Both nations were founded by those seeking political and religious freedom. Both have absorbed waves of immigrants seeking political freedom and economic well-being, and both have evolved into democracies that respect the rule of law, the will of voters, and the rights of minorities.

One of the underlying strengths of the Canada-Israel bilateral relationship lies in the extensive people-to-people ties. There are approximately 20,000 Canadian citizens living in Israel, and many Canadians have family in Israel.

The Canadian Jewish community, which stands at around 350,000 people, acts as an important bridge between Canada and Israel. These informal ties give rise to significant co-operation between our two countries in business, philanthropy, and tourism.

We clearly have the Israeli embassy right here in Ottawa and consulates in Montreal and Toronto. Support for Israel, especially its right to live in peace and security with its neighbours, has been at the core of Canada's Middle East policy since 1948.

We have signed multiple letters of declaration of intent to trade with Israel, including the Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement, which went into effect in 1997 and eliminated tariffs on all industrial products manufactured in Canada and Israel as well as a limited number of agricultural and fisheries products.

Between 1999 and 2003, additional agriculture and agri-food tariff reductions on goods previously excluded from those agreements were successfully negotiated. This included preferences for a number of Canada's top agriculture and agri-food exports to Israel.

In addition to this agreement, we have signed multiple other contracts for aviation, transportation, science and technology, and the space industry. From a science perspective, Israel's ability to innovate is best in class in the world, and we as Canadians need to learn from Israelis and leverage our research together.

We have been engaging in mutual collaboration when and where possible on energy and other sectors such as information and communications technology, life sciences, as well as ocean and sustainable technology, which are critical to Canada's economic development.

The Canada-Israel Industrial Research and Development Foundation has enabled technologies that have generated a minimum of hundreds of millions in economic value for Canadian and Israeli companies alone over the past decade.

In addition to our economic agreements, we have also signed broader agreements. Let me read an excerpt from the memorandum of understanding that Canada signed with Israel as part of the Canada-Israel strategic partnership:

> Understanding that the security of Israel and the wider regions directly affects the security of Canada
>
> Recognizing that Israel, Canada, and all nations of the world, under the UN Charter, have the right to live in peace and security and the right of self defence;
>
> Considering that we have a long history of diplomatic cooperation, bilaterally and in a variety of multilateral fora,
>
> Wishing to deepen our relationship by enhancing our bilateral engagement and cooperation across the widest possible spectrum to promote and enhance these values, commitments and interests, resting on the four central pillars of diplomatic partnership: security, economic prosperity and culture and education,...

Having promised this to Israel, why are we allowing the BDS movement to encourage boycotting Israeli artists and Israeli businesses and calling for the destruction of Israel as a state? Why are we allowing BDS to influence our academic institutions? We need to take action to address this hateful behaviour that goes against our Canadian values and policies.

● (1730)

I would suggest we follow the actions of some of our allies. The British government is currently preparing to unveil rules that would prohibit public institutions from adopting boycotts against Israel. Under the new legislation, all publicly funded institutions such as local town halls, universities, and student unions could face prosecution should they pursue and enforce the boycott of goods and services from the Jewish state.

Another bill was sponsored by the French republican party. In a statement issued, the party said that BDS efforts are divisive and hateful and have no place in Paris. The Paris municipality approved a bill barring city departments and city-affiliated organizations from hosting events or fostering ties with the BDS movement or any other group urging divestment from Israel or boycotting Israeli products.

The boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement has goals to reverse all of the things that our government has been supporting for years. Let me quote from its web page:

> Boycotts... Anyone can boycott Israeli goods, simply by making sure that they don't buy produce made in Israel or by Israeli companies. Campaigners and groups call on consumers not to buy Israeli goods and on businesses not to buy or sell them.

Let us examine how the BDS movement is demonizing Israel, the lone democracy in the Middle East.

BDS claims that Israel is uniquely responsible for the Arab-Israeli conflict. Israel has tried time and time again to make peace and has co-operated in numerous peace negotiations, so this simply is not true.

BDS calls for Canadian universities to cut ties with Israeli academia.

Israel is a vibrant democracy that protects the rights of women, homosexuals, and religious minorities. Arabs in Israel have more freedoms than Arabs in any other Arab country. In fact, Israel is the only functioning democracy in the entire Middle East region, and is surrounded by cruel dictatorships that engage in systematic and egregious human rights violations.

Yet the boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement calls for the isolation of only one state, Israel. Clearly this does not align with Canadian policies and agreements and is discriminatory. It also does not align with the view of the majority of Canadians. Two-thirds of Canadians are either Christian or Jewish according to the latest census results. This is an overwhelming majority of Canadians. Christians and Jews believe this verse from the book of Genesis, chapter 27, verse 29, where it says regarding Israel, "May those who curse you be cursed and those who bless you be blessed".

The BDS movement is cursing Israel. It is boycotting Israeli goods and services. It is discriminating against the Jewish people, and it is spreading anti-Semitic views and advocating for the elimination of Israel as a free state.

Section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees the rights of every individual to be free from discrimination. Let me remind members of it:

> Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

How can we allow in our country an organization like the BDS movement to operate when it clearly is discriminating against the Jews? How can we allow it to infiltrate our Canadian academic institutions and fill the minds of our young people with hatred for Israel?

Today I am calling on the government for action, recognizing that Israel is a free state with a right to exist and a right to defend itself. I am calling on the government to condemn any organizations, groups, or individuals that actively promote the boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement. I am calling on the Liberal government to stand up for the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, to stand up for the 24 million Canadian Christians and Jews who want to stand with Israel. I am calling on the government to stand with Israel that we as a nation might be blessed.

● (1735)

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since 1948, the creation of the State of Israel, and with the years past, it was clear to anybody that forces motion and even veto power did not resolve the problem. In 1948, the Palestinians started a fight with guns or machine guns, and now we see them launching missiles on the State of Israel.

The vision of this government is to bring both sides together under the umbrella of the United Nations, helping both sides to compromise, as the late Yitzhak Rabin, may he rest in peace, did and Yasser Arafat also, and with the United Nations doing its best to promote peace, to have a lasting peace agreement paving the way for prosperity and security for the generations to come.

I would like the member to comment on this.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, obviously peace is always the best approach. There have been many attempts to achieve peace in Israel, without success to date. However, my point is that Israel is a free and democratic nation, and as such it has the right to defend itself when people shoot missiles at it. For example, Canada is a free and democratic country. If somebody were to attack us, we have the right to defend ourselves. Israel has that right as well. Although my favourite would be to have peace in the region, I still do not want to take away the rights of Israel to defend itself.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to look back in history a little.

On July 9, 2004, the International Court of Justice ordered that the wall between Israel and Palestine be torn down, saying that it violated international law. On July 9, 2005, the BDS movement began. I think there is a link between the two.

Peaceful groups such as PAJU, Palestinian and Jewish Unity, promote the BDS campaign, claiming that it constitutes peaceful action. I can give names. There have been calls to boycott in the past. There was a boycott against South Africa during apartheid. There was one against Myanmar, the country formerly known as Burma, during the military junta. France called for a boycott against Mexico when Florence Cassez was kidnapped. There was also a boycott against California grapes. I did not eat those grapes for many years.

However, during the years that we were boycotting California grapes, the Liberal government, then led by Pierre Elliott Trudeau, never prohibited or condemned anyone. The hate propaganda argument amounts to censorship.

If I understand what my colleague is saying, Canada would be one of the few democratic countries in which calling for a boycott, a peaceful action by a citizen movement to criticize another state, would be condemned.

The Bloc Québécois believes in freedom of expression, whether a person is for or against the campaign. Freedom of expression takes precedence, and that is what we must protect from this motion.

Does my esteemed colleague not agree?

● (1740)

[*English*]

Ms. Marilyn Gladu: Mr. Speaker, the difference is that this insidious organization is having an impact in Canada. It is on the soil of our Canadian universities. Its members are affecting people's opinions. They are trying to influence the freedom of rights of Canadians. They are trying to drum up this anti-Semitic view. We simply cannot allow that.

Our Charter of Rights and Freedoms clearly specifies we cannot have discrimination. Because it has come to our place, we have to rise up and we have to take action to ensure we do not allow this organization to take root in our country.

Mr. David Sweet (Flamborough—Glanbrook, CPC): Mr. Speaker, because this is the first opportunity I have had to give a speech, I have not had an extended amount of time to thank the citizens of Flamborough—Glanbrook for their trust and confidence.

It is a brand new riding. The original riding that I represented was Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, which was divided by the commission. I now had to prove my worth with a new group of people from Flamborough—Glanbrook, and I am glad they put their trust in me. I want to thank all the volunteers and supporters who made it possible for me to come here and speak to issues on their behalf.

It is an honour for me to rise in the House today to support the motion by my colleagues. I would like to take this time to amplify the many salient points made by my caucus colleagues throughout the debate, and frankly from the other side of the House too, on the important motion to reject and condemn the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement and call it what it is: the deliberate, malicious targeting of Israel, a long-standing friend of Canada and Canadians.

As the final speaker likely from our side of the House on the motion, and by way of closing arguments, I would like to reiterate three key points made by my colleagues throughout the discussion today. First, Israel is our friend. Second, the BDS movement is nothing but thinly veiled anti-Semitism, and to be very frank, Jew hatred. Third, the BDS movement has completely misplaced in its narrow-minded agenda and it ignores regimes like Iran and North Korea that are serial human rights abusers.

First and foremost, the premise of the motion before us recognizes the friendship Canada shares with Israel. As chair of the Canada-Israel Interparliamentary Group for the last four years, I have had the privilege of watching the relationship between these two nations strengthen and grow. Our closest friends on the world stage are those who share our values. In the case of Canada and Israel, we are bound together in strong beliefs in freedom, human rights, democracy, and the rule of law.

For Israel, these values have come at a very high price. In a region where basic human rights are denied time and again, in a region where democracy has yet to take root, in a region ravaged by war, and in the face of terrorism, Israel has become a beacon for hope, freedom, human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. With those values serving as the foundation of our friendship, both nations now enjoy improved diplomatic ties as well as strengthened and growing economic relations, including the modernization of the bilateral free trade agreement between Israel and Canada last July.

Although our friendship is alive, Israel faces a renewed enemy. It is a rise of a new kind of anti-Semitism, and it is not exclusive to the Middle East. It exists in Canada with those groups so actively calling for boycott, divestment and sanction against Israel.

In 2011, I served on the panel of inquiry for the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat anti-Semitism. The panel heard about organized anti-Semitic efforts, like the boycott, divestment and sanction movement. In broad terms, BDS exists to delegitimize and isolate Israel, advocating for the elimination of the Jewish state, while making the claim that Israel alone is responsible for the Arab-Israeli conflict. This ideology is a dangerous slippery slope that should be alarming to all free people.

When people find it easy or palatable to hate Jews simply because they are of Jewish faith or ethnicity, it is not a stretch for that discrimination then to snowball to include more faiths, more and more ethnicities, and worse and worse consequences. As Canadians, we have a duty and moral obligation to stand up to this kind of ideology and say loudly “no”.

The panel heard from expert witnesses who confirmed movements like BDS breed hate and fuel anti-Semitism around the world. However, what is most alarming is what is happening right here in Canada, a land of tolerance and respect that all of us here in the House love.

Who would have thought that in early 21st century Canada, synagogues would be desecrated with swastikas and religious objects destroyed? Worse still, who would have thought in the early 21st century in Canada that Jewish community centres, schools, and synagogues would be fire bombed? Who would have thought in early 21st century Canada, anti-Israel protesters would chant profane and highly threatening chants in the core of our largest cities?

Through this motion, we must use our voice in the House of Commons on behalf of the Jewish community in Canada and abroad to reject this type of racist violence.

● (1745)

What is more is that the boycott initiative and events like Israel Apartheid Week are targeted at Israel, Israelis, and Jews.

We know that regimes like those in Iran, North Korea, Congo, Nigeria, Somalia, and others have horrifying human rights records. Yet, we do not see organized efforts to isolate and delegitimize them. Nor is their right to exist called into question by these same organizations. It is obvious, why the double standard.

While I will not stand here and make the claim that Israel is perfect, because no nation is, it is clear that the intent of those in favour of BDS is not to address concerns they might have with Israel to work toward a resolution, but rather to single out Israel's right to be treated with fairness and legitimacy, and to make all Jews responsible for contrived human rights abuses. This type of approach is not one that will lead to lasting peace in the region.

Pressuring consumers to avoid buying Israeli products, which happened in my home city of Hamilton, or calling for universities to cut ties with Israeli academia, which happened in my home city, at McMaster University, or calling for Israeli athletes to be banned from international sporting competitions and other actions like these does not and will not create a pathway to peace. Rather, these actions only encourage hate and discourage peace.

We suffered a dark day in Canadian history in 1939 when the government of the day rejected Jewish refugees on the *St. Louis* at Halifax Harbour. In doing so, we condemned hundreds of them to eventual death when they landed back in Nazi-controlled Europe. As one of our local rabbis said, we arguably allowed Hitler to believe that since no one would stand up for Jews, since no one would take them, then it was his opportunity to pursue his plan of Jew genocide.

It is easy to look back now and see how shameful that was. However, we forget that the 1930s was a time of rampant anti-Semitism in Canada.

Would we who are in the House now have spoken out in 1939? That is exactly the point of this motion: it is to stand up, to speak out and act now. If we are to learn anything from history, it is that no amount of anti-Semitism is tolerable.

If we were to go to Jerusalem and visit Yad Vashem, which most Gentiles would call a museum of the Holocaust, or the Shoah, we would enter a building that shows the timeline of anti-Semitism, how it grew, how it became socially acceptable in Germany, and how that paved the way to allow Nazis to take over the country and to come up with what they called the ultimate solution.

It is educational to the point that any kind of racism, when allowed to brew, when allowed to fester, when allowed to grow, can turn into these kinds of atrocities that all of us despise, that all of us would condemn.

The reason the motion is important today is to send a very clear message to all of those who would be involved in BDS that this is unacceptable, that we reject it, that we condemn the message behind BDS, and ask those people who are ignorant of the core purposes of the very leaders who started BDS to educate themselves on it and to remove themselves from the movement.

● (1750)

Mr. Michel Picard (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first, I would like to congratulate my hon. colleague on his first speech and I would like to ask him to comment on my concerns.

[*Translation*]

I understand that this debate is very much about freedom of expression, but I cannot help but think that this issue goes far beyond freedom of expression. The impact of such an action will cause much more harm than the simple, yet important, value of freedom of expression.

What does my colleague think about that?

[*English*]

Mr. David Sweet: Mr. Speaker, I would agree wholeheartedly with my colleague. There are broader issues. That is why we had struck the parliamentary coalition to combat anti-Semitism years ago. That is why we hosted the international coalition to combat anti-Semitism here. That is why the Ottawa protocol and our subsequent report came out from our own parliamentary coalition.

This is a very big concern. It is not only a concern with racism here, but a concern with our relationship with Israel, the capability for us to not only trade freely with it, but to nurture that relationship so we learn from other militarily, research and development, learning and developing in many different areas. Most provinces have memoranda of understanding or agreements with the State of Israel. There is much at stake in this regard. That is why we need to send a clear message around this BDS movement.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am very glad to ask a question during this debate. I want to thank all members of the House today for their thoughts on this. I would like to thank my colleague for his eloquent speech and all of the work that he has done.

I am going to use a couple of clichés before I ask him a very obvious question. We hear these things from time to time. People say that wrong is wrong even if everyone is doing it and right is right even if no one is doing it, and all it takes for bad to triumph in this world is for good people to stand by and do nothing. We know that from our history. My wife is a Polish immigrant to Canada. I have taken her and my family to Auschwitz-Birkenau and have seen the effects of what the Holocaust did in those Nazi concentration camps in Poland. My children were horrified to see what actually happened, with the mounds of hair, luggage, and things that are on display there. People thought they were going to a better place and, ultimately, perished in the Holocaust. It was absolutely atrocious.

We know that there are people in this world who like to foment hatred and create this type of environment. It does not take the majority of a population to do this. The majority of Germans in 1939 were not Nazis, but the Nazis had enough people thinking the way they did to intimidate and badger the rest of the population in Germany, to whip them up into a frenzy, and to do these atrocities.

My question for my colleague is this. Why does he think it is so important that virtually every member in the House takes the opportunity right now to head this off at the pass, to send a clear message by all of us unanimously supporting this motion that is before the House today?

Mr. David Sweet: Mr. Speaker, I have stated the case with regard to the BDS movement, but let me reassert that. We need to send a clear signal that no form of racism, anti-Semitism, or Jew hatred is acceptable, however cloaked, however minimal somebody may think it is, no matter how devious one is in fashioning it as some kind of legitimate criticism for Israel, even though it is Jew hatred.

Also, it is important for us to remember history and understand what the situation is. Many members have talked about the Middle East conflict. Hopefully our decision here will encourage some people to learn about what actually happens on a day-to-day basis in Israel. There were two stabbings today, one person is dead and another is in hospital critically injured. They were stabbed by a Palestinian activist. People should understand that there are thousands of missiles sent annually into Sderot and Ashdod and are reaching farther, almost to Tel Aviv now.

Let me share one quick story. When I was there, I was talking to a psychologist who got a call from his daughter. She was finally able to visit Jerusalem. She lived for 12 years under missile attacks every day and the first thing she said to him was, "Dad, you won't believe it. In Jerusalem when the alarm goes off, we have a full minute to get to the bomb shelter." In Sderot, people have 12 seconds and that is why every bus stop is a bomb shelter. We need Canadians to learn about the actual situation there on the ground.

● (1755)

Mr. Sean Casey (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the outstanding member of Parliament for Humber River—Black Creek.

The boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement, also known as the BDS movement, is a global campaign launched in 2005 in response to calls by Palestinians and international civil society groups for international sanctions against Israel. The BDS movement currently promotes a variety of actions intended to restrict trade with Israel. This includes targeting Canadian companies that engage in trade with Israel, or Israeli businesses, and calling for a boycott of those Canadian companies and their products. There have also been calls in Canada to boycott Israeli products.

The BDS movement, however, goes well beyond trade issues. Much of the movement is focused on university campuses in Europe and North America and includes repeated calls and intense pressure in favour of academic and cultural boycotts of Israel. Examples of this include pressuring musicians, writers, poets, and artists not to perform in or visit Israel. Similarly, professors and researchers are increasingly being pressured not to work with Israeli universities.

These bans threaten the intense and ongoing research collaboration between Israel and Canadian academics in areas such as the health and life sciences sector, environmental and clean technologies, and information and communication technologies.

Activities, such as the annual Israeli Apartheid Week events at Canadian universities promote the BDS movement and seek to equate Israel with apartheid.

Many organizations and individuals in Canada and abroad support the BDS movement out of the belief that it will somehow accelerate the peace process and lead to a lasting resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However, it is important to understand that the goal advocated and supported by Canada and many of our partners worldwide of a two-state solution with a secure, stable, and democratic Israel living side-by-side with a secure, stable, and democratic Palestinian state is not a solution that can be imposed from outside. A lasting peace will only come through direct negotiations between the two parties through negotiations without preconditions. Such actions only exacerbate the tensions in the region. The peace process would be better served by efforts to bring people together than those that seek to divide them.

These facts lead to the conclusion that the real intention of the BDS movement is not to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict but to delegitimize and single out Israel. This is demonstrated by the one-sided nature of the movement. It targets Israel alone. It punishes Israel alone. It calls on Israel alone to act.

Canada has been firm in its opposition to the Arab boycott of Israel since it began in the 1970s, and Canada remains deeply concerned by all ongoing efforts to single out Israel for criticism and to isolate Israel internationally. Once again, this is not a recipe for achieving a lasting peace settlement.

It is important to recognize that the BDS movement is in fact a form of collective punishment. It is not carefully targeted toward the ends it claims to support, but instead seeks to punish all elements of Israeli society. Its effects go well beyond the government whose policies the BDS supporters claim to oppose. All segments of Israeli society are affected because the BDS movement's economic, cultural, and academic boycotts threaten to adversely affect all aspects of Israeli life. This highlights once again that the BDS movement is really about punishing Israel and not about advancing the peace process.

Furthermore, there is evidence that the BDS movement is hurting the very people its supporters claim they are seeking to help, the Palestinian people. In one case, a world-renowned Israeli company, SodaStream, was forced through threats of a BDS boycott to close its factory, which was located in the West Bank, in order to preserve access to global markets. This resulted in the loss of hundreds of well-paying jobs for Palestinians. The owner of the company went on the record to condemn the BDS movement and highlight its negative effect on the Palestinian people and economy.

● (1800)

Canada believes that supporting the economic prospects of the Palestinian people is a vital goal for ensuring their prosperity and dignity, and that it has the valuable side effect of creating stability and security in the region. Israel benefits when the Palestinian people are prosperous. In this spirit, Canada funds a host of projects to better the livelihood of the Palestinians. Working toward that goal is the sort of activity that will advance prospects for the peace process. Canada looks forward to being able to contribute to a reinvigorated Middle East peace process.

We noted with optimism the recent announcement by the Quartet. The governments of the United States, the European Union, and Russia plus the United Nations would work with all key partners in the region to create a report that provides recommendations for relaunching the peace process and advancing down the road to a two-state solution. It is vital that such efforts receive the support they require in order to be successful, and that efforts that are counter-productive to a lasting peace, like the BDS movement, be abandoned immediately.

Canada and Israel are strong, vibrant democracies where legitimate criticism within a legitimate discourse is expected and accepted. Nevertheless, discussion of the BDS movement too often descends into anti-Israel and even anti-Jewish rhetoric. There are also disturbing reports of Jewish students feeling unsafe at Canadian universities.

As Canada considers the Middle East process and seeks opportunities to move it forward toward a lasting solution that meets the interests of all the Israeli and Palestinian peoples, we should not be asking ourselves how to punish one party, but instead how we can remotivate people to get into a dialogue again, and how to start a positive process with the Israelis and Palestinians to relaunch a peace process.

Canada should reject the boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement wholeheartedly. We should oppose calls to boycott Israel and Israeli products or to ban cultural and academic exchanges. We should instead seek to build bridges among the people of the region rather than use divisive language and counter-productive tactics. Although Canada recognizes that Israel should not be immune from criticism, Canada will continue to work to defend Israel from the BDS movement.

Hon. K. Kellie Leitch (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as my colleagues on this side of the House have suggested with this important motion rejecting the boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement, there are few key points here, as my colleague from Ancaster also pointed out. Israel is our friend and the BDS movement is nothing but a thinly veiled anti-Semitism movement. We know that our closest values are the ones that our closest friends share.

As my colleague from the opposite side said, we do need to move toward dialogues that are about peace and being constructive, and not divisive, and encouraging others across this globe to be Canadian and to focus on ensuring that we have free and open democracies that allow that free and open dialogue.

As the member opposite mentioned, he will be supporting this motion to reject the boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement. Why is he passionate about this, and what should Canadians be doing to encourage others to reject this movement that is so rooted in anti-Semitism, to ensure that all Canadians are open-minded and focused on looking forward?

Mr. Sean Casey: Mr. Speaker, there are two parts to my hon. colleague's question. First, why does this matter to me in particular and, second, what should Canadians be doing?

I got into politics because of the importance of Canadian values and my firm belief back in 2011 that the country was on the wrong track. I do not mean to make this a divisive issue, but I feel very strongly about the rights that are enshrined in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. That is really at the core of Canadian values. That, quite frankly, is at the core of this motion.

The real key for Canadians here, as stated by my colleague from Winnipeg North, is very much education. BDS has to be singled out for what it is, and not for what it purports to be. The more that message is disseminated on university campuses by members of Parliament, in civil society, and in academia, the better the prospects for understanding and support of a peaceful two-state solution and a peaceful process leading to that.

● (1805)

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I do not think my friend and I have had an opportunity yet to engage in the House and I congratulate him on his return to this place.

The Conservatives may be accused of having no sense of irony whatsoever. For instance, I have heard the Conservatives say all day that they do not want to be divisive and do not want to limit speech. This is the same party that when in government practised nothing but divisiveness and wedge politics. It brought in legislation like Bill C-51, which very clearly went after freedom of speech and the charter that Canadians hold so proudly and that my friend referenced so recently.

I have a very specific question for my friend. We find things that we do not agree with all the time as legislators. We see movements come and policies brought forward by constituents or groups around the country that we do not agree with, yet we agree with the principle of allowing them to have that freedom of speech. That is the basis of this place we call Parliament, the place where we speak not the place where we ban speaking. That would be a different word and a different place.

My question is this. Does the member or his government allow for this idea? I am a strong supporter of Israel and I am strongly in support of Israel in that when the Israeli government does something wrong and antithetical to the peace movement I think it is okay to criticize it, just like our governments are criticized around the world. To criticize a government is not to be anti-Semitic. I know this because the Israeli media and the activists in Israel routinely criticize the government. That certainly is not anti-Semitic. Does he draw that same connection that some of my Conservative colleagues so treacherously attempt to do?

Mr. Sean Casey: Mr. Speaker, what we have here in the BDS movement really is a wolf in sheep's clothing, and the veneer is extremely thin. The member makes extremely valid points with respect to freedom of expression. He makes extremely valid points with respect to the right to be able to criticize a government. Indeed, the Government of Israel and the Government of Canada share his view that a critique of the government is entirely fair game. However, when a movement gets to the point where Canadian students feel unsafe on their campus it has gone too far, it has gone beyond free speech. That is what we are dealing with here. It is more than free speech, it is worse than free speech, and it needs to be condemned.

Hon. Judy Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to stand today and voice my concern along with my colleagues about this terrible organization and what it is trying to do to destroy everything we have all worked very hard to build up.

Unfortunately, discrimination, racism, and anti-Semitism remain serious issues that affect all societies to different degrees. Anti-Semitism can take different forms, and Canada continues to oppose its many iterations.

The working definition of anti-Semitism, as defined by the European Monitoring Centre for Racism and Xenophobia, is “a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”

In recent years, the world has continued to witness contemporary forms of anti-Semitism in the denial by some states and individuals that call for aid and justify the killing or harming of Jews. They also make dehumanizing or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such, or the power of Jews as a collective, especially, but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy, or of Jews controlling the media, the economy, government, or other societal institutions; accusing Jews as a collective of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group or the State of Israel; accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.

Other forms of anti-Semitism would deny Israel's right to exist, its right to defend itself, and the right of Jews to undertake Aliyah and immigrate to Israel.

While it is fair to criticize Israel for the action of its government in the context of open and fair debate, as any other government may be criticized, it is not fair, in fact it is anti-Semitic, to deny Israel's right to exist.

It is evident that new forms of anti-Semitism are being revealed alongside older iterations in many countries where Jews, Jewish businesses, synagogues, and Jewish institutions continue to come under attack. This can often occur in violent form, as we have witnessed in the attacks against the Jewish Museum in Brussels, in May 2014, and the attack against the Great Synagogue in Copenhagen just over a year ago.

In fact, a 2015 study by the widely respected Pew Research Centre reported that there has been a marked increase in the number of countries where members of the Jewish community were harassed. In 2013, the harassment of Jews, either by government or social groups, was found in 39% of countries, which was a seven year high.

Discrimination and intolerance causes suffering, spreads division, and contributes to a climate of fear and stigmatization. Anti-Semitism, given its long history, is a particularly pernicious and chronic form of discrimination. Actions motivated by intolerance have no place in any country and are in opposition to values that we in this House hold so dear, such as pluralism, diversity, and inclusion. Canada supports efforts to combat all forms of racism and discrimination.

However, the Government of Canada understands that hatred can manifest itself in specific forms that requires differing degrees of responses.

Anti-Semitism is indicative of a unique form of racism, one whose extreme manifestations has led to some of the darkest hours in the history of humankind. On January 27, 2016, all parties in this House remembered the atrocities and crimes against humanity committed against the Jewish people during the Holocaust.

As we commemorate International Holocaust Remembrance Day, and as the Minister of Foreign Affairs indicated in his statement on January 27, we must remember the six million Jews and millions of other victims of the Holocaust, and we must be ever mindful of the dangers of anti-Semitism and intolerance that continues to persist in this world today.

● (1810)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): It being 6:15 p.m. pursuant to an order made earlier today, all questions necessary to dispose of the opposition motion are deemed put and a recorded division deemed requested and deferred until Monday, February 22, at the expiry of the time provided for oral questions.

● (1815)

Mr. Arnold Chan: Mr. Speaker, if you check, I believe you will find unanimous consent of the House to see the clock at 6:30 p.m.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Is it agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

[*English*]

INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to rise in the House today and follow up on my questions of January 29 and February 2.

During question period on those days, I asked the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs why her government had decided to ignore the compliance measures of the First Nations Financial Transparency Act. The minister and the parliamentary secretary both failed to answer my question.

As the opposition critic for indigenous affairs, I continue to be appalled by the Liberal government's decision to abandon transparency when it comes to financial matters for indigenous Canadians.

The Conservatives supported this legislation because it is based on the premise that all Canadians deserve accountability and transparency from their leadership.

For all practical purposes, on a dark day right before Christmas, on a Friday, when no one was watching, before the holidays, the Liberal government effectively repealed the act without bothering to give members of Parliament a chance to debate it. It is ironic that a law about transparency was gutted in such a non-transparent way. The government is functionally abandoning the transparency act without repealing it.

Furthermore, the act was working. Nearly 94% of first nations chiefs and councils complied, and 543 bands made their expenses and salaries public to their band members. For many of them, it was the first time they ever had that kind of information. Now, with no compliance measures in effect, it is a safe prediction that compliance rates will collapse and financial information will again be shrouded in secrecy from band members. Transparency means having readily available, accessible information. As I said, it does not mean having a report sitting in a basement in Ottawa.

On December 21, an editorial in the *Toronto Star* asked the right questions. Without compliance measures:

> ...how will the rights of band members to see fiscal statements and salaries be guaranteed, going forward? How this will result in “real accountability....

These are questions the minister needs to answer. Band members should not be left in the dark.

I ask the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs how she can explain to indigenous Canadians that the Liberal government's commitment to transparency is empty rhetoric. Why are the Liberals telling band members that they have to go to court to get basic information that is available to all other levels of government?

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise this evening in response to the question posed by the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo. She posed this question previously in the House of Commons, and we have responded to it. However, I will attempt to clarify again for the hon. member opposite.

Everyone, including first nations, wanted increased transparency and accountability; however, they do want to do it in collaboration with government. They do not want a talk-down approach that tells them what they can do, when they can do it, and how they should do it.

We realize, we accept, and we are very much in favour of transparency and accountability. We know it is paramount to the government. We also know that, whether it is municipal, provincial, federal, or first nations, this has to be an important piece of accountability to government.

● (1820)

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I think we have to look at this—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Order please. There was a mix-up with the clock. I have been informed by the Table that the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs has about three minutes left. We have it all straightened out.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate your ruling.

As I was saying, transparency and accountability are paramount in any government. It is the same in our government. That has not changed.

However, the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs had been mandated to undertake, along with the Minister of Justice, and in full partnership and consultations with first nations, Inuit, and Métis, a review of laws to ensure that the Crown is fully executing its obligations in accordance with its constitutional and international obligations.

Doing so will take some time. I ask members to recognize that, but we are committed to getting this right. We want to work in full partnership with first nations leadership and organizations on the way forward so that we can improve accountability and transparency. I have said before that top-down solutions have never worked and they are not working in this case.

In fact, last December, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada ceased all discretionary measures related to the enforcement of the First Nations Financial Transparency Act and reinstated funding that had been withheld from first nations under these measures. The member opposite talks about it being a dark day. Well was it a dark day for first nations in this country when government allowed reinstated funding to their governments that they should have received in previous years?

Also, I would like to ask the member if it was a dark day when the court actions against the first nations that had not complied with the act were actually suspended? Maybe the member opposite thinks that should not have happened.

These initial steps will enable us to engage in discussions on transparency and accountability that are based on recognition and rights, and that are based on respect, co-operation, and partnership that builds toward a renewed relationship with our indigenous people in this country.

In the meantime, first nations governments will continue their long-standing reporting of their audited consolidated financial statements including chiefs' and councillors' salaries and expenses to Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada and to their membership.

We are committed to getting this right. Together with our partners we are taking very important steps like the two steps I have just mentioned. That will reinstate funding that has been withheld from first nations under the current measures that were in place. I would ask that the member opposite be supportive of increased funding to first nations at this time.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): Before we resume, I will explain what happened. We had a little bit of a synchronization problem with our technology. Technology is wonderful when it works. When it does not, it can cause a few problems.

The hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

Mrs. Cathy McLeod: Mr. Speaker, I am absolutely appalled with what I heard from the member in terms of transparency.

The prior situation was that band members would have to go pleading to a band office for information, which they may or may not get. I appreciate that this information gets taken and delivered to the Department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs where it is looked at. That is not about transparency and accountability. This is basic, simple legislation. As a member of Parliament, my constituents know what my expenses are and what I make. The constituents of MLAs know what their expenses are and what they make. The shareholders of a company are very aware of what a company makes.

This is basic transparency. It is appalling that the government is backtracking on a piece of legislation that allowed band members for the first time to easily access important information about how the money was being spent in their communities.

● (1825)

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is obviously trying to make this look like a process whereby band chiefs and indigenous governments in this country are accountable to no one, and that is wrong. They are accountable, first, to the Government of Canada for the money they are afforded and, second, to their own membership. They do report to their membership. It is available.

I know the members opposite may have trouble understanding this, but what we are doing is working with first nations, Métis, and Inuit governments in this country to be able to develop transparency and accountability regulations collaboratively together, with mutual understanding, so that the regulations are fair to all partners involved, and do not require indigenous Canadians to go to a reporting system that is above and beyond what any other Canadian is expected to do.

The member opposite knows that the act that was in place had measures that certainly asked them to do just that.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, at the outset, congratulations for being in the chair. I invite you to come to my town of Cobalt any time you want.

We are here tonight to follow up on the question that I raised with the Minister of Health, that on the day it was found that Canada had systemically discriminated against indigenous children for years, Health Canada denied a youngster medically necessary orthodontic surgery at the third stage of appeal.

I am very pleased that the minister, because of the pressure that we raised in the House, is now looking at that case again. I find it shocking that it takes pressure in the House of Commons to deal with children who cases are being denied.

In this child's case, in 2008, she suffered an ocular tumour and was going to lose her eye. She needed special drops. The medical professionals gave her a prescription for the drops, and the bureaucrats at Health Canada said, "Absolutely not", she could get by with Visine. The family has had to get by on samples from the medical specialists so this child does not lose her eye.

Recently, her orthodontic crisis came to a head, with two pediatric orthodontic specialists stating that if nothing were done, she would lose all her teeth and need special surgery. This was a severe and functionally handicapping malocclusion. She was denied at the first stage. She went to the second stage of appeal and was denied there too. She went to the third stage of appeal and again denied.

What is really disturbing is to have read the criteria, because the government said that she did not meet them. The criteria for the government to accept a case is for that person to have a severe overbite with evident soft tissue injury, two-third overlap with impingement of the palate. I am not a dentist. I do not know what that means, but I know that her orthodontic surgeon said that she had a severe overbite with evidence of two-third deep overbite impingement that would lead to a loss of her teeth. If she is not eligible under the criteria, then who is?

Evidently no one is. I am looking at over 534 cases of children that were brought before Health Canada, and 80% were rejected in the first round. The few that went to the second round had a 99% rejection rate. On the third round, 100% of these children were denied by the bureaucrats at Health Canada. That is what systemic discrimination against these children looks like.

I refer members to the working document of the Officials Working Group, May 20, 2009, on Jordan's principle dispute resolution. It states that when a child has special needs, for example, for a wheelchair, Health Canada will not give an indigenous child a motorized wheelchair, but that the child has to get by with an adult push wheelchair. If the child does not fit that chair, it actually says that they will have to put in some pillows. If they need a special lift because they cannot move or if they need a special wheelchair or a special tracking device, they do not get all three. They can pick one. That is it. This is what systemic discrimination by the government against children has meant.

It is all very well for the kind words we are hearing from the government, but we need to know whether the systemic discrimination is going to end and if Canada will become compliant with the Human Rights Tribunal.

I want to hear, first, will the Liberals immediately stand up in this House and say they will not appeal against Cindy Blackstock?

Second, will they prove to this child and to the country that they are willing to implement the Human Rights Tribunal?

Third, how are we going to deal with the 500, the 1,000-plus children, and all the other children who are being systematically denied day after day by the government?

● (1830)

Ms. Kamal Khera (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our government is fully committed to ensuring that first nation and Inuit children have access to the health services they need. Our government is committed to working with our partners to provide effective, sustainable, and culturally appropriate health programs and services to improve the health of first nations and Inuit people in Canada.

I know with the leadership of the Minister of Health and the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, we will continue to build relationships with first nation, Inuit, and Métis communities around Canada to work in partnership with them on their concerns and priorities.

Health Canada's non-insured health benefits program is a health benefit program that provides coverage for medically necessary health-related goods and services not otherwise provided by the provinces. Benefits include prescription drugs, dental care, vision care, medical supplies and equipment, mental health counselling, and medical transportation where health services are not available in communities.

NIHP is one of the largest health benefit programs in the country, supporting approximately 824,000 eligible first nations and Inuit, with expenditures last year of over $1 billion. All benefits are provided without a co-payment or deductible to all eligible first nations and Inuit. Like any other publicly funded health benefit program, this program makes coverage decisions based on current scientific and clinical evidence.

Specifically on dental care, the program provides eligible first nations and Inuit with coverage for dental benefits, including diagnostic, preventive, restorative, endodontic, periodontal, removable prosthodontics, oral surgery, orthodontic and other services. Last year, the program processed approximately 2.5 million dental claims for 290,000 first nation and Inuit clients, supported with over $200 million in funding.

Orthodontic services are covered when they are needed because a person's ability to chew is adversely affected. There are clear criteria and guidelines in place, and these are always followed.

As hon. members of the House are aware, not all Canadians have access to insured dental health care services. We know the importance of oral health in contributing to the overall health of first nations and Inuit, and this program does cover a broad range of dental services in an effort to address the oral health needs of first nation and Inuit populations through NIHB programs.

Unlike private plans, the NIHB program will cover, for most cases, the full cost of orthodontic treatment that meet program criteria. In the majority of the provinces and territories, the program pays more than $6,000 per case. This represents about three times more than what a private plan would cover per client.

I am not able to comment on the details related to a specific case in order to protect patient confidentiality, but our government continues to work with first nation and Inuit partners to enhance access to non-insured health benefits for first nations and Inuit.

For instance, in partnership with the Assembly of First Nations, Health Canada has begun a joint review of the NIHB program in the spirit of continual improvement of the program. This two-year review will enable direct input from first nations. Each NIHB benefit area will be examined, with a view to identifying and addressing gaps and streamlining service delivery.

We know that there is always more to do. We are committed to delivering the best possible health care services to first nation and Inuit communities.

I appreciate the question from the member opposite, and value his commitment to representing and advocating for his constituents.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I am absolutely appalled. We are talking about whether Canada is in compliance with a human rights tribunal ruling that has gone around the world for systemic discrimination against children. However, what I am hearing from that member makes it sound as if these children are getting a better deal than ordinary white Canadians, that they are getting access to services that other kids would not get, and that maybe there is more to do.

Yes, there is more to do. If the member read the internal documents, they routinely deny emergency medical treatments. If the Liberals look at the documents, there is a 100% refusal rate at level 3. Is there more to do? Yes, there is more to do.

It is about being in compliance with the legally binding rules. I did not hear one word about whether the member's government will meet the obligations that have been laid down by the human rights tribunal to stop this systemic discrimination against these children that is endemic within Health Canada. It is a legally binding ruling.

I would have liked to have heard, “Yes, we will respect that ruling, and yes, we will make sure that discrimination stops”, but I did not hear any of that. I heard more pointed talk and blather.

● (1835)

Ms. Kamal Khera: Mr. Speaker, I am happy to have this interaction today and to speak to the importance of first nations and Inuit children having access to the health services they need.

As I said previously, yes, we know there is more that can be done, and we will do more. First nation children must have access to the health services they need, including the provision of orthodontic services through Health Canada's NIHB program.

The joint review of the NIHB program currently being undertaken with the Assembly of First Nations will be an important part of this work. The review will enable direct input from first nations and Inuit in the spirit of continual improvement of the program.

We will continue to work with partners to provide effective, sustainable, and culturally appropriate health programs and services to improve the health of first nations and Inuit people in Canada.

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mr. Anthony Rota): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6:35 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Thursday, February 18, 2016

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

ORAL QUESTIONS