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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, February 17, 2022

The House met at 10 a.m.

Prayer

• (1000)

[English]

POINTS OF ORDER

TERMS OF DEBATE PURSUANT TO THE EMERGENCIES ACT—SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker: I am now ready to rule on the point of order raised yesterday by the House leader of the official opposition concerning today's statutory debate being held pursuant to the Emergencies Act.

In his intervention, the member asked for the Chair's interpretation of the provisions found in subsection 58(6) of the act, which state that the motion is to be debated “without interruption”. He argued that the plain meaning of these words is that once the debate begins, it cannot be interrupted for any other business and the House is required to sit continuously until it is concluded. He also cited past examples of statutory debates that had similar provisions, but noted that those statutes contained explicit wording allowing for such interruptions, provisions that are absent in the Emergencies Act.

[Translation]

The role of the Chair in arriving at a decision is to draw on procedural information and precedents. When it comes to statutes, my predecessors have consistently explained that it is not up to the Chair to rule on matters of either a constitutional or of a legal nature. In a past ruling, one of my predecessors stated on October 24, 2011, at page 2405 of the Debates:

...it is important to delineate clearly between interpreting legal provisions of statutes—which is not within the purview of the Chair—and ensuring the soundness of the procedures and practices of the House...—which, of course, is the role of the Chair.”

As pointed out by the Opposition House Leader, in many past statutory debates, the House decided on how to interpret a statutory provision in the parliamentary context by adopting a motion regarding the parameters that would govern a statutory debate. This is, of course, part of the House's undoubted privilege to control its own proceedings. But absent such a motion, he contended that the House is bound to follow the plain meaning of the law.

[English]

The member cited a number of principles to follow in interpreting statutes. I would suggest that a critical one often cited by the courts is the principle of contextual construction. It is described by Driedger in *Construction of Statutes*, second edition, at page 87: “the words of an Act are to be read in their entire context in their grammatical and ordinary sense harmoniously with the scheme of the Act, the object of the Act and the intention of Parliament”.

Following Sullivan in *Statutory Interpretation*, second edition, one reads this at pages 58 and 59:

There are problems with the plain meaning rule. In the first place, the distinction it draws between reading and interpretation is illusory.... Second, the plain meaning rule expressly requires courts to distinguish between clear or plain meaning on the one hand and ambiguous or doubtful meaning on the other. This distinction has no solid basis.

To understand how the wording “without interruption” came to be, the Chair has reviewed the evidence given at the legislative committee on Bill C-77 in the second session of the 33rd Parliament. Originally, this section of the bill provided that the motion be debated for three days without interruption. A member moved an amendment to strike the three-day limit, arguing that he did not want to see a mechanism for time allocation built into the act. He instead suggested that it be subjected to the normal rules of the House. Another member explicitly asked if the provision as drafted meant that the House would need to sit for 72 hours straight to consider the motion. The response given, both by the parliamentary secretary and by the official present, was that the provisions of the act had to be interpreted within the context of the House's rules. Therefore, any extension to the House's sitting hours would have to occur pursuant to the normal procedures. This was clearly the understanding of the members of the committee when they removed the three-day limit on debate. I refer members to the evidence of the committee from April 12, 1988, especially pages 945 and 946.

• (1005)

The amendment was adopted and the provision was further amended at report stage to arrive at the current wording of the act.

[Translation]

Given the clear intention of the legislators who adopted these provisions, the Chair has difficulty accepting the argument that this motion must be debated non-stop until the House is ready to come to a decision.

Routine Proceedings

Instead, I propose to treat the matter as an order of the day having priority over all other current orders of the day and to continue to apply the schedule of the House as laid out in our Standing Orders. This means that the House will consider items such as Routine Proceedings, Statements by Members, Oral Questions, Adjournment Proceedings, etc. at their usual time, and will adjourn at its usual time.

[English]

The Chair recognizes that this is an important debate on an urgent matter and that many members will wish to express their views. If parties feel the current rule should be adapted to this context, I strongly encourage the parties to follow the practice used in past statutory debates and arrive at an agreement.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

Mr. Marc Serré (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Official Languages, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34(1), I have the honour to present to the House, in both official languages, two reports of the Canadian Section of ParlAmericas.

The first report concerns its participation in the 13th Gathering of the ParlAmericas Parliamentary Network for Gender Equality, which was held virtually on September 13, 22 and October 4, 2021.

The second report concerns its participation in the 5th Gathering of the ParlAmericas Open Parliament Network, which was held virtually on March 15, 19, and 26, 2021.

* * *

[English]

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP) moved for leave to introduce Bill C-255, An Act to amend the Income Tax Act and the Canada Student Financial Assistance Act.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce an important bill to Parliament, the post-secondary education financial assistance for persons with disabilities act, with thanks to the hon. member for Edmonton Griesbach for seconding it and his tireless advocacy for diversity and inclusion.

This legislation would provide tuition-free post-secondary education for all Canadians with disabilities. This is not only fundamentally just; it is an investment in our citizens that will unleash potential and benefit our society. While there has been progress in broadening inclusion for students in Canadian colleges, universities and trade schools, there is still much more to be done.

I call on all parliamentarians to support this vital initiative to help Canadians with disabilities reach their potential and share their talents, skills and energy with us all, because when people with diverse abilities succeed, we all succeed.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

• (1010)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there have been discussions among the parties, and if you seek it, I believe you will find unanimous consent to adopt the following motion. I move:

That, in relation to the motion for confirmation of the declaration of emergency, notwithstanding any Standing Order or usual practice of the House, the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, the Minister moving the motion and the member speaking immediately afterwards shall be allowed to speak for no more than 20 minutes with 10 minutes for questions and comments and that they be allowed to split their time with another member, and that the Prime Minister be allowed to speak before the Minister moving the motion.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed to the hon. member's moving the motion will please say nay.

I hear none.

The House has heard the terms of the motion. All those opposed to the motion will please say nay.

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

[English]

PETITIONS

AIR TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition on behalf of numerous residents in my riding. For some time, they have been impacted by increased air traffic over their neighbourhoods. These are not people who live next to an airport. Rather, they live between designated training areas many miles away from an airport. Their quality of life has been diminished, and attempts at finding reasonable solutions have not been successful. They are calling on the government to legally implement changes to resolve the matter so they can regain a normal, peaceful life.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Sean Casey (Charlottetown, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition signed by several Prince Edward Islanders who were inspired by Seth Klein's book and are very concerned about the climate emergency. They are calling on the Government of Canada to enact just transition legislation that would reduce emissions by at least 60% below 2005 levels, that would create good, green jobs and drive an inclusive workforce, and that would protect and strengthen human rights and expand the social safety net.

QUEEN JULIANA PARK

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise in this place to present a petition primarily from residents of Ottawa who are very concerned about what might seem at first to my colleagues in this place to be a local issue, but it is not. It is the destruction of Queen Juliana Park, which was established to honour the Canadian soldiers who fought for the liberation of the Netherlands, 7,600 of whom died in that conflict. The establishment of Queen Juliana Park was in honour of the sacrifices of Canadian soldiers and of the close relationship that exists between the people of the Netherlands and Canada.

The decision to remove 750 mature canopy trees flies in the face of everything we hear about trying to create urban places with green spaces. Being able to escape to a green space restores our souls, especially in a time of pandemic. Those trees will be cut down to make room for a new hospital expansion, even though the National Capital Commission, which is federal, had already told the City of Ottawa the better location was Tunney's Pasture.

These citizens of Ottawa call for the National Capital Commission's original recommendation to be reinstated to preserve Queen Juliana Park and indeed the entire Central Experimental Farm as green spaces, and they support the request for a public inquiry at the federal level.

• (1015)

THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Mr. Speaker, I have a petition from folks in Kitchener Centre who agree with the member for Charlottetown and residents of his community. They are similarly calling for just transition legislation. They call on the government to ensure that the targets included align with climate science and doing our fair share, at least 60% below 2005 levels by 2030, and that we phase out fossil fuel subsidies and move that toward creating the good, green jobs of tomorrow, while protecting human rights and indigenous rights.

* * *

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 Deputy Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

[English]

EMERGENCIES ACT

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.) moved:

That, pursuant to section 58 of the Emergencies Act, this House confirms the declaration of a public order emergency proclaimed on February 14, 2022.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the Minister of Public Safety.

Statutory Order

On Monday, as we entered the third week of illegal blockades and occupations, the federal government invoked the Emergencies Act. We did it to protect families and small businesses, to protect jobs and the economy. We did it because the situation could not be dealt with under any other law in Canada. We did it because that is what responsible leadership required us to do.

For the good of all Canadians, the illegal blockades and occupations have to stop and the borders have to remain open. We have made progress since Monday. On Tuesday, the border was reopened in southern Alberta after the Coutts blockade was dismantled. The RCMP arrested a small group of people within the larger blockade and seized firearms, ammunition and body armour. It is believed that this group was willing to use force against police officers.

On Wednesday, the blockade in Emerson, Manitoba had been cleared without arrests or charges. Traffic and trade at this border crossing have now resumed.

In Windsor, Mayor Dilkens said that law enforcement was able to successfully intercept a new convoy suspected of heading to the Ambassador Bridge.

Here in Ottawa, law enforcement now has more tools and resources in order to give the people of this city their jobs, neighbourhoods and freedoms back.

[Translation]

In Windsor, Coutts and Emerson, illegal blockades have been lifted and border crossings have resumed or are resuming. I want to thank law enforcement officers, including RCMP members, for their work on the ground.

For the sake of the economy, families and workers, it is high time that these illegal and dangerous activities ended, including here in Ottawa.

Invoking the Emergencies Act is not something we do lightly. This is not the first, second or third option. It is the last resort.

When I consulted the provincial and territorial premiers on Monday morning I was very clear. By obstructing the supply chains, the illegal blockades are causing considerable harm to our economy and to Canadians.

[English]

It is consistent with the requirements of the Emergencies Act that the views of the premiers of all provinces and territories be carefully considered, and that is what we did. The consultation and collaboration with the premiers will continue until the situation is resolved.

Statutory Order

As I said on Monday, the scope of the Emergencies Act is time-limited and targeted, as well as reasonable and proportionate. It strengthens and supports law enforcement agencies so they have more tools to restore order and protect critical infrastructure.

These illegal blockades are being heavily supported by individuals in the United States and from elsewhere around the world. We see that roughly half of the funding that is flowing to the barricaders here is coming from the United States.

The goal of all measures, including financial measures, in the Emergencies Act is to deal with the current threat only, and to get the situation fully under control.

I want to reassure Canadians that when the Emergencies Act is invoked, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms continues to protect their individual rights. We are not using the Emergencies Act to call in the military. We are not limiting people's freedom of expression. We are not limiting freedom of peaceful assembly. We are not preventing people from exercising their right to protest legally. We are, in fact, reinforcing the principles, values and institutions that keep all Canadians free.

● (1020)

The blockades and occupations are illegal. They are a threat to our economy and to our relationship with trading partners. They are a threat to supply chains and the availability of essential goods, such as food and medicine, and they are a threat to public safety.

[Translation]

The Emergencies Act will be time limited and targeted to respond to the threats of occupations and illegal blockades only.

The measures are reasonable and proportionate. I want it to be clear to Canadians that when the Emergencies Act is invoked, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms continues to protect individual rights.

We are not using the Emergencies Act to send in the army. We are not taking away fundamental rights. We are not limiting freedom of expression or the right to peaceful protest. What we want to do is ensure the safety of Canadians, protect workers' jobs and restore trust in our institutions.

[English]

We understand that everyone is tired of this pandemic. We understand that Canadians are frustrated with COVID. Some protesters came to Ottawa to express their frustration and fatigue with public health measures, and that is their right. As I said, it is a right that we will defend in this free and democratic country. However, illegal blockades and occupations are not peaceful protests. They have to stop.

[Translation]

We all want the pandemic to be over. Public health measures are constantly being re-evaluated. We will continue to modify them based on the science and the situation, and we will continue to encourage people to get vaccinated.

[English]

This week, based on advice from public health experts, our health minister, Mr. Duclos, announced that we will soon start easing border measures for travellers. Our government—

The Deputy Speaker: If I can, I will interrupt the Prime Minister for a second to say we need to make sure we are not using proper names here. We want to stick to the riding names.

The Right Hon. Prime Minister.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, this week, based on advice from public health experts, the health minister announced that we will soon start easing border measures for travellers. Our government will continue to follow the best scientific advice to keep Canadians safe and to support health care workers.

People are making sacrifices, and have been for two years. It is never time to hurt our communities or our fellow Canadians with illegal blockades, but especially not now that we are reopening and beginning to get back to the things we love. That is why it is so important for us to be having this debate today and in the days to come, and for Parliament to play its role in this process.

Today, I ask all members of the House to take action against illegal blockades that are harmful to Canadians. I ask all members of the House to stand up for families and workers, to stand up for jobs and our economy, and to stand up for the freedom of Canadians and for public safety.

● (1025)

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Public Safety and the Minister of Emergency Preparedness have repeatedly stated that there is evidence of foreign extremist financing behind this convoy.

Last week at the public safety committee, the deputy director of intelligence for FINTRAC, Barry MacKillop, stated that there was no evidence that this funding in Ottawa was tied to ideologically motivated extremism. Under further questioning, he stated that there had been no spike in suspicious transactions.

On what basis is the government freezing the bank accounts of Canadians? It is in violation of section 8 of the charter, which is against unreasonable search and seizure.

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I think it is going to be extremely important. In this House, over the coming days there will be important and robust debate on many such issues. I can highlight, once again, that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms continues to apply. The Emergencies Act is subject to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the measures that we have brought forward are proportional, measured and responsible. They are designed to get Canadians their lives and communities back, and to restore their freedoms.

*Statutory Order**[Translation]*

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I believe that just about everyone agrees with the intention of putting an end to the siege of Ottawa. It is just about the only hostile protest still going on in Canada. Although the intention is a good one, the means being used may not be.

Quebec dealt with protests in Quebec City without the Emergencies Act. In Coutts, not only did the border reopen without the Emergencies Act, but weapons were seized without it. The Ambassador Bridge was reopened without the Emergencies Act. The situation in Manitoba was resolved without the Emergencies Act, and there are other examples.

How can the Prime Minister claim from the beginning of his speech that there was no other way to intervene? Why did he not exclude the provinces and Quebec, which do not want to be subject to or use the powers of this law?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, police forces across the country now have more tools to deal with these illegal blockades and occupations, if and when they occur.

We will continue to ensure that the measures are proportionate, reasonable and time-limited. However, it was and is important to give more tools to the police who need them.

We understand that the police were able to keep the situation under control in many parts of the country, but the Emergencies Act applies from one end of the country to the other. However, it will be used only when necessary.

[English]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for weeks this occupation has been allowed to continue. People have lost wages, citizens have been harassed and the potential for violence has grown. Instead of acting, the federal government argued over jurisdiction.

What responsibility does the Prime Minister take for the inaction that has made invoking the Emergencies Act necessary?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to reiterate that from day one of these barricades, blockades and occupations, the federal government has been supplying resources and working closely with local police officers of jurisdiction to ensure they had the tools they needed. Obviously, the situation has evolved. The situation has escalated, but every step of the way the federal government has been there to support the law enforcement of jurisdiction. Here in Ottawa it is the Ottawa Police Service and the OPP, and we will continue to be there with the RCMP as necessary.

● (1030)

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as members are very much aware, my riding includes Parliament Hill, which has been under siege for over three weeks now. My community has been held hostage, and I can assure the House these protests have not been peaceful or lawful.

My question for the Prime Minister is this. How is the Emergencies Act going to help my constituents in Ottawa Centre?

Right Hon. Justin Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, Canadians continue to have the right to free expression and to protest peacefully, but occupying the downtown cores of our major cities, protesting and blocking border crossings, is unacceptable. That is why we have given more tools, in a proportional way, to police officers.

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking the Prime Minister for commencing this important debate on the invocation of the Emergencies Act for the first time.

I want to begin with a number of expressions of gratitude, both to my colleagues on this side of the House and to the opposition for the informed debate we are about to have. Finally, I would like to thank Canadians. I know this has been a very difficult time, a period of great frustration, anxiety and uncertainty. It is not lost on me, and I hope it is not lost on any member of the chamber, that the confluence of events of the pandemic and now these illegal blockades does create for an emotionally charged atmosphere. Sometimes we let that get the better of us here in this chamber.

My sincere hope is that we will be able to have a principled debate about why it is that the government has chosen to invoke the Emergencies Act, the paramount reason being the health and safety of all Canadians.

We have heard the Prime Minister set out what the test for the invocation of the Emergencies Act is, and I know my colleague, the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, and other members will elaborate on that. However, I want to focus my comments on what I believe are the perceived and real risks to public safety we have seen over the last number of weeks that have emanated from the so-called "freedom convoy".

This convoy has taken to the streets, and other critical infrastructure, right across the country, including our borders, national symbols, communities and neighbourhoods. It has had a profound impact. I would submit to members of this chamber that it has been a very negative and detrimental impact to public safety.

I want to touch on the number of ports of entry that have been significantly interrupted as a result of participation in the illegal blockades, including at Coutts, Alberta; Emerson, Manitoba; Surrey, British Columbia; Windsor, Ontario; Sarnia, Ontario; Fort Erie, Ontario; as well as those here in Ottawa.

Statutory Order

I hope that all members recognize that the kind of conduct we have seen at our borders puts the integrity and the security of this country into serious question. The impact at Coutts, for example, has cost the economy approximately \$48 million per day. In Emerson it has been \$73 million a day, and in Windsor, where we conduct roughly a quarter of all of our daily trade with our most important trading partner, the United States, it has been roughly \$390 million. Those are just numerical figures, but I think about the translation of those dollar figures into the impact on Canadian jobs, families and those who are just trying to get by right now.

Whatever the motivation of some individuals who have commingled with those organizers and agitators of these illegal blockades, whatever their concerns are with regard to the government's strategy to get out of the pandemic, which is of course to get vaccinated, this has become something much more concerning.

I do want to say we have made some progress at these ports of entry, and that is in large part thanks to the very important work that has been undertaken by the members of our law enforcement.

• (1035)

[Translation]

I want to thank the RCMP for its efforts and energy. I also want to thank all the police forces who are doing great work on the ground. We are seeing a lot of progress. Most of the borders are now open. That is good for the economy, good for business and good for Canadians. However, this progress is no guarantee.

[English]

It is very important that we continue to guarantee the progress that we have made. I want to speak for a moment about the situation here in Ottawa. I know that many of my colleagues in the NCR caucus have spoken very articulately and very passionately about the damage that has been caused in our communities and neighbourhoods. I have also heard some members of the opposition try to somehow cast a minimization, in an effort to generalize what is going on outside of this chamber as being legitimate. It is not. It is illegal, and it causes great harm.

We have seen people intimidated, harassed and threatened. We have seen apartment buildings chained up. We have seen fires set in corridors. Residents are being terrorized, and it is absolutely gut-wrenching to see the sense of abandonment and helplessness they have felt for weeks now. I want to assure them that since day one, the federal government has done everything it could do to provide additional resources. The RCMP has sent three sets of reinforcements to the Ottawa Police Service, and we will continue to do whatever we can to help.

However, it is also important for members of this chamber that we write the laws and we set the policies, but we trust our police, our law enforcement, to enforce them. That is why it is so important that we use every tool in our tool box, especially now, when we find ourselves in a predicament, a dilemma, a situation that has perhaps never been seen before.

I ask myself, and I hope others are reflecting as well, what this is all about. I try to step back and look at what is occurring. I am concerned. I have heard some people say, and they are still saying, that

this is a protest about vaccines. It is not. They say that it is a protest about mandates. It is not.

I have heard some people still say that this is a protest about freedom. What is going on outside, on the streets of Canada and at our borders, is most certainly not about freedom. It is about a very small, organized and targeted group of individuals that is trying to strip away the very freedoms that we here, and the generations of those who preceded us, have sworn to uphold.

I have seen many striking similarities in the way that these blockades have manifested across the country, including the tactics that they are using, the timing they are occurring, and the targets, whether they are national symbols, such as Parliament here, or provincial legislatures. There was also the war monument outside, where we hear members speak passionately about their forebears who made sacrifices for the freedoms that we now enjoy. The individuals outside are tearing down the barriers to attack those monuments. What does that say? Those are—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Marco Mendicino: I know members are heckling, but I am encouraging them to reflect on this and on the rhetoric. Notwithstanding the efforts of my colleagues to shout me down, I am speaking on behalf of constituents and Canadians. Yes, there is an ideologically motivated operation that we see here in the rhetoric that is meant to incite.

That is indeed one of the reasons why we have had to invoke the Emergencies Act. I want to assure members that these are very targeted measures. They are time limited, and they are protected by the charter. For those who want to ask questions as to how those powers are going to be enforced, part of the debate is going to ensure that there are sufficient guardrails and safeguards in place. There will be transparency on how those measures are implemented.

There will also be an inquiry to ensure that we can learn from these lessons and make sure that this is an instrument that has been used responsibly and in a manner that is consistent with the charter to uphold the health and safety of all Canadians.

At the end of the day, we are all here, I would hope, to do one thing, and that is to protect the health and safety of Canadians. We find ourselves at a crossroads of the pandemic, but we have made progress. We have made progress with the pandemic, and we are making progress in restoring public order, but it is absolutely imperative that we have these debates in a principled and reasonable manner that is respectful of our constituents and respectful of Canadians. That is certainly something that I hope we will see over the next number of days.

• (1040)

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the minister today, and in a news conference yesterday, has repeatedly stated that there are ideologically motivated, violent extremists and there is a small group of extremists who are willing to use violence. He says that there are ties between extremists who were apprehended in Coutts and extremists here in Ottawa.

However, when asked repeatedly by the media to back up that assertion with evidence, the minister fails to provide any evidence. We are talking about invoking a once-in-34-year Emergencies Act. Parliamentarians deserve real evidence, not conjecture from the minister, before we could ever contemplate suspending the rights of Canadians. In what basis does the minister make the claim that there are violent extremists in Ottawa?

Hon. Marco Mendicino: Mr. Speaker, I am afraid my colleague operates from the false premise that the Emergencies Act is a kind of suspension of charter rights. It is not.

As I have said throughout the course of the debate, and as the act itself says, all of the powers that need to be exercised in the Emergencies Act must be done in accordance with the charter. That means ensuring that section 8 is respected, which guarantees people the right to be protected from any unreasonable search and seizure, and the same for section 7 as well.

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of his speech, the minister said that he was proud to move this motion, that he was proud to be the first Minister of Public Safety to invoke the Emergencies Act since it came into force in 1988. I am wondering how he can be proud to enforce a law that limits the fundamental rights of Quebecers and Canadians.

We heard the Prime Minister say that this was the last resort. Unfortunately, I do not think he used all of the tools at his disposal before we got to this point. I would like to know what other approaches he could have taken before invoking the Emergencies Act.

Hon. Marco Mendicino: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question. The Emergencies Act is a last resort. This was not the first option and is certainly not the option we prefer.

In response to this convoy and illegal blockade, we had to add a lot of resources to help the police restore public order on the ground. However, we have gotten to a very difficult point right now with a lot of challenges, which is why we invoked this measure.

[English]

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in his speech, the hon. member spoke of the people who are being impacted by the blockades. He spoke about the harassment and the assaults. I know I have spoken to a lot of workers in this downtown about that as well. It is truly heartbreaking. I think of the workers and businesses who have been impacted negatively. I think about the people at the Rideau Centre. I think about people within my own region in southwestern Ontario and those businesses who have been impacted.

What is the government's plan to help those workers and those business owners after this debate is done, after we have seen the protesters go home? We have been asking for the government to come up with a plan. What is the plan for those people?

Hon. Marco Mendicino: Mr. Speaker, I share my colleague's concerns about public safety. Certainly, the impact of these illegal blockades across the country has undermined not only public safety but also families' and individuals' ability to provide for themselves. I want to assure my colleague that we will work with her and all

Statutory Order

members, so once we clean up these illegal blockades and we have public safety restored on the streets here in Ottawa, the Government of Canada will continue to be there to support Canadians, as we have been throughout the pandemic.

• (1045)

Hon. Candice Bergen (Leader of the Opposition, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Mégantic—L'Érable today.

This week, for the first time since its passage, the Emergencies Act has been invoked by the Prime Minister. This is historic, and it is extremely disappointing. The Prime Minister has invoked the act, he says, to deal with the protests that have gathered here in downtown Ottawa and blockades that were happening at the Coutts border in Alberta, the Emerson border in Manitoba, the Ambassador Bridge in Windsor and the border at Surrey, all of which, by the way, are now open. There are no more blockades at any borders. What are left are the trucks parked outside here in Ottawa that need to move or be moved.

However, throughout the last three weeks the Prime Minister has failed to take meaningful action to de-escalate the protests here or to use any tools he may have available. Instead, he has jumped straight to the most extreme measure, and as he has invoked the act, he has failed to meet the high threshold set out by the Emergencies Act to justify it, that being when a situation “seriously threatens the ability of the Government of Canada to preserve the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of Canada,” and when the situation “cannot be effectively dealt with under any other law of [the country].”

Conservatives do not believe the government has shown that threshold has been met, and thus we will be voting against it. Members should keep in mind this act is already invoked and is the new law of the land. Our debate and the vote on Monday can only stop it if the NDP vote with Conservatives and the Bloc to stop it. Supporting the use of the Emergencies Act is one of the most serious decisions a parliamentarian can make. I want to remind especially the New Democrats of this, who are supporting the Liberals in this sledgehammer approach. History will not be kind to the leader of the NDP or his members on this particular question.

The Emergencies Act's predecessor, the War Measures Act, was only used three times: World War I, World War II and the FLQ crisis. We should keep these precedents in mind. The weight of those events should caution us against making this decision lightly. These protests have caused disruptions for many Canadians, especially local businesses and residents of Ottawa. As I have said, Conservatives are the party of law and order. We believe the trucks should move or be moved, but we want to lower the temperature across the country. The Prime Minister clearly wants to raise it.

Statutory Order

Let us be very clear how this all started. The Prime Minister decided to impose a vaccine mandate on truckers with no scientific evidence that it was the right thing to do. Many Canadians opposed it, but he went ahead anyway. Truckers and millions of Canadians felt they had no recourse with the Prime Minister, and who can blame them? After all, this was the Prime Minister who called them racist and misogynist. He said their views were unacceptable and that they were on the fringe. When truckers and their supporters arrived in Ottawa, what did the Prime Minister do first? He hid for a week and then he continued his insults, calling them and anyone who supported them or even talked with them things like Nazi supporters. We saw that name-calling and unfair and mean-spirited characterization happen just yesterday by the Prime Minister of Canada in the House. That is all he has done to rectify the problem: call names and insult.

Many of the people who are protesting and are upset are our neighbours. They are our constituents. They are Canadians. They want to be heard and given just a little respect by their Prime Minister, but he has decided that, because he disagrees with them and does not like their opinions, he will not hear them. At every turn the Prime Minister has stigmatized, wedged, divided and traumatized Canadians, and now, without even a single meeting with a trucker, without talking through one of their concerns, without apologizing for his insults, without listening to what people have to say and without using any other tool at his disposal, he has used this over-reach, the Emergencies Act, and it is wrong.

• (1050)

The Prime Minister's leadership in this situation has, frankly, been abysmal. He said this week, "Invoking the Emergencies Act is never the first thing a government should do, nor even the second. The act is to be used sparingly and as a last resort", but his actions have shown the opposite approach.

The so-called measure of last resort has come before taking any action to address the frustrations at the root of the protest. How did the Prime Minister go directly from ignoring the truckers to turning to the Emergencies Act? Why has the government jumped straight to this without doing anything to lower the temperature first? Conservatives put forward a reasonable approach that could help bring the temperature down and address the concerns. We asked the government to commit publicly to a specific plan and timeline to roll back federal mandates and restrictions, but the Liberals and NDP refused to support our plan. Instead, the Prime Minister reached for more power. This comes as provincial governments are announcing plans to end COVID-19 restrictions.

The Prime Minister is an exception to this trend and he refuses to come forward with a plan. Even the provinces are unhappy with the Prime Minister for doing this: Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Quebec and Nova Scotia. They are all opposed to the use of the Emergencies Act. This is not a good look for the Prime Minister.

We all want the trucks here in Ottawa to move. We want a peaceful and quick end to the trucks blocking the streets in Ottawa. Our message to those protesting is still this: Conservatives have heard them. We will keep standing up for them, but it is time to move the trucks.

At the same time, no government should resort to the kinds of extreme measures that we are seeing. Unfortunately, the Prime Minister has a track record of serious disregard for the law and that raises a lot of red flags. This is the Prime Minister who interfered with an ongoing criminal trial in the SNC-Lavalin scandal. This is the Prime Minister who took the Speaker to court instead of fulfilling his legal obligation to provide documents to this Parliament on two separate occasions. This is the Prime Minister who has been found guilty by the Ethics Commissioner.

This Prime Minister admitted his admiration for basic dictatorships. We have seen red flag after red flag after red flag. He may not like it, but in Canada civil liberties must be defended at every turn. Section 2 guarantees our freedom of association and assembly. Section 7 guarantees our right to life, liberty and security of the person. Section 8 guarantees our protection against unreasonable search and seizure.

Canadians cannot be expected to simply take the Prime Minister at his word. His plans are not consistent with fundamental freedoms. The government should not have the power to close the bank accounts of Canadians on a whim. The Prime Minister is doing this to save his own political skin, but this is not a game. It comes at a cost to Canadians' rights and freedoms. Parliament should not allow the Prime Minister to avoid responsibility in this way.

I urge all members of the House to proceed with extreme caution. Now is the time to stand up for their constituents, to show real leadership, to help heal our divisions, to listen to those we disagree with, to not shut them down, to not tell them that they are irrelevant and to not speak insults to them. That is the job of each one of us as members of Parliament, no matter who we represent. We have to represent them with integrity, with hope, with honour.

What the Prime Minister is doing, and has done for the last two years, is to disregard those Canadians, call them names and insult them. It is time for every one of us to show leadership and say no to this Emergencies Act.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, now I will speak on behalf of my constituents, which all of us are sworn to do.

I ask the members opposite: If this kind of occupation was happening in their neighbourhoods in their ridings for four weeks in a row—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (1055)

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

The longer I stand here, the fewer options people will have to actually present their feelings and represent their constituents later.

The hon. member for Ottawa Centre.

Statutory Order

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Mr. Speaker, it has been four weeks in a row. The members opposite talk about listening to the protesters but they will not even listen to a member of this House to understand what my constituents, the members of my community, are going through.

When did the line cross between this being a lawful protest, which we welcome in my riding and happen all the time, to an illegal protest? Members opposite were out there taking photos, encouraging those protesters to keep honking in the middle of the night.

Would the member now denounce those actions?

Hon. Candice Bergen: Mr. Speaker, that is a very good question for his leader, the Prime Minister. When these protests started, the first thing the Prime Minister did was call these people names. He insulted them. I do not think anyone in that member's constituency thinks that the response of a Prime Minister is to hide and then hurl huge insults, not just saying he disagrees with them but calling them misogynist, racist, having fringe views and that they should not be tolerated.

That is a very good question, and he should ask his own Prime Minister why he did not take action, why he did not show leadership and why he did not take the high road and try to at least listen to these folks so that they felt they were respected. That is a good question for the boss.

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the problems in Coutts, Alberta, were resolved without the Emergencies Act. The same goes for Emerson, where things were resolved without the Emergencies Act. With the Ambassador Bridge, once the Americans called the situation unacceptable, it was resolved without the Emergencies Act. There were protests in Quebec City, and it was all resolved without the Emergencies Act.

Here, in the federal capital, in the Prime Minister's backyard, there is an occupation. What did the Prime Minister do? First, he called them whiners, then he blamed the police, and then he brought out the atomic bomb, also known as the Emergencies Act.

My question is simple. Between playing Pontius Pilate and dropping the atomic bomb, there was a point at which the government could have shown some leadership and made use of tools.

What does the leader of the official opposition think about that?

[English]

Hon. Candice Bergen: Mr. Speaker, the member may recall that I sent a letter very early on to the Prime Minister asking that he meet with the opposition leaders to talk about solutions like the ones he just spoke about.

It is clear that the borders were cleared by police action, and that is a good thing. We believe that these protesters here in Ottawa, these blockades could have been moved quickly had the Prime Minister shown some leadership and said, "Hey, I'm hearing you. I disagree with you, but I hear your concerns. We're going to look at removing these mandates. We're going to do it because it's actually scientific to remove them."

I would guarantee that these folks would have moved on had the Prime Minister decided he wanted to actually listen. What I promise is that we would not be here today invoking an Emergencies Act, which is a sledgehammer on all Canadians.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is no secret that the convoy stated its mission was to overthrow the government. It sounds ludicrous, but it brazenly posted that on its website and it reiterated it—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order, order. I cannot hear the question, and I am sure the Leader of the Opposition cannot hear the question.

The hon. member for Burnaby South.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, it is no secret that the goal of this convoy, posted brazenly on its website, reiterated as recently as earlier this week in a press conference, was to overthrow a democratically elected government. That was its goal.

The interim leader of the Conservative Party says, "We have heard you and we will keep standing up for you." Do you regret endorsing a convoy that is attacking the fundamental democracy of our country? Do you regret endorsing and supporting an occupation that is harassing citizens? Do you regret endorsing a movement that has lost—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order, order. I know the questions have to come through the Chair, and I cannot speak on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition.

I will let the Leader of the Opposition answer the question.

Hon. Candice Bergen: Mr. Speaker, obviously nobody in this House believes that a government should be overthrown, although I have seen that member's colleagues at a number of pro-communist marches, so I am not sure if that means he endorses communism.

In fact, I will tell the House what I know. When history looks back on this, Conservatives will have stood up with Canadians, millions of Canadians, vaccinated Canadians, Canadians who are blue-collar workers, Canadians who are white-collar workers, Canadians who have had enough of a Prime Minister who has divided, wedged, stigmatized and traumatized them, and the party that will have stood with the Prime Minister is that member and his NDP colleagues. It is shameful.

Statutory Order

• (1100)

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would prefer to stand in the House today and talk about inflation. I would prefer to stand in the House today to defend the mothers, fathers and seniors who have suffered so much since the beginning of the pandemic and who are facing all sorts of really difficult situations. However, because of this Prime Minister's inaction, because he chose to protect his career rather than listen to Canadians, we are here today discussing a law that is being invoked by Parliament and the Prime Minister for the very first time since its enactment in 1988: the Emergencies Act.

This day will go down in history, but not for the right reasons. It is very disappointing. The Prime Minister says he is invoking the act to manage the blockades and protests happening in downtown Ottawa, at the border crossings in Coutts, Alberta, and Emerson, Manitoba, and at the Ambassador Bridge in Windsor. He said it again this morning.

I would like to point out to my colleagues that we must take these precedents into account. The weight of these events calls for prudence on our part. However, only the blockades in Ottawa remain. All of the other blockades ended or were ended without the need for the Emergencies Act. For 15 days, the Prime Minister took no real action to defuse the protests. He did not listen to the discontent, fatigue and demands being expressed by the protesters and Canadians. He preferred to take extreme measures as a first resort.

In short, the Prime Minister failed to meet the high threshold provided for in the Emergencies Act to justify its invocation and application. For that reason, the Conservatives will be voting against his decision. Invoking the Emergencies Act is one of the most important decisions a member of Parliament can make. Its predecessor, the War Measures Act, was invoked only three times: World War I, World War II and the October Crisis, which Quebecers remember all too well.

It is our prime responsibility as parliamentarians to protect our democracy. This includes Canadians' right to elect their representatives, the right to disagree with the government, and the right to express that disagreement publicly.

We know that these protests are causing problems for many Canadians, especially residents of Ottawa and local businesses. It is extremely hard for them. They are the collateral damage of a situation that extends far beyond the streets and people of Ottawa. We acknowledge that. As we have often said, the Conservative Party is the party of law and order. The illegal blockades must end quickly and peacefully. It is time to de-escalate the situation, not only in Ottawa, but across the country. Unfortunately, as many experts and analysts have said, the Prime Minister's actions could have the complete opposite effect.

Let us start at the beginning. How did these events start?

They started when the Prime Minister decided to politicize an election, to trigger an election in the middle of a pandemic, and then decided to force truckers to get vaccinated when there is no scientific proof that it was the right thing to do. We put the question to the government. We asked the Minister of Health on what expert

testimony he was basing his decision to force truckers to get vaccinated. The government consistently avoided the question. It never answered, but it did not back down. It kept the requirement in place, despite all the problems it was causing for our economy and supply chains, and despite the size of the movement it created.

When the protesters arrived in Ottawa, the Prime Minister went into hiding for a week and, when he came out, he did not attempt to de-escalate the situation. Instead, he insulted the protesters and Canadians who did not agree with him. That is what happened.

• (1105)

The Prime Minister called them racists and misogynists. He even said that their point of view was unacceptable. That happens often in the House. Every time somebody says something the Prime Minister does not entirely agree with, it is instantly clear that he finds it unacceptable.

As far as I know, more than half of Canadians did not vote for him in the last election. However, they are still Canadians, and they are entitled to their opinion. They are Canadians who expressed their views and still have the right to do so. Voting against the Prime Minister is acceptable.

I have heard opinions from everywhere, in my riding, on social media, over the phone and in emails. We received a lot of emails this week. The people expressing their views are our neighbours, our constituents. They are Canadians who want to make their voices heard and who should be able to do so. However, since the Prime Minister does not agree with them and does not like their opinion, he simply decided not to listen to them.

The Prime Minister stigmatizes and divides Canadians every chance he gets. We know that he refused to meet with any of the truckers or their representatives. He did not discuss their concerns with them. He did not even apologize for the insults he hurled at all the protesters outside and right here in the House.

Apologies are not for people who do not agree with him. He ignored what people have to say and waited for the crisis to get worse and worse and worse. He could have done something. He had plenty of tools at his disposal.

The first tool is himself. As Prime Minister and head of state, he could have listened to Canadians. The first tool he could have used is himself as head of state. He chose to act like a petty politician. Instead of listening, he chose to give himself more power, to expand the government's powers. That was a bad decision. The Prime Minister's leadership in this case has been deplorable.

This week, he even said, and I quote: "Invoking the act is never the first thing a government should do, nor the second. The act is to be used sparingly and as a last resort."

No one thinks that the Prime Minister used even the first, second, third or fourth options. He has not convinced anyone of the need to invoke the Emergencies Act when almost every expert, analyst and police chief said that they had all the tools they needed.

The provincial premiers said the same thing more than once. They said that they were able to manage the situation and asked the federal government not to throw fuel on the fire by invoking the Emergencies Act. That is what happened.

How did the Prime Minister go from totally ignoring the protesters directly to invoking the Emergencies Act?

We hope that history will tell, because the Prime Minister and his ministers will not, and, unfortunately, the current crisis was the direct result of the Prime Minister's lack of leadership.

The Conservatives proposed an option, a reasonable approach. We asked the Prime Minister to present a plan to announce the lifting of the vaccine mandates, a plan to end the health measures. That was not unreasonable. All of the provinces, all of the other governments in Canada are doing that.

Unfortunately, the Prime Minister dug in and chose to do nothing, to ignore his experts. He should not be surprised to learn today that the protesters and Canadians are fed up with his lack of leadership. That is the reality we find ourselves in today. The Prime Minister prefers to do whatever he wants and continues to refuse to present a plan.

The government should not have the power to close Canadians' bank accounts. The government should not have to invoke the Emergencies Act when there are other tools to resolve situations like the one that exists in Ottawa right now.

• (1110)

The Prime Minister failed. Unfortunately, the Prime Minister will be judged, not by us, but by generations of Canadians to come.

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite likes to talk about leadership. However, his party is trying to both support and condemn the illegal blockades.

The hon. member for Lambton—Kent—Middlesex suggested that the Prime Minister should show leadership and give the illegal protesters everything they want. What measures should the government have taken? Should the government simply give in to the demands of the illegal protesters?

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, to the best of my knowledge, the official opposition is the official opposition.

This Prime Minister had the tools to work with the provinces and send additional police officers in response to the City of Ottawa's request when the City of Ottawa made that request. Ministers could have intervened, but they did not.

The question the member is asking the official opposition would perhaps best be put to his own Prime Minister. Why did he do absolutely nothing at the beginning of this crisis? Why did he let things get this bad? That is the question. The lack of leadership is not on our side, it is on that side.

Statutory Order

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there is one thing that makes me really mad. When the Prime Minister said he was going to invoke the Emergencies Act, he said it would be geographically targeted and the government would intervene only where justified.

The Premier of Quebec made it clear that his government does not want the Emergencies Act applied on its territory. The National Assembly unanimously stated the same.

According to the text of the order, however, it applies across Canada. This is not the first time the Prime Minister has said one thing and done the opposite. Earlier, he said the scope of the act is reasonable and proportionate. Does my colleague agree that it is actually unjustified and unjustifiable?

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, the Premier of Quebec has said that invoking the Emergencies Act could add fuel to the fire by further polarizing the population. He made it clear to the Prime Minister that the act should not apply to Quebec. He does not think we need it. He does not see how it would improve the social climate at this time.

I can also reference the premiers of Manitoba, Prince Edward Island and Alberta. The premiers sent a clear message to the Prime Minister that they do not want his Emergencies Act and are capable of managing their own affairs in their provinces. Why is the Prime Minister not capable of doing the same?

[English]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I am raising a point that I have heard the hon. member's leader, the official leader of the opposition, raise as a hypothetical, and I want to address it now. It is the notion that the Prime Minister "hid".

I am not going to defend all of the Prime Minister's actions by any means, but at the moment this convoy started, the Prime Minister had been diagnosed positive with COVID. I think we forget that if the Prime Minister had gone to meet with people who were unvaccinated and had any of them sickened and died, he could have been charged with manslaughter.

Does that occur to people on the other side as—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I would like to hear the member's question. Has the member completed her question?

I just want to make sure everybody listens to the question so that we can get a good answer.

Statutory Order

• (1115)

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I know that this is a difficult time for everyone, but I think that this hypothetical and the use of the word "hid" is, again, inflaming divisions that we should not have in this place.

If someone tests positive for COVID, they should not be meeting with anyone and they certainly should not be threatening the health and safety of people who have chosen not to get vaccinated.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Berthold: Mr. Speaker, since the pandemic began, I have had the opportunity on countless occasions to listen to speeches and presentations from my hon. colleague using a little tool called Zoom, on a little computer. I have heard the member defend the Liberal government several times on this little screen.

Hiding means not answering questions. It means refusing to take a stand. That is what the Prime Minister did by hiding. He hid from his responsibilities. He did not hide at home; he hid from his responsibilities. He could have spoken out. He had every opportunity to do so.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet (Beloeil—Chambly, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would begin by reminding our friends across the aisle that we are in the middle of a pandemic and our friends to our right that I would like to hear myself speak.

The pandemic has claimed victims. Some have died, while others are struggling with very serious health problems. Some people are living in a state of anxiety. Some people saw their purchasing power markedly decline because of the inflationary impact of the pandemic, whether it be permanent or temporary, structural or cyclical. Seniors were hit hard by the pandemic, as were the health care systems in Quebec and the provinces.

Of course, handling unusual and unprecedented situations sometimes involves trial and error. We try things that do not immediately work, and sometimes this approach, these trials and errors, can sow doubt. I understand. That is the case for the health restrictions, for the health measures around vaccination and the regulations that required, as well as for the travel restrictions. That is reasonable and understandable.

The answer to all this is, and should always be, information, even if that does not always work and the dissemination of good information remains relative. Unfortunately, the management of the pandemic was undermined by the federal government's obsession with taking over Quebec's and the provinces' powers, imposing conditions outside its jurisdiction, and even subjecting the pandemic to multicultural values.

All of this does make things more difficult to understand. It creates confusion among Quebecers and Canadians when what we need is quality information. It is also what led to the opposition that emerged in the forms we have been seeing in recent weeks. Fear, doubt and opposition to a government's ideas and policies are legitimate. Protesting to express them is legitimate. Sedition and insurrection are not legitimate.

Is refusing treatment legitimate?

Is endangering other people's lives by refusing treatment or vaccination legitimate?

Yesterday, I voluntarily went for my third shot. I was free to do so, and in so doing I was protecting and helping bring back freedom for other, more fragile, people, especially those in seniors' residences, who are awaiting the day when they can feel safe enough to leave the house.

Freedom requires striking a balance between individual and collective freedoms. Doing this requires judgment, and that is not currently on display in all parties. Freedom is a test of leadership, the test of freedom. The Prime Minister failed this test because of ideology. He sought to subjugate collective and individual freedoms, to crush the identity of a nation under that of all nations, to deny the nation and talk of a postnational state. He is continuing the work of his father. He is denying Quebec, he is completing the transformative work of trivializing the Quebec nation.

Speaking of freedom, that was the purpose of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the charter of individual rights, the charter that denies French, secularism and the freedom of education, the one that seeks to censor social networks. Though they are an alarming cesspool of profanity these days, they remain a place of free expression, except for hate propaganda. The charter denies collective rights, the collective identity and the nation. Naturally, the Prime Minister stands up for individuals and then he drops the ball.

• (1120)

Freedom is becoming "freedumb". Driven by fear, doubt and insufficient information, freedom is taking on the appearance of right-wing extremism, which condones anything in excess, encourages civil disobedience, flirts with violence and pollutes social media—and yet the Prime Minister continues to drag his feet. It is in his nature to actively do nothing in times of crisis. It is part of his ideology to show contempt for differences and fan the flames of division. He just does not get it.

Ottawa is under siege. The flag of Prime Minister's country is now being associated with the worst of the worst. He needs to take action, but, as usual, he does not know how, so he pretends to take action. He puts on a show. He deflects people's attention, covers up his failures, and moves a motion that is as heavy-handed as it is useless, a thinly disguised version of the War Measures Act. Thank heavens, it is a watered-down version of the original.

The Prime Minister keeps repeating that the charter freedoms are not being infringed upon. If the Emergencies Act did not infringe on any freedoms, it would not exist. By its very nature, it infringes on freedoms. The Prime Minister's role is not to deny that the act infringes on freedoms but to justify it and explain why it is being used.

The Emergencies Act was not needed for the Ambassador Bridge, not needed for the border in Coutts, not needed for the seizure of weapons in Coutts, and not needed in Quebec. Ironically, Quebec does not want the Emergencies Act enforced on its territory, but the Sûreté du Québec has been called in for backup in Ottawa. They should put that in their pipe and smoke it.

The Prime Minister is saying that the act will be enforced geographically, but that is not how it works. He can say it as much as he wants, but that is not how it works. This is a Canadian act, in keeping with Canadian tradition. As with other traditions, the copy is always a poor imitation of the original.

The Quebec National Assembly wants nothing to do with this act, nor does the Government of Quebec. Obviously, the Bloc Québécois is not in favour. Conservatives in Quebec are not in favour, either. I am meeting with the NDP leader this afternoon to discuss. Could there be some way for us to come to an understanding?

Only the Ottawa Liberals want it, because the ones from Quebec do not. If Ontario wants this act, that does not make it useful. This could all have been done differently, but that falls on them. Quebec obviously wants nothing to do with it.

The Prime Minister has failed the test of collective freedom. On this, he has a sorry record. He often fails the test of freedom. He abandoned Raif Badawi. He has ignored the Uighurs. He is complicit with Spain against Catalonia. He sneers at Quebec's linguistic aspirations. He sneers at Quebec's secular aspirations. He sneers at freedom of expression and education if it is not in line with what he thinks and says. He starves provinces that do not meet his conditions with respect to health care. Even in security matters, the Prime Minister acts first and foremost by interfering, by grabbing powers that do not belong to him and by intervening in ways that, despite what he says, are not warranted as things now stand. All of Canada, except for the crisis in Ottawa that he himself engineered, sees this.

He has failed the test of freedom of expression, because he has yielded the word "freedom" to his worst enemies: the far right and, more importantly, ignorance. Freedom is a progressive value; freedom is a national value; freedom is a Quebec value; freedom thrives on truth.

• (1125)

Vaccination is a tool of freedom. It is imperfect, of course, but it remains the least bad solution. The sooner we accept it, the sooner all the health measures can be lifted.

Worse, by his failure, he has abandoned the sick to manage a crisis that is completely of his own making.

As for me, I will always defend freedom, especially the freedom of my nation. Quebec is free to make its own choices.

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the leader of the Bloc Québécois compared a public emergency order to the War Measures Act, which is not the case. His public safety critic suggested that this measure takes away the rights guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which is not the case.

This order merely gives police and provincial authorities additional powers to do their jobs, which includes tracking financial contributions to illegal activities, including in Quebec, that cause economic damage.

Normally, the Bloc likes the idea of provincial discretion. Why is it now against a reasonable and proportional measure for its province?

Statutory Order

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet: Mr. Speaker, there is a big difference between offering additional powers to other police forces and taking powers away from other levels of government so they can be handed over to one's own police force. Once again, the government is performing some gymnastic manoeuvres with a few extra twists, which would outdo any figure skating routine in Beijing.

When measures are necessary, are appropriate, and restrict freedoms, the government should explain and justify them, rather than claim that they do not restrict those freedoms. Whether these actions are justified or not, the government is claiming that seizing someone's bank account or preventing someone from walking down a particular street does not restrict their freedoms.

There are things that are obvious, but this government is a master of claiming the opposite of what is obvious and repeating it among its members.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the leader of the Bloc Québécois what he thinks about the differences between what the act allows and the capacity and resources on the ground. We can see that the major problem in Ottawa right now is the ability to remove tractor trailers from the streets.

Is my colleague aware that section 129 of the Criminal Code compels transportation companies to provide resources to the police when requested? Again, are there too many differences between what the act allows and the available resources and capacity?

• (1130)

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet: Mr. Speaker, it is illegal to stop a heavy truck on the white line in the middle of the street, except for about a minute and a half when the light is red.

These protesters gave notice in advance that this was their intention, and they were allowed to come anyway. The Ottawa police got a little worried and requested assistance, which they were not given. They were told that 275 RCMP officers were going to be sent in, but that they would be reserved for Parliament and the Prime Minister, who was beginning to find it difficult to get around and was less inclined to come to Parliament. The Prime Minister himself said that the Ottawa police had all the necessary powers to intervene, until he realized that what he was saying did not make sense.

In every province, each level of government has police forces and state of emergency legislation that provide all the necessary tools. We need to stop saying that the current situation cannot be resolved without the use of the Emergencies Act. This scares people into calling for the act to be invoked. The provinces could, and can, intervene, as has been seen everywhere except here around Parliament.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. leader of the Bloc Québécois.

I would like to ask him a question because I am worried about the enforcement of emergency measures and the related geographic issues. In the order before us, there is no clear mention of a geographic region. Yesterday, the Prime Minister and the other ministers stated that the use of the Emergencies Act would have a geographic limit, but I do not see it here.

Statutory Order

If the government changed the order to include geographic limits that did not comprise the Province of Quebec, might the leader of the Bloc Québécois think that it is needed to resolve the situation here in Ottawa?

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet: Mr. Speaker, what has happened in the past few years has taught us one thing: What is said in general terms is less likely to be implemented than what is written. Based on recent experience, I am not really interested in what the Prime Minister says. I am looking at what is written. The text says it applies across Canada. There is no nuance or restriction.

The Prime Minister said that he would consult the provinces. That is odd because earlier he said in English that the government would consult and perhaps collaborate with them but that if he intended to go in somewhere, he would do it. He could change the text and acknowledge provincial jurisdiction, since seven premiers said that they do not want this measure to be implemented. However, he should do the opposite, that is withdraw the text and replace it with one that states what he can do and what he is prepared to do to help Ottawa now, so he can put an end to this farce, this political cover-up of his own mistakes.

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, without question, today is a dark day for Canadian democracy.

In Quebec, the use of the War Measures Act in 1970 was an extremely traumatic experience. Some 500 people were arbitrarily arrested, people who were held for weeks without being told their rights. This brings back some truly painful memories.

Obviously in politics there is the law, the letter of the law, the punctuation of the law and the text of the law, but there is also the spirit of the law. People can say that the Emergencies Act is not the same as the War Measures Act, but it triggers memories of a trauma for Quebec.

I would like my leader to talk about the trauma Quebec experienced with the application of the War Measures Act in 1970.

• (1135)

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet: Mr. Speaker, there is nothing more traumatizing than rising to speak after the member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert.

Yesterday I asked government members to show some sensitivity. I understand that does not come easily to them, because when we asked them to apologize for the Canadian abuses a few months ago, they practically laughed in our faces and denied our history. We were the last, along with the Acadian people, to wait for an apology.

I do not expect any miracles, but I am asking them to be sensitive to the fact that Quebecers have an uneasy relationship, not with the humanitarian role of the army—we were happy to welcome them because many Quebecers are members of the forces—but with legislation that takes away freedoms and is the spawn of the War Measures Act, albeit a watered-down version in scope and nature. We do not like that. It worries us. We have been through this, so we are asking for a bit of understanding.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we agree that the act should not apply in Que-

bec because there is no way to do that, and we were prepared to support the motion moved by the Bloc Québécois yesterday in that regard, before the Liberals blocked it.

What made me uncomfortable about the Bloc Québécois leader's speech was when he made some questionable historical associations involving us by bringing up some painful memories and the trauma caused by the use of the War Measures Act in Quebec. There is no comparison between the Emergencies Act and what happened some 50 years ago. Even columnist Hélène Buzzetti, who could never be accused of being insensitive to Quebec's views, has said that the two are not at all comparable.

I therefore invite the leader of the Bloc Québécois to look at the provisions of the act in an intellectually honest way and to make the necessary distinctions.

Mr. Yves-François Blanchet: Mr. Speaker, there is certainly no lack of humility in Rosemont.

I would invite the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie to look at the views of the Quebec National Assembly, which should matter to him at least a little.

His Québec Solidaire friends are against this, as are the Liberals, the Parti Québécois and the CAQ.

The only person in Quebec who is right is the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie. I am rather concerned, but I would remind him that, in 1970, the NDP leader voted against the War Measures Act.

[English]

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, this is a critical moment in our history. In a few weeks, we will enter the third year of this pandemic. Canadians are tired, tired of a pandemic that has created so much loss and such sacrifice for so many. Canadians are frustrated, frustrated that so many have found themselves worse off, while those at the very top have only increased their wealth and power. Many are afraid, afraid of the next wave, of the next variant. They are also afraid of the other crises we face: fires and floods caused by the climate change destroying their homes and livelihoods, losing those they love to a toxic drug supply and not being able to get the care they need or their loved ones need when they need it. However, neither fear, nor frustration nor fatigue has won over Canadians' fundamental desire to take care of one another.

We are here today, at this moment, because of a failure of leadership. People were abandoned by governments that argued over jurisdiction rather than helping people. People were abandoned because governments did not take this convoy and its impact on people seriously. They were abandoned by the police, some of whom stood with the occupiers and the occupation.

It should never have come to this. It should never have come to a point in time where thousands of workers lost their wages because of blockades at bridges and because of blockades of one of the busiest shopping centres in Ottawa, affecting retail workers, people who were already precariously employed. It should never have come to the point where residents, families and children were harassed, intimidated and terrorized by the convoy. It should never have come to this.

Many people are rightly concerned right now about the impact of the Emergencies Act and that it might crack down on protests in the future. What we are dealing with is not a protest. It is not peaceful. The organizers of this illegal occupation have been clear from the beginning. They have not shied away from this; they have been brazen about it. They came here to overthrow a democratically elected government. It is a movement funded by foreign influence and it feeds on disinformation. Its goal is to disrupt our democracy.

We share the concern of many Canadians that the government may misuse the powers in the Emergencies Act, so I want to be very clear: We will be watching. We will withdraw our support if at any point we feel these powers are being misused. I have been at many protests and strikes, and I have witnessed the full and brutal power of the police being used against peaceful protesters. I therefore want to make this clear as well: Indigenous land defenders, climate-change activists, workers fighting for fairness and any Canadian using their voice to peacefully demand justice should never be subject to the Emergencies Act. The New Democrats will never support that.

● (1140)

What has become very clear in this crisis is that there also needs to be a serious examination of policing in Canada. Occupiers get hugs from the police while indigenous and racialized protesters are met with the barrel of a gun. There are several very troubling accounts of current and former law enforcement and military members involved in these occupations. One of the requirements of the Emergencies Act is that after its invocation, there is a public inquiry into its use. This must include a full public inquiry into the role of law enforcement in these occupations, both in their support of the occupiers and, in many cases, in their refusal to enforce the law.

[Translation]

The use of the Emergencies Act is tantamount to an admission of defeat on the government's part. It should never have come to this. The crisis situation in Ottawa now calls for further action to prevent grave outcomes. We take the invocation of the Emergencies Act very seriously. Nobody wants to see the kind of thing that happened in 1970.

Many people remember the War Measures Act in 1970, the random arrests and the army being deployed in the streets of Montreal. Many people are worried the same thing could happen again. I understand that. That is why the Emergencies Act must be used judiciously and prudently.

We have been assured that there is no plan to call in the army and that the rights set out in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms will be

upheld. That means arbitrary arrest and seizure will not be justified under the act.

The NDP believes there is currently no justification for the use of emergency measures in Quebec. We want the Prime Minister to guarantee that emergency measures will be used only where they are truly necessary. The NDP is prepared to use the mechanisms at its disposal to revoke the government's powers at a moment's notice. We are not giving the government carte blanche, and we will be keeping a close eye on it to make sure it does not overstep.

● (1145)

[English]

In the last few weeks, we have heard a lot about divisions in our country. That division, sadly, has been fed and amplified by members of the House. That has to end. Using a pandemic as a political wedge to score points off opponents to try to win a leadership race or an election is wrong and, frankly, dangerous. This virus does not care who we voted for. Wearing a mask is not a partisan activity. Vaccines save lives, and the vast majority of Canadians and members of Parliament know this and have supported vaccination efforts. We cannot let Canadians' trust in science and public health be eroded by political opportunism.

The pandemic is changing, and our response has to change as well. Restrictions are being lifted. We need a plan to get out of the pandemic, to get to the end of the pandemic, a plan based on science and our fundamental responsibility to take care of one another. Canadians who have done everything asked of them now want to know what to do next. Canadians have followed the rules, but they need to believe that restrictions are fair and make sense. We know that things can change quickly. New variants may appear and evidence may change. However, without a clear plan, confusion, disinformation and resentment grow.

We believe that a plan to get to the end of the pandemic, to get us out of this pandemic, has to include the urgent repair of our health care system so that people can get care when they need it. It has to include finishing the job of vaccination, especially of our children. We have to make sure there is global access to vaccines so we avoid future variants and waves of infection, and we have to move forward on solving the problems this pandemic has only made worse.

The reality is that working people have paid the price of this pandemic. While big companies took government money and gave out shareholder dividends and CEO bonuses, frontline workers got sick because they had to work without sick leave. Parents struggled to keep their kids at home while schools were closed, and big box stores stayed open.

Statutory Order

People are right to be angry that life has only gotten harder over these past two years, and that it is almost impossible to buy a home to keep a roof over one's head or to rent a decent place to live because wealthy speculators are driving up the cost of housing. People are right to be angry that the cost of groceries goes up to feed the profits of wealthy corporate grocery stores. People are right to be angry that they work hard and pay their taxes, but that the super-wealthy and big businesses do not pay their fair share. People are right to be angry that their lives have become harder, while the super-wealthy and powerful have only added to their wealth and power.

I am angry too, and when I get angry, I fight. I learned long ago that my anger and my fight are not with the powerless. People's anger and their fight are not with Canadians. They are with those at the very top: the powerful who have built a system rigged against working people.

We can change this, but only if we come together to fight for a Canada that does not leave people behind while others profit. The story of this pandemic is not one of division. It is one of solidarity. It is a story of frontline health care workers showing up day after day in impossible situations. It is a story of grocery workers, farmers and truckers keeping us fed. It is of teachers doing their best to connect with children through screens. Our story is of neighbours helping each other get vaccinated, and helping each other when they are in need.

We will not let the past few weeks define the pandemic for us. Canadians have sacrificed too much, lost too many loved ones and missed out on too many moments to allow our country to become divided by hate and violence. People should not let their anger turn into hatred. We know hatred is like a fire. When it is allowed to grow, it will consume everything.

As I hold my daughter, I often think about the world I want for her. I want her to walk through the world without fear. I want her to always feel like she belongs. I do not want her to face the same struggles I have. I believe this is what we all want for our children. My hope is that our decisions in the coming days are guided by this desire to build a better, safer and more just world where all of our children believe they belong.

● (1150)

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate my colleague for Burnaby South on his baby.

I have seen the member engage on many occasions with protesters over the many years I have known him. This particular time he has not. The opposition has advised the Prime Minister to engage with people at the illegal blockades that are here.

What are his reflections on engagement with those who are here for the illegal protests and blockades, and what message would it send if the Prime Minister or he were to engage with these folks?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, we have been very clear that the convoy wants to undermine our democracy, and that this is not a group that we can negotiate or work with. We need to acknowledge that there is real frustration among Canadians who have done

everything they can to get vaccinated and follow public health guidelines.

Canadians are frustrated. They want to know what the plan is to get out of this pandemic. That plan has to include making sure we invest in our health care system so it is no longer pushed to the brink of collapse. That plan has to include responding to the frustrations of Canadians who cannot find homes they can afford, who are worried about the cost of living going up, and who cannot find jobs that pay the bills. We have to respond to those real frustrations that Canadians are feeling. That real anger has to be responded to by us working together to find real solutions to solve those problems.

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I was disappointed to see the stand that the leader of the NDP and the party have taken on an issue that deals with the fundamental civil liberties of Canadians. What has happened to the party of Tommy Douglas? What has happened to the party of Jack Layton that fought against Bill C-51 and the War Measures Act? What has changed?

The NDP is trying to split hairs. Why has it abandoned one of its fundamental principles?

● (1155)

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, let me be really clear. We are in this national crisis because of the failure to respond to how serious this crisis is. All levels of government failed to take this convoy seriously. They failed in their leadership, and that is why this crisis became so bad.

In order to fix this crisis, it has to be taken seriously now. I believe that to take it seriously, enacting limited and specific powers to deal with this crisis is appropriate. We do so reluctantly, and will closely monitor to ensure there is no overreach. We know that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms continues to apply and that legitimate, peaceful protests demanding justice should continue and will be protected.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am thoroughly convinced that the NDP leader was not happy about announcing his support at the outset, unlike the Minister of Public Safety, who said he was proud to support the Emergencies Act.

The NDP's current position is inconsistent with the history of the party and the legacy of Tommy Douglas, which they claimed to represent when marking the anniversary of the Emergencies Act.

We will be debating this over the next few days before voting on it later this week. The situation we are discussing could also evolve and change.

I would like to know whether there is anything that might make the NDP leader change his mind and withdraw his support for the Emergencies Act.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, let me be clear. We are not proud to support these measures. We do so reluctantly. The fact that we are now in this situation is a glaring example of the government's failure. We are very reluctant to support it.

We will remain vigilant to ensure that these measures are not applied where they are not needed. However, we are in a national crisis and we must act. The fact that all levels of government failed to take action shows a failure of leadership.

We want to resolve this crisis immediately, but we reserve the right to use every available tool to withdraw our support should the powers be used where they are not needed.

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we had the lowest death rate in the western world and the highest level of vaccination. The solidarity of Canadians was incredible, yet there was an absolute failure and exploitation of fear by members in the House. The Leader of the Opposition said they wanted to exploit this. There was a failure of the Prime Minister to stand up and show vision, and a failure of police to defend people in the streets. We should never have been at this moment. We are looking like a failed state.

What steps will the leader of the New Democratic Party take to hold the government accountable? It has failed us at every step of the way in this crisis. How can we trust it at this point? How can we say to Canadians that we will make their streets safe and return the rule of law, but we will make sure the Liberals are accountable? How will we do that?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, I want to be clear to Canadians that we take this step with a lot of reluctance. We are not in any way proud that we are at a point in our country's history where the Emergencies Act has to be implemented. We think a failure of leadership got us to this point. It was a failure of taking the convoy seriously. People were abandoned. Workers were abandoned and residents of Ottawa were abandoned. As a result, we are in this crisis.

We are going to support this measure, but we are going to do so with a lot of vigilance. We are going to pay close attention to the implementation of the Emergencies Act, and we are prepared to withdraw our support at any moment that it becomes clear that there is an abuse of power. We have the power to do so. There are a number of tools at our disposal, and we will be paying very close attention to the way the Emergencies Act is used. We want to make sure it is used only for the goal of dealing with the convoy and the national crisis, so that Canadians can have restored confidence in the ability of this country to function properly, to protect them and to keep them safe.

• (1200)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to go back to the leader of the NDP's comments about the real story. Over the last couple of years, there have been so many heroic moments that we have witnessed where people from all regions of the country have stepped up. That really needs to be acknowledged right up front.

It is an unfortunate situation that we find ourselves in. Not that long ago, a week ago, we had literally half a billion dollars' worth of trade between Canada and the U.S. being held hostage by convoy blockades. This had a very negative impact on issues such as jobs. We had some opposition parties being inconsistent with their messaging, which also caused some issues.

Statutory Order

Could my friend provide his thoughts on how important it is? Yes, we recognize how Canadians have contributed, but at this point in time we have to do things to protect our families, businesses and economic trade lines.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, the question gives me an opportunity to talk about the incredible sacrifices of so many people. I think of all the frontline workers who kept us going through the most difficult parts of this pandemic, the retail workers, logistics workers, truck drivers and frontline health care workers, and how it has been so difficult for these frontline workers. In a lot of ways, these frontline health care workers and frontline workers were abandoned as well. They were the most important workers, and in some cases they were paid the least. We fought to make sure that they were recognized not just for their hard work and sacrifice, but with fair compensation. That has to continue. Health care workers right now are struggling. They are on the brink. Nurses have told us about the crisis in health care, so we have to make sure we are supporting them with real investments.

We are in a real crisis. The fact that one of the busiest borders in North America could be shut down, causing thousands of workers to lose their wages, is unacceptable. It is wrong. We need to make sure workers are protected. That is why we reluctantly support this measure to make sure the convoy is ended, that workers and people are protected, and the residents of Ottawa are supported. We stand with them.

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo. It is interesting that the hon. leader of the NDP has spoken about the division of the government, yet he has consistently propped up the government that has chosen to divide.

He spoke about the fact that the Emergencies Act should not touch on Quebec, yet he is supporting legislation that theoretically could freeze bank accounts in Quebec. Will he support that aspect of the act, yes or no? It cannot be separated from the remainder.

Statutory Order

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, we want to make sure that the act is used in a way that stops the convoys and is not used where it is not necessary. I want to be very clear about division. I certainly have said that, in the House, divisions have inflamed issues, and the story of this pandemic is one of solidarity. I want to be clear. Conservatives have purposely tried to use this convoy as an opportunity to score points and cause problems for the Liberals. The Liberals have also looked at this as an opportunity to divide and wedge. I am saying it is wrong to do that. We cannot be wedging people on a thing that is not partisan. This is a crisis that we have to come together on. The pandemic is one we all have to tackle together. It should not be something to score points on.

Hon. David Lametti (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and the Minister of Emergency Preparedness.

I am pleased and honoured to rise today to speak to the invocation of the Emergencies Act by our government and to the motion in this House to affirm the government's decision, but I also do so with a deep sense of obligation.

Canada is a rule-of-law country. By declaring a public order emergency under the Emergencies Act, we followed the law and we are acting within it. There are clear conditions set out in the Emergencies Act in order for a public order emergency to be declared. Our government believes those conditions have been met and that those same conditions required the Government of Canada to act.

• (1205)

[Translation]

The Emergencies Act was enacted in 1988 to replace the War Measures Act. There are two significant differences between the two acts. One, the Emergencies Act contains a number of limits and safeguards, including a parliamentary review. Two, the measures taken under the act are subject to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

[English]

I want to reiterate this point. The preamble to the Emergencies Act states, "And whereas the Governor in Council, in taking such special temporary measures, would be subject to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Canadian Bill of Rights and must have regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, particularly with respect to those fundamental rights that are not to be limited or abridged even in a national emergency". Any and all of our government actions will be subject to the charter, and it is my job as Attorney General to ensure this. I take that responsibility incredibly seriously. There is, therefore, a further check in the parliamentary oversight process as well.

The Emergencies Act can only be invoked in specific serious circumstances that amount to a national emergency. In order to meet the threshold for a national emergency, three conditions must be met: First, we must be in a situation that either "seriously endangers the lives, health or safety of Canadians... [and exceeds] the capacity or authority of a province to deal with it, or seriously threatens the ability of the Government of Canada to preserve the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of Canada". Second, the provinces'

and territories' capacity to handle the situation must be considered insufficient or show gaps. Third, we must conclude that the situation cannot be handled adequately under any other Canadian law, including provincial or territorial laws.

Our government believes these conditions were met, and yesterday we tabled an explanation of the reasons for issuing the declaration, as required by the act. We also tabled yesterday, as required, a report on any consultation with the provinces with respect to the declaration. I would especially like to highlight the support of British Columbia, Ontario, and Newfoundland and Labrador, as noted in the document invoking the act to respond to this national emergency.

[Translation]

Once an emergency is declared, the Emergencies Act allows the federal government to make the necessary orders and regulations to intervene.

Our government respects Canadians' rights and freedoms, which are protected by the charter. We intend to use only necessary, reasonable and measured powers to resolve this crisis quickly and safely, in accordance with section 1 of the charter.

[English]

As members have seen, our government has introduced targeted orders under the act. While the act technically applies to all of Canada, we have been very careful to tailor orders to be as focused as possible, and only in those places affected by blockades and illegal occupations will we see any change at all.

We have introduced measures to bring the situation under control. They include temporary regulation and prohibition of public assemblies that lead to a breach of the peace and go beyond lawful protest; the situation in Ottawa and blockades at certain border crossings have gone far beyond lawful protest.

They also include temporarily designating and securing places where blockades are to be prohibited. These places could include borders, approaches to borders, critical infrastructure, hospitals and democratic institutions.

These measures also include temporarily directing persons to render essential services to relieve impacts of blockades on Canada's economy. These persons could include tow trucks and their drivers—for compensation, of course.

The measures include temporarily authorizing or directing financial institutions to render essential services to relieve the impact of blockades, including regulating and prohibiting the use of property to fund or support the blockades.

They include temporarily enabling the RCMP to enforce municipal bylaws and provincial offences where required, and finally, temporary imposition of fines or imprisonment for contravention of any order or regulation made under section 19 of the Emergencies Act.

• (1210)

[Translation]

These are extraordinary times. The Government of Canada is committed to respecting and protecting individual rights while maintaining public order. This includes all of the measures taken by the Government of Canada in accordance with the Emergencies Act, including any orders, regulations or actions of government representatives.

[English]

I want to repeat what I previously stated: It is my responsibility and my commitment as Attorney General of Canada to ensure that all steps taken by our government are consistent with the charter, as required by the act.

The Emergencies Act also contains a number of significant limits, checks and safeguards. As required by the act, on several occasions over the past week, the Prime Minister and members of cabinet consulted with the premiers and members of their respective governments. Having now declared a public order emergency, we tabled the declaration in Parliament, as required, within seven days. In fact, we did so as quickly as possible, well before the seven days, tabling the declaration yesterday for discussion today so that Parliament could perform its important oversight role.

In the coming days, a parliamentary committee will be struck to provide oversight while the emergency is in effect. This declaration only lasts for 30 days, unless renewed. However, we can revoke the emergency much sooner, and we sincerely hope to do so.

[Translation]

Parliament has the power to revoke an order, which ensures that any measures taken will be responsible and measured and will comply with the established limits.

[English]

Orders must be tabled in Parliament within two days for review by parliamentarians, as was done yesterday, and Parliament has the power to amend or revoke any order made under the act.

In closing, I want to address two critiques of the official opposition. They say this declaration is unnecessary, that the illegal blockades and occupations are ending. I say to look outside. They are not. I say look at the streets of Winnipeg. The ones that have ended did so after the Prime Minister announced we were moving to declare a public order emergency. We are achieving what we intended to achieve with these measures and we are doing it in a most measured and responsible way.

We have seen, further, how fluid the situation is. Since we declared this emergency, we have seen other potential blockades stopped. We want law enforcement to have the necessary tools for a limited time to ensure we do not have a repeat of any of the blockades.

Statutory Order

The official opposition is talking about rights. On this side of the House, we take rights seriously, and so did the Progressive Conservative government that introduced the Emergencies Act and ensured it was charter compliant. That was the right thing to do.

We are invoking this act to end illegal blockades and occupations. We are invoking it to restore the rights of those who cannot walk safely on the streets of downtown Ottawa. We are invoking it to protect the rights of workers to earn a living, of businesses to serve the public, of people to move freely across international borders.

Let us not confuse illegal blockades and occupations with lawful protests. We know what a lawful protest looks like. It does not look like what is happening on Wellington Street, or what transpired in Coutts or in Emerson. We have declared a public order emergency to help law enforcement deal with these issues quickly and to protect us from having them happen again.

Our goal is to see order restored and to see this emergency declaration lifted as soon as possible.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, the act expressly prohibits violation of charter rights. The declaration put forward by the government assumes power to regulate or prohibit private transfers of funds to protesters, including the ability to mandate the reporting of such transfers and the freezing of accounts, all without judicial oversight.

How is this measure compliant with section 8 of the charter rights to be free from unreasonable search and seizure?

Hon. David Lametti: Madam Speaker, indeed this act is compliant with section 8 of the charter with regard to unreasonable search and seizure. It is an extension of procedures and practices that already exist with respect to anti-terrorism financing and money laundering. We are extending these practices and procedures that already exist and are already charter compliant to this other situation—that is, funding illegal blockades and protests—and we are going to do it in a reasonable manner. It will be charter compliant.

• (1215)

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank the minister for his speech.

Statutory Order

I think that everyone on this side of the House agrees that this is a measure of last resort. However, I do not think we are there yet. There are many other tools that could have been used first. It seems to me that this trivializes the Emergencies Act. I am not a legal expert, but it does not take a lot of research to find tools in Canada's Criminal Code that the government could have used before resorting to the Emergencies Act. Why not press criminal charges against the people who were blocking the bridges? Here, people are no longer participating in a legal protest; they have Ottawa under siege. Why were criminal charges not laid?

I would like the minister to explain to me why he did not use the other tools at his disposal under the Criminal Code before invoking the Emergencies Act.

Hon. David Lametti: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her question.

From the start of the crisis, we worked with other governments across Canada and with the RCMP. The RCMP worked with other police forces. We saw that there were gaps and that we needed to work together. By bringing in measures that did not exist before, we gave Canada's police forces additional tools to better address and manage their respective situations. We are filling in the gaps.

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have been here for much of the last three weeks, and what I have seen in Ottawa is a complete failure of civic officials and a complete failure of the police. This should never have been allowed to spiral. In Quebec City and Toronto, we saw that the police did their job. At the Ambassador Bridge, we saw the ridiculous situation of our bridge being shut down for eight days without action.

Now we are having to take these measures. The minister is talking about anti-terrorism measures. Is the government able to tell the House that it has evidence that there is terrorism and extremism that can justify this measure, or do we just have to clean up the mess from the failure of what happened here in Ottawa?

Hon. David Lametti: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his question, delivered with his usual passion in this important circumstance.

I mentioned terrorism as part of the financing. This is not a terrorism act. We took measures that had been applied to terrorism and applied them to other illegal activity, but I am not equating this to terrorism. What we have done is declare a public order emergency based on the reasons we gave in the declaration that we have made. They include the very deleterious economic impact to the kinds of workers that the hon. member has tried to protect throughout his whole career. We could think of auto workers in southwestern Ontario or Niagara or beef farmers or pork farmers out west whose supply chains were blocked in trading with our largest trading partner.

We have declared a public order emergency based on those very serious grounds. We needed to act. We had been there from the beginning and we saw gaps. We filled them. Now we have given better tools to the police.

Hon. Bill Blair (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is a privilege to have the opportunity to rise today as the Minister of Emergency Preparedness to speak to the importance and necessity of the motion before the House.

Let me also acknowledge that the fact we are all in this House, that elected representatives from across Canada have come to debate this important measure, is evidence of the strength and resiliency of our democratic institutions. Although the subject of today's debate is a solemn one, I think it is also evidence that should give us strength, resolve and hope.

Let me begin my remarks by acknowledging the impact that these blockades and demonstrations have had on Canadian citizens, particularly the people of Ottawa who have been subject to intimidation and threats. The disruption of the course of their lives is, frankly, unacceptable.

Among the most important freedoms that we covet and protect in this country are freedom of opinion, freedom of expression and freedom of assembly, lawful peaceful protest. It has also been said that one's freedom to swing their fists ends at the end of another's nose. What we have seen, unfortunately, over the past three weeks is that those rights have been exceeded and abused to the point that it has put Canadians in harm's way.

I also want to speak briefly about the impact of the blockades that were taking place at vital trade corridors in this country, our international borders. When the protesters decided to go to our borders, we need to recognize and acknowledge they were going for the throat. They were going to cut off the supply of goods and services that our country relies on.

When they stopped parts from coming across that border at the Ambassador Bridge, they shuttered factories and they idled workers. They damaged the reputation of Canada as a safe and stable place to invest. They hurt Canadians. It was clearly their intent. It is clearly what they were doing, and it had to stop.

We saw the same targeted approach to hurt Canadian interests and to harm their fellow citizens in Coutts, Alberta; in South Surrey, British Columbia; in Emerson; at the Ambassador Bridge; and a number of fakes at other border points. This was not by accident. They did not just wander into those spaces. They went for the throat of this country. They created an emergency, an emergency that we had to respond to.

For the first time, we have come to the difficult decision to invoke the authorities of the Emergencies Act. I want to assure the House from the very outset that our government recognizes the significance of this decision, and the heavy responsibility that would come with pursuing it, not just the responsibility of the government but of the House.

We approached the process with caution and with care. It was essential that we explored all options available to us. We looked at everything very closely. We looked at our existing legislation. We looked at the regulations with the support of our Department of Justice officials to see what additional federal supports would be required. We examined existing municipal, provincial and federal authorities.

I think it is rather evident the threat of parking tickets did not deter those trucks in Ottawa. The threat of the enforcement of Ontario's Highway Traffic Act did not deter those commercial carriers from coming down our highways and using their vehicles, which are licensed under that legislation, to cause harm to Canadians. It has also become clear that with the limitations, even of the authorities enshrined within federal law and the Criminal Code, our law enforcement officials were struggling.

I will give two examples that I hope will be helpful to Parliament in consideration of the necessity for these measures.

One of the challenges that our law enforcement officials had was this, and it was not just our law enforcement officials but those who are tasked with gathering and analyzing financial intelligence through FINTRAC. Unfortunately, the funding associated with these actions, which in many cases have been clearly criminal and harmful to Canadians, was opaque. It became very clear when our officials came to us that they did not have the tools they needed to provide the necessary and appropriate scrutiny of the source of that funding, and that they did not have the tools to bring the accountability and even the consequences that were required in doing their jobs. We listened to what they needed. Ontario, for example, declared an emergency and brought forward really important and useful regulations, but they could not do that because it was our responsibility. We considered that and we listened.

• (1220)

Another example that may sound trivial, but was significant, relates to jurisdictions right across the country. I heard from my counterpart and colleague, the minister responsible in Alberta, who for weeks had been asking for help to get tow trucks down to Coutts, Alberta, to haul those trucks away. However, the tow truck industry in Alberta, like in Ontario, like right across the country, as a result of threats and intimidation were afraid to do their jobs. We needed that equipment. We needed those drivers. We needed their ability to remove those vehicles, but they were intimidated and afraid, so we have brought forward in these measures the authority not to compel them but to really authorize them to do what we all need to be done.

I submit to all those here that these measures work. People who knew the gaps in our laws and our law enforcement's response were exploiting them. When we closed those gaps, they went to school. We saw evidence of that in Coutts.

I do not want to minimize the importance of the RCMP investigation. By the way, I am not going to comment on any of the aspects of their investigation or the prosecution that will follow. It is totally inappropriate for a minister to do so. However, I want to thank them for doing their job. I want to thank God that they were able to do it safely.

Statutory Order

That eliminated part of the threat at Coutts, but when we announced on Monday that we were coming for the source of their funding and that there were going to be real consequences, financial consequences for their actions, they scurried away. That is exactly what we needed them to do. They did exactly the same thing in Emerson, Manitoba. Even though we saw yesterday in Windsor that some of them were going back because that is the way they can most effectively attack this country, they were stopped. They were stopped by effective law enforcement.

We have brought forward these measures, but let me also assure all my colleagues in this House that these measures must always be charter-compliant. Our expectation is that our law enforcement officials will do their job, the job we all need them to do, but they will always do it mindful of their responsibility to uphold the rule of law, to effect their lawful purpose with a minimum of force and to do the work right.

I also want to assure this House that we will be there to support them. When they say they need tools, we will give them the tools to do the job. When they say they need resources, we will provide those resources to do the job.

Every order of government and every person in this House has a responsibility to stand up with resolve and determination and to do what is necessary to protect Canada's interests.

• (1225)

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Madam Speaker, I note that the deputy director of intelligence for FINTRAC, Barry MacKillop, would disagree with the minister's suggestion that there is extremist financing of the convoy, but I will move on to my question.

Back in January through March 2020, as the minister said, those people came for the throat. What happened to the throat of our country when our railways were being blockaded and when our pipelines were being blockaded? We could not even get propane to Quebec in the middle of the winter, risking the lives of so many seniors. The port of metro Vancouver was blockaded. The government said we needed to initiate dialogue, and we needed to work with those people to come to a peaceful resolution.

What is the difference with the current situation that we are facing? Why is the Emergencies Act needed?

Hon. Bill Blair: Madam Speaker, let me just speak to the member's first point because I have heard him ask the question before. Perhaps he has not been satisfied with the answer. I understand, because I also speak to FINTRAC often and I have worked with them for decades. They did not have the evidence because they did not have the tools to collect the evidence. We listened to them. They said it was opaque. They did not have the tools to examine cryptocurrency laws, for example. We told them we heard them. If they do not have the evidence, we will give them the tools to collect the evidence because it is necessary to protect Canadians.

Statutory Order

The member's argument against these measures is clearly a little bit shallow. He needs to recognize that. He is right that we did not have that information. Now we are getting that information. It is what our law enforcement officials need to protect the country.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, we agree the situation is serious. The problem is, for over two weeks, only the opposition parties recognized it as an emergency.

The Prime Minister failed in his duty to use tools that were available to him before. Quebecers and Canadians deserve better.

I would like to know if the hon. minister is proud to be seated next to a last-resort Prime Minister.

[English]

Hon. Bill Blair: Madam Speaker, I want to assure the member that, not only am I proud but it is the honour of my life to be a member of this government serving Canadians. I also want to be very clear that we have been seized from the very first moment with supporting law enforcement efforts and also the efforts of our municipal and provincial partners. We have been working closely with provincial governments right across the country, including Quebec.

I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge that we very much respect the jurisdiction of provinces and territories over policing in their jurisdiction, as I am sure they recognize and respect our responsibility to maintain the integrity and security of our borders. All orders of government have a responsibility to protect Canadians, and we will all work together to do it.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I understand and share the concerns that people have about the potential long-term impacts of the use of emergency measures legislation, in particular, as it relates to the expansion of the institution of policing, given the past abuses and overreach against legitimate political actions by indigenous, racial and climate-justice activists and workers. However, with the capital and country in crisis, Canadians are feeling abandoned by their local police services who have repeatedly been caught on video compromised and at times seeming to be working in collusion with the insurrectionist occupation.

The last royal commission on policing was in 1962. Will the Minister of Public Safety commit to establishing a national commission on policing that would review the duties assigned to the police and their corresponding budgets, and will the minister commit to a secretariat or some other office to report on the radicalization and use of public resources and security forces for undemocratic ends?

• (1230)

Hon. Bill Blair: Madam Speaker, one of the things that has become quite apparent, and I have heard concern across the country as well, is an overwhelming desire that the police in this country do their job and that they do it right, that they do it in a way that is compliant with all of our laws, with our Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and that their response is measured, thoughtful, proportional and effective. We are working hard to make sure they have the tools and support they need.

I spent 40 years in policing. Policing must always be accountable to the people it serves, because the most important tool that the police have is the trust and confidence of the people they serve. We will always work to maintain that trust and confidence.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the Minister of Emergency Preparedness sharing the care and caution with which this is being applied. The Prime Minister shared a more targeted approach, but I need to reconcile that with what I am reading in the regulations that we have been provided, which mention critical infrastructure quite broadly. I share the concerns of the member for Burnaby South, for example, with respect to how this could be applied in the future to indigenous land defenders and climate activists.

Could the minister clarify the difference between the more targeted approach we are hearing and the words we are seeing written here?

Hon. Bill Blair: Madam Speaker, I understand the member's concern. I want to provide him with reassurance.

These measures are time-limited. They are subject to parliamentary and judicial scrutiny, and we will only use these measures as long as they are required. We recognize their extraordinary nature. They have to be subject to the scrutiny of this House; it is in the law. We will only use them as long as they are required, and we will always ensure that they are compliant with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Mr. Dane Lloyd (Sturgeon River—Parkland, CPC): Madam Speaker, unlike the Prime Minister and ministers across the aisle, it actually gives me no pleasure to rise to speak to the matter at hand. The invocation of the Emergencies Act earlier this week, for the first time in Canadian history, is a significant moment and it is not a moment to be pleased about. It is a solemn moment. It is a moment when we have to ask ourselves, how did we get to this situation in the first place? When we examine the evidence of how we got to this situation, I do not think there is much for the government to be proud of.

The Conservatives thoughtfully considered the justifications, written in law and given by the government, for the enacting of the Emergencies Act. The government has based its justification on one provision: that a public order emergency exists throughout Canada. This claim is not supported by the evidence. Yes, we have seen border blockades in at least four provinces and we have seen a persistent protest in Ottawa that has now been declared illegal. However, before the Emergencies Act was invoked, the blockades at the borders and across Canada were lifted or were well into the process of being lifted, so the government trying to claim credit after the fact is completely absurd. The Emergencies Act is now being used solely for the purpose of addressing the situation in Ottawa, not throughout Canada as defined by the act.

A key part of the threshold for enacting these measures is that existing laws and capabilities have proven insufficient for dealing with the problem. Existing laws are well equipped to deal with these situations. They were well equipped to deal with the situation at Coutts, Emerson and the Ambassador Bridge, and I submit they are well equipped to be used here in Ottawa.

The Minister of Justice and the Minister of Emergency Preparedness said earlier that they were required to pass this so they could requisition essential services like tow trucks. However, it has been noted by many that under the Criminal Code, police already have the authority to requisition such services, under pain of criminal sanction. That was before the Emergencies Act was brought in, so this argument that the Emergencies is necessary is completely absurd.

I note that I will be splitting my time with my hon. colleague from Regina—Qu'Appelle.

The police already had the power to compel many of these services. The police already had the power to be coordinated with the RCMP, the OPP and the various police forces and national security forces throughout Canada. They have measures existing under the Criminal Code, such as mischief and intimidation, to be used against illegal protesters and blockades.

The government has used an argument where it is citing potential acts and threats of violence against Canadians and critical infrastructure. This is not just any violence, the Liberals are saying; this is violence intended for the furtherance of an ideological and political objective. I am very concerned with the language that the government is beginning to use, because that language is very similar to the language under terrorism laws. The definition of terrorism is the use of violence to advance a political or ideological agenda. The government is using terrorism legislation against Canadian protesters.

There is very little evidence that there was a serious threat to persons and critical infrastructure from these protests. There was a short-term risk, but it was dealt with by law enforcement.

An hon. member: What about those assaults outside?

Mr. Dane Lloyd: I will address the member's heckle.

I am very concerned about the situation that occurred around Coutts, Alberta, where a small group of militants was arrested with firearms and with the intent to do harm. I am so thankful for law enforcement's efforts in taking down this very real threat, and I am so confident in our law enforcement because I know they had been planning this operation for weeks. They had likely infiltrated this group. They had a plan in place and had the appropriate tools and expertise to deal with this dangerous situation and defuse it before it became a very real and dangerous situation. The fact is that they did this before the imposition of the Emergencies Act.

• (1235)

Clearly, they have the tools. This completely undermines the government's argument that it is justified because the tools were insufficient to deal with the problems. The tools have been sufficient. The threshold has not been met.

Statutory Order

I want to address some comments that have been made by the government. At a press conference, the Minister of Public Safety stated very clearly and definitively that there is a connection between the militant faction at Coutts and protesters here in Ottawa. He declined to provide any evidence to back up that assertion. He was asked repeatedly by the media to back up that claim and he failed. His only evidence was to cite social media posts and a general tone that has been seen in protests across Canada.

The government has been very quick to label protesters and anyone who would oppose its political agenda. In 2021, even before the protests began, the Prime Minister called people who opposed mandatory vaccinations racists and misogynists, among other epithets. Since the beginning of the protests, the government has sought to brand and label all protesters as fringe extremists with "unacceptable views". Despite this unrelenting scrutiny and rhetoric, there has still been no evidence of violent extremists in Ottawa. If there were, I do not know how the government could believe it is being responsible in allowing us all to be here today, walking the streets of Ottawa. It undermines the whole claim.

There is no evidence of a plot to violently overthrow the Canadian government, despite constant repetition in saying so. I remember a quote by a previous Liberal minister, who said that if we tell a lie big enough and loudly enough, people will totally believe it. The government is constantly saying things that it does not have the evidence to back up. I would like to see that evidence if it is there. We deserve to see that evidence.

This act was not designed or intended to crack down on peaceful protesters, even if they are protesting illegally. We have other laws to deal with that. The government is citing a so-called terrorist threat. However, although having protesters in Ottawa is very inconvenient and terrible for the people of downtown Ottawa, honking horns does not meet the threshold of a terrorist organization. The government knows that.

Without further evidence of a violent threat, I cannot in good conscience support the invocation of the Emergencies Act. Even if I were to accept that the government has met the threshold for calling on emergency powers, I would still have serious reservations about the powers the government has said it needs for dealing with this situation. If it believes there is a threat to critical infrastructure and persons, which it has said, and it shows evidence, I could support declaring Parliament Hill and certain sensitive areas as no-go zones. I could accept that we need better coordination between the RCMP and local police. However, what I cannot accept is the government's need to undermine section 8 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which guarantees Canadians a right against unreasonable search and seizure and having their bank accounts frozen.

Statutory Order

The Minister of Justice, while on a panel last night, said that anyone who is part of a so-called pro-Trump organization should be worried. I think all Canadians should be worried when a Minister of Justice threatens people because of their political views. That is not the Canada that any of us want to see and it is unacceptable.

Throughout this debate, which we are going to be having over the next number of days, Canadians will know that their official opposition is alive and well. We are prepared to stand up for Canadians' rights. We are prepared to hold the government accountable. We are going to keep fighting. We are not going to stop standing up for the rights and freedoms of Canadians.

• (1240)

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I listened to the member's speech on CPAC as I was walking over here. I want to try to reduce the tone of this debate, so I will respectfully point out a couple of things.

First, what happened in Coutts, Alberta, is extremely concerning for any Canadian, and I presume all parliamentarians who are concerned about violence.

Second, people, including some outside of this very building, have openly called for the overthrow of a duly elected government, including an entity that is calling itself Canada Unity. I think that is direct evidence of an ideological imperative or agenda that is being pursued.

Last, I will gently point out one thing to the member opposite, and I appreciated his submissions, with all sincerity. All that is being extended here with respect to laws that are already compliant with section 8 of the charter, which relate to unreasonable search and seizure and FINTRAC, is ensuring that FINTRAC can be applied to cryptocurrency and crowdfunding sources. Is that not a necessary initiative given the foreign funding that is streaming into this country right now? If the member could—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Sturgeon River—Parkland.

Mr. Dane Lloyd: Madam Speaker, I was at the public safety committee when the deputy director of intelligence, Barry MacKillop, answered a question from one of his colleagues: Why are we not covering these crowdfunding sources? It is obviously a big loophole. The deputy director stated that the payment processors moving the money from individuals to the crowdsourcing pages report to FINTRAC, and the Canadian banks that receive the money from the crowdsourcing efforts report to the Canadian government. He stated there is no such thing as anonymous donations because everyone must provide their name and credit card. There are no anonymous donations. FINTRAC knows exactly who is donating and exacting where the money is going, and it has the tools it needs. We do not need this further infringement on Canadians' rights and freedoms.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, it is clear that the Bloc Québécois and the Conservative Party intend

to oppose the use of the Emergencies Act, but our reasons for doing so are very different.

The Bloc is against it because both the National Assembly of Quebec and the current Government of Quebec have unanimously stated they do not want the feds to interfere in their business yet again by imposing the Emergencies Act. Lest we forget, pretty much every Quebecer has not-so-fond memories of what happened in 1970.

My colleague talked about there being no proof that the group of demonstrators, or rather, occupiers currently in Ottawa includes more radical elements who could pose a threat to people's safety or to national security. Is that what my colleague was saying? Is he saying that he really does not believe that some of the people participating in the illegal demonstrations could pose a threat to public safety? Does he believe what he sees on social media and what we have seen with weapons seizures in other places where protests are happening?

• (1245)

[English]

Mr. Dane Lloyd: Madam Speaker, we could go on Twitter right now and find some of the most outrageous, offensive and criminal statements across Canada. What we do not do in this country is base the passage of laws and the invocation of emergency acts upon the possibility of a threat. We must base it on a real threat. We must base it on evidence that there is a threat to Canadians. The fact that we are allowed to walk freely through this parliamentary precinct with protesters less than 100 metres from us right now undermines the claim that there is a serious threat to Canadian democracy.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, I find this very difficult. My hon. colleague across the way said that people were just honking their horns. He seemed to suggest that this convoy is a simple annoyance for the people in Ottawa. I have spoken to quite a few people who are working downtown. A lovely young woman served me lunch at a restaurant and I asked her how she was doing. She talked about the harassment and specific assaults. She talked about assaults on friends of hers who are working in the ByWard Market. That is what we need to address.

Could the member explain why he seems to think this is just a simple annoyance and why he would want to take away the safety of the people who are working and living downtown?

Mr. Dane Lloyd: Madam Speaker, the member is putting words in my mouth. I am not saying this is a simple inconvenience for the people of downtown Ottawa. I am not downplaying the experiences she mentioned. I believe they are true experiences and unacceptable experiences. However, they are experiences that can be dealt with through existing laws. Harassment is a crime. Intimidation is a crime. It is up to police to enforce these measures. We do not need emergency powers to enforce existing laws.

Hon. Andrew Scheer (Regina—Qu'Appelle, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for agreeing to share his time with me.

It is very important for Canadians to understand that the government's proposal to invoke the Emergencies Act is in no way connected to public safety, restoring order or upholding the rule of law. We know this because we know what it has done with previous protests and blockades. When the Prime Minister agrees with the aims of protesters, he does nothing. Actually, it would be unfair to say he does nothing. He does nothing to end the blockades, but he will send negotiators, who send government delegations to meet with protesters and even propose settlements and compromises when he agrees with the political aims of those protesting.

We know this because in 2020, anti-energy protesters, and anti-oil and gas protesters held up vital transportation links for weeks. At the time, the Prime Minister had a much different tone. Let us look at what he said when vital transportation links and rail lines were blockaded, crippling the Canadian economy for weeks at a time. He said, "Therefore, we are creating a space for peaceful, honest dialogue with willing partners." Compare that to the rhetoric and inflammatory language that he has used over the past several weeks in 2022.

Make no mistake, the protests that are happening in Ottawa and have taken place across the country are a direct result of the Prime Minister's actions and rhetoric, and the demonization of people who are fighting to get their rights back. Canadians have had two years of incredible hardship, of politicians and government agencies telling them they were not allowed to have family members visit them inside their own homes, of governments telling business owners that they had to keep their doors shut and their employees laid off, of people not being able to use the various support systems they have had in their lives, such as relying on friends and family. Gyms were closed and activities for children were cancelled.

After two years of this, just as there is hope on the horizon, as other jurisdictions around the world and even here in Canada were lifting restrictions and easing mandates, the Prime Minister added a new one. He added a new restriction after two years of telling truck drivers that they were essential services and that they would be allowed to travel across the border to bring vital goods to our markets. After two years of deeming them an essential service, just as there was hope and reasons to lift restrictions and mandates, the Prime Minister added a new one without any data or evidence to back it up.

Then people started objecting to this. They were finally saying that enough is enough, they want their freedoms back, and it is time for the government to retreat back to the normal boundaries of government interference in their lives. When people started doing that, gathering to peacefully protest against government overreach, what did the Prime Minister do? He called them names and tried to smear them with broad brushes. He called them racists and misogynists. He asked the rhetorical question of whether or not we should tolerate these people. I would like to ask the Prime Minister this question: What does not tolerating these people look like? What he has done over the past few weeks has been shameful.

The Prime Minister has lowered the office in which he serves to unprecedented depths. In my 17 years of being a member of Parliament, I have never seen a prime minister or, for that matter, any other politician so debase the office that they hold, hurling insults at

people and referring to a Jewish member of this House as standing with people waving swastikas. It is outrageous.

My hon. colleagues on the Liberal benches have often admonished their political opponents for even sharing the same postal code as someone who may be holding an offensive flag or a placard with unacceptable language on it. When Conservatives denounced that, it was not good enough for members of the Liberal Party. They say we are supposed to paint the entire group protesting with that broad brush, but they do not hold themselves to that same standard.

● (1250)

I see many hon. members across the way, some of whom I have served with. I know them to be honourable people. I do not assume that they are all racist because their leader has performed racist acts by putting on blackface so often in his life that he cannot remember how many times he has done it. We do not paint every single Liberal member of Parliament with that brush. They have no problem being photographed with the Prime Minister, despite his history of racist acts, neither should members of Parliament paint the entire group of people who are protesting for their freedoms with that same broad brush.

Let us look at the lengths to which the government goes, and indeed not just the government, but many of its friends in the corporate media, to paint every single person who is protesting and demanding an end to the restrictions and the mandates with that broad brush. They go to great lengths to discredit and dehumanize those people, who are just fighting for their traditional civil liberties.

We could look at this in two different groups. On the one hand, we have people who are saying that after two years of hardship, sacrifice, and being forced to comply with unprecedented government intrusion in their lives, with government telling them where to go and who they can have in their house, which is a level of government interference of the like we have not seen in recent Canadian history, after two years of that, they just do not believe they should be fired for making a health care decision.

On the other hand, there is a group of people who are saying that anybody who holds that view is a racist, a misogynist or an insurrectionist. There is a group of people who are saying that government should have the ability to tell people who they can have in their house, and whether or not their business is allowed to stay open.

Which group seems more unreasonable? I would say that after two years, those who are fighting against the government intrusion in their lives have a legitimate case to make. Whether or not we agree with them, we must respect their right to advocate for their views. The Prime Minister has not provided any legitimate justification for bringing in the Emergencies Act. He asks us to trust him. He says we should not worry, that the government is going to make sure everything is fine with the courts and that everything is compliant with the charter.

This is the same guy who fired his attorney general because she would not go along with his plans to interfere in a criminal court case. Pardon the members of the Conservative Party if we are not going to take the Prime Minister's word that he is not going to abuse the power that he is granting himself.

Statutory Order

He points to specific instances that the Conservatives denounced. We denounced the rail blockades in 2020 and we denounced the border blockades in 2022. We do not believe that the right to peacefully protest should mean the right to infringe on the freedoms and rights of other people. We raised that point in 2020, calling on the government to do something about the rail blockades when it was the anti-energy workers. By the way, there have been a lot of radical left-wing protests across the country where we could see all kinds of placards, including anti-Semitic placards and banners advocating violence against police officers, and we do not see the government rushing to crack down on those.

The government is talking about foreign funding. What about the foreign funding that is pouring into Canada by the hundreds of millions of dollars to help groups fight against energy projects and natural resource projects across the country? That did not seem to bother the government then. Now, all of a sudden, it says it has to do something about it.

It is a little like the scene in *Casablanca* when the inspector comes to Rick and says that he has to close the place down because there is illegal gambling going on, and then the croupier comes over and puts his winnings in his pocket. That is what the government is doing. For years, it has relied on foreign funding coming to help its allies in the political spectrum fight for its goals and fight against Canadians and their interests.

This is the exact same playbook that we have seen dictatorial governments use across the world. They dehumanize their opponents. They invoke threats of foreign influence. Let us remember, the Berlin Wall was ostensibly built to keep others out. Governments always talk about their good intentions when they take away rights and liberties. I am asking Canadians not be fooled by this.

• (1255)

I am asking members of the Liberal Party who actually believe in civil liberties, who actually do believe in the natural limits of government, to do—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It is time for questions and comments.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Sport.

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I just rushed back into the House. I was sitting in the lobby, listening to that speech, and I could not believe how willing the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle was to justify all these behaviours we are seeing. I saw a video of him crossing the road this morning giving a thumbs up and shaking hands with the people who have been occupying this capital city for the last three weeks.

If this were happening in Regina, if his neighbours were being occupied and harassed downtown and were afraid to leave their homes, would your position be exactly the same as it is here? Would you be giving them a thumbs up every single day?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I will remind the hon. member to speak through the Chair.

The hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Madam Speaker, the member comes from a caucus whose leader sent a delegation to protesters. He is saying that I should not have waved back to people who waved to me. His government actually sent a minister with a mandate to negotiate.

I am Canadian. I will wave to people when they wave to me. I will say hello to people who say hello to me. When I have constituents who have left their homes to come and fight for their freedoms, I will listen to them. I will be civil because, if the government had not started off this whole thing with that type of attitude, we might not even be having this debate today.

[Translation]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Speaker, as you know, the Conservatives and the Bloc are voting the same way, in other words against the Emergencies Act.

That being said, I would like to understand something. In 2012, 10 years ago, the student crisis took hold in Quebec. Of course, that crisis did not concern the federal government, but Conservative Party supporters said on the radio that it was time to get out the batons. They took a hard line.

During the Wet'suwet'en protests, the Conservatives said that they had gone on long enough, that it was time for forceful intervention. Once again, they took a hard line.

In 2020, the Bloc Québécois moved a motion calling on the Prime Minister to apologize to the victims of the War Measures Act in October 1970. Again, the Conservatives took a hard line and voted against our motion.

Now, we are facing the trucker crisis. As soon as the Conservative base is affected, suddenly the hard line is not so hard. It melted away as quickly as the polar ice cap is melting as a result of climate change, which, according to the Conservatives, does not exist. Why is that?

• (1300)

[English]

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Madam Speaker, I will start my remarks by thanking the member from the Bloc Québécois because we disagree on many things philosophically, but it is nice to know that, even if we disagree on policy, that there is still some common ground on our principles about using the sledgehammer the government has brought in.

The member is invoking a series of events that happened in 2012. The Conservative Party did not bring in the Emergencies Act in 2012. It is legitimate. There are going to be protests across the country, across time, where various parties are going to agree with the aims of the protests or disagree. We can all express our opinion about whether or not those protests should be happening, but the government should not be bringing in this massive sledgehammer to crack down on dissent when there are existing laws.

The Prime Minister talked about the Coutts border crossing. It was resolved with existing laws and tools that law enforcement have. There is no need for this act.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I found the hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle's speech disturbing at many levels. There were more dog whistles to a rabid base of Trump supporters in one short speech than I have ever heard in this place.

I would like to correct the record and ask the hon. member to consider that when the Government of Canada sent a delegation, it was because the Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs have the Supreme Court of Canada on their side in that they have a continuity of leadership and territorial responsibility that goes back to our Constitution. From the Supreme Court of Canada, for the Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs, it was required that both British Columbia and the Government of Canada, in the honour of the Crown, sent representatives to discuss the situation with them. They were not protesters. They were chiefs.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Madam Speaker, I believe the hon. member may be the only member of the House who was actually arrested for participating in an illegal protest. She is now somehow justifying the Emergencies Act. Would she have appreciated, while she was breaking laws and getting arrested, if the government had the power to freeze her bank account? Would she have appreciated anybody who made a donation to the Green Party at that time having their bank accounts frozen for supporting her illegal activities? I doubt it.

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Outremont.

Today I rise to deliver what may be the most important speech I have given since having the privilege to serve the people of Kings—Hants in the House. Today, we as parliamentarians are debating whether the government's decision to invoke the Emergencies Act on Monday was justified. I submit, for my colleagues in the House and indeed all Canadians watching, that the threshold required to trigger the Emergencies Act has been objectively met and perhaps exceeded.

As the Prime Minister has said in the House, a decision of this nature is not taken lightly. However, the situation we have seen across the country is serious and warrants a response that is proportionate to the impact we have seen on all Canadians. Let me be very clear: I am in full support of legal protests in this country. It is a constitutionally protected right and, indeed, I have spoken with some of my own constituents who, in their own way, have demonstrated their displeasure with the government's protocols to date. However, we have to delineate between lawful protest and individuals who refuse to abide by the rule of law, who have occupied Ottawa and who have blockaded our key border crossings.

I believe it is incumbent on all of us to look at the facts and to try to be objective. We have seen a group of individuals in Ottawa occupy the city for three weeks now. This is despite orders from law authorities to disperse and to go home. The key organizers of the Ottawa occupation have openly espoused their goal of overthrowing the government, and of meeting with the Governor General to form a coalition.

We have had blockades across the country at key border crossings that have targeted the country's trade relationship, including at Windsor, Coutts and Emerson. At Coutts, the RCMP found

weapons and body armour. How can one conclude that this was simply a peaceful protest?

The Minister of Public Safety outlined to the House this morning what impact these were having across the country economically. There have been hundreds of millions of dollars a day in economic harm. Blocking of critical infrastructure and critical trade routes hurts everyday Canadians, and impacts our food security and our supply chain. There has been a targeted impact on the Ottawa International Airport, and the organizers of the "freedom convoy" have expressed their desire to re-establish blockades and occupations elsewhere, even if they are taken down by police.

We also know that these activities are being financed by international sources. I ask this, for members of the House: Do we, as parliamentarians, have a responsibility to take action on internationally financed assistance to organizers of activity that is not only illegal, but represents a threat to Canadian security and the rule of law? I, for one, believe we do. I want to be crystal clear. This is being done to target activities that are illegal and threatening the economic health of the country and the rule of law and order.

For those whose intent is to raise issues about government policy, I have no issue. For those who continue to be a part of illegal blockades here in Ottawa or elsewhere, they do not have the ability to do so. These measures are being implemented because of their unwillingness to abide by the law.

What is the public emergency order being invoked under the Emergencies Act? What does it actually mean? The Conservatives would have people believe that this government is limiting all freedoms. These measures do not take away freedoms. The Bloc members would suggest that this is akin to the War Measures Act, and are seeking to drum up memories of the FLQ crisis. This is not the War Measures Act. It is not taking away the rights of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and it is not calling in the army. This is a specific measure to give additional powers to police and provincial authorities to maintain law and order, to monitor financing, including from foreign sources, that is being used to block and undermine critical infrastructure, and to ultimately remove the blockades and occupations that exist across the country.

Let us examine the actual measures in the order. They include the regulation and prohibition of public assemblies that lead to a breach of the peace and go beyond lawful protest. I want to be clear: Lawful protest can continue. Designating and securing places for blockades are to be prohibited.

The measures also include directing persons to render essential services to relieve impacts of blockades on Canada's economy. This could include such things as tow trucks that could be requisitioned, of course for compensation, by government authorities to help with removing trucks and vehicles that are blockading key infrastructure.

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● (1305)

They include authorizing or directing financial institutions to render essential services that relieve the impact of blockades, including regulating and prohibiting the use of property to fund and support the blockades that are undermining economic security in the country.

There are also measures enabling the RCMP to enforce municipal bylaw and provincial offences where required, and the imposition of fines under section 19 of the Emergencies Act.

I submit to the House that these measures are specific, time-limited and geographically focused. The measures will be overseen by a joint parliamentary committee and, of course, must be supported by a majority in the House to remain in force.

I previously mentioned that policing is in the domain of municipalities and the provincial government. Since day one, our government has worked, and continues to work, directly with municipal and provincial authorities and their law enforcement. We have answered calls for additional resources. We helped create integrated operations, and provided additional RCMP officers to try and deal with blockades.

Leading into Monday's decision, it was clear that the provincial and municipal authorities had been unable to address the situation. Ironically, members of the House were calling on us to show federal leadership. Some Conservatives, after openly encouraging illegal activity to continue, were asking the government to stop the blockades. These measures are designed to do exactly that.

My question to members in the House who are criticizing the government for making available time-limited tools under the Emergencies Act to support law enforcement is this. What intermediate step would they suggest the government should have undertaken? Beyond asking the Prime Minister to meet with individuals who fly flags that say, "F.U.C.K. Trudeau", who want to overthrow a democratically elected government, and who have stated that they will not leave until their demands are met, what security measures would they have suggested this government should have undertaken? That is the key question. As my constituents have rightfully pointed out, it is easy to be an armchair critic, but I have yet to hear many constructive measures from the other side of the House on how to deal with the current situation.

I support the government's measures. They are reasonable, they are balanced and they are proportionate to the circumstances we have seen. They are focused on giving tools to police in jurisdictions across the country to resolve illegal blockades that are hurting everyday Canadians.

It is extremely important for all of us to remember that these are tools that are available. This order is in effect for 30 days. This is to make sure that we have the ability to address the circumstances that we have seen. I would hope that all members of the House believe that this is an important measure so that we can make sure that the blockades, the economic harm and, frankly, the lack of law and order that we have seen in certain elements in this country do not continue.

● (1310)

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, earlier, we heard from one of the member's colleagues that the government said that it knows what a lawful protest looks like. I wonder why, then, the government did not act when we had protesters blockading Via Rail and CN Rail, blocking the Port of Vancouver, crippling our economy, and crippling pipelines and oil and gas trains to the point that Alberta companies were offering to truck propane to Quebec.

Why was that considered a lawful protest not to be subject to such extreme, draconian acts as the government is bringing in, compared with what is going on now?

Mr. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, I was anticipating the question, because I have noticed that members on the opposite side of the House are trying to create that narrative. I find that they have been inconsistent in their own way, in that they were very quick to call for government action back in 2020, but were silent for nearly two weeks with what we have seen in Ottawa and elsewhere in the country.

The difference for me as to why this situation rises to the level of the Emergencies Act is the fact that it has been an open, stated goal of those who have been involved in the protest to actually overthrow government and to cause disruption and harm to Canadians. I will go on the record and say that it is absolutely unacceptable, regardless of the notion and desire of protesters, to block critical infrastructure. I support measures that do this, including in this way here today.

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to say that I profoundly and completely disagree with the Emergencies Act, the topic of debate today.

Unlike the member who just spoke and the Prime Minister, who said this morning that this legislation is proportionate and reasonable, I find it completely disproportionate and unreasonable.

My colleague talked about intermediate steps that should have been taken. My question for him is this: Why did the government not take measures, both political and for the sake of public safety, from the very start instead of allowing the blockade we are seeing now to set up in front of Parliament Hill?

[English]

Mr. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, "in the absence of federal government leadership, ordinary people, brave as they may be, put themselves in harm's way because of this government. Protecting the people is the cornerstone of the contract between citizens and the government. Does the government understand the consequences of its lack of leadership?"

That was from the critic from the Bloc Québécois four days ago. What does the Bloc Québécois expect federal government leadership to look like? Does it suggest that it looks like what the Conservatives are calling for: for the government to simply do as those outside on Wellington Street are asking, and eliminate any public health measures related to COVID?

What we are doing is very simple. We are giving tools to local authorities, including in Quebec, to use at their discretion and to avoid what we have seen across the country.

Would the member opposite think it is a good idea to have those tools available, such that if there was a blockade at Lacolle, we could address that situation? It is ironic, because they ask why this did not happen at the time. The reality is that it had to work its way to a federal level, which it has over the past three weeks. Had we intervened the first time, the Bloc Québécois would have been the same party saying that it was an overstep and to respect provincial jurisdictions. It is hypocrisy.

• (1315)

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, having been in Ottawa for most of this blockade, what I have seen is a complete lack of willingness by the police to do their job. This should never have spiralled. It was allowed to metastasize and create a crisis at our borders, cutting off hundred of millions of dollars of trade. I remember when the Conservatives were saying that if 10 unvaccinated truckers did not get to cross the border, we would have all our supply lines and our stores shut down. When that did not happen, their supporters actually shut the border.

I would like to ask the hon. member to consider this. Now that we are at this point, it does speak to the absolute failure of the government to have shown leadership throughout. We should never have been in a situation where we had to use the Emergencies Act against people who were setting up hot tubs on Wellington Street because of the lack of rule of law.

Mr. Kody Blois: Madam Speaker, the member talks about leadership. What type of leadership would he have liked to see? Would he have liked to see federal overreach in the first few days, and the imposing of federal powers? Would the member suggest that leadership looks like acquiescing to what the Conservatives have said? No. What we have done is wait until the situation warranted a federal response. Here we are. We are putting tools in place to be able to address the situation. It is a bit of a nothing question, in my mind.

[Translation]

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, today's debate is crucial. I would like to address my remarks to all members of the House, of course, but also to Canadians right across the country.

The Canadian government declared a state of emergency this week. This decision was not made lightly, and for good reason. Invoking the Emergencies Act is not the first thing the Government of Canada should do, or even the second. It must be used as a last resort. However, it is clear that this tool is now necessary.

Illegal blockades set up across the country over the past three weeks have disrupted the lives of far too many Canadians. These blockades have caused significant damage to our economy and our democratic institutions. Canadian jobs and prosperity are at stake. The illegal actions that have been taken have shaken international confidence in Canada as a good place to invest. We cannot stand by while the livelihoods of Canadians and workers are threatened,

while businesses large and small are affected by these blockades across the country.

[English]

We cannot and we will not let Canada's reputation on the international stage be tarnished. That is why we are taking action. The emergency economic measures order will allow the government to take concrete steps and actions to stop the financing of the illegal blockades. The main objective of these measures is to limit the flow of money that is used to finance this unlawful activity and to prevent additional financial support. As the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has said before, this is about following the money.

Two broad categories of financial measures are being enacted. The first are aimed at crowdfunding platforms and payment service providers, while the second will apply to Canadian financial service providers.

Let us look at the first one. Crowdfunding platforms and some payment service providers are not currently subject to the anti-money-laundering and anti-terrorist-financing laws in this country. It therefore stands to reason that they could be used to finance unlawful activities, such as the blockades we are seeing. To address this, the order extends the scope of Canada's anti-money-laundering and anti-terrorist-financing rules to cover crowdfunding platforms and the payment processors they use. Specifically, the entities that are in possession of any funds associated with the illegal blockades are now required to register with FINTRAC, the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada, and to report suspicious and large-value transactions of persons involved in the blockades. This will mitigate the risks that these platforms could be used to receive funds from illicit sources or to finance illicit activity.

The second group of measures directs our financial service providers to intervene when they suspect that an account belongs to someone participating in the illegal blockades. This means that banks, insurance companies and other financial service providers must now temporarily cease providing financial services and freeze accounts when they believe an account holder or client is engaged in illegal blockades. The order applies to all funds held in a deposit account, a chequing account or a savings account, and to any other type of property. This also includes digital assets, such as cryptocurrencies.

As a result, Canadian financial service providers are now able to immediately freeze or suspend an account of an individual or business affiliated with these illegal blockades and to do so without a court order. Financial service providers are also protected against civil liability for the actions they take to comply with the order.

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Of course, these service providers are required to unfreeze accounts when the account holder stops assisting or participating in the illegal blockades.

• (1320)

[Translation]

With the emergency economic measures order, the government is also directing Canadian financial institutions to review their relationships with anyone involved in the illegal blockades. The order also gives federal, provincial and territorial government institutions new powers to share any relevant information with banks and other financial service providers if that information helps stop the funding of the illegal blockades and unlawful activities occurring here in Canada.

The vast majority of Canadians, those who are law-abiding and not involved in these illegal blockades, will see absolutely no difference. This order changes nothing for them. These measures are designed to stop the funding that enables illegal blockades. They are targeted and temporary. They will apply for 30 days and are aimed at individuals and businesses that are directly or indirectly involved in illegal activities that are hurting our economy and our people. These measures are necessary.

It is true that blockades are only happening in certain parts of the country, and we know that, but they are hurting the entire Canadian economy. It is also true that most areas of the country have not been where these unlawful activities have been occurring. However, the funding for these illegal acts is not just coming from the areas where the semi-trailers are parked; it is coming from everywhere.

Moreover, some individuals have crossed interprovincial borders to participate in these activities, which, I stress, are illegal. Our democratic institutions are under threat. The Canadian economy is under threat; peace, order and good government are under threat in Canada. This is unacceptable. We must end it, and we will end it.

[English]

The message is clear. From the finance perspective, if people are funding blockades that harm the Canadian economy, their bank account will be frozen. If people who fund blockades think they can get around the law by using cryptocurrencies, it will not work. If a company's truck is used in an illegal activity, the vehicle's insurance will be suspended and the company's bank accounts will be frozen.

Semi-trailers should be on our roads, not parked for weeks on end in front of Parliament. They should be delivering the goods and services that will grow our economy, not holding up traffic at border crossings or paralyzing our city centres.

• (1325)

[Translation]

That said, I remain optimistic. I remain optimistic knowing that the law will soon be restored and the blockades dismantled; that we will put this pandemic behind us while being there for each other; and that we can strengthen our economy not by honking horns, but through the hard work of our entrepreneurs, our small and large businesses, and through thoughtful and responsible economic policies.

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Before we go to questions and comments, I believe the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle has a point of order.

Hon. Andrew Scheer: Madam Speaker, I want to clarify the record. I misspoke during my questions and comments in regard to the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands. I indicated she was the only member of the House to have been arrested for protesting illegally. I completely forgot the image of the Minister of Environment in his orange jumpsuit. He too was arrested for illegal protests and I—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It is noted.

The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands has a point of order.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, to the hon. member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, I would like to retain the honour of being the only member of Parliament currently serving as a member of Parliament when I faced arrest non-violently, surrendering immediately and accepting the consequences, unlike our friends outside.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Questions and comments, the hon. member for Yorkton—Melville.

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Madam Speaker, the individual who just spoke indicated that one of the problems here is that Canada's reputation is being tarnished. Whose reputation is truly being tarnished, Canadians' reputations or the government's reputation?

The stands that everyday Canadians have taken have gained international support and have drawn disdain directly toward the Liberal government, and especially toward the language and actions of the Prime Minister.

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: Madam Speaker, I am sure it will come as no surprise that I entirely disagree. Canadians have lost confidence in many different institutions as a result of what has been happening over the course of the last three weeks. Top of mind are the police. I believe many Canadians across the country question whether law enforcement was there, and this Emergencies Act provides more tools to our police force to maintain confidence in law and order in this country.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague did say that her government would not let these events tarnish Canada's reputation.

The flag that she holds so dear has now become a global symbol of the far right movement and chaos.

I would like to know, given that her speech seems to have been written three weeks ago, if my hon. colleague is getting help with her agenda.

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: Madam Speaker, the Canadian flag is the flag of all Canadians, including all Quebecers, and I wear it proudly every day.

In reply to my colleague, because I did not really understand his very bizarre question, I would like to point out that I have just seen that Quebecers agree with the use of the Emergencies Act.

More than 70% of Quebecers approve of the invocation of this act, and I am proud to represent them.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would first like to say that I hold the Liberal government responsible for letting convoys organized by the far right take over Parliament and illegally occupy downtown.

I would like to look at this from another angle. The War Measures Act is a painful and traumatizing event stamped in the collective memory of Quebecers. However, it cannot be compared to the Emergencies Act, which was drafted by Mulroney's Conservative government.

There are huge differences: fundamental rights and freedoms are protected, its application is time-limited, and members can call for a vote at any time to put an end to the application of the act.

Do these guarantees as to the authority given to all parliamentarians to exercise vigilance reassure my colleague?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: Madam Speaker, I completely agree with my colleague from Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie. This is a completely different act. The Emergencies Act is not the same as the act invoked in 1970. Soldiers are not being deployed on Canadian soil or Quebec soil.

I agree that there is transparency and that parliamentarians in this House all have the power to revoke the application of the Emergencies Act at any time.

• (1330)

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, today I noticed some very interesting public opinion polling coming out of Quebec. As a matter of fact, it says that 72% of Quebecers support the use of the Emergencies Act. More importantly, in polling from Abacus Data that was released recently, 63% of Bloc supporters in the last election indicated that they would never vote for an MP who supports the occupation going on outside. However, the Bloc seems to be showing its support for the occupation.

Can the parliamentary secretary provide some insight on that?

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: Madam Speaker, I think I will address this question in French, with the permission of my colleague.

[Translation]

I agree, as I mentioned earlier, that the vast majority of Quebecers support the use of this act. I will also point out that the approval rating is even higher in Quebec than in the rest of Canada. I think that the members of the Bloc Québécois should be careful when they speak on behalf of Quebecers.

[English]

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time for remarks with the hon. member for South Surrey—White Rock.

It is an honour to rise on behalf of the citizens of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, not only in this House generally but in such

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important times. Sometimes we do forget what a tremendous honour it is. I am sad, though, to be here discussing emergency measures today. This has been a time, with respect, where the Prime Minister has inflamed, has incited and has divided.

The Prime Minister took that same inflammatory approach yesterday when he spoke in response to a question from the member for Thornhill. I was dismayed that he did not apologize for that today. Instead, he came into this House this morning and doubled down on years of division, so let us recap. The predecessor legislation was invoked three times: World War I, World War II and the FLQ crisis.

The Prime Minister invites and likes Canadians to think that he is the common person. I am not sure if he has walked through downtown Ottawa of late, but I did yesterday and today. I saw trucks in streets. There were a few streets that were plugged and those trucks need to go, period. The question then becomes how that should be done.

I took an oath when I was sworn in. It was the greatest day of my life to take that oath on behalf of all Canadians and particularly on behalf of the residents of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo. I took my oath to do my job to the best of my ability. I have to be satisfied as a legislator that the preconditions for this act have been met. That is my job. That is the oath I took and that is something that I take very seriously.

I read the act and I considered it. I actually had to read it twice. I have practised law for 14 years. I previously taught at a law school for a number of years, so when it came to my analysis of the act, I did what I taught my students to do. I went back to first legal principles, first statutory principles. We apply legal principles and statutory principles not because it is popular, not because we want the trucks to be cleared in any way possible, but because we here, the 338 of us, must apply the law.

After all, the Prime Minister has made the same remarks about the rule of law. He would not strip Canadians of citizenship just because it was popular, just because people may like it, but instead we must accede to the rule of law.

Let us apply the rule of law. Let us apply the legislation here. This legislation is clear. It says that its application must be the last resort. Members of the House have repeatedly asked what step one was. We hear crickets. What was step two? We hear crickets. The police were not even stopping people carrying jerry cans in. What was step three? We hear more crickets and a word salad. The official leader of the opposition asked the Prime Minister to attend a meeting with all party leaders, with a view to bringing this matter to an end. By my count that was about 10 days ago. Again, we hear crickets.

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Even without the Emergencies Act application, which is alive right now, protesters could be arrested under the current regime. There are laws about causing a disturbance, mischief and participation in these sorts of illegal activities. The Criminal Code is very clear on that and I am not even touching on the Ontario Highway Traffic Act. The trucks could be seized, incidental to arrest, as evidence. They could be seized with a warrant, all things that the police have at their disposal right here, right now, to address the very situation that the Emergencies Act says it will deal with as a last resort. These first resorts have not been addressed.

• (1335)

Let us next look at what was resolved without the use of the Emergencies Act: Coutts and the Ambassador Bridge in Windsor. Why? It is because the police had the powers to do so and used those powers. My point is this. The legislation says that we do not resort to its use unless it is absolutely necessary. What we have seen in these three instances I just mentioned is that it is not absolutely necessary and, as a legislator, I need to be convinced that the threshold has been met or I will not vote for such legislation.

I wish we could simply invoke legislation to make our problems go away. That is just not the case. It cannot be done as a measure of convenience. Let us not forget. This was not done during 9/11. This was not done during COVID. This was not done during railway blockades that had a crippling impact on our economy and economic consequences. This was not done throughout many protests throughout the country. This was not done when B.C. highways and rail were washed out due to recent flooding.

I recently received an inquiry from a constituent in the north Thompson area near Blue River in my riding. There have been protests in that area for years. Blue River is a small community. There has been violence, threats and blockades. I told that constituent what I am telling the House. The legislation is a last resort to be used in extraordinary circumstances of national emergency when nothing else will do.

As one of the members for Ottawa said earlier today, this has been going on for four weeks and I echo that sentiment. I understand that it has been going on for four weeks and those committing illegal activities need to stop. It has been going on for much longer in my riding and those people are asking the same questions.

In closing, I do agree with the Prime Minister on one point. He did say that he is trying to save jobs. Unfortunately, I would eliminate the plural. He is trying to save one job, his own, and that is not right.

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I welcome the hon. member to the House as a new member and a fellow member of the bar. I would politely point out that an emergency—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I would ask that the people who are outside of the chamber please stop speaking so loudly. We can barely hear ourselves.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Arif Virani: Madam Speaker, the member indicated he read the statute. He knows full well that, in terms of COVID, enacting a

public welfare emergency requires the provinces to initiate such a request. No request was forthcoming.

Second, he asked what steps have been taken. The first step was actually the City of Ottawa declaring an emergency, which did not render the results. The next step was the Province of Ontario declaring an emergency, which has not rendered results. The final step is this very important debate that we are having today.

I want to put to the member an issue about the capability of the province under its authority to deal with this, which is clearly an issue because the provincial order that has been made by Premier Ford fails in two important respects. It does not compel essential workers like tow trucks to actually tow vehicles away. Second, it cannot compel a vehicle's licence to be suspended when that vehicle originates in another province such as one of the western provinces.

Are those not instances of a lack of provincial authority that necessitate the usage of the Emergencies Act in this case?

• (1340)

Mr. Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, the Criminal Code actually deals with all of those issues. When the hon. member speaks about the invocation of a state of emergency, I did not see a single thing change. He is right. I did not see a single thing change. I did not see any enforcement change. What was step one? What was step two?

We cannot simply do this because we do not like how something is being enforced. It should be a matter of last resort and those steps are available in the Criminal Code whether it comes to seizure, to search, or to seizure and arrest with warrant.

With respect, I disagree.

[Translation]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

I agree with him on a number of points. This morning, the Prime Minister said that there were several options and that the Emergencies Act was the last resort, but we did not hear about the first, second or third options.

I have a question for my colleague. Does a government that is unable to keep the public safe in the context of these protests and the presence of truckers deserve a seat on the United Nations Security Council?

[English]

Mr. Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister declared “Canada is back” when he was first elected. The problem is this: One can say anything they want, but at the end of the day it is their actions that people will judge.

People look at actions and they look at integrity. We have a Prime Minister that, with respect, has not displayed a great deal of integrity, whether it comes to ethical breaches or it comes to a deliberate desire to divide both in this House and with respect to Canadians.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, we are seeing growing escalations. This situation is clearly out of control due to a lack of leadership from all levels of government.

In addition to the firearms and arrests for conspiracy to commit murder in Coutts and attempted arson of a residential building in the occupation area, convoy members have been deputizing themselves and now claim they have the lawful authority to detain and arrest others. I do not recall the hon. member mentioning the seriousness of the violent terrorist cell apprehended at Coutts on conspiracy to commit murder. No one wants to see someone get hurt here, yet this is a recipe for disaster.

Does the hon. member, and the Conservatives, not view the situation as an emergency?

Mr. Frank Caputo: Madam Speaker, I will be very clear. When we talk about the legislation, has the threshold been met? Simply saying, “Do you view it this way colloquially?” is not the question that is before the House.

The question that is before the House is whether the threshold has been met. With respect, I do not believe it has been because I do not view this as the act of last resort.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a sombre time to be speaking in this House. It is a seminal time in Canadian history, in my view.

It is apparent to me that we seem to be living in two Canadas. There is the Canada of fear and division promoted by the current Prime Minister and the leader of the NDP, confirmed by their caucuses, but there is another Canada out there, a united and proud nation that has sacrificed and done without and suffered economically, physically and in their mental health condition. This is a Canada that is a bit worn out, plainly speaking, but still firmly patriotic and ready to take on whatever the future brings. These Canadians do not share the Prime Minister's post-national narrative. They embrace the essence of Canada that they see themselves a part of, as the true north strong and free.

In our national anthem, we call out to God and we pray that he keep our land glorious and free. The truth is that Canada can only be glorious if it is free, meaning its people are free—free from tyranny, free from government abusing its awesome powers, with the government mindful of the responsibility and trust given to it in a representative democracy. Because the Prime Minister wants to dwell in the extreme, in the fringe and false narratives of what is happening during peaceful protests, I am choosing to address those other Canadians.

I remember the historical term “the two solitudes” in reference to impasses between anglophone and francophone people in Canada. Its meaning was meant to refer to a perceived lack of communication and, moreover, a lack of will to communicate. Here today we see history repeating itself with a lack of communication, but, more

significantly, a lack of will to communicate between the present federal government and anglophone and francophone citizens alike.

Statutory Order

The Emergencies Act is extraordinary legislation. “Extraordinary” means remarkable, exceptional, unusual and uncommon. The measures in this act are to be entered into reservedly, advisedly and with extreme caution. Through all the trials and tribulations of a newly created and burgeoning nation trying to unite coast to coast to coast, through other public health emergencies and through other civil unrest, the federal government saw fit to invoke the Emergencies Act and its precursor, the War Measures Act, only four times in our history. These extraordinary measures were used in World War I, in World War II, by a previous prime minister in the 1970s and by the current Prime Minister.

It was not invoked during the fears and protests around the Spanish flu. It was not invoked during the workers' strikes in the 1930s; during the crises in Oka, Ipperwash or Caledonia; during the aftermath of 9/11; during crippling national strikes affecting our supply chains or during the rail blockades or pipeline protests that negatively affected the Canadian economy. The list is long. The point is that when other methods and authorities exist to deal with serious disagreement, governments should use those methods and authorities. Government should not subjugate free people to abusive, wide-ranging, freedom-altering overreach.

A Liberal member earlier in this debate asked the Leader of the Opposition how she would feel if this happened in her neighbourhood, in her riding. Well, it did happen in my neighbourhood and in my riding. It happened at one of the border crossings in South Surrey—White Rock. I received many reports on the ground about the activities there. I did get three complaints through social media calling the people involved the same outrageous, inflammatory names that the Liberal Party and the Prime Minister have been using. There were no complaints to my office.

● (1345)

On the other side, I have had overwhelming outpourings of support from my constituents because the supporting protests were meaningful to those in attendance, and even joyful in the hope for change. What kind of change? It was not necessarily a change in government, although that might happen in the next federal election, but most definitely a change in the federal government's approach.

Statutory Order

In support of the right to protest the government's policies, actions and inactions, on two previous weekends vehicle after vehicle drove in a rolling loop around those border crossings and highways in South Surrey, with not hundreds but thousands of Canadians cheering them on from the sides of the roads and on highway overpasses. Those involved were vocal but peaceful, holding Canadian flags high, singing the national anthem, saying prayers and greeting others cheerfully, including the police. The result is that the border has been cleared, goods are flowing and police officers, using tools already at their disposal, were able to both show respect for the protesters and clear any impasses.

Why is the Emergencies Act needed now in my riding? It is not. The only distress being expressed right now from my riding is that the Prime Minister and his cabinet, having inflamed the situation, are showing disdain, are not even attempting to engage in dialogue and feel the only tool in their tool box is to take more power unto themselves.

I have heard from many civil enforcement officers, civil liberties scholars and lawyers on this subject. Collectively, they want me to remind the House that a public order event is not necessarily an emergency. We are down to a protest in a few blocks of downtown Ottawa. That is all. With some proper policing, the situation in Ottawa can be brought to a conclusion, as it has been elsewhere. Unlike some of the other events, in downtown Ottawa, our nation's capital, we are not at a U.S. border, so the protest does not affect imports and exports.

I am not sure who the leader of the NDP was referring to when he said, "Don't let your anger turn into hatred." The Prime Minister has literally turned his back on a large segment of Canadian citizens, showing them nothing but derision and disdain, which only escalates and never de-escalates tension and disagreement.

I had occasion, early in my career, to attend advanced negotiation classes at Harvard Law School under the supervision of Professor Roger Fisher, the author of the acclaimed book *Getting to Yes*. There are necessary steps that should be taken in any conflict resolution, such as some form of engagement, de-escalation, respectful dialogue and looking to best alternatives to resolve the conflict. The only one the PM has employed has been described as the "nuclear option".

I agree that we should never have arrived at this moment of looking like a failed nation state. We are looking this way due to weak and ineffective leadership. It is that simple. Why invoke this act now when it was not invoked all those times before? The federal government should be talking to and engaging with citizens to resolve this conflict by introducing a plan to get back to normal. Instead, we have seen the federal government demonize and insult our fellow Canadians. The Prime Minister must remember that they are all Canadians out there on Wellington Street, and a Canadian is a Canadian. I am pretty sure I heard that somewhere before.

Instead of creating a plan, engaging in dialogue and looking for a peaceful solution, the Prime Minister is looking to invoke and stoke more fear and division. Countries around the world, and Canadians themselves at home, are looking at this situation and wondering if this is the Canada they have believed in patriotically, firmly and

with a full heart for so long. The truth is that the Prime Minister and the government initiated these protests by Canadians by calling them down in the first place and then not dealing with the situation as it unfolded.

I think back to a former leader of the Progressive Conservative Party who went along with a former prime minister who invoked the War Measures Act for just the third time in Canadian history, and not during wartime. He voted for that War Measures Act. His name was Robert Stanfield. He later said that it was the greatest regret of his life that he voted with the government that day.

● (1350)

Edmund Burke is often quoted as saying that "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." Well, I stand against this measure with every fibre of my being. I will vote no. This is a free country. Its people should be free to protest and free to exercise their human rights, and we need to respect and engage them.

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I respect the member opposite a great deal and served with her on the justice committee in the last Parliament.

I have heard the narrative throughout the debate thus far that the tools are no longer necessary, because the blockades at the border have been cleared. I would also put to her a few simple facts, simply from one lawyer to another.

We know that there was an attempted resurrection of the blockade in Windsor just yesterday, and the Windsor police used the tools under the Emergencies Act to their benefit in preventing and thwarting that quickly. We also know that protesters who have threatened to take up arms have openly declared that they will be returning to Quebec City on February 19 in front of the Assemblée nationale, and we know the type of arms that were seized at Coutts.

Do these threats and ongoing threats not merit the necessity of using a federal power, including the Emergencies Act, to deal with what is an ongoing, current and future situation in this country?

● (1355)

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Madam Speaker, I thank my friend opposite. I also have great respect for his intellect and abilities. Yes, I apologize to all Canadians: We are both lawyers. That said, we are now members of Parliament as well.

With great respect, I do not think it should have ever come to this. I believe the Prime Minister and the government should have engaged in respectful dialogue, should have at least signalled an understanding that we can have differences of opinion in a free country and that those differences are being listened to. If the government had acted on our opposition motion to table a plan of action, all of this would have calmed down immeasurably.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, I certainly agree that it should never have come to this. The fact that a protest was allowed to become an occupation speaks to failures at every level.

The problem I have with my hon. colleague and her party is that they are saying that if the Prime Minister had just gone out and talked to the nice protesters, everything would have been settled. However, when Pat King, an organizer for the protest and the spokesperson, said that this was going to be settled with bullets, a line was crossed.

I know that talking about shooting the Prime Minister may not seem like a problem, but it should be a problem, and it should be a problem to every parliamentarian. I will not negotiate with anyone who talks about shooting a prime minister in this country. They need to start addressing these issues.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Madam Speaker, with all due respect, the police and law enforcement authorities in this country deal with threats and deal with violence every single day. They deal with it effectively, they deal with it forcefully, and they deal with it definitively. Our Crown prosecutors make sure that those people come to justice.

The expression that is coming to my mind is, “Oh ye of little faith”. Why do you have such little faith in the people who are tasked with keeping us safe? We do not need these extraordinary measures.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I never thought I would do this, but I am going to pick up on what the member for Timmins—James Bay just said.

When will the Conservatives acknowledge that there is an actual threat that the police clearly do not have the means to contain?

When will they admit that the evidence is right in front of them, what with the weapons seizure in Coutts and the threats made right out in the open on social media?

What more proof does my colleague need to be convinced that the police are failing to contain the ongoing occupation here in Ottawa?

[English]

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question.

It would be really refreshing to actually have real evidence connecting these dots. The Minister of Emergency Preparedness, at a press conference in the last couple of days, asserted that what happened at Coutts, the arrests at Coutts, were directly related to the leadership here in Ottawa, and under questioning by the media,

Statements by Members

backed down, backed down further, backed down further again, and basically said, “Well, I’m just sort of figuring that out myself.”

That is not real evidence, that is not a real connection and that is not a national security threat.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

● (1400)

[English]

A BETTER TENT CITY

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to recognize A Better Tent City, an innovative and successful housing solution serving previously unsheltered neighbours of mine in the Waterloo region. Consisting of 42 insulated cabins and an indoor warming space, kitchen, showers and laundry, A Better Tent City is a safe and caring place born from the leadership of the late Ron Doyle, Jeff Willmer and Nadine Green, among others. Nadine, the site coordinator, whose compassion brings calm in times of crisis, feels particularly fitting to celebrate during Black History Month, as her leadership is one example of Black excellence in the Waterloo region.

A Better Tent City is supported by so many, including the volunteers, staff and board at St. Mary’s Church and the Social Development Centre. In light of this incredible grassroots work, A Better Tent City recently received our community’s highest honour, the Barnraiser award, for showing us what is possible when a group of people rally—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour.

* * *

JUSTICE

Mr. Darren Fisher (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Madam Speaker, throughout this pandemic, the people of Dartmouth—Cole Harbour have shown the very best that Canada has to offer. From embracing public health measures like staying the blazes home to mourning incredible tragedies together, we have been there for each other while keeping six feet apart.

Like all Canadians, this pandemic has worn us down. We are so tired. However, just as public health measures are easing, those who seek to harm our country and our democracy through conspiracy theories and misinformation are using this opportunity to sow discord. I always see the best in people, but the rise in hate is so high. Folks in our community, our neighbours and friends, are finding themselves caught up in this. I know that this hate and hostility are not at the heart of who we are. I ask that all Canadians be there for each other by speaking out against misinformation and standing up against hate.

*Statements by Members***LEADER OF THE LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA**

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I think I speak for most Canadians when I say that the last two years have been extremely difficult. At times like this, one would think the leader of our country, the Prime Minister, would be there to unite Canadians. Unfortunately, that has not been the case. He has done the opposite. Do not take my word for it; his own Liberal MPs have said so.

The Prime Minister chose to divide Canadians as a political strategy to win an election. He pitted one Canadian against another for his own political gain. He called Canadians who are tired of mandates and restrictions a “fringe minority” with “unacceptable views”. He said they are extremists, misogynists and racists, and asked if these Canadians should be tolerated.

The Prime Minister has fanned the flames of division to a point of a national crisis. His solution is to divide Canadians further to implement unprecedented and extreme government measures through the Emergencies Act. This is a crisis that he, himself, created.

Where does the Prime Minister’s recklessness stop?

* * *

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak about Black History Month. I know I am not the only one to do that this month, but it should be spoken about often, which is why this year’s theme is “February and Forever: Celebrating Black History today and every day”. We need to remember that Black history is Canadian history, which at times has been for the worse, but over the years has become significantly for the better. Our communities are enriched by our Black neighbours and friends, who take on many important roles.

The honourable Jean Augustine, who proposed the motion that we recognize February as Black History Month, was the first Black woman elected to the House. Her election showed us the House could truly be a House for all Canadians.

I want to take this time to recognize and thank a community leader in Aurora. Phiona Durrant came to Canada as a young woman and established a small, successful local business. She also founded the Aurora Black Community Association. This is a dynamic, change-making group focused on uniting all the—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert.

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[Translation]

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, February is Black History Month.

Longueuil’s city council has broken down age-old barriers and now welcomes young people, women and people from diverse backgrounds.

Today I am proud to celebrate three extraordinary women recently elected to Longueuil’s city council: Reine Bombo-Allara, the first Black woman to chair the city council; Affine Lwalalika, the first Black woman on the executive council; and Rolande Balma, who, at 23, is the youngest woman ever elected in Longueuil.

The fact that these three Black women are now decision-makers on Longueuil’s city council represents huge progress and reflects modern-day Quebec. To young people of diverse backgrounds, their election signals that participation in politics—

● (1405)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Alfred-Pellan.

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HOOKED ON SCHOOL DAYS

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Madam Speaker, during Hooked on School Days, let us take the time to recognize and encourage the efforts of our young people, who remain eager to learn, despite the difficulties of the past two years.

Teachers, support staff, stakeholders and social workers have also demonstrated perseverance and are making tremendous efforts to help our young people succeed. The work of community organizations significantly enhances the lives of disadvantaged youth. They help these young people make sense of their educational path and encourage them to stay in school.

Finally and above all, let us acknowledge the important role of parents, who stand by their children every day to support and encourage them. Thank you to all these people who are dedicated to motivating our young people. To children of all ages, I hope you enjoy Hooked on School Days.

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[English]

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls, CPC): Mr. Speaker, February is Black History Month, and I want to take this opportunity to recognize the work being undertaken by the Niagara Military Museum, which is located in my riding. In partnership with the Canadian War Museum, the volunteers of the Niagara Military Museum worked to develop an incredible Black military history collection, which was publicly unveiled in Niagara last February. The Canadian War Museum is now showcasing these educational panels here in Ottawa so that more Canadians can learn about the important contributions that Black Canadians made to the defence of Canada and our freedoms.

Entitled “A Community at War: The Military Service of Black Canadians of the Niagara Region”, the exhibition highlights the experiences of 22 Black men and women from the Niagara region and southwestern Ontario who served their country in uniform, from the American Revolution to present day. Their experiences offer insight into the broader experiences of Black Canadians and this country's military history, and I invite all Canadians to visit the War Museum to see this marvellous exhibit.

* * *

VACCINE COMMUNITY INNOVATION CHALLENGE

Mr. Ron McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I recently had the pleasure of meeting with family doctors from the Fraser Northwest Division of Family Practice Society who won the \$100,000 grand prize for Canada's vaccine community innovation challenge. Their “Physician on a Mission” campaign amplified the voices of family doctors in Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam and beyond as trusted community members to encourage vaccinations by using physicians' personal stories and expertise. Videos were produced in English, Cantonese, Korean, Farsi and Arabic, with family doctors addressing common questions about COVID-19 vaccines, helping new mothers and reminding us to get our second shot. This initiative has empowered Canadians to make informed decisions about their health and to protect each other.

Congratulations to Dr. Yun and the Fraser Northwest Division of Family Practice Society. I thank them for their innovative and impactful work in keeping our communities healthy.

* * *

GURDWARA GURU NANAK DARBAR

Mr. Peter Schiefke (Vaudreuil—Soulanges, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one year ago, the Gurdwara Guru Nanak Darbar opened its doors for the first time in the historic and beautiful town of Hudson. Since doing so, it has served as a sacred place of worship for those of the Sikh faith in my community of Vaudreuil—Soulanges. It has also served as so much more. In keeping with the guiding principles of kindness, generosity and community, it has served as a place for those in need of all faiths to enjoy a free, warm and healthy meal prepared by dedicated volunteers. It is also a rallying point for business owners and families to come together to help one another by donating truckloads of food and supplies to neighbouring churches and community groups during this incredibly difficult time.

For this and so much more, I rise in the House on behalf of my entire community to congratulate Harjeet Singh Bajwa, Sarvdeep Singh Bath, Lakha Singh Dhindsa, Gurinder Singh Johal and the entire team at the Gurdwara Guru Nanak Darbar in Hudson for their hard work and generosity over the last year. May the years and decades ahead continue to bring peace, joy and fulfillment.

* * *

• (1410)

EMERGENCIES ACT

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House to address the government's egregious overstep in invoking the Emergencies Act. I have had hundreds of constituents contact me, sincerely alarmed by the implications of

Statements by Members

the Prime Minister's draconian overstep. This is the same Prime Minister who stated that he admired China's dictatorship. Even Chinese state media stated that, while “Hong Kong cannot invoke National Security Law against violent petrol-bomb-throwing mobs”, it is shocked to see the Canadian Prime Minister “crack down on peaceful pro-freedom protesters”.

The people of the world are watching this critical moment in our nation's capital, and they are rightly alarmed to see the leader of a G7 country that has long been a beacon of freedom come down on peaceful protesters with a sledgehammer. It is absolutely shameful, and I am calling on the Prime Minister to lay aside his pride, listen to the very real concerns of the Canadian people, follow the science and drop the mandates. That is the clearest path forward to resolving these tensions and healing our divided and wounded nation.

* * *

[Translation]

HOOKED ON SCHOOL DAYS

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Hochelaga, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, no one has been spared the negative effects of the pandemic we have been experiencing since 2020, least of all young people. For many young Quebecers and Canadians, pursuing their studies is a huge challenge, and the current situation does not help.

Whether they need supports related to learning difficulties, their family situation or their physical or mental health, the success of our young people must be the focus of our responsibilities as a government and as a society. We owe it to them to think about their success, to remain committed and engaged on their behalf all year long of course, but especially this week.

I would like to thank all the parents, teachers, educators, advocates and support staff who, day after day, help guide young people in their academic journeys.

As part of Hooked on School Days, my team and I sent some love to the teachers and support staff in my constituency, offering them gift baskets of cookies thoughtfully prepared by the Cuisine collective d'Hochelaga-Maisonnette.

I thank all teachers for the amazing work they do every day.

*Statements by Members**[English]***EMERGENCIES ACT**

Mr. Eric Melillo (Kenora, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the illegal blockades must come to an end, and law enforcement has the resources it needs to do that without the government's invoking the Emergencies Act. The Prime Minister has said that this should not be the first, second or third response, but he has been unable to tell us what his first, second and third responses were.

After taking no action, the Prime Minister is now moving to the most extreme action. We have seen crises in this country before, many times and in many different situations, where the Emergencies Act in its current form was not utilized. This is an unprecedented overreach and it is a result of a failure in leadership on the part of the Prime Minister.

Parliament must reverse this decision immediately.

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*[Translation]***CELEBRATIONS IN MONTMAGNY—L'ISLET—KAMOURASKA—RIVIÈRE-DU-LOUP**

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today. With 58 different municipalities in my riding, there are plenty of opportunities to celebrate, especially since many of those municipalities have reached a very venerable age.

Over the years, generations of people have pulled together to make their community their own. In the current health crisis, many committees have gone the extra mile to find different ways of celebrating.

I want to formally pay tribute to them. First, the seigneurie of Rivière-du-Sud in Montmagny is celebrating 375 years. Berthier-sur-Mer, Rivière-Ouelle and Cap-Saint-Ignace are celebrating 350 years. Sainte-Hélène de Kamouraska and Sainte-Anne-de-la-Pocatière are celebrating 175 years. Saint-Pamphile is celebrating 150 years and Saint-Joseph de Kamouraska is celebrating 100 years.

I will take some time in the coming weeks to visit them and offer a commemorative gift. I wish all the residents of these municipalities a happy anniversary.

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OUTAOUAIS PEEWEE AAA HOCKEY TEAM

Hon. Greg Fergus (Hull—Aylmer, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, earlier today, the Canadian women's hockey team won the gold medal, but I would like to talk about the next generation of players here in the Outaouais.

The Intrépide, a peewee AAA team, is made up of 17 of the best players from my beautiful region. The team has qualified for the Quebec international peewee hockey tournament. To be invited to this prestigious tournament, the Intrépide de l'Outaouais had to rank among the 14 best teams in the Quebec hockey league of excellence.

The Intrépide peewees met the challenge, and every player is very proud to represent the Outaouais region at the tournament being held in May. The excellence of Canada's Olympic team is a beacon for all Canadians, but nothing happens by accident. The team's victory represents years of hard work. The Intrépide de l'Outaouais is already on the right path.

Congratulations and much success to the team.

Go Intrépide, go!

* * *

● (1415)

*[English]***EMERGENCIES ACT**

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, for three weeks, the city of Ottawa and border crossings across the country have been under siege by blockades and occupations. People in Ottawa have been criminally harassed and assaulted, and are afraid to leave their homes. The declaration of a public order emergency is a result of a failure of all levels of government to keep the public safe.

Canadians are rightly concerned about these unprecedented measures being enacted and about the precedent it will set. I am too. It will be critical over the course of the debate over these next few days for the members of the government to clearly explain why they believe the conditions to enact this emergency order have been met. There is no time for talking points, spin or partisan attacks. Canadians deserve honest answers, accurate information and clear reasoning.

Conversely, the opposition has an important role: to hold the government to account, to ask serious questions and to refrain from overheated rhetoric.

Today marks an important moment in our history and there will be much work to do in the weeks, months and years to come. We must work to rebuild trust in our institutions, and that work must begin now.

* * *

*[Translation]***MANICOUAGAN**

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to recognize Anticosti Island, which has officially become a candidate to be declared a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Anticosti Island is a magnificent and unique place, abundant in natural wealth and home to friendly people, making it a treasure of the North Shore, Quebec and the world. Many people came together and a lot of hard work went into making this historic announcement possible, and the project has been heralded by residents.

I have worked with elected officials, organizations and residents from the early stages right up until this announcement. I responded to every request for support from residents, and I will continue to support them until Anticosti Island gets the global recognition it deserves. Together, we are making progress and we will succeed.

Congratulations to all residents of Anticosti Island. This just goes to show that goals and hard work lead to big achievements, and that when we work together we can be recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage site.

* * *

[English]

INFLATION

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are debating the Emergencies Act because of a political crisis of the Prime Minister's own making, a political crisis here in Ottawa because of his failure to act sooner.

There is another crisis building across our country that he and his government have failed to act on. Canadians are seeing the rising cost of living impacting them in their homes and in their backyards, in my riding of North Okanagan—Shuswap and across the country. Groceries will cost families \$1,000 more this year. Energy prices have reached record levels, and rent rates are skyrocketing.

Constituents have contacted me about house prices going up by 35% to 45%, concerned that young families cannot afford their own homes. Seniors on fixed incomes cannot keep up with inflation, which is now pegged at 5.1%, the highest rate in 30 years.

The Prime Minister and his government have failed to act on the cost of living crisis and have now created another crisis as a diversion. This is shameful. Canadians deserve better.

* * *

RICHARD PATTEN

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Ottawa Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House to honour my late friend, Richard Patten, who dutifully served our community of Ottawa Centre as the member of provincial Parliament from 1987 to 1990 and from 1995 to 2007. During this time, he also served as minister of government services and minister of correctional services in Ontario.

After he retired from politics and as I succeeded him as the MPP, Richard gave me a note that read, "Remember, all of this belongs to the people." This sentiment captures the essence of Richard's brand of public service. He was one's neighbour who was also one's elected representative.

Whether it was helping to save Ottawa's Aberdeen Pavilion, successfully fighting to keep the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario's heart surgery unit in Ottawa or championing legislation to help people with severe mental illness, Richard Patten's legacy in Ottawa Centre will be felt forever.

As Richard bravely fought cancer, he never missed a day at the legislature or stepped away from many of his community-building activities. He died on December 30 of last year. I thank his wife Penny for sharing Richard with our community. Ottawa Centre will forever be a better place because of him.

Oral Questions

ORAL QUESTIONS

● (1420)

[Translation]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as a Canadian, I am disappointed today.

This morning, the Prime Minister finally deigned to speak in the House of Commons, this sacred place of Canadian democracy, following his decision to invoke the Emergencies Act throughout Canada. He had a unique opportunity to justify his decision to use this extreme legislation in order to bring an end to the crisis that he himself created. He failed. He failed to demonstrate that existing laws were insufficient to stop the illegal acts.

My question is clear: Why is this government using such radical legislation with the sole purpose of protecting the Prime Minister's leadership?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this siege and these blockades are causing major damage to our economy. International confidence in Canada as a place to invest and do business has been shaken. The blockade of the Ambassador Bridge disrupted \$390 million in trade per day. These costs are real. They threaten businesses large and small and, for that reason, we must act.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I think the Minister of Finance should update her talking points. The Windsor blockade is gone. It is done. The Emergencies Act was not required.

The Prime Minister has repeatedly stated that foreign groups were supporting the demonstrations here in Ottawa. Last week at the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, the deputy director of intelligence for the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada stated there was no evidence to back up those claims or even any indication of suspicious transactions.

Why is the Prime Minister justifying his decision on the basis of facts that, according to his own experts, do not even exist?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Canadian business leaders know these illegal blockades cannot go on, and they support our government taking necessary action.

Goldy Hyder, president of the Business Council of Canada, said this week that the council welcomed the decision as a step toward ending illegal blockades across the country and upholding the rule of law. That is exactly what we are doing.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, let me say it again: There are no longer any blockades at the border. The issue was resolved without the Emergencies Act. That is the reality.

Oral Questions

This is the first time in Canadian history that the Emergencies Act is being invoked. This legislation's predecessor, the War Measures Act, was used only three times: during World War I, World War II and the October crisis.

The Prime Minister said just last Friday that no additional measures were needed, and then all of a sudden on Monday, boom, he invokes the Emergencies Act.

Can anyone in this government tell us what happened between Friday and Monday to make the Prime Minister do such a 180 in just a few hours?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we did during the NAFTA negotiations, our government will always do whatever it takes to protect our workers and the national interest. We stood up for Canada during the NAFTA negotiations, and now we are standing up for Canadians against these illegal blockades and occupations. We must and we will continue to do so.

[English]

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and the emergency preparedness minister have repeatedly stated that foreign extremist financing is behind Canadian protests. At public safety committee last week, deputy director of intelligence for FINTRAC, Barry MacKillop, stated that there is no evidence to back up these claims. In fact, he stated that they “have not seen a spike in suspicious transaction...related to [the protests].”

Why is the Prime Minister offside with Canada's national security experts?

• (1425)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I spoke yesterday with the head of FINTRAC and we are in close touch with that very important organization. The reality is that FINTRAC lacked the necessary authorities to oversee the new world of cryptocurrency, crowdsourcing and payment platforms. With these measures, we have enhanced the authorities of FINTRAC and that is allowing us to stop the illegal funding of these illegal blockades.

Hon. Kerry-Lynne Findlay (South Surrey—White Rock, CPC): Mr. Speaker, this morning the Prime Minister contradicted two of his ministers who had stated that the application of the Emergencies Act would be geographically limited. The PM said it would apply to all of Canada. All the border crossings in B.C., Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario have been cleared. The majority of premiers are clearly saying that Liberal government overreach is interfering in their jurisdictions.

When will the Prime Minister revoke this reckless decision and begin rebuilding the trust of Canadians?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, once upon a time the Conservative Party was a responsible party that believed in defending the national economic interest.

I know one former Conservative minister who served in such a government, Perrin Beatty, who created the Emergencies Act. Mr.

Beatty said this week that when he brought in the Emergencies Act he knew that there would inevitably be future crises. I spoke to Mr. Beatty today, and I told him about the work our government is doing to defend the Canadian economy.

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we do not need the Emergencies Act to arrest those participating in an illegal protest, cut off crowdfunding of illegal activities, hand out fines or protect strategic infrastructure.

For the past 21 days, the tools to address the crisis have been there, but for 21 days this government just did not use them. Does the government realize that the only thing missing for 21 days was not the Emergencies Act, but rather his leadership?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, Quebec's business leaders know that the illegal blockades cannot continue, and they have supported our government's action.

Véronique Proulx, president and CEO of Manufacturiers et Exportateurs du Québec, said this week that manufacturers applauded any action that would restore order at the borders and Canada's reputation as a reliable trading partner.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, this is not a joke. The Sureté du Québec has come to Ottawa to save the government's skin.

The Emergencies Act was not needed to resolve the situations in Manitoba, Alberta and British Columbia or to clear the Ambassador Bridge. This is not necessary. The problem is that this crisis is happening right in front of Parliament. Why is that? It is because the federal government has been in hiding for three weeks.

Does the government realize that the situation would have been less dangerous if it had taken responsibility?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we did take responsibility and we are doing so now.

I am calling on all members of Parliament to be accountable to the Canadians who elected them and to take responsibility for Canada's democracy and economy and for protecting the national interest. That is what we are doing and what we will continue to do.

● (1430)

[English]

HEALTH

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the story of this pandemic has been a story of solidarity, of Canadians taking care of one another. However, Canadians are now wondering what the plan is to get out of this pandemic. We know that the plan to get out of this pandemic has to include a science-based approach. We also know it has to include an approach to invest in our health care system.

Will the Prime Minister commit to making sure our health care system is never again in fear of collapsing, and that we have an evidence-based plan to move past this pandemic?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, our country is moving past this pandemic. This is thanks to the hard work and common sense of Canadians, thanks to the fact that 90% of Canadians are vaccinated, and thanks to the heroism of our health care workers and our essential workers.

For that reason, Canada has one of the best outcomes in the western world when it comes to mortality rates. Had we had the U.S. level of mortality, an additional 66,000 Canadians would have died. We are getting past the pandemic thanks to Canadians.

* * *

[Translation]

THE ECONOMY

Mr. Jagmeet Singh (Burnaby South, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the story of this pandemic has been a story of solidarity. People across the country took care of one another.

However, people are getting frustrated because the pandemic made their problems worse. Folks are having a harder and harder time finding affordable housing and making ends meet.

Will the Prime Minister commit to working together to solve these problems people are facing?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yes, absolutely. Our government is working hand in hand with municipalities, the provinces and all Canadians to bring about a strong recovery after the COVID-19 recession.

The good news is that Canada's GDP is now back to where it was before COVID-19, and we have recovered all the lost jobs. We have work to do, and we will do it together.

* * *

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister cannot justify the invocation of the Emergencies Act. He cannot tell us what tools he used and what steps he took before deciding to use this extraordinary piece of legislation.

Oral Questions

He can hardly criticize us for seeing this as a ploy to cover up his failure to act, his lack of leadership and his negligence.

I want to give him another chance to enlighten us. What steps and measures has he taken over the past three weeks that have failed so badly that they warrant invoking the Emergencies Act?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her question.

The government is learning a lot from concrete actions that have been taken since the illegal blockades began. For instance, the government has offered additional resources to police forces, which is making a difference. However, at the same time, the blockades have caused the police a great deal of frustration.

That is one of the reasons why we invoked the Emergencies Act. We will continue to provide police services with all the tools they need.

Mrs. Dominique Vien (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Quebec and other provinces have the situation under control without using the Emergencies Act. In fact, they do not want it. The Prime Minister has been warned.

Will this Prime Minister, who listens only to himself and is introducing emergency legislation without consulting anyone, respect the wishes of the provinces not to have this legislation enforced in their jurisdiction, as is the case for Quebec?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the short answer is yes.

We have consulted with all the provinces and territories. The Emergencies Act is being enforced in co-operation with all the provinces. That is how it works.

Our duty is to continue working with the provinces and territories, as well as with municipalities and police forces, to end this blockade. It is time to leave now.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for three weeks, the Prime Minister did nothing. He added fuel to the fire by provoking the protesters. He even hid in his cottage during this crisis.

Now he is invoking the Emergencies Act to improve his image. Unlike the Liberals, the provinces have acted and are managing the situation in a responsible and peaceful manner.

Will the Prime Minister confirm that he will not use the emergency powers against Quebec and other provinces in Canada that are opposed to them?

● (1435)

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on the contrary, police services have been working hard and spending a lot of energy to de-escalate the situation on the ground. For example, today there is a dialogue between the police and the blockaders to encourage them to leave now.

Oral Questions

This is the most effective solution, and the government will continue to provide all the resources and tools that the police need.

Mr. Alain Rayes (Richmond—Arthabaska, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the reality is that the provinces demonstrated leadership in managing the situation. That is what the Liberals lack.

The Prime Minister has invoked the Emergencies Act to offload his responsibility for a crisis that he himself fuelled by stigmatizing the protesters who are here in Ottawa.

This Prime Minister wants to manage the border between Ukraine and Russia, but he is not even capable of managing the street in front of Parliament. That is the reality.

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, with all due respect for my colleague, there is no justification for these illegal blockades.

The debates in the House on the pandemic are very important, but the way these blockades are being held in Ottawa or at the border is unacceptable. That is why we invoked the Emergencies Act: to help police end these blockades.

[English]

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the lack of action from the government has resulted in the reaction to end the protests and blockades by invoking the Emergencies Act. It is the most reactive step taken to date.

Canadians are looking for hope and for a plan. The government decided to vote against having a plan. What proactive steps did the Prime Minister actually take prior to putting in these restrictions?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, of course we have been clear about being there every step of the way to support law enforcement as this situation has continued.

It is important to reflect on the steps the Conservative Party has taken during this process, starting with the interim leader, who said, “I don’t think we should be asking [these people] to go home”, inferring that the Conservatives should take this as a political opportunity. There is the member for Carleton, who is a leadership aspirant, saying that he stands with the illegal activity occurring outside and that we should “Keep the momentum going.” Of course, this continues with the members for Yorkton—Melville, Saskatoon—Grasswood and Cypress Hills—Grasslands.

Again and again and again, they encourage the—

The Speaker: The hon. member for Elgin—Middlesex—London.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the House leader did not understand. What I am looking for is an answer to the question about the plans and what this Prime Minister has actually done.

Step one, he stigmatized, traumatized and divided Canadians, just as the House leader is doing today.

Step two, he hid in a cottage. He did not react. When things were going on, we did not hear from the Prime Minister.

Step three, he whipped his caucus, where every single member, with the exception of one, voted against a plan.

This leadership has failed. It has failed. What actions did the Prime Minister actually take prior to putting in these restrictions?

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, every one of us walks through what is going on outside every day. We see the residents of Ottawa being terrorized by this illegal occupation that is occurring.

Will the members opposite stand today, every single one of them, and clearly say that it is time to go home? Will they stand, every single one of them, and stop tweeting, stop encouraging and stop saying things like “Keep the momentum going”? Instead, will they ask those folks outside to go home, to make sure that this illegal activity is not something that their party, a party that is supposed to stand for law and order, stands with?

● (1440)

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the National Assembly is unanimous: Quebec does not want the Emergencies Act.

Even though the Prime Minister said that his order would be geographically targeted, we see that it covers all of Canada. It applies not only to Quebec, but also to Quebec infrastructure such as hospitals, dams and vaccination centres.

There is no crisis in Quebec, as evidenced by the fact that the SQ is helping in Ontario. On what basis does the Prime Minister believe it is necessary to suspend fundamental freedoms in Quebec just because he has lost control of the siege in Ottawa?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that is not how the act works.

The Emergencies Act was introduced with all the protections in the charter. All the powers, all the authorities and all the measures included in the declaration will apply in a manner that is consistent with the charter.

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the situation at the Ambassador Bridge was resolved, as were the situations in Coutts and in Manitoba. The situation in Quebec was always under control.

The only place where this situation is still ongoing is Ottawa, the Prime Minister’s own backyard. The national crisis is over. There is no reason to use the Emergencies Act or limit fundamental rights across Canada.

The Prime Minister’s opponents are calling him a dictator, which is clearly not true, but does he realize that he is validating their claim? That is irresponsible.

Oral Questions

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, facts are facts.

The Bloc Québécois cannot just make things up or invent facts. The act does not take away any of the provinces' powers. We will not use the act to suspend the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

We are talking about concrete measures to help Quebec, if Quebec needs them. If it does not need them, then nothing will happen, and the Bloc knows that. The Bloc should at least be honest about it and stop making things up.

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Quebec does not need it and does not want it.

Why is the Emergencies Act being used? According to the act, it is for “the protection of the values of the body politic and the preservation of the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of the state”, but none of that is under threat. According to the act, there must be a national emergency. This is not the case.

The act provides the authority “to take special temporary measures that may not be appropriate in normal times”. Canada’s territorial integrity is not under threat. There is no national emergency. Why, then, use the Emergencies Act?

Hon. Marco Mendicino (Minister of Public Safety, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the circumstances require it.

We have been very clear that we will not use these measures where they are not necessary. I would not want to deprive Quebecers of these important tools to ensure their security and the integrity of their territory.

There is talk of possible demonstrations and blockades at the Lacolle border crossing this weekend. All the measures in the declaration are temporary, targeted, and exercised in accordance with the charter.

* * *

[English]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, earlier this week I asked the finance minister what she was doing to control the skyrocketing cost of living. All she did was shift blame. She avoided the question. Yesterday, we received the news we were all dreading. Statistics Canada says that the consumer price index rose 5.1% in January. It is the worst it has been in over 30 years.

Paycheques no longer go as far as they used to, and Canadians are getting left far behind. I will ask again. What specifically is the minister doing to get inflation under control?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, unlike the Conservatives, Canadians understand that inflation is a global phenomenon, and here are some numbers to back that up. The latest inflation number in Canada was 5.1%. In the U.S. it was 7.5%, and in the U.K. it was 5.5%. Our inflation is lower than the G7 average, which is 5.5%, the G20 average, which is 6.1%, and the OECD average of 6.5%.

Canadians understand. It is time for the Conservatives to understand as well.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for months now, the Liberal minister has been claiming that inflation is “transitory”. There is nothing to see here, folks. This week, Statistics Canada proved the minister wrong. Inflation is up again to 5.1%, the highest it has been in over 30 years. Prices are up 8% for fish, 12% for beef and 19% for bacon.

How does the minister expect Canadians to put food on the table? When is the government going to realize that it has lost complete control over inflation?

• (1445)

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think it was actually the chairman of the federal reserve who used the term “transitory” to characterize inflation. Let me just point out, yet again, that the Conservatives continue to push a false narrative, frankly, about everything that is happening in Canada, and very much including the economy. The fact is that the Canadian recovery is strong. Our GDP grew by 5.4% in the third quarter. That beat the U.S., Japan, the U.K. and Australia.

I also want to point out that S&P and Moody’s both reaffirmed our AAA credit rating this fall.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, three weeks ago, we were talking about inflation, and the Minister of Finance told me that there was no problem because it was a global problem and that the IMF said that Canada was fine and that the GDP was going up. How convincing.

What are we seeing now? Inflation continues to rise and is at 5.1%. Beef is up 12%; gas is up 30%; housing is up 6%. Those are things Canadians know for sure. Another thing we know is that the government is doing absolutely nothing.

Can the Minister of Finance leave the IMF out of it and talk about what Canadians are actually going through?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, we do not need lectures from Conservatives about helping the most vulnerable Canadians deal with the cost of living.

We introduced the Canada child benefit, which is indexed to inflation and has lifted almost 300,000 children out of poverty.

Our government increased the guaranteed income supplement, which is also indexed to inflation and has helped over 900,000 seniors.

That is what we have done.

*Oral Questions**[English]***THE ENVIRONMENT**

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, Canada is one of the biggest funders of oil and gas in the G20. A new study showed that last year alone, the government, through Export Development Canada, handed out \$4.4 billion, earning Canada the worst possible climate score. That is despite repeated Liberal promises to phase out fossil fuel subsidies.

We are in a climate emergency and EDC is fuelling the crisis. Why will the government not make EDC clean up its act, stop giving billions to big oil and gas and start standing up for Canadians?

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in fact, G20 countries have committed to eliminating fossil fuel subsidies by 2025. We in Canada have committed to doing that by 2023, which is two years earlier than our G20 colleagues. On top of that, EDC has reduced its fossil fuel subsidies by more than \$3 billion per year since 2018.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, earlier this week, I made an accusation against the environment minister that his government had held 370 backroom meetings with big oil in just two years. I withdraw those comments, because it turns out that it actually rolled out the red carpet for 1,224 meetings with big oil. That, my friends, is the definition of carbon captured, so it is no wonder that under the Prime Minister Canada has fallen to the bottom of the G7, in terms of climate action.

When is the environment minister going to stop acting as the head butler for the oil lobby and start standing up for Canadians?

• (1450)

Hon. Steven Guilbeault (Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, one of the highest carbon prices in the world is here in Canada. There are regulations on methane pollution, and a 40% reduction by 2025. There is a cap on oil and gas emissions. These are all things our government has done to fight climate change and ensure we create good jobs and a prosperous future for all Canadians.

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INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Mr. Michael McLeod (Northwest Territories, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this Tuesday, 54 potential unmarked graves were found at Keeseekoose First Nation. Three weeks ago, Williams Lake First Nation announced that a survey had identified 93 potential unmarked graves on the site of the former St. Joseph's Mission residential school. Nearly a year ago, Canada was rocked by the discovery of 200 probable unmarked graves on the grounds of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School. Despite all of this evidence, some still deny the actual legacy of residential schools and claim the number of unmarked graves is exaggerated. I find this very troubling and unacceptable.

Could the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations comment on what our government is doing to support the survivors of these residential schools?

[Translation]

Ms. Sylvie Bérubé: I have a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Points of orders are not allowed, except on technical matters.

I would like to remind members that interpretation services are provided in the House.

[English]

There is accommodation that takes place in the chamber. Sometimes, technically, it does not always work. We had everything tested and it worked out fairly well. I believe the translation took place.

[Translation]

If you cannot hear the interpretation, please let me know. Has the interpretation stopped?

Some hon. members: No.

[English]

The Speaker: I would ask for a bit of understanding and compassion so we can all work together in the House.

Hon. Marc Miller (Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, last summer, in light of the devastating findings in Kamloops and Cowessess, our government announced an additional \$329 million to support indigenous communities in their search for loved ones robbed from them at such a young age, in their efforts to memorialize their loss, and in their quest for closure.

Residential schools were a reality in this country for well over 150 years, and the effects are still felt painfully today. To the survivors who are speaking out, including my friend, the member who spoke, as well as those who continue to suffer in silence, we believe them. Canada believes them.

* * *

HEALTH

Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is out of step with Canadians. Canadians want and deserve open dialogue after two years of uncertainty. This should be about science, not political science, yet the Prime Minister would rather divide and stigmatize than give people the certainty and hope they need.

When will the Prime Minister stop doubling down on divisive rhetoric and commit publicly to a specific plan and timeline to end federal mandates and restrictions?

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, since day one of this pandemic, our government's focus has been the health and safety of our neighbours, by following the latest science. The most recent data indicates that the omicron wave has passed its peak in Canada, which allows us to move toward a more long-term approach to managing COVID-19. We intend to follow the science, and we are working closely with experts, such as Dr. Tam and other public health officials, to ensure that we continue to get through this pandemic together as best we possibly can, and that has been through vaccinations.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's petulance led to the firing of Ottawa's first Black police chief during Black History Month. It is yet another example of the divisiveness fostered by the government. The Prime Minister's own finance minister stood on the Maidan during Ukraine's revolution. Canadians want foreign interference from the Prime Minister's jet-setting resetters to stop.

When will the Prime Minister listen to the majority of freedom-loving Canadians and end the mandates?

• (1455)

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have had, and I am sure all members have had, the opportunity to talk to people who come from countries that are not free, and who know what it means to have their freedoms restricted in ways so they are not able to live, share their thoughts or protest in peaceful ways.

I am sure, and I would hope the member opposite would agree, that what we are seeing outside, such as the terrorizing of residents, the harassment at homeless shelters and the inability for Ottawa citizens to continue their lives, has gone way too far. Please stop supporting these illegal activities and join with us so our lives can begin to return to normal here.

Mr. Martin Shields (Bow River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the science has changed. Canada's top officials, including Dr. Tam, have recommended a review of COVID policies. We are seeing countries around the world with lower vaccination rates dropping their restrictions. We are seeing provinces in our own country dropping restrictions.

Is the government going to stick to its word and follow the science? When will the mandates for Canadian travellers who are fully vaccinated be dropped, and when will the mandates be totally dropped for testing Canadian travellers upon return?

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, this transition, including this week's announcement, is possible because of a number of factors, which include our high vaccination rates and the increasing availability of rapid tests and treatments. As we have said all along, Canada's border measures will remain flexible and adaptable, guided by science and prudence.

Oral Questions

I have a quote for my colleague opposite. It states, "Everyone entering Canada (by land as well as by air), irrespective of their vaccination status will be required to take a rapid test or possibly a PCR test." Where is that from? It is from page 19 of the Conservatives' election platform. Do members remember this magazine? It is that one.

Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC): Mr. Speaker, life moves on, and the government needs to move on with it.

In December, the Liberals again imposed rigid COVID-19 testing on Canadians living in border communities who travel to the United States and return home, often within a day or within a few hours. The Liberals announced they would replace 72-hour PCR testing with a 24-hour rapid test. This does not help our border communities. The new 24-hour testing will continue to separate families and people in Canada's border towns.

When will the Liberals allow Canadians to drive to the United States and come home in a single day without testing?

Mr. Adam van Koeverden (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Health and to the Minister of Sport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would remind the member again that he campaigned on testing as well, just like we did. While we are in a better position today than we were previously, this pandemic is not over yet. We all want this pandemic to be over but it is not over yet. The Government of Canada will continue to assess the evolving situation here at home and globally.

While the members opposite continue to shout me down, it does not change the reality that the pandemic is not yet over.

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[Translation]

PUBLIC SAFETY

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the government has given itself the extraordinary power to freeze the bank accounts of individuals and businesses whose trucks are blocking downtown Ottawa. That is part of the Emergencies Act, which has been in effect since February 14. Today is February 17.

My question is simple. How many bank accounts of the occupiers in Ottawa have been frozen in the last three days?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question.

I confirmed at a press conference today that we have started to use the tools provided in the emergency measures, and that some accounts are now frozen. However, for the safety of the security forces' operations, we cannot give the figures today. We will provide them as soon as possible.

Oral Questions

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the truth is that the government had the power to freeze the bank accounts of those participating in an illegal protest from day one. There was no need to invoke the Emergencies Act. It could already do this under the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act. The federal government has had the power to freeze funds belonging to those who have been occupying Ottawa for the past 21 days.

I will repeat my question because we in the House want the numbers.

How many bank accounts were frozen to try to resolve the situation before it turned confrontational?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before the use of the Emergencies Act, it was impossible for all the information to be shared between the national, local and municipal security forces and the banks. Before the use of the Emergencies Act, we also could not require the banks to do these things. These financial tools are important—

• (1500)

The Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Calgary Forest Lawn.

* * *

[English]

IMMIGRATION, REFUGEES AND CITIZENSHIP

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Mr. Speaker, 23 Liberal MPs' requests to help Afghan refugees were ignored. Liberal ministers were briefed months before Kabul fell. These warnings were ignored. My letters to the Prime Minister and the minister continue to be ignored. Afghan refugees write to the government every day pleading for help. They continue to be ignored. The Afghan crisis is another pattern of inaction and failure in leadership by the Liberal government.

Why was an election plan and abandoning those that served Canada more important than the pleas of Afghan refugees?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when that member first asked me a question about the success of our resettlement efforts in Afghanistan, there were 3,800 Afghan refugees in Canada. Today, there are more than 7,700. In the past few weeks, we have seen more than 460 arrive on 20 commercial flights. There are more flights arriving every week.

We have made one of the most substantial commitments of any country in the world, not just on a per capita basis but in terms of the raw number of human beings that we are going to welcome and give a second lease on life. Canadians should be proud of the effort we are making and we will not waver until we are successful in resettling all 40,000 Afghan refugees who will call Canada home.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Mr. Speaker, that does not explain why in December 2020, 23 Liberal members begged the Prime Minister to take action to save Afghan nationals who had helped Canadians during the con-

flict in Afghanistan. It took eight months, and after that, the embassy closed its doors, everyone left and nothing happened.

Today, they are throwing a number at us: 40,000 Afghans are coming here. However, they have never specifically mentioned helping the Afghans who helped us on the ground during the conflict in Afghanistan when we were there.

Why were these people not taken care of when the Liberal members asked the Prime Minister to do so?

[English]

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member will appreciate that, during the evacuation, there was an emergency situation and we responded as quickly as was humanly possible. One of the reasons, which I think the hon. member will appreciate, is that we no longer had a military presence with the logistics capability of moving thousands and thousands of people on our own because we had not had a military presence there since 2014.

We worked with international partners to rescue thousands of people in the moments of the evacuation. I want to thank my predecessor, now the Minister of Public Safety, for his efforts to resettle thousands of Afghan refugees. I am going to finish the job.

Mr. Alex Ruff (Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound, CPC): Mr. Speaker, here is some of the damning testimony this week from retired generals about the Liberal government's failure during the fall of Kabul and the government's continued lack of leadership. One said, "we were the first embassy to depart. That was very embarrassing". Another said, "When this crisis was unfolding right in front of our eyes, we then urged the government, as we do now, to create an interdepartmental task force with one leader."

I will ask the same question I asked last week. Will the Prime Minister assign one lead minister to solve this ongoing humanitarian aid crisis?

Hon. Sean Fraser (Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am the minister who has been appointed by the Prime Minister to lead this effort. We will collaborate with other ministers, including the Minister of Foreign Affairs, to help ensure we are successful in partnership with the global community to see this mission succeed.

I heard members opposite heckling about the timing of the election when it came to the Afghan refugee resettlement effort, and I would point out how important that election was because we campaigned on a commitment to increase our level of ambition from 20,000 to 40,000. Their commitment on the other side, while they heckle, was to welcome precisely zero Afghan refugees. More than that, they campaigned to end the government-assisted refugee program altogether, which has been responsible for saving thousands of lives.

*Oral Questions***THE ECONOMY***[Translation]***CANADIAN HERITAGE**

Ms. Patricia Lattanzio (Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the House began debate on second reading of the online streaming act.

During the debate, certain opposition colleagues raised interesting questions, even though others practised their leadership race speeches.

Can the Minister of Canadian Heritage tell us what Bill C-11 proposes to do?

• (1505)

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her absolutely outstanding work and her truly excellent question.

The objective of the bill is to ensure that broadcasting companies continue to invest in Canadian culture, in our culture. That is all. In real terms, that means more Canadian artists, more Canadian movies, shows and music. With this bill, we are laying a foundation and building the next generations of Canadian creators, the next Weeknd, the next Denis Villeneuve, the next *District 31*. We introduced this bill because we are proud of our culture, proud of who we are and proud of our identity.

* * *

*[English]***HOUSING**

Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals' made-in-Canada housing crisis has gotten out of control. It is the same situation across the country, including in my community of York—Simcoe.

Working Canadians have been priced out of the housing market with no hope in sight. Home builders are stopping the construction of new homes. Liberal inflation has caused prices for materials to skyrocket. There is no way for builders to know the fair market value of a home that would not be ready for at least two years.

Why is the Liberal government making it even harder for Canadians to own a home?

Hon. Ahmed Hussen (Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservatives are not really serious about housing affordability because every single time we have brought a measure here to enable Canadians to be able to afford a home, they have voted against it, including the first-time homebuyers incentive and all the measures that we have brought in. They even voted against imposing a vacancy tax on foreign-owned non-resident properties.

The Conservatives are not serious. They are full of rhetoric, and Canadians see through them. We will take additional measures to improve the first-time homebuyers incentive and turn more Canadian renters into homeowners. Let us see if they vote against that.

Mr. Gerald Soroka (Yellowhead, CPC): Mr. Speaker, \$400 billion in newly created cash has driven up consumer prices, and constituents in my riding, especially seniors, cannot afford their basic necessities. In addition to rising consumer prices, electricity and heating bills are increasing due to the carbon tax, which will increase again on April 1.

When will the Liberal government finally quit making false promises and create a real economic plan for all Canadians, especially those who are struggling to meet their basic needs?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the Conservative MP began his question talking about government spending, which he seems to deem excessive.

I would like to remind him that he, together with every single Conservative member, actually ran on an election platform proposing higher spending in 2021-22 than the Liberals did. They proposed a \$168-billion deficit. We proposed a \$156-billion deficit.

Could the party of flip-flops tell Canadians what they stand for today?

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, with more than 1.3 million unemployed Canadians, 200,000 jobs were lost in January alone. At the same time, our businesses are struggling to fill almost one million jobs. Canada's economic recovery is in jeopardy. Canada has the fifth-worst job recovery in the G7.

Hard-working people of Brantford—Brant are asking this: When will the Prime Minister stop putting his ideological agenda above prudent economic decisions?

Hon. Chrystia Freeland (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is a bit rich to hear the Conservatives talk about their support for Canadian workers and Canadian jobs. Let me just point out one moment of abject Conservative failure. It was before Christmas when we knew omicron was coming and we knew Canadian workers and businesses needed support, but the Conservatives voted against that measure.

When it comes to jobs, Canada recovered 101% of the jobs lost to COVID. In the U.S., it is just 87%.

*Points of Order***SENIORS**

Ms. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, some working low-income seniors in this country have had a challenging time making ends meet during this pandemic, which is why they turned to what most Canadians did, the CERB and other pandemic benefits. While we are going to be supporting people who suffered drops in their GIS and allowance compensation payments, the Minister of Seniors' mandate letter also called on us to look forward. It called on us to assure seniors that we have their backs even more.

Can the minister tell this House how she has done that?

• (1510)

Hon. Kamal Khara (Minister of Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the member for London West for her advocacy for seniors in her riding.

The member is right. We committed to ensuring seniors' eligibility for the GIS and allowances would not be impacted by receiving pandemic benefits. The House yesterday unanimously passed Bill C-12. I want to take this opportunity to thank every member in the House for making that happen. I look forward to seeing it make its way through the other place. It is clear for seniors with the greatest needs that we will always have their backs.

* * *

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, 1.5 million Ukrainians have been displaced from their homes since Russia invaded in 2014. Now, as Russia amasses troops and armaments and threatens further invasion, the Ukrainian people need Canada more than ever. There is a looming humanitarian disaster in Ukraine, and thousands of Ukrainians are seeking refuge in Canada.

We saw this government fail to protect Afghans. We cannot let this happen again. Will the minister uphold Canada's responsibility to Ukrainians? Will the minister ensure humanitarian aid and better support for those Ukrainians who are fleeing violence?

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, there is no situation that we are more seized with right now than Ukraine, our solidarity with the Ukrainian government and the people of Ukraine. We have also been very clear that we are standing with Canadian citizens who are in Ukraine regarding any possible humanitarian crisis that could extend following a possible incursion.

Right now, however, our mission is to de-escalate Russia's total disrespect for the territorial integrity of Ukraine. We will stand with the people of Ukraine, whether it is militarily, through humanitarian assistance or by helping every Ukrainian who is in trouble.

* * *

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, I recently met with representatives from the Undergraduates of Canadian Research-Intensive Universities, which represents over a quarter of a million students from U15 universities that annually conduct \$8.5 billion of research and contribute more than \$36 billion to

our economy. Like most students I meet with in Spadina—Fort York, there is a shared concern: crippling student debt. The average lifetime interest on a Canada student loan is \$3,000. Due to the pandemic, the government waived the interest for two years. More must be done.

Can the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion inform the House when the government will permanently eliminate interest on Canada student loans?

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, young Canadians and students must be at the centre of our recovery, and we are proud that our response during the pandemic was one of the largest youth support packages in the world. During the pandemic, our government waived the interest on Canada student loans and Canada apprentice loans for two years, because we knew young people were among the hardest hit by job losses. That is why we are committed to permanently eliminating the federal interest on CSL and Canada apprentice loans, supporting over one million students.

We are also committed to increasing the repayment assistance threshold to \$50,000 for Canada student loan borrowers. We will continue to be there to help Canadians transition into the workforce.

The Speaker: I am afraid that is all time we have for today. I know this week has been very difficult, very emotional and very heated, and I want to thank members for today because it was very nice to see everyone being respectful.

* * *

[Translation]

POINTS OF ORDER**USE OF APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGICAL EQUIPMENT**

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal of respect for the member for Northwest Territories, but I have even greater respect for our employees, the interpreters. Today, the Board of Internal Economy ruled on the issue of members who speak in the House without using a microphone that is appropriate for the interpreters. We know that injuries are occurring when members, either in committee or in the House, are not equipped with a good microphone.

We are prohibited from speaking when naked. Similarly, we should not ask a question without using equipment that protects our employees, the interpreters.

• (1515)

The Speaker: The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby is absolutely right. When members rise to speak in the House or from their homes, they must use the equipment approved by the House.

The member for Northwest Territories worked with our technicians to get a microphone that works for him. It is important to give members who are not wearing a headset some consideration and hope that they have worked with our technicians to ensure that their microphone is working, which is what the member for Northwest Territories did. If the interpretation is not working or if there are any sound issues, that is something to be dealt with immediately.

I do not know if we need to release the name of everyone who has worked with our technicians. All members who speak virtually must ensure that the equipment they use is approved by the House.

The hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations among the parties, and I think you will find unanimous consent for the following motion: Whereas there is an urgent humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, that this House call on the government to proceed with due diligence for the Canadian non-governmental organizations operating in Afghanistan and assure them that they will not be prosecuted even though a terrorist organization is leading the Afghan government, and that the NGOs' operations will not jeopardize their charitable status, and to allow the humanitarian and civil society organizations to conduct their co-operative and humanitarian assistance work in the areas most at risk.

The Speaker: All those opposed to the hon. member moving the motion will please say nay.

Some hon. members: Nay.

* * *

[English]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague from the NDP rose on a point of order, and we are certainly sympathetic to the member for Yukon. However, the easiest way we can resolve the situation with interpreters is to get back to normal Parliament so that we are all here.

The debate we are having in this place, whether we agree or not with the invocation of the Emergencies Act, is probably and arguably one of the most important debates we are going to have in a generation, or at least my generation. As the eyes of the nation are upon us, I ask the government House leader what the business of the House will be.

Hon. Mark Holland (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will start by saying that Tuesday, March 1, will be an allotted day.

To what the hon. House leader for the Conservatives said, I completely agree with him. This is an exceptionally important debate,

Business of the House

and all House leaders from all parties have had an incredibly productive discussion. I want to thank them for their collaboration and for working together to get on the same page, because while we may disagree in the final vote, it is essential that we agree on the process that we utilize and it is essential that Parliament have a full-some debate.

It is why I am pleased that we have reached an agreement for this debate to occur over the next five days, with debate continuing today until midnight. I will move a motion to put this into action in a moment with unanimous consent. It would see us going tonight until midnight, Friday from 7 a.m. to midnight, Saturday and Sunday from 7 a.m. to midnight, and Monday from 7 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., with a vote at 8 p.m.

I will now seek unanimous consent to adopt the following motion. I move:

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order, special order or usual practice of the House:

(a) on Thursday, February 17, 2022, Orders of the Day shall be extended beyond the ordinary hour of daily adjournment for the purpose of considering the motion for confirmation of the declaration of emergency standing on the Order Paper in the name of the Minister of Public Safety, and when no Member rises to speak or at 11:59 p.m., whichever is earlier, the House shall stand adjourned until the next day;

(b) on Friday, February 18, 2022, the House shall proceed with the ordinary daily program, provided that it meet at 7 a.m. and sit beyond the ordinary hour of daily adjournment for the purpose of considering the aforementioned motion, and when no Member rises to speak or at 11:59 p.m., whichever is earlier, it shall stand adjourned until the next day;

(c) on Saturday, February 19, 2022, and Sunday February 20, 2022, the House shall convene at 7 a.m. for the sole purpose of considering the aforementioned motion and when no Member rises to speak or at 11:59 p.m., whichever is earlier, it shall stand adjourned until the next day;

(d) on Monday, February 21, 2022,

(i) the House shall proceed with the ordinary daily program, provided that it meet at 7 a.m. and that it sit beyond the ordinary hour of daily adjournment for the purpose of considering the aforementioned motion,

(ii) if no Member rises to speak on the motion at any time before Statements by Members, all questions necessary to dispose of the motion be put and if a recorded division is requested it be deferred to 7:30 p.m. that day and the sitting then be suspended until the time provided for Statements by Members and be suspended again after routine proceedings until 7:30 p.m.,

(iii) if no Member rises to speak on the motion at any time after routine proceedings, all questions necessary to dispose of the motion be put and if a recorded division is requested it be deferred to 7:30 p.m. that day and the sitting then be suspended until 7:30 p.m.,

(iv) at 7:30 p.m., if not previously disposed of, all questions necessary to dispose of the motion be put and if a recorded division is requested it shall not be deferred;

(e) if, during the sittings of February 18, 19 and 20, the Speaker receives notice from the House leaders or whips of all recognized parties that they are satisfied no further member wishes to speak on the motion, all questions necessary to dispose of the motion be put and if a recorded division is requested it be deferred to Monday, February 21, 2022, at 7:30 p.m., and that the House stand adjourned until this time;

(f) during the sittings of February 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21,

Statutory Order

(i) the Speaker shall not receive any dilatory motions, and shall only accept a request for unanimous consent after receiving a notice from the House leaders or whips of all recognized parties stating that they are in agreement with such a request,

(ii) the House may be adjourned before the aforementioned times pursuant to a motion to adjourn proposed by a Minister of the Crown,

● (1520)

(iii) the application of Standing Orders 26, 38 and 52 be suspended, the sittings of February 19, 20 and 21 not be counted for the purposes of Standing Orders 34(1), 36(8)(b), 39(5)(b), 51(1), 81(10)(c), 92 and 91.1, Private Members' Business shall not be taken up, and provided that any response to petitions and questions on Order Paper otherwise due on those days shall be tabled at the sitting of the house on February 28, 2022.

(iv) no motion be allowed to be moved during routine proceedings, except by unanimous consent;

(g) notices laid on the table, or filed with the clerk for publication between the hours of 6 p.m. on Thursday, February 17, 2022, and 6 p.m. on Thursday, February 24, 2022, only be printed for the Notice Paper of Monday, February 28, 2022;

(h) when proceedings are completed on the motion for confirmation of the declaration of emergency, the House stand adjourned until Monday, February 28, 2022, at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Orders 28(2) and 24(1).

● (1525)

The Speaker: All those opposed to the hon. minister's moving the motion will please say nay.

It is agreed to.

[Translation]

The House has heard the terms of the motion.

All those opposed to the motion will please say nay.

(Motion agreed to)

ORDERS OF THE DAY

[English]

EMERGENCIES ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Surrey Centre.

I rise today with some humility. I rise to speak not on behalf of a political party, because I firmly believe this issue cannot be partisan today. I rise not as a representative of a particular community, because I do not think it is a regional issue that we are discussing today. I rise today, in all sincerity, as a member of Parliament, as a member of this chamber, the House of Commons, committed to serving the public, to serving all Canadians in a genuine effort to do what is best for our country.

At this stage, I firmly believe that the only way to resolve the present threat that is facing this country is to declare a public order emergency under the Emergencies Act.

I want to start by talking about the charter. Let me state at the outset that the right to freedom of expression is sacrosanct in this country. It is entrenched in section 2(b) of the charter for a reason:

because it is the hallmark of our democracy, and indeed of any democracy. It is the ability for citizens to voice their discontent, to challenge authority and to seek change. I do not deny any of this. To the contrary, I vigorously defend it. I also do not deny that the people gathered outside this very chamber right now, who have been on the streets of Ottawa for what is now 21 days, have legitimate grievances; criticisms of my government, of my party; perhaps even of me personally, which they have every right to air.

However, in our democracy, freedom of expression, while sacrosanct, is not absolute. This charter protection under section 2(b) extends toward lawful, peaceful protest; the charter does not protect illegal, violent blockades. It is the latter, unfortunately, that this protest has devolved into.

I want to reference Ottawa. How do I substantiate this assertion I just made? I substantiate it with the evidence I gathered with my own eyes and from the accounts of other parliamentarians that have been shared with me.

Far from seeing people exercising their constitutional rights to disagree vigorously with the government, we have instead seen intimidation, threats and harassment. We have seen deliberate nuisances being created by truck horns blowing at all hours of the day and night, rendering the city effectively uninhabitable for local residents. We have seen open displays of hatred, such as swastikas and Confederate flags, and acts of direct hatred when windows are smashed on coffee shops that dare to fly the pride flag. We have seen the desecration of national monuments, including our national war memorial. We have seen deliberate efforts to block the movement of people and goods by people intentionally disabling large vehicles and trucks by activating their air brakes or actually removing the tires from their vehicles. We have seen death threats follow toward an Ottawa tow trucking company accused of being complicit with police efforts to remove such disabled vehicles.

We have seen the shuttering of businesses in the entire downtown core, impeding residents' ability to work. It is puzzling, to say the least, to see protesters who claim to eschew lockdowns themselves causing Ottawa's downtown to enter into a lockdown for a period of now three weeks. We have seen intimidation and threats toward the media, again ironic for those who would be more ardent defenders of freedom of expression than even I am, in terms of what I have articulated. We have seen the active sabotage of 9-1-1 emergency call lines and even an attempted arson.

The protest ostensibly began over vaccine mandates. It has morphed into what resembles an occupation of the city by people who have openly declared on the public record that they are seeking to overthrow the government. That constitutes a complete breakdown of public order in Ottawa. Despite efforts from the Ottawa Police Service, law and order in the nation's capital have been impossible to maintain.

The evidence that I am outlining here extends beyond the nation's capital. Members have heard references to the borders. I want to address this now. What commenced as a protest targeting this city and this Parliament has emerged as a concerted effort to block our national border crossings and impede the flow of people and goods. In Texas and Florida and in other parts of the United States and indeed in other nations, foreign entities openly and publicly have declared their sympathy with the blockades and admitted to sending money and resources to help the blockades continue. Today the Anti-Defamation League showed a result of their analysis of the GiveSendGo website; it found 1,100 people in the United States who supported the January 6 insurrection last year actually donated money under GiveSendGo to these blockades. Just let that settle in for a moment, in terms of what the motivations are for such types of people.

● (1530)

The blockades that have emerged around the country are deliberately targeting critical infrastructure. We know about what happened at the Ambassador Bridge in Windsor and Detroit. The multi-day siege on Canada's busiest border crossing alone, and I am now wearing my hat as the parliamentary secretary for international trade, resulted in the suspension of nearly \$400 million in daily trade between Canada and the United States, the cancellation of shifts at multiple auto plants in southern Ontario and an intervention by President Biden and the Governor of Michigan showing that confidence in Canada as a safe place to invest, do business and trade with is starting to erode.

Blockades have occurred in Surrey, Emerson and Coutts, Alberta. What should be startlingly alarming for every person in this chamber and every Canadian watching right now is that when members of the RCMP went to clear the Coutts border crossing, they made 13 arrests, including laying charges for conspiracy to commit murder. They found firearms, ammunition and body armour. That bore out certainly my worst fears, and I think all of our worst fears, that blockade protesters were armed and preparing for violent confrontation with law enforcement. The violence is continuing to ratchet up. We have had bomb threats at a Vancouver hospital as well as suspicious packages and language about hanging members of Parliament being sent to colleagues of mine from Nova Scotia.

I am laying this all out in such excruciating detail because there is a legal test that must be met when we are doing something that has not ever been done under this legislation or even in this country under antecedent legislation in 52 years. The test is high, as it should be, when we are considering a statute that temporarily permits the suspension of civil liberties.

What is the test? It is entrenched in section 3 of the Emergencies Act, which states:

a national emergency is an urgent and critical situation of a temporary nature that

(a) seriously endangers the lives, health or safety of Canadians and is of such proportions or nature as to exceed the capacity or authority of a province to deal with it, or

(b) seriously threatens the ability of the Government of Canada to preserve the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of Canada.

Statutory Order

It is my fundamental belief that this high legal threshold has been met in this case. When we have a blockade laying siege to an entire city for 21 days and counting, intimidating, harassing and threatening locals and rendering a city uninhabitable, it is endangering the safety of Canadians. When those blockades limit the ability of medical first responders to respond quickly to emergencies, they are endangering the lives of those on the other end of those 911 calls. When factions armed with weapons and ammunition are blockading borders, they are directly endangering the lives of Canadians. When groups are deliberately blocking trade corridors with our single largest trading partner, grinding our border traffic to a halt, they are threatening the ability of the federal government to preserve our sovereignty and economic security. These are important.

In the last two minutes, I want to address some of the general objections we have heard, not just today but prior to this.

To those who say there is an overreach here, I say there are five checks that are important.

First, everything done by a government under the Emergencies Act must be done in accordance with the charter. That is entrenched in the preamble.

Second, all declarations are time-limited to 30 days and no more. In fact, it may be less, and hopefully it will be less in this context.

Third, the very act of declaring an emergency under the declaration must be reviewed by a committee of all members of Parliament and senators from all parties.

Fourth, the exercise of powers under the declaration must be reviewed by that committee.

Fifth, following the end of an emergency, a full inquiry must be held.

What we are doing is not a power grab and it is not the invocation of the War Measures Act; we are simply giving the RCMP the power to enforce local laws and work quickly with local law enforcement. We are not calling in the armed forces. We are not putting the RCMP or any other police force under the control of the government. Policing operational decisions remain independent, as they must in any democracy.

I am going to end with the right to protest, because people have asked about their children's rights to protest. I take this very seriously, because I myself have taken my children to protests. This law talks about the right to lawful protest. It is entrenched in black and white. The measures we are contemplating would address or prohibit public assembly that is a threat leading to a breach of the peace; we are specifically carving out the right of lawful advocacy, protest and dissent.

I would say this to those who say the threats have been addressed: Windsor had an attempted blockade yesterday, and we know the protesters are returning to the Quebec National Assembly on February 19.

Statutory Order

I will conclude with this sincere undertaking to the members of this chamber and all Canadians: I will do everything in my power to ensure that this act lasts for only as long as is absolutely necessary; I will do everything in my power to ensure that there is no overbreadth; I will do everything in my power to ensure that charter rights are always fundamentally protected. All members of Parliament should strive for nothing less.

• (1535)

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I remain unconvinced by the member's argument, and I recognize the fact that he was a lawyer by profession before he came to this place. I was not a lawyer, thankfully, in my previous life, but the member, during his speech, said that there must be a very high threshold to suspend civil liberties. I would say let us not use American language, and call them charter liberties or charter freedoms. Let us Canadianize it.

He said there should be an explicitly high threshold before we suspend charter liberties, but that is the opposite of what the Prime Minister said. The Prime Minister said that is actually not going on, and this has happened repeatedly in the last 72 hours. Cabinet ministers say one thing, and then they are contradicted by the Prime Minister. People in my riding, back in Calgary, have very little faith in the government's handling of the situation.

Can the member clarify what he just said? We are not suspending charter liberties. We are not going after people without some type of recourse to the law. Is he going to ensure the Prime Minister stays on message and stops jacking up and ratcheting up the rhetoric, as people are trying to clear protesters outside this building?

Mr. Arif Virani: Mr. Speaker, I want to make clear, as the member for Calgary Shepard has read the material, as I hope everyone who is participating in this debate has read the material, that it talks about certain regulations, certain powers and certain prohibitions. One of the prohibitions is on assemblies that would lead to a breach of the peace, but what is important, and what the Prime Minister and every cabinet minister has said, is that everything that is undertaken under this emergency declaration must be done in compliance with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The Charter of Rights and Freedoms talks about charter liberties. It also talks about limitations on such liberties that are saved under section 1. That is the important facet all Canadians must recognize, and that is the important facet under which we will operate as a government. That is what all parliamentarians must operate under, because the charter and those fundamental rights are sacrosanct in our democracy.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, on February 7, the City of Ottawa asked for help. It asked for 1,800 extra police officers.

The department sent 275 police officers, most of whom are deployed around Parliament, mainly around ministers and the Prime Minister. It appears that there are only 20 extra police officers on the street right now, out of the 1,800 who were requested.

My question is, if the request from the Ottawa police had been met, is it possible that we would be in a different situation?

Mr. Arif Virani: Mr. Speaker, I do not want to get into hypothetical situations or backtrack. However, what I do want to point out is that the City of Ottawa and the Government of Ontario have declared a state of emergency. Both levels of government were unable to resolve the situation here, in Windsor or anywhere else.

The third and final step is to use the Emergencies Act, if it would help, to resolve the situation. This is a serious situation, and it requires serious action.

[English]

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I think the member for Parkdale—High Park was effective in talking about the impacts on people's lives from what has happened over the last few weeks. Many people, thousands of Canadians, have lost their jobs, at least temporarily. We have seen businesses closed.

In Ottawa, they have been going through hell. There is no other way to put it. As members know, there are impacts of the toxic fumes; the impacts of the extraordinarily loud industrial levels of noise, which have caused permanent hearing loss; and the assaults and disrespect that so many of the residents of Ottawa have experienced first-hand. There is no doubt there is a compelling reason. The reality is that we could have well avoided all of this, if the government had acted more promptly.

I would like to direct the member for Parkdale—High Park specifically to the issues around the proceeds of crime and terrorist financing regulations that were put into place with huge loopholes, which the NDP, for years, has called upon the government to fix. Canada is known as the snow-washing capital of the world, because of money laundering and all these problems.

Why did the government not move years ago to fix those loopholes, so this financing of what transpires in Ottawa could not have occurred in the first place?

• (1540)

Mr. Arif Virani: Mr. Speaker, what I am trying to do is address the situation that has really seized the city and seized this nation. As opposed to turning back the clock and engaging in what-ifs or hypotheticals about what could have been done previously, we are quite directly, and the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance addressed this in question period, addressing lacunae in financial tracking legislation right now, as that is one of the economic measures contained in this declaration. It allows us to address who is funding, including foreign sources, this particular illegal blockade and make sure it is brought to an end.

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that I am disheartened to have to give these remarks today. I am saddened by the events that continue outside the doors of this building, which have continued for the last three weeks, and by the blockades that have closed borders across the country.

Let us be clear. This is no longer a protest. It is an occupation that advocated to overthrow a democratically elected government. On Monday, the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Justice, Minister of Emergency Preparedness and Minister of Public Safety announced that our government was invoking the Emergencies Act, a decision that I support.

This is a situation I do not think any of us wanted to get to. However, the defiance of those who continue to occupy the streets of Ottawa and attempt to block our border crossings needs to end. These individuals need to go home.

There is a shocking amount of misinformation and plain lies being spread about the occupation, public health measures and the Emergencies Act, and some have been supported and echoed by members in the chamber.

To begin, I think we should start by clarifying a few important points. Let us be clear on what the Emergencies Act is, and this is for those on the other side of the aisle who are provoking fear, spreading misinformation and encouraging conspiracy theories that legitimately concern Canadians who want to understand what is going on in their country.

This is dangerous and harmful. I encourage those who have been supportive of this movement to think long and hard about the long-term consequences of their actions and words in support of the occupation.

These are temporary, proportionate and targeted measures. I will repeat that. These are temporary, proportionate and targeted.

The act was invoked to supplement provincial and territorial authorities, address the blockades and the occupation, ensure the safety of Canadians, protect people's jobs, and restore confidence in our institutions. Our government enacted this act after local and provincial efforts were unsuccessful in resolving the situation. The Emergencies Act provides law enforcement new authorities to prohibit blockades, ensure our essential corridors remain open and regulate crowds. It allows the government to mobilize essential services such as tow trucks, and it gives the RCMP the ability to act quickly to enforce local laws.

This act will also provide more power to stop the flow of money. The scope of Canada's anti-money laundering and terrorist financing rules are being broadened. They will cover crowdfunding platforms and their payment service providers, as well as those using digital assets such as cryptocurrencies.

In situations where there is suspicion of an account being involved to further the occupation or illegal blockades, Canadian financial institutions now have immediate authority to temporarily seize providing financial services. Corporate accounts can and will be frozen for those participating in the blockades. They are also at risk of having their vehicle insurance revoked.

I have seen a significant amount of misinformation about the powers granted under the act. Let us clarify a few things that the Emergencies Act does not do.

The Emergencies Act is limited in scope compared to the War Measures Act of the past. The act does not involve the military. For

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the military to be involved, the National Defence Act would need to be invoked. This has not happened.

I think we also need to make very clear that no individual's charter rights are being violated. In fact, the Emergencies Act must be compliant with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The specific measures provided in this act are limited. Parliament provides many checks, safeguards and transparency. This is the reason we are here today debating. We are going through this process of checks and balances.

I would like to pivot now to the impact of the occupation and the blockades on the lives of everyday Canadians. For those taking part in this illegal occupation in Ottawa, many seem to be enjoying themselves. There are pancake breakfasts, hot tubs, dance parties in the street and bouncy castles. Contrary to the narrative being driven by supporters, though, this has not been a peaceful experience for residents, businesses and employees in Ottawa.

Honking continued most of the day yesterday and early this morning, despite a 60-day extension of an injunction requiring by law that it stop. On top of that constant honking, there have been drums beating, loud fireworks and music at all hours of the night.

● (1545)

The health consequences of this constant bombardment of noise is not exclusive to residents. Occupiers are doing considerable damage to their own health and the health of the children they have brought with them, whether it is from the loud air horns or constant cloud of diesel fuel lingering on the streets from idling trucks.

It has been a very frustrating time for the residents of Ottawa, especially those who live and work in affected areas. Residents complain of being harassed for wearing a mask, and of being accosted with racial and anti-Semitic slurs. Employees and businesses do not feel it is safe to keep their businesses open. Real people's lives are being impacted by a loud minority in very real and significant ways.

The lack of empathy toward the residents and businesses in Ottawa is shocking and unacceptable. Thousands of people have been out of work in Ottawa. The Rideau Centre alone employs 1,500 individuals, and it has been closed for weeks.

A woman who lives in my building here in Ottawa has been working from home due to the pandemic. She told me that she had to leave the city to go to her parents' home in Toronto in order to work and get some rest because she does not feel safe. Not only has the constant noise disrupted her sleep, but it has also prevented her from working during the day.

Vaccine clinics, libraries and other important community resources have been shut down in the downtown core for weeks due to safety concerns. These resources are relied upon by many residents and many vulnerable residents in downtown Ottawa. The people of Ottawa are not strangers to protests. However, they know the right to protest comes with limits. Those limits stop when protesters are causing harm to the people around them.

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I have heard from staffers and employees on the Hill that they have been taunted and yelled at for simply wearing a mask. Many of the occupiers show disregard for public measures by going into restaurants and places of business without masks, thereby putting those who work there at risk.

This week at the airport on my way home to B.C., I met a woman whose husband is a truck driver. He was not able to work for days because he could not cross the border due to blockades. She urged me to get the borders open so her husband could continue to work and provide food for their family.

The week before, I received dozens of calls from trucking companies and families of drivers stuck on the other side of the border in Coutts and could not get back. They are the people who are making sure that there is food on our tables and that supply chains remain open. While the borders are back open again now, the blockades have taken a serious economic toll on our communities.

These individuals blocking critical infrastructure, and their supporters, claim to want to ensure that groceries shelves stay full and our trade routes keep running smoothly. However, their actions have led to serious disruptions in our supply chains, including putting people out of work in the auto industry because of plant closure. They have caused the exact thing that they claim to want to protect our country from.

This blockade has damaged trade relations with our most important trading partner, the United States of America. Around 73% of our exports go to the United States and billions of dollars in imports come from our neighbours to the south annually. Truckers were stuck on the other side of the Coutts border crossing for days and were forced to drive for hours to get through a different crossing.

The blockade at the Coutts border cut off a vital trade route for agriculture and other goods, and cost our economy hundreds of millions of dollars. Jobs in Manitoba were at stake, because of the Emerson, Manitoba, crossing. Here, too, traffic was forced to divert to other crossings increasing travel time, creating chaos for truckers and other travellers.

Windsor also experienced days of blockades at one of Canada's most important routes over the Ambassador Bridge. This bridge alone is responsible for 30% of trade going back and forth between Canada and the U.S. That is \$390 million in trade per day. Around 40,000 commuters, truckers and others cross that bridge daily.

In my own community, truckers and others trying to cross the Surrey border crossing were harassed by individuals blocking the border. There were reports of demonstrators driving on the wrong side of the road, a dangerous and reckless behaviour that endangers the lives of others.

The Surrey crossing is home to hundreds of millions of dollars in trade back and forth. Organizations are speaking out, like the Surrey Board of Trade. The impact of these blockades is choking us and has already impacted supply chains, businesses and jobs. This is unacceptable sabotage to the economy.

To be clear, everyone has a right to peaceful protest, but these type of demonstrations are impacting businesses and livelihoods. This is not a movement for the people. These are not peaceful

demonstrations. Those who remain are unlawful, destructive and are looking to defy the law and abuse their fellow citizens. It has done a great deal of harm and it must end now.

The pandemic has been a challenging time for everyone, and if people are still in Ottawa, I encourage them to leave now and allow residents to get back to their lives.

● (1550)

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member spoke at length about the negative aspects of what is occurring in Ottawa. Unfortunately, the act we are debating today is not based only on the negative aspects. It has a critical threshold. He talked about what people and businesses have experienced. We need to put all that aside and focus on what can be done about this. People can be arrested and vehicles can be seized without a warrant or incidental to arrest.

Given that those tools already exist in another act and this act says it is an act of last resort that cannot be satisfied by any other legislation, how can his party support it when we can get rid of those vehicles under existing legislation and every negative impact he said would disappear?

Mr. Randeep Sarai: Mr. Speaker, central infrastructure and our Parliament buildings were put at risk. Ontario declared a state of emergency and, despite that, was not able to clear these occupiers from the streets of Ottawa. The city was not able to do it on its own. Tow truck companies have said they have received death threats, so they will not tow. That is why there is a time, a place and a need for such legislation.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what is happening right now is complicated and a source of anxiety for many. I am talking not only about the blockade, but also about the Emergencies Act.

All the hot spots, except Ottawa, have been dismantled without implementing emergency measures. Why invoke them now? Ottawa is the only one left.

If someone threatens someone else, the Criminal Code applies. If someone has an unlicensed weapon, the Criminal Code applies. The Criminal Code already covers everything the government wants to accomplish with the Emergencies Act.

[English]

Mr. Randeep Sarai: Mr. Speaker, as we have seen, without this legislation there has been chaos. In fact, the day this was invoked, just before midnight the Surrey border crossing was cleared. Fortunately, this does not take away the powers and laws already in place. This supplements them. It gives extra powers and tools on top of those we already have. This is territory-specific, so when we have an issue, we can invoke it and use it on one area. It is not universal to places that do not have the disruptions.

• (1555)

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are here because of a failure of leadership, and it is day 21 of the occupation in our nation's capital. Local leadership has failed and police inaction has been on full display, even police complicity. Shockingly, the Conservative leader and Conservative MPs have been aiding and abetting the illegal occupation. Then we have the Liberals, who have sat by for going on four weeks and have not taken the measures necessary to crack down on an illegal occupation led by a number of folks who are known to be associated with white supremacy.

Why did the Liberals, once the first clear signs were out there, not crack down on this illegal occupation, particularly on the funding, including foreign funding?

Mr. Randeep Sarai: Mr. Speaker, my colleague is absolutely correct. When some members of Parliament on the other side, particularly the Conservatives, are aiding and abetting, as she states, by sometimes telling protesters to go away, sometimes saying, “Stay”, and sometimes saying, “We are for you”, while their aspiring leader supports the convoy, things become very difficult.

The government has done an impeccable job at being controlled, complying with laws, allowing injunctions to take place and allowing the police and the city to do what they have to do. However, unfortunately, it has reached the point where we now have to invoke the Emergencies Act. There is no choice.

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague, the hon. member for Chilliwack—Hope.

My phone has not stopped ringing. Constituents and concerned Canadians are emailing me en masse. I have had hundreds of phone calls and literally thousands of emails since the news of the government's plan to invoke the Emergencies Act trickled out on Friday. Not one of those emails and not one of those phone calls has been in favour of this enactment. What they did want was to ensure that their voices were heard by the Prime Minister and the misguided Liberal and NDP MPs who plan to support this overreach. Before I begin with my own thoughts, I thought it important for the House to hear about this, and specifically the members opposite who may be tempted to remain loyal to their party lines despite a heavy heart and conflicted conscience. While these emails were sent to me specifically, they are really intended for the members across the way, who could still change their position.

Lanny writes, “It's deeply disturbing to see the Prime Minister invoke the Emergencies Act under present circumstances. He failed to act with the powers that he previously held, and then asks for open-ended powers with no real motivation. I do not support this.

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He has failed as a leader.” Lanny knows that the Prime Minister has been disengaged, unwilling to meet and unwilling to listen, and, most importantly, that this is not what a leader does. She is right: This is failed leadership. This is a failure to use negotiation and use the authorities that already exist. It is simply a power grab by someone who is beyond his depth.

Lanny is not the only one who feels this way. Here is an excerpt of an email from a lady by the name of Rena: “I feel very strongly about the Emergencies Act. Frankly, it's overkill and quite frightening for a citizen of Canada. There is no reason to invoke this. It's giving far too much control over a situation that can be negotiated.” Does that sound familiar? The Prime Minister's inability to negotiate, frightened Canadians, fear tactics and too much control are repeating themes, not today, not this week and not this year. This has been the tone of the Prime Minister his entire time in office, and Canadians are beyond frustrated with it.

My constituents are in no way the only Canadians concerned. As The Canadian Press notes, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association says it “does not believe the ‘high and clear’ threshold needed to invoke the act has been met” and notes specifically that the law states the Emergencies Act “can only be used when a situation cannot be dealt with using any other law in the country”. The executive director went so far as to warn that normalizing emergency legislation “threatens our democracy and our civil liberties”.

Why? The Prime Minister and his misguided ministers surely have had legal opinions, like the one provided by Leah West, a former national security lawyer with the federal Department of Justice. As noted in a CBC article, “she's not convinced that the ongoing protests rise to the level of a public order ‘emergency’”. She has even gone so far as to state publicly, “As someone who studies the law very carefully, I'm kind of shocked, to be honest, that the government actually believes this meets the definition to even invoke the act.” The article goes on to elaborate: “West said that, under the existing provincial emergency order, Ontario can already do some of the things that the federal government is now contemplating.” She says, “It's not clear to me why you would need the federal authorities to do that.”

The Emergencies Act is not required. We have heard that expressed by constituents, by Canadians and in legal opinions. The Emergencies Act powers become available immediately, and the government then has seven days to table legislation in Parliament. I do not want to put words in the legislative drafters' mouths on this, but surely they were thinking, back in the day, that there would never be a Prime Minister so brazen as to utilize the powers of this act without a clear and evident emergency requiring them to do so.

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In a situation that would properly utilize the Emergencies Act, the threat would be so inherently grave that invoking the powers within the act would jointly be called for by parliamentarians across party lines and provincial leaders and would unite all Canadians, while protecting our country and our freedoms. Our predecessors in the House would be ashamed of the audacity of the Prime Minister, the government and the NDP coalition propping it up in allowing the Emergencies Act to be used as a divisive tool and not as the unifying, nation-building and life-saving tool it was designed to be. This is not the case and this is not the time. The government does not have my support and it does not have the support of Canadians.

● (1600)

What is required, but has been lacking, is leadership. The provinces have been able to resolve their issues with protesters, just as we saw in my riding at the Coutts border crossing. What does Coutts have that Ottawa does not? It has leadership. A peaceful resolution was achieved via dialogue and open, frank and honest conversations between protest organizers and elected officials. Alberta MPs, provincial leaders, locally elected officials and law enforcement all had a hand in the peaceful resolution by showing true leadership and genuine concern and by taking the time to listen and be heard.

No one, not the Prime Minister, not one government minister and certainly not the leader of the NDP, possessed the leadership to have one meeting with protesters, even when it was offered to them. Was it their privileged perch from their ivory tower offices that made them feel superior to the working-class citizens beneath them? Was it their intolerance of opinions they disagree with? Or has this single incident exposed what the Prime Minister and the leader of the NDP are really all about?

At election time, we hear phrases from the Prime Minister like, “We know that Canada has succeeded—culturally, politically, economically—because of our diversity, not in spite of it.” However, in situations like the one we find ourselves in today, we know the Prime Minister instead thinks that our diversity is a national emergency, not something to be embraced.

The leader of the NDP is no better. When he needs people's votes he tweets, “diversity is a strength not a weakness. We were meant to stand out, not blend in”, and uses the hashtag #makeitawkward. When his convictions are truly tested, his voice is nowhere to be heard. His silence and lack of leadership blend in well among the Liberals, and the only awkward person here is him as he continues to empower the Prime Minister to treat hard-working Canadians as second-class citizens.

What do the Oka crisis, the conflict at Caledonia, the Wet'suwet'en rail blockades, the B.C. pipeline protests and 9/11 all have in common? None of them warranted the use of the Emergencies Act. This is the first time we have had a Prime Minister audacious enough to invoke the Emergencies Act since it was created in 1988, and Canadians know he is doing so as a power grab. This is an example of political gamesmanship, not political statesmanship. Constituents, Canadians and legal practitioners all agree that invoking the Emergencies Act is unwarranted and unwanted.

Do the Liberal members opposite and those in the NDP whose votes would be required to pass this motion have the courage to do

what Canadians are demanding of them and oppose this motion? I do. I hope they find it within themselves to rise above the political fray and do the right thing.

● (1605)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, there are a number of things that have constituted global emergencies. By the way, I should say to the hon. member, because I do not think I have put it on the record yet, that I am still trying to decide how to vote on this. There are pros and cons to the act's use. We had a collapse of police here in Ottawa. The chain of command broke somewhere, and we are in a very different situation now than if we had acted based on the information that, it now appears, we should have had about the security threat that was implicit in the convoy.

The examples the hon. member used of when we did not use the Emergencies Act were exterior to Canada. Goodness knows that Canadians, and particularly those in Halifax and Newfoundland, reacted so brilliantly and generously when 9/11 happened in taking care of people who were completely stranded. However, that does not rise to an emergency in Canada; I do not even think it is plausible. In the Wet'suwet'en protests, I was arrested in a non-violent civil disobedience protest, and on many similar occasions, Kinder Morgan never even called the police. Those are not emergencies that would rise to the level that is anything like this.

I ask the hon. member to reflect on the differences in each of the examples he put forward.

Mr. Glen Motz: Mr. Speaker, my answer will not be as long as the member's question. However, I will say that in some of those circumstances, the situation was as serious or more serious than what we face today. The Emergencies Act was not invoked then and it should not be invoked now.

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, while my colleague was speaking, we got a notification about a perimeter being erected around Ottawa's downtown just a few metres from here. Apparently the police are preparing to intervene.

Things are getting more and more serious now. All of this could have been avoided. Here is my question for my colleague.

What happens next? Is there any way to avoid chaos, physical confrontation and injury? Are we headed straight for a bloodbath?

[English]

Mr. Glen Motz: Mr. Speaker, absolutely and unequivocally, there is an opportunity to prevent any sort of injury, property damage, loss of life or violence, and it starts by the government actually, as our leader said the other day, extending an olive branch and meeting with the occupiers. I have met with the organizers here in Ottawa, and all they wanted to do was meet with a minister, even via Zoom, to feel listened to. They do not feel listened to. They do not feel heard. They feel that they have been pushed aside by an ideology that they do not adhere to, and therefore they are second-class citizens. We still can avoid this issue if the government swallows its pride and does what should have been done right away: meet with somebody and then listen to their concerns.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the hon. member, who speaks so highly of how peaceful it was here in Alberta and how peaceful what was happening in Coutts was, that Albertans lost almost \$50 million a day. On February 14, the RCMP arrested 11 people who were charged with conspiracy to commit murder, and that was against our own police. If that is not violence, and if that is not urgent and an emergency, I do not know what is. There were 14 firearms found there, as well as body armour, a machete and huge quantities of ammunition. These are serious issues that are in our country and in our province, and we have lost hugely.

Would the member explain why he, and even members from our province, would stand with these folks who were terrorizing many people across our province, including the ones in Ottawa?

Mr. Glen Motz: Mr. Speaker, I was hoping someone would bring that up.

Let us clear the air here. It has been very clear that a criminal organization, weeks after the Coutts border crossing protests began, joined the group and infiltrated the group. It was not part of the group. It had ulterior motives. It was not part of the protest. It was tied to organized criminal organizations from here in the nation's capital and across this country. We should be very concerned that there is violence and that those extremists exist in our society, but they exist, and it is not because of this protest. They attach themselves to every sort of movement.

What is important to realize here is that the situation in Coutts was resolved using the legislation that already exists. With authorities from the RCMP and the elected officials, it was resolved. Those individuals who were planning to commit criminal offences were dealt with appropriately without enacting the Emergencies Act. That is a prime example that shows we can do this and settle this without this nonsense from the government.

• (1610)

Mr. Mark Strahl (Chilliwack—Hope, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are here today because the Prime Minister has already invoked the Emergencies Act. What we are debating in the House is whether or not we believe that his invocation of the act should be endorsed or revoked. In order for the House to endorse the invocation of the Emergencies Act, two very high thresholds need to be met. The government, at the time that this legislation was introduced, set a very high bar on purpose. The Emergencies Act is like a fire alarm

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that can only be activated when the glass has been broken, and we should only allow the glass to be broken when it is justified.

The Emergencies Act is only to be used when there are threats to the security of Canada that are so serious that they constitute a national emergency and cannot be addressed using any of the laws or tools that are currently on the books. This invocation fails on all counts. There are no threats to the security of the country. There is a noisy protest happening around Parliament Hill, but it is not impeding the ability of Parliament to function, as we can see clearly today. The House continues to sit. MPs walk through the protests every day. The Prime Minister holds press conferences mere steps from where the truckers have set up their rigs and their signs.

This protest is not even a threat to the continued security of the House of Commons, let alone the security of Canada. It is also not a national emergency. The protest stretches over a few city blocks of downtown Ottawa. Has it been disruptive? Yes, it has. Should the trucks move on or be moved at this time? Yes, they should. Does the Emergencies Act need to be invoked to allow that to happen? Absolutely not. There are more than enough powers granted to enforcement agencies to allow them to manage the situation and resolve it peacefully.

We have seen this at the border in Coutts, at the Ambassador Bridge, in Surrey and in Emerson. All of those incidents were peacefully resolved using existing police and government powers. The predecessor to this act, the War Measures Act, was only invoked during World War I, World War II and the FLQ crisis. These are seminal moments in Canadian history. What we are seeing right now in Ottawa does not even come close to the level required to take this draconian response.

Conservatives will oppose this overreach. The Bloc Québécois has indicated that it will oppose this overreach. Liberal MPs will do what the Prime Minister tells them to do, as they always have and always will. Therefore, it comes down to the votes of the NDP to determine whether or not the House will endorse using the Emergencies Act to suspend the civil rights and civil liberties of whomever the Prime Minister deems to be a designated person engaging in an illegal protest.

In 1970, when Pierre Elliott Trudeau used the War Measures Act to send in the army and suspend the civil liberties of Canadians, the NDP stood in opposition to it. The vote was 190 MPs in favour and only 16 against. NDP leader Tommy Douglas, who I am quite sure I have never quoted before, said, “This is overkill on a gargantuan scale”. Calling the emergency legislation an act of panic, he went on to compare the invocation of the War Measures Act to using a sledgehammer to crack a walnut. The exact same quotes could and should be used to describe the Prime Minister's gross overreach by using the Emergencies Act today.

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Numerous former NDP MPs have weighed in in disbelief at what their party is prepared to endorse, recognizing the dangerous precedent this will set for future governments to crack down on their own citizens protesting the direction of a future government. Today's NDP is joining the Liberals in endorsing the use of legislation that takes away the rights of Canadians the government disagrees with. Today's NDP members are willing to sacrifice their own principles to provide comfort to a Liberal Prime Minister who has none.

The order attached to this invocation is far-reaching. Canadians who have been involved in completely legal and legitimate protests that have taken place over the past weeks could be retroactively caught up in this dragnet. Canadians who donated small amounts of their own money or gave home-cooked meals to truckers on their way to Ottawa could be caught up in this overreach. What does the Prime Minister say to those who have raised those concerns? "Just trust me. Give me the benefit of the doubt." Trust is earned, and the Prime Minister deserves none.

• (1615)

The emergency order allows the government to freeze and seize bank accounts without legal recourse. The government is encouraging banks to never do business again with any of the protesters. It allows for the suspension of insurance products and the seizure of private property. It proposes up to five years in jail for people who are advocating for an end to government restrictions.

Let us think about that for a minute. People who are fighting for freedom, using their rights as free citizens to criticize government policy, could be thrown in jail for up to five years. They could have their ability to provide for their families taken away. They could have their mortgages revoked. They could lose their homes. This has nothing to do with public safety, and everything to do with punishing those who have dared to speak against government policies. We are sent here to protect the rights of Canadians, not to take them away on the flimsiest of excuses or to punish those who embarrass the Prime Minister.

There are many who will say "good riddance" to the protesters, and many who will cheer on their financial ruin. Clearly, while there are many supporting the protests, there are many other Canadians who are disgusted by them. Indeed, many Liberal supporters are cheering on the Prime Minister's strong-arm tactics against our fellow Canadians. They will point to public opinion polls, showing that people agree with the government's decision to put the boots to those who are embarrassing them on the streets of Ottawa, to put the protesters back in their rightful place and to serve as a warning to others that there are consequences for daring to question or push back against the government.

I will remind the House that many of the darkest chapters in our history, many of the things we look back on in disbelief and shame, and many of the suspensions of freedoms and liberties that past governments have brought down upon our own people were cheered on by the majority of Canadians and the majority of MPs, and were justified in these halls. That does not mean they were right. It does not mean they were just. Indeed, I believe that if we allow this to stand there will be a time when a future prime minister rises in this place and apologizes for the actions of the current Prime Minister in this case.

The Prime Minister has made a purposeful, political choice to create the division we see in this country today. This has been confirmed by the Liberal MP for Louis-Hébert. Instead of seeking understanding and common ground, the Prime Minister sought political advantage through division. When his pollsters told him he could turn vaccinated Canadians against unvaccinated Canadians, friend against friend, neighbour against neighbour and family member against family member, he jumped at the chance.

He spent the entire election pitting Canadian against Canadian. He called those who disagreed with him racist misogynists who should not be tolerated and a "fringe minority" with "unacceptable views", as if being the Prime Minister or being a Liberal gave him a monopoly on what acceptable views are. He inflamed the situation in Ottawa with his rhetoric and then went into hiding. He continues to divide for partisan advantage. Now he wants the House to simply roll over and allow him to steamroll the rights of Canadians he disagrees with, and he wants to use a tool he has no justification to use.

The use of the Emergencies Act and its order in this case are unjustified. The thresholds have not been met. Its invocation will only serve to further deepen the divisions that have been purposely sown by the current Prime Minister. Invoking the Emergencies Act will not resolve a national crisis. Indeed, it may create one.

It is time to stop using the powers of government to punish those who have made difficult, unpopular decisions about their own health. It is time to stop going down the Prime Minister's path of division and instead choose the path of healing and reconciliation. The first step on that path is the rejection of the use of the Emergencies Act against our fellow citizens. We must vote against this motion and instead work together to lower the temperature, give Canadians back their rights and work together to heal the divisions in our land.

• (1620)

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as I was listening to the member's intervention today, I was reflecting on a joint statement from Canada's unions on the Ottawa occupation from February 9, 2022. It states:

Canada's unions have fought for generations for the right to protest. This is a cornerstone of our democratic system. But what we have witnessed on the streets of Canada's capital...is something different altogether.

Instead, they refer to what is happening outside this chamber as "an occupation by an angry mob trying to disguise itself as a peaceful protest."

This joint statement calls on the federal government to quickly deliver urgently needed supports to workers and businesses affected. Can the member please share how aligning himself with an occupation that has shut down workers and businesses is in the best interests of Canadians?

Mr. Mark Strahl: Mr. Speaker, who I have aligned myself with are the Canadian people who have rights under our Constitution and who do not deserve to have those rights trampled upon because there is a protest taking place in a few city blocks of Ottawa. This does not meet the threshold of the Emergencies Act. As much as the Liberals want to say it does, the only emergency is a political emergency for the Prime Minister who has utterly failed this country and who has utterly failed to deliver the leadership that he is supposed to give.

There is no need for the Emergencies Act. Anything that has been described can be dealt with under existing legislation and under existing tools. The idea that we need to use this draconian act when its predecessor has only been used three times, during world wars and during times when people were being kidnapped and explosions were happening in the streets, and to compare that to what is happening outside of Parliament is ridiculous.

We need to reject the Emergencies Act provisions immediately.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member is incorrect. This piece of legislation has never been enacted before. He is trying to suggest that the Emergencies Act is the same thing as the War Measures Act, and he could not be further from the truth. They are completely different and call on different measures.

What I find most alarming is that this member wants to align himself with a group outside, a group whose first objective in their calls to action is, if we can believe this, to have the Governor General of Canada and the Senate get together to overthrow a democratically elected Parliament and set up a citizen advisory committee of Canadians that will then govern the country. That is what this member is aligning himself with when he supports the people outside.

Mr. Mark Strahl: Mr. Speaker, I am surprised the hon. member, being so terrified of what he sees outside, found his way into the House of Commons. It must have been very difficult for him to walk past the bouncy castles and the kids' play area to get inside.

This is a ridiculous argument. The idea that somehow a manifesto by a few people on the Internet is a threat to the national security of the country, is a clear and present danger to the national security of our country, is absolutely ridiculous. This is a protest that has gone on. We have said, quite clearly, that it is time for the individuals there to move their trucks or to have them moved. That can all be done through existing legislation.

I know that this member and his government like to control Canadians. They like to gather all the power they can. We need to reject this draconian overreach and do it today.

[Translation]

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

My question is about something the government said to him just now about how the Emergencies Act and the War Measures Act are completely different. I think they are brushing off concerns and being a little too simplistic in their attempts to dissociate the two.

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Could my colleague comment on that? After all, there are a few little similarities between these two acts. Moreover, neither of these two pieces of legislation, the current one or the former one, is called for right now.

• (1625)

[English]

Mr. Mark Strahl: Mr. Speaker, I said that it was the predecessor to the Emergencies Act, which is demonstrably true. I think it is quite simply ridiculous. I heard another Liberal member say just before that the government has done an impeccable job of managing this situation. I think Canadians would disagree. It has been a catastrophe. However, the government's catastrophe and the failure of the Prime Minister does not justify the use of an Emergencies Act to punish Canadians for voicing views that are outside of what the government finds acceptable.

This can all be managed under current laws, as it has been done at the Ambassador Bridge, Coutts, Emerson and Surrey. These have all been managed without the draconian overreach of the Emergencies Act. The House must oppose this action.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to mention that I will be sharing my time with my distinguished colleague from Elmwood—Transcona.

This is an exceptional, unprecedented and extremely concerning situation that has ramifications for the health of our democracy and the future of political debate and vitality in Canada and at the federal level.

The first thing I would like to point out is what and who we are dealing with. We are not dealing with ordinary protesters. I can say this from experience, because it is no secret that I have participated in many protests for various causes in the past as a student, union representative and MP.

There are surely many people of good faith among these protesters. They are tired and exasperated and cannot stand any more health and vaccine mandates. We understand that because after two years, we are all fed up.

However, the convoy has been infiltrated by members of the far right. What is more, most of the convoy organizers use extreme right-wing rhetoric and are openly affiliated with the far right. It is not a rumour or hearsay, since they wrote in black and white that if they do not get what they want, they will overthrow the government and replace it with a provisional government in collaboration with the Senate and the Governor General. These people are anti-Parliament, anti-public health and anti-democracy, and they are threatening to overthrow an elected government by force.

I would remind the House that these people have received public support from the interim leader of the Conservative Party and her finance critic, who is now a leadership candidate for that same party. I think that one day, the Conservative Party will have to answer to Canadians for its actions and its place in history.

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These protests are largely being funded by foreign sources, including the United States and Donald Trump supporters. Let us not forget that Donald Trump provoked and continues to defend the assault on the Capitol on January 6, 2021. Some protesters here actually said they wanted this to be Canada's January 6.

Some of these protesters openly identify themselves as white supremacists, make racist comments and unabashedly wave Nazi or Confederate flags. Let us not forget that the Confederates are the Americans who fought to preserve the right to own slaves. These are the symbols some people have been waving throughout this long illegal occupation of downtown Ottawa.

Protesters are traumatizing and verbally abusing local residents. Some minorities and racialized people, including people of Asian origin, have been spat on and had insults shouted at them. Journalists are being targeted by protesters, who are behaving like bullies rather than legitimate protesters.

While we may not have all the relevant information on the Ottawa protesters yet, there is no doubt that this is the same movement, with the same intentions, supporting the same cause. People are organizing in the same manner. Let us not forget the arsenal of weapons seized in Coutts, Alberta, including assault rifles, bullet-proof vests and hundreds of rounds of ammunition.

The current situation is not the same as when people protest to protect our public health care system, for example. The situation we have been experiencing in Ottawa for the last three weeks is altogether different, and it is becoming unbearable for local residents. Some locals even took it upon themselves to block roadways to prevent additional trucks and big rigs from getting downtown.

This clearly illustrates the Liberal government's inaction. If the situation has deteriorated to the point where the Emergencies Act needs to be invoked, it is because the Liberal government did nothing. The government's lack of leadership is clearly to blame for the dangerous and awful situation we are in.

• (1630)

If we are responsible parliamentarians, we will analyze the bill before us. I initially had reservations, and, as the leader of the NDP said today, we will support it reluctantly; we are not happy about it, and we do not like it. However, there are some important safeguards.

First, the act maintains fundamental freedoms. The right to legally and peacefully protest is not affected. Rights and freedoms are maintained. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms is still in force. I will get back to that later. This is quite different from the analogies and conflated comparisons being raised by other political parties in the House. It is not the same thing at all.

The act comes with a time limit. There is a sunset clause. It has to be renewed after 30 days. It is therefore not indefinite. Not only are arbitrary and random arrests not possible, but fundamental freedoms are protected, the act is in force for a limited period of 30 days, and most of all, and this is important, the act can be revoked at any time by a majority vote of the members of the House. All it would take is for 20 of our colleagues to ask the Speaker to hold a vote in three days.

Since the three opposition parties have a majority, if there were any abuses committed by the police, the federal government, or the Liberal government, we could pull the plug, just like that. These safeguards are extremely reassuring and should reassure all Canadians.

This is very interesting legislation, and I would point out to my Conservative Party colleagues that what they are saying is absolutely ironic, because the Emergencies Act was brought in by the Conservative Party. It was Brian Mulroney's government that passed this legislation in 1988. Before they get all worked up about it, perhaps they should open a history book, because this is their law. They are the ones who passed it.

Speaking of history, it makes me very uncomfortable to hear the leader of the Bloc Québécois imply that this is the War Measures Act redux. He is conflating the two acts to appeal to his base in a very unscrupulous, intellectually dishonest and flawed way. This brings back a very painful memory for all Quebecers, the memory of the 1970 October crisis. During that period, hundreds of police officers took to the streets of Montreal to randomly arrest nearly 500 people, without cause, without any charges. This was not an attempt to restore peace, but an attempt to intimidate the public, a national emancipation movement and a civil society movement.

That is what happened in 1970, and the Bloc Québécois needs to stop conflating the two situations and comparing apples to oranges. The leader of the Bloc Québécois is very confused. These situations are nothing alike. Being arrested in the middle of the night and thrown in prison by the police is nothing like someone having their bank account frozen because they chose to participate in an illegal occupation that is infringing on the rights of the people of Ottawa. These situations are nothing alike.

Friends of my parents were arrested during the October crisis. I think it is an insult to the victims of the October crisis to compare them to the proto-fascists who have been occupying Ottawa for the past three weeks. The two cannot be lumped in together. That is just wrong. The laws are different, the circumstances are different, the demonstrators and the illegal occupation are completely different.

We agree that the law should not apply in Quebec. It will not because there are no blockades or illegal occupations in Quebec. There is no siege, so there should be no problem. The NDP supported the Bloc Québécois motion on that yesterday, but unfortunately the Conservatives blocked it.

Let me be very clear: We are not giving the Liberal government a blank cheque. We are keeping a close eye on it, we will be very vigilant, and we will use the provisions in the act that enable us to shut this down if it is abused in any way, but the people of Ottawa deserve to have their city and their peace and quiet back.

• (1635)

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy that I get to ask this NDP member from Quebec a question, because I would love to hear his insight into this.

Public opinion polling is showing that 72% of Quebecers are in favour of the Emergencies Act being invoked, but even more astonishing, according to Abacus Data, 63% of the people who voted for the Bloc Québécois in the last election say that they would never vote for an MP that supports the protests outside.

What we are seeing here is the Bloc Québécois lining up with the Conservatives, saying they are supportive of what is going on outside right now. I wonder if the member could provide his comments, being a member of Parliament from Quebec, on why it is the Bloc is taking this approach.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. It certainly has been a little hard to keep up with the Bloc Québécois's position on this situation these last two weeks.

First they accused the government of doing nothing, of failing to act. They demanded it help the people of Ottawa. Now that Ottawa is preparing to use these tools, such as freezing bank accounts to put the financial squeeze on people participating in illegal occupations, suddenly that is not okay.

They cannot say one thing one week and another the next. Indeed, statistics show the majority of Quebecers support this measure, clearly indicating solidarity with the people of Ottawa and a desire give them back their city as soon as possible. This has gone on long enough.

[English]

Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am concerned about what I am hearing today from the member of the NDP. It is painting a picture that is inflammatory by implying that the majority of those who are protesting are racists, rather than a few who show their ignorance whenever an opportunity arises.

Personally, I have multiple examples of indigenous, Black, Indian, Muslim, Sikh and Jewish participants who have taken part in this peaceful protest and are proudly talking about it. They are either here to do that or have shared their information after fact-checking what they are hearing from mainstream media and from members in this House.

When did the member personally interact with these individuals who are behaving in the way he is claiming they are?

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her question.

If there are people of good faith out there who want to express their opinion, that is fine. However, they have unfortunately been dragged into a movement organized by people who self-identify as

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being with the far right. It is clear. The connections have been made.

We have received dozens of reports from people in Ottawa who have been insulted and endured racist verbal abuse by people who were in fact displaying neo-Nazi symbols and the Confederate flag.

While most protesters are not carrying this flag, we have seen it, and the evidence is there. This illegal occupation, which is unfortunately supported by the Conservatives, does include a far-right element.

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I must say, I was a little taken aback by the arrogance of the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie when he talked about my leader and the Bloc Québécois.

I think my colleague is being disingenuous. He implied that the Bloc leader is not looking at the act in an intellectually honest way, when what we said is that these are two different laws. At this point, it is like using a bazooka to kill a fly, after all.

The Prime Minister had three weeks to take action under existing legislation, but he did not lift a finger. Now we are being put in a position that no one wants to be in.

I would like to know whether the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie is aware that Quebec as a whole, that is, his own National Assembly, opposes the use of the Emergencies Act on Quebec territory. We do not need it.

My colleague does not represent only himself. He represents Quebecers, so he should take that into account in his comments.

• (1640)

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. I expected my comments and my argument to get her attention.

We agree on the fact that this need not apply to Quebec. I agree with the members of the National Assembly of Quebec, since we do not need this in Quebec. There is no illegal occupation or siege there.

With respect to the comparison to the War Measures Act, it was people from the Bloc Québécois who made the comparison. They have to live with it.

[English]

Mr. Daniel Blaikie (Elmwood—Transcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise today in support of emergency measures to restore order in a situation that has been steadily getting out of hand. The convoy movement has clearly come to mean many things to many people, but it matters that the stated intention of the organizers has been to disrupt and overthrow Canada's democratic institutions, as outlined in their published memorandum of understanding and their discussions in the media.

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A lack of leadership by the federal government and local police in Ottawa have led us to a point of crisis. Coupled with the discovery of weapons caches, allegations by authorities of conspiracy to commit murder, reports of involvement by elite military members and the prolonged harassment of people in their homes and places of work, there can be no question that this has to stop. The status quo is unacceptable and cannot be allowed to continue.

The failure of the Ottawa police so far to bring an end to the occupation and the persistence of border blockades until the declaration of emergency measures show that additional measures are necessary to break the logjam. I am glad that all the border crossings have reopened in the last several days and I look forward to the end of the illegal occupation of Ottawa, an end that I hope comes swiftly and peacefully.

There have been many protests in Canada over the 34 years since the Emergencies Act was developed as an alternative to the War Measures Act. None of them have resulted in a prolonged weeks-long occupation of the nation's capital city. None of them have been characterized as this one is by the active and sustained harassment of residents in their homes, on the street and in their places of work. The fact that many Canadians are feeling legitimate fatigue because of the pandemic challenges we have all had to suffer does not excuse this behaviour. The fact that many Canadians share a desire with convoy organizers to lift public health measures does not absolve the organizers of responsibility for their undemocratic objectives.

The fact that most Canadians fed up with vaccine mandates and passports do not support white supremacy or endorse messages of hate does not make this small number of Canadians who do any less dangerous in this volatile time. I believe that many Canadians, frustrated and tired of the pandemic, have sympathy for the convoy because they want to see an end to certain public health measures, but I believe that the overwhelming majority of them do not support the extremist views and objectives of the convoy organizers. It is very important that there be space in our country for debate about the issues of the day. In our day, that includes the nature and extent of public health measures.

On my part, I believe that the discussion should be led by public health officials on the basis of the best available information. I have been consistent in that position since the outset of the pandemic and I will continue to be, even as I respect the right of others to disagree. Many Canadians want to have a discussion about public health measures, including vaccine mandates and passport systems. There is room for this discussion in a democracy and the right to engage in those conversations has to be protected. Ending the illegal occupation and stopping the extremists who have their own undemocratic political agenda is necessary to make space for that legitimate debate and protest. It may also create space for Dr. Tam to undertake the review of public health measures that she hinted at on February 4, measures that have largely been expected to come after the omicron wave, even before the convoy left for Ottawa.

Making changes to public health orders while the occupation persists is not advisable, in my opinion, because it would encourage people to think that public policy can be set by intimidation and the threat of violence. Capitulation does not work. In Winnipeg, where the Manitoba Conservatives announced a sudden change to public

health orders in response to the convoy, demonstrators are still set up downtown, even though the province has said all public health measures will be lifted within the next several weeks.

In my day, I have been part of many different political demonstrations and supported many different causes. I have seen police clear out demonstrations of people protesting against free trade agreements and racism and in defence of indigenous rights far more quickly and far more brutally, despite those demonstrations being truly peaceful demonstrations. I recall not that long ago in Winnipeg, in 2020, in the aftermath of George Floyd's murder at the hands of police, a demonstration at the legislature that was attended by thousands of people. I remember organizers in the lead-up to that event publicly communicating that violent demonstrators were not welcome. I remember them working to make a plan that would make it hard for anyone who wanted to hijack the demonstration with violent or hateful acts, and it was a successful demonstration. Many people made their point, went home and continued to be involved in all sorts of continuing anti-racism activity, including protests and demonstrations, but they did not occupy downtown Winnipeg for weeks on end.

• (1645)

We have even seen camps of the homeless, who have nowhere else to go, get cleared out in no time by police, simply for being in some of the same spaces that are being occupied now in downtown Winnipeg. It was not a problem to clear out the homeless. I do not know why it is acceptable to allow other folks to set up in the way that they have when others who are just seeking to live in some kind of community get cleared out.

I was talking earlier about the demonstration surrounding George Floyd's death in Winnipeg. I think that is what a commitment to peaceful protests looks like in responsible political organizing. It takes work. There are people who do that work. We can tell by their public messages. I have not seen that kind of leadership from the organizers of these occupations. I have to say that if any efforts have been made, they certainly have not been effective.

I was pleased last Thursday when the member for Portage—Lisgar and the interim leader of the Conservative Party finally called for the convoy to go home, but they have not gone home. The Ottawa police have shown they cannot be trusted to send them home, and so we have to have additional measures to move them along.

I agree that the Prime Minister has done a terrible job as a leader through this crisis. While it is right to call out proponents of hate and extremists in the crowd and in the ranks of the organizers, it is wrong to lump the far larger group of Canadians who are tired of public health messages into that group. It has not served our national dialogue, it has not served our country and it has not served our body politic.

I would be remiss if I did not note that the Conservatives have been engaging in their own brand of politics on these issues. The Conservative government in Manitoba was the first to implement a vaccine passport system, but federal Conservatives never showed up on the steps of the legislature to oppose that system. Leaked letters show that the interim Conservative leader has been more concerned about making this a political problem for the Prime Minister than to help the country find a way to de-escalate and get out of this situation. While there is absolutely a very serious responsibility on the part of the Prime Minister to provide that leadership, there is also a responsibility on others in this House, particularly the leader of the official opposition. Leaked letters have also shown that the Conservative premier of Manitoba has been happy to privately beg the Prime Minister to intervene while criticizing his intervention publicly.

What I am trying to say is that there are a lot of different political agendas at work in and around the convoy, but the upshot is that the people of Ottawa have been terrorized in their homes for weeks now, while the country careens toward a level of political instability we have not seen in my lifetime. That is why it really is time for the convoy to go home. That does not mean it is time for the discussion around public health measures to end, but it means that those who want to demonstrate and those who want to protest have to start doing so in a peaceful way.

I know there have been many who have done this in a peaceful way, but as with the efforts made by the organizers of the other protests that I was referring to earlier, there has to be an effort to root out the violence and the extremists and those who are intimidating people in Ottawa. That has to become far more a part of the public message of this convoy in order for the real issues that people are concerned about to be heard. They may not agree with me on those issues, and that is okay, but if they want that message to be heard, then their political organizing has to take a shape very different from the shape it has taken in the convoy.

I appeal to all those Canadians who may be frustrated and angry with me because I have not called for an end to all public health measures right now. I prefer to defer to public health officials on this point, but I call for them, in their good spirit and in their good faith, to start actively calling on the convoy organizers to promote peace, to dislodge themselves from downtown Ottawa and anywhere else where they are hanging on, and then to engage in the kinds of peaceful protests that Canada knows very well. I think that is how we get this dialogue back on track and create a path to unity in Canada.

• (1650)

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague's intervention was very thoughtful.

I want to highlight that a number of speakers have suggested the Prime Minister meet with those who are illegally blocking Parliament Hill and engage in dialogue with them. I just want my friend opposite to reflect and maybe give us a sense of why that is not possible and why political engagement at that level is inappropriate, just given what is out there right now.

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Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, I do not think it makes sense for a Prime Minister to meet with a group that has a stated objective of displacing a democratically elected government with some kind of self-appointed committee and the Governor General and the Senate. I read the MOU and I thought it was ridiculous. Unfortunately, it sounded so ridiculous that too many people, including people in the Ottawa Police Service and the government, failed to take seriously the threat that these folks represent to stability.

There are a lot of Canadians who have supported them in good faith without taking that part of it seriously, but that part of it, and the determination that it represents, has been a big part of why this has been such an obstinate protest and why it has been so hard to dislodge. That is the part that we now need to deal with.

Mr. Kyle Seebach (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what test has been met in order to justify this extreme measure? The former NDP member of Parliament Svend Robinson has said:

I was in the House during 1988 debate on the Act, when we were promised that “emergency powers can only be used when the situation is so drastic that no other law of Canada can deal with the situation”.

That test has not been met.

@NDP can [you] stop this.

It is clear from the member's speech that the New Democrats are not going to stop this. What is happening in Ottawa that regular laws cannot deal with? We saw all the other blockades at borders removed with existing laws. What is the specific law that has to come into place to take care of something that has been taken care of elsewhere?

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I would note that some of those border blockades were only cleared out once the state of emergency had been declared. Therefore, in some of those cases, this declaration has played a role in having those clear out.

Second, I would note that for as much as there may be powers under existing laws to clear out Ottawa, the Ottawa Police Service has not done it. Something in the context needs to change, and this is how we get to the position we are in.

I wish we had had a more unified call across party lines early in the convoy to send the message that they should all go home. Instead, we saw a lot of people in this place encourage them, which is not to say that they should not be giving voice to the legitimate questions about public health measures. Even where there is disagreement between the NDP and those folks who hold views about—

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments, the hon. member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles.

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• (1655)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I am a bit surprised to see the NDP change without warning, from yesterday, the values that are part of its DNA. They are a humanist, social democratic political group, and I do not understand this reversal.

We will be voting on this order on Monday. This afternoon, one hour or two ago, we heard the Ottawa police chief say that this weekend will not be like the previous ones and he will clear out the place in a certain way.

In that context, is it still appropriate for us to spend three days discussing this, only to show up on Monday with a bill that may no longer be relevant?

Mr. Daniel Blaikie: Mr. Speaker, yes, I think it is important to spend the next three days having this debate.

Even though the NDP is prepared to support these measures because of a lack of leadership at this level, this debate in the House is truly important. It is about the members of the House of Commons and allowing them to express themselves and determine the direction to take for the next days and weeks. I think this debate is important, regardless of what happens this weekend.

Mr. Alain Therrien (La Prairie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in a previous life as a teacher, when I presented a topic, I always gave my students some background to help them understand.

Today, I am going to provide a bit of history about the current situation, and I am obviously going to put the spotlight on the Prime Minister, because we believe that he is the one who is responsible for how things currently stand.

I am a former member of the Quebec National Assembly, where I sat from 2012 to 2018. I faced two premiers, Ms. Marois from 2012 to 2014, and Mr. Couillard from 2014 to 2018. They showed me what a premier is like, in the National Assembly and elsewhere. Both premiers loved the thrust and parry of parliamentary debate, showed up ready for question period and had fun engaging with and trying to persuade their opponents.

During the 2019 federal campaign, when I saw the Prime Minister on the hustings, I honestly thought that he was energetic, that he was determined, and that he was in top form. I expected him to be like that in the House. He was not.

When we began sitting here, something struck me. It is not something that often comes to mind, but here we have the chance to work with people who are seen on television, people who are recognizable in public. We are often asked what we think of this or that person. I tell them the truth, because I am a Bloc member. When the Liberals come up, for example, I am quick to point out that so-and-so is very nice, and I say nice things about people in the House in general.

Somebody asked me what I thought of the Prime Minister. I said he seemed nice, I did not talk to him much, and he really did not seem to like his job. That really struck me. He would show up in the House at question period and give people the impression they were bothering him. He did not seem keen on being there. I do not

know how else to describe it. He is the Prime Minister of a G7 country, after all. If it were me, I would be turning cartwheels all over the place, but I got the sense he would rather be somewhere else. I figured he was just going through something, or maybe he ate something that disagreed with him.

Then along came a crisis and, as they say, when the going gets tough, the tough men and women of this world get going. Our PM certainly had a tough go of it during his 2019-21 term, and things have not eased up.

I am going to speak very quickly about two crises. First, there was the rail crisis. When the Wet'suwet'en protested, there were rail blockades across Canada. The Prime Minister was on a trip, and he was told that he should return because things were not going well in Quebec and Canada. He told people to leave him alone because he was on a trip.

The crisis seems to have three episodes, somewhat like the *Indiana Jones* trilogy. In the first episode, he asked that he not be bothered because he was on a trip. When he came back 10 days later, he did not seem all that interested in intervening, and he said that it was up to the provinces to resolve the crisis—when it was a national problem that fell under federal jurisdiction.

It is ironic, because he always seems to have fun tinkering with provincial jurisdictions, sticking his nose in, demanding all kinds of things, and lecturing and preaching to everyone. However, he does not seem interested in his own matters. It is a bit odd, and it seems as if he always wanted to be the premier of a province, such as British Columbia.

In the second episode, we told him that the Bloc was focusing on finding solutions, and we proposed some for him to consider. However, he spent the next 10 days saying that it was up to others to solve the problem.

In the third episode, he listened to the Bloc, and, in the last days, he did what we asked of him and the situation was resolved. However, he did not seem all that interested.

The coronavirus arrived with a vengeance. You will remember, Mr. Speaker, as you were there. It started with China, then Iran and Italy; travellers from those countries just waltzed into Canada as they pleased.

• (1700)

We were calling on the Prime Minister to do something, to close down the borders, to require tests and quarantines, but he did nothing. I guess we could call it compulsive inaction. It was as though he were asleep and had to be nudged to do something.

Ultimately, and even as I say it I cannot believe it, Valérie Plante went to the Montreal-Trudeau airport to say that enough was enough and they needed to stop letting people in and start testing people. Think about it. The mayor of Montreal stepped in for the Prime Minister because she could see that this was wrong. Again, we have to wonder if he was even interested.

Here we are with a third crisis, and this is a big one. I looked outside a few minutes ago, and I have to say that going out to play on Wellington Street right now does not sound very appealing.

Again, there are three steps, a trilogy, if you will. Step one is to add fuel to the fire. This all started a while ago, not just in the past day or so. I want to read a quote about what was happening during the last election campaign, and I hope my colleagues will be able to guess who said it:

I can't help but notice with regret that both the tone and the policies of my government changed drastically on the eve [of] and during the last election campaign....a decision was made to wedge, to divide and to stigmatize.

He went on to say:

I fear that this politicization of the pandemic risks undermining the public's trust in our public health institutions. This is not a risk we ought to be taking lightly.

Who said that?

Was it the Conservatives? No. Was it the Bloc? No. Was it the NDP? Of course not. Let me tell you. It was the Liberal member for Louis-Hébert. I imagine he is not the only one among the Liberal members who are asking themselves, "Should I do it?" Even they are wondering.

On September 16, on a program in Quebec called *La semaine des 4 Julie*, the Prime Minister added fuel to the fire when he said:

[People who] don't believe in science...are very often misogynistic and racist....And then we have to make a choice, as a leader, as a country: Do we tolerate these people?

When he starts conflating and stigmatizing, that is a problem. It only adds fuel to the fire. Then he goes on to say that vaccination is being made mandatory for truckers.

We know that 90% of truckers are vaccinated, but convoys are heading out from all across Canada. That comes as no surprise. The trucks did not appear on Wellington Street out of nowhere. They arrived from somewhere, they arrived from British Columbia. We know that Canada is a big country. A guy who leaves British Columbia in his truck will be at it for quite a while. He will also rack up Petro Points in no time.

The truckers then arrive in Ottawa, but that is not exactly surprising, because they said they were coming. This is another quote by the Prime Minister, adding a little more fuel to the fire on January 29:

Canadians are not represented by this very troubling, small but very vocal minority of Canadians who are lashing out at science, at government, at society, at mandates and public health advice.

It goes on. Now we have to pay attention. The Prime Minister got COVID-19. I agree, we have to isolate when we get COVID-19. I understand that, and I hope he was not too sick. It does not seem like he was.

People in isolation can sometimes make appearances over Zoom or make calls, but no, not him. On January 31, during his first public appearance since the beginning of the siege and the occupation of Ottawa, he said the following, adding a little more fuel to the fire:

We will not end this pandemic by complaining. We will end it by getting vaccinated and listening to the best public health advice.

That is what he told protesters. I do not think that worked. Now we get to step two: looking for solutions. This could also be known as the Prime Minister's inaction fest.

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• (1705)

Little by little, the stakeholders, including the Ottawa police chief and the mayor of Ottawa, tried to find a solution.

People saw what was happening in front of Parliament and thought that maybe it was not such a bad idea. They started protesting and blocking roads in other parts of the country. Some even tried in Quebec City. They stayed two days and that was the end of it. The situation in front of the House of Commons was left to deteriorate, and it set a bad example.

The Bloc Québécois is always coming up with suggestions. We usually end up having to press the government, but in the beginning we always make suggestions. The Bloc Québécois has done so from the beginning. We made six suggestions, including talking to trucker representatives, even those who are vaccinated and who are against this movement, and trying to reach out to the people protesting, but the Prime Minister did nothing.

On February 6, the City of Ottawa declared a state of emergency because it wanted the government's help. It was as though it was signalling to the federal government that things were not going well.

My father used to always say, once a Liberal, always a Liberal. He never met the member for Louis-Hébert. Even Ernest Lapointe, Mackenzie King's lieutenant used to say that he was not a Quebecer, he was not a Canadian, he was a Liberal. Even former Liberal Allan Rock criticized the current Liberal government's lack of leadership. Things are not going well.

On February 7 we were anxiously awaiting the Prime Minister's return to the House. We were just like kids waiting for Santa to arrive. We thought that the Prime Minister of Canada would have been advised to come up with a solution and that he would propose something. Plus, since he was scheduled to speak for 10 minutes, he had the time to give us some good news.

What he proposed was that the protesters should go get vaccinated. That is it. That is step two: inaction, a lack of leadership.

The good news is that the Ambassador Bridge was cleared, in response to pressure from the White House. In Manitoba, southern Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia things were eventually resolved. Quebec also had some protests, and the mayor of Quebec City and the Government of Quebec made sure that nothing got out of hand. The only blockade remaining is the one in front of the House of Commons, where we await the end of this upheaval. We support the right to protest, but we do not support an occupation. That is unacceptable.

I call step three the "atomic bomb." We have reached the stage where the Liberals know that they have lost badly. It is like a midget player who gets shut out by a pee-wee. He knows that he really blew it. He walks away, his cap by his side, and goes home without talking to anyone. His girlfriend is in the stands, but he pretends that she is not there.

This is probably what the government thought, that it had looked like a fool for 10 days, and that it would unleash the atomic bomb and look like heroes. That is not how things work at all.

Statutory Order

● (1710)

Six out of nine provinces, Quebec, the Conservative Party, the Bloc Québécois, and the Quebec National Assembly have said that they want nothing to do with this. Even Québec Solidaire, the party that is very fond of the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, said that they want nothing to do with it. Everyone has said it, except the NDP.

Despite this, the government has invoked the Emergencies Act. We are still in a situation where we see that the government already had tools. The Prime Minister told us that he would not unleash this atomic bomb until he had used tools one, two and three. However, he has not used tool one, two or three.

He has gone from acting like Pontius Pilate, doing nothing and washing his hands of the whole business, to dropping an atomic bomb. It is as though there is no in-between. However, there are indeed things in between. We saw it at the Ambassador Bridge. We have seen it in other provinces.

We all have a childhood hero. Mine was Batman. For some people, it was Zorro or some other superhero with incredible powers. I am pretty sure the Prime Minister's childhood hero was Pontius Pilate. He had this magical ability to wash his hands. The Prime Minister wanted to be just like him. In fact, his hands got all chapped from washing them so often. That is the kind of Prime Minister we have. He is like Pontius Pilate with OCD. That is what we have, unfortunately.

I would be remiss if I did not talk about the NDP members, our great moral arbiters. Here is what Svend Robinson said about their position on Twitter: “The NDP Caucus in 1970 under Tommy Douglas took a courageous and principled stand against the War Measures Act. Today's NDP under [its current leader] betrays that legacy and supports Liberals on the Emergencies Act. Shame. A very dangerous precedent is being set.”

This statement illustrates the once-quiet strength of the NDP, a leftist party that defended workers and people who needed help, not the government.

I would like to comment on what people have said about using this measure. A lot of people have said that it is pointless, that things work themselves out. When things work themselves out, it is because people already had the tools to deal with the problems, so why use this measure?

Some people said that governments are relaxing restrictions, some of them quite rapidly, so the frustration will just go away on its own. That is what *The Economist* says, not some amateur stand-up comedian. *The Economist* says this is dangerous because these measures can fan the flames of frustration.

I said earlier that, when the going gets tough, the tough men and women of this world get going. Out of the Great Depression, the worst crisis the world has ever known, emerged a hero, John Maynard Keynes, a brilliant economist and true humanist, a hero who changed the face of humanity.

John F. Kennedy became a hero because of the October missile crisis. During the Second World War, de Gaulle became a hero in France, while Churchill was Great Britain's hero. Of course there

was Mandela, in South Africa, who fought for racial justice. There was also Gandhi. They have all earned their place in the history books. These people all experienced hardship, had to be strong and decided to take a stand. They have been an inspiration to the world and their nation.

We can see how the Prime Minister behaves in the various crises we are going through. These are major, serious crises. We are talking about the worst pandemic since 1919 and trucks in front of the House of Commons. It is terrible. I can say one thing. The history books will remember the Prime Minister not as a hero, but as someone who caved when faced with adversity.

● (1715)

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, I do not know what is going on, but ever since the former leader of the opposition stepped down, or was kicked out, and the member for Carleton became the heir apparent to lead the party, the Bloc Québécois members have taken a massive change in their approach. They have lined up with the Conservatives time and again, as though they have to regurgitate the same rhetoric that we hear from the Conservatives all the time.

That is what we are seeing: a brand new approach by the Bloc Québécois. This member spoke for 20 minutes, at least 19 minutes of which was just an opportunity to air his personal grievances about the Prime Minister. He spoke very little to the actual substance of this motion.

How is it that the Bloc Québécois has put itself in this position, when polling shows that 73% of Quebecers support this move?

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Therrien: Mr. Speaker, it was quite funny to listen to my colleague, who always makes an impression, but never in a good way.

The Bloc Québécois is not aligning itself with the Conservative Party. Where did he get that idea? We are aligning ourselves with Quebec's values. We are here to defend Quebecers. Quebecers oppose this measure. Quebec journalists keep pointing this out. The Quebec National Assembly is unanimous. All members—and I mean every last one—joined voices to oppose the Emergencies Act. This includes the Conservative member, the Liberals, the CAQ, Québec Solidaire and the PQ.

Did members here really think the Bloc Québécois would contradict the National Assembly? We are here to represent Quebecers and we will continue to do so. My colleague will certainly not be the one to stop me from doing that.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the speech by my colleague from the Bloc Québécois was quite eloquent and truthful. I enjoyed his reference to trilogies.

We have seen three different governments over the past few weeks and three completely different Prime Ministers, but there were several trilogies, including the one at the beginning that he mentioned. It also happened in this crisis and, if we start looking around, I think we will see several trilogies.

Which trilogy does my colleague think we are in now? Is it the magic of *Harry Potter* or rather *Back to the Future* that will let us know what will happen tomorrow based on what has already happened?

I ask because I have not been impressed by what I have seen from the Prime Minister today or last week or in any of the trilogies so far. What does my colleague expect to see in the coming weeks with the Prime Minister?

• (1720)

Mr. Alain Therrien: Mr. Speaker, I would say *Slap Shot*, but there were only two films.

It is always the same old thing with the Prime Minister. Maybe he should be the one to answer the question. We could ask him tomorrow if he comes to the House.

[English]

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Qujannamiik, Uqaqtittiji.* I would like to thank the member for La Prairie for his very entertaining statement and for talking about leadership.

I would like to ask about the Conservatives' attempt to minimize these extremist activities. I would also like to highlight that there was news that law enforcement had intercepted a new convoy heading to the Ambassador Bridge recently.

Does the member agree that dismantling the blockade does not dismantle the leadership, and that the potential of enforcing these measures is going to be what is needed to keep the safety of Canadians, and indeed the freedom of Canadians, intact?

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Therrien: Mr. Speaker, we are asking ourselves whether or not the measures were adequate, and I want to comment on that and present the range of measures that could be at our disposal and that we could use. The fundamental problem is not whether these measures exist or are adequate, but why the Prime Minister is not using them. That is the problem.

We are justified in wondering if the measures are adequate. I hope that the government will wake up, show leadership and use them properly so we can finally resolve this situation that no one is happy about.

[English]

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend opposite for his very entertaining presentation today.

I want to put on the record of the House the report to Parliament on the Emergencies Act consultations and the extensive work that was undertaken, not just by the Prime Minister, but by the whole of government. I ask the member opposite to reflect on that.

He did mention a couple of things I want to probe him on, particularly on media. He said that the media is very supportive of the position of the Bloc. There have been a number of media reports of individuals who represent the media being attacked, intimidated and having to obtain security just to walk through the convoy.

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Could he suggest to us what would prompt the Bloc to support people who have made very insinuating remarks, who appear to be racist on a number of fronts and who are also intimidating the media? What would prompt the Bloc to support them?

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Therrien: Mr. Speaker, I believe that I was not clear and I will try again.

First, journalists do not support the Bloc Québécois. Journalists support the Bloc's position, namely that it is against this legislation.

Second, the Bloc Québécois does not support the protesters. What we want is the proper use of effective measures to put an end to this situation. The Bloc Québécois is wondering why the government is using this extreme measure when other measures could have been used but were not.

The Bloc Québécois wanted the government to show leadership and to use the tools already at its disposal, tools that were used to resolve situations elsewhere in Canada. Unfortunately, this situation is ongoing. Quite simply, this government needs to smarten up.

• (1725)

[English]

Mr. Ben Lobb (Huron—Bruce, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be here today. I would like to thank all the police involved, especially the Ontario Provincial Police, which is doing a great job across the province.

I have two points. One is on polling. The Liberal member for Kingston and the Islands has mentioned polling many times. I do not think polling has any place in what we are trying to accomplish here in keeping Canadians safe, so we need to get polling and that discussion right off the table.

The second problem is that most of the people who are in here today have not been briefed by CSIS, the RCMP or anybody. A lot of what we are talking about is hyperbole, especially on the other side.

I wonder if the member from the Bloc has any comment on that and the importance of briefing senior members in each political party to make good decisions for Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Alain Therrien: Mr. Speaker, I think the leader of the official opposition asked some time ago for the Prime Minister to meet with the opposition party leaders to discuss the crisis, learn about the plan and suggest ways to resolve the situation.

Throughout this crisis, the Bloc Québécois has been making suggestions and offering constructive ideas to come up with solutions, as it always does. Partisanship has no place in this situation. However, as members of Parliament, when we see a government that is not capable of addressing this situation and that cannot show some leadership, we have to wonder if anyone is flying this plane.

Statutory Order

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from La Prairie spoke about trilogies, but I for one am interested in the fourth instalment, something like *Po-lice Academy*.

The member also used the term “atomic bomb”. I think the use of this new Emergencies Act is historic. I have never seen anything like it. The act is unique, and there is nothing more powerful. The situation needs to be absolutely critical.

The situation only became so bad because of a lack of leadership. The government invoked the act on Monday, but today is Thursday. What has been going on the past three days? Where is the leadership?

Mr. Alain Therrien: Mr. Speaker, I should point out that the War Measures Act was used three times: twice during wartime, as the title suggests, and then in 1970 against Quebec. It left a bitter taste in our mouths. I could speak at length about how Quebecers lived through this catastrophe, which left permanent scars on Quebec.

Here, we are talking about legislation that is a bit less aggressive in terms of suspending freedoms, but it is still to be used as a last resort. I do not understand why this law is being used before other measures have been tried. What I may not have mentioned in my speech is that Quebecers do not want this on their territory. The National Assembly has said this to us over and over again. That is why we say that this is a pointless tactic and an admission of failure by the government.

[*English*]

Mr. Francesco Sorbara (Vaughan—Woodbridge, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is nice to be here this evening. I will be sharing my time with my hon. colleague and friend from Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle.

I have been in this House now over six years, and I have spoken with pleasure many times in this House on various topics, such as BIA legislation this week, Bill C-12, Bill C-8 or Bill C-2, but this evening I am speaking on something I think merits much pause, thought and importance for our country. We have reached a stage where the government needs to act.

I fundamentally believe in the rule of law, enforcing the rule of law and making sure all Canadians follow the rule of law. Sadly, events in recent weeks have added a significant layer of hardship to the lives of many Canadians who have already endured two years of a global pandemic.

All of us here went through an election last September. I canvassed extensively in my riding, and I know the feedback I received. I was privileged enough to return here to the House of Commons to represent the wonderful resident of Vaughan—Woodbridge, and I represent all my residents, much like we all do. However, I note that at that time there was much feedback and much frustration with what we were going through. The comments I heard were sometimes really disappointing, and that frustration has carried through. We have been in a global pandemic, but we are coming out of it.

When I think about tonight's debate and what will happen over the coming days, invoking the Emergencies Act will help authorities in getting our country back on track. Disruptions and illegal blockades at Canada's border crossings have halted international trade and supply chains, at a time when Canadian businesses are striving to take part in the ongoing global economic recovery.

On that point, I think about where we are as we come out of the pandemic and where the world is going, with increased global competition; increased economic nationalism; the rise of what I would call economic and regional blocs; the United States, its competition with China, and what is happening there; a reinvigorated Europe; and a post-Brexit U.K. We know we need to stand up for Canadian businesses, and we know we need to stand up for Canada's reputation globally to ensure we always implement and follow the rule of law. Those thoughts are in my mind.

We also know that during this time, here in Ottawa and across the country, municipal and provincial resources have been strained. The City of Ottawa, the City of Windsor and the Province of Ontario have all declared states of emergency. The situation has evolved over two weeks in Ottawa and almost a week at the Ambassador Bridge. There has been a substantial impact on our economy, and there are those who are unable to work due to the blockades and the occupation here in our nation's capital.

Many businesses in our nation's capital have been forced to close due to safety concerns. I have been here these last three weeks in Ottawa, and I have seen all the businesses along Sparks Street that are run by families and are unable to open. There are individuals who work at the Rideau Centre who are at home right now, not earning a paycheck to cover their bills and expenses for their families. This, frankly, must stop. This must come to an end, and invoking the Emergencies Act is the right thing to do.

About a week and a half ago, I was able to do a panel on CTV's *Power Play*, and that panel has received approximately 200,000 views on my Facebook page. I went and saw the feedback I was receiving, and I realized just how nasty and unbecoming some of those comments were. They were from the United States, Canada and different parts of the world, and I thought to myself just how frustrated people were and how the right-wing in parts of this country, and in other parts of the world, were distorting the truth, putting forward mistruths and misleading Canadians.

● (1730)

In my comments during those interviews, I said, very frankly, that the individuals outside have a right to peacefully protest. The individuals who are outside have a right for their voices to be heard, like all Canadians do, whether it is at the ballot box or whether it is assembling to peacefully protest.

However, what they do not have a right to do, for now 21 days, is to disrupt the lives of the citizens of this wonderful city that many of us here get to visit. That is not right. That needed to come to an end and I called for it that evening. I called for it in the subsequent opportunities I had, and I call for it again tonight. I truly hope the individuals outside hear what is being said in Parliament and decide to go home and back to their families.

They have many messages: anti-vax, anti-mandates, anti-Prime Minister, overthrowing a democratically elected government. Everyone is entitled to their views and I respect that, but they are not entitled to disrupt the lives of the citizens of this city or the lives of the citizens of any city across Canada. We are all under the rule of law and the invocation of the Emergencies Act is, in my view, justifiable.

Ottawa residents have been harassed and in some cases physically assaulted by protesters for practising basic public health measures during the pandemic, such as wearing a mask. Citizens have been targeted and called disgusting insults simply for the colour of their skin. Other alleged crimes have been even more egregious. Ottawa police are investigating the attempted arson of a downtown apartment building.

The situation persists fuelled, in part, by foreign funding. Ottawa residents are rightly frustrated by the ongoing illegal activity occurring in their city. Recently, some even took to the streets to counter-protest, physically preventing more vehicles from joining the disruptions. The chief of the Ottawa Police Service, Peter Sloly, publicly announced his resignation on February 15 in the midst of this unprecedented situation. The mayor of Ottawa, Jim Watson, publicly announced he had negotiated with members of the convoy to allow for certain residential streets to be vacated of trucks.

How would we feel if we went home to our individual ridings and to our homes, and there were vehicles parked in front of our homes with people honking at any time during the day? I do not believe that any members of the 338 of us who have the privilege of sitting in this House, who were sent here by residents, would think that would be cool. I do not think anyone would accept that. That is not acceptable in our country. That is not following the rule of law.

An integrated command centre has been established to consolidate response efforts between the Ottawa Police Service, Ontario Provincial Police and the RCMP. The Government of Canada continues to support the City of Ottawa, the Province of Ontario and all the law enforcement agencies involved as needed. RCMP resources have already been deployed. Invoking the Emergencies Act will help authorities clear downtown Ottawa streets of illegally parked trucks and help restore order and peace in affected communities.

Law enforcement agencies in Coutts, Alberta, are also facing very real and worsening threats. A tractor and semi-trailer truck attempted to ram a police vehicle. As my colleagues have noted, the Alberta RCMP also identified a criminal organization operating among protesters and arrested 13 individuals, seizing firearms, tactical vests, high-capacity magazines and ammunition in the process.

Yes, that actually happened in Canada. They had stored their weapons in trailers and were reportedly prepared to use force against the police if the police attempted to disrupt the blockade. The CBSA port of entry remains open and the supply lines continue to flow at this border crossing in Alberta.

Throughout the evolution of these protests, the Government of Canada has been closely monitoring and engaging with partners as needed. This is a clear threat that is national in scope and not just impacting one or two provinces. We recognize and sympathize with the challenges that many Canadians face as result of the situation,

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along with the sacrifices made by all Canadians, including the residents of my riding, Vaughan—Woodbridge, through the pandemic, which is nearly two years in. Thankfully, due to vaccinations, we are, I would say, exiting and on to sunnier days.

The federal government continues to call on everyone involved not to jeopardize public peace or endanger anyone, and not to participate purposefully in illegal events such as what we are seeing outside the House of Commons.

• (1735)

While the right of everyone to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly is an important part of our democracy—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Unfortunately, the hon. member's time is up. The hon. member will have a chance to add to his speech through questions and comments.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Beauport—Limoilou.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Madam Speaker, we will never associate ourselves with the illegal actions of certain protesters. It must be said.

This may seem simplistic, but I would like to summarize, with my own words and images, what I see the government doing. It is like a parent whose child keeps doing something that puts them in danger, but nine times out of 10, the parent does nothing. However, the 10th time, the parent flies into a rage. The child does not understand what is happening, which makes all of this pointless.

That is a bit like what is happening right now. Before flying into a rage, maybe the government could use existing laws, such as the Criminal Code.

• (1740)

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

[*English*]

I am a father of three daughters and I understand well the analogy of raising children. I also understand very well that we are a nation of laws and that the rule of law needs to be enforced.

I again ask the individuals outside to please go home, go back to their loved ones and go back to their families. Let us do the right thing. Let us allow the citizens of Ottawa to return to their normal daily lives, and let us hope that this situation resolves itself peacefully so we can all move on with our lives, especially the wonderful citizens of our nation's capital.

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Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for his well-toned speech. I appreciate it.

What has changed? A couple of days ago, Windsor was cleared. Surrey is cleared. Coutts, Alberta, is cleared. Emerson is clearing. All those were cleared under existing laws and existing enforcement measures. Those main issues have cleared. Why bring in this sledgehammer now? I hear a gentleman across the way heckling that they could return. Is the intent then to continue this forever under the defence that it could possibly return?

Could the member fill us in as to what has really changed? Now that these items have been cleared, why bring in the act now?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, the invocation of the Emergencies Act is something done with much thought, much diligence and much judiciousness. It is timely, proportionate and targeted. There are many safeguards put in place.

The situation outside is now in day 21. It needs to be resolved. We need to act as a country. The federal government is there working with the province and the municipality, and this is justifiable. That is what this comes down to for me: Is this justifiable? My answer is yes.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Madam Speaker, just this Monday, the City of Ottawa still claimed it did not have enough resources from provincial and federal governments to deal with the occupation. Just the day before that, the Minister of Emergency Preparedness was blaming the police for the lack of enforcement. While there may be some truth to both claims, both are finger pointing and blaming each other. This is not what Canadians need. They need leadership.

Do my Liberal colleagues agree that it is unacceptable that we see arguments about resources in the third week of this occupation? Why has this not been figured out yet?

Mr. Francesco Sorbara: Madam Speaker, I do not believe in Monday-morning quarterbacking. What I believe in is leadership and action. Our government, every step of the way, has worked with the City of Ottawa and provided resources whether it is RCMP officers, intelligence or intelligence gathering. We will continue to work with every single province and territory and with our municipal leaders as well.

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Madam Speaker, invoking the Emergencies Act was a difficult but necessary decision our government chose to make for the good of Canada. It was made after carefully considering all other possible solutions to our ongoing emergency. We recognize the powers of the Emergencies Act, which was enshrined into Canadian law in 1988, should only be utilized in very specific and dire circumstances. The criteria are strict, but we believe the current situation meets the definition of threats to the security of Canada as outlined in the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act.

As the Minister of Public Safety has noted, numerous consultations were completed prior to moving forward. It is important to note that this decision is not a catalyst for a military intervention. We are not preventing Canadians from exercising their right to peaceful assembly or to protest legally. We are not suspending fun-

damental rights or freedoms, or overriding the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We are not limiting the freedom of speech of Canadians. This decision aims to keep our citizens and our institutions safe.

Through these new powers, the government is enabling the RCMP to have jurisdiction to enforce municipal bylaws and provincial offences; prohibiting taking part in a public assembly where it is considered a breach of peace and goes beyond lawful protest; regulating the use of certain property, including goods used in blockades; designating secure and protected places and infrastructure that are critical to the economy, such as the airport or border crossings; compelling those capable to render essential services, in this case ordering tow truck drivers to move vehicles blocking roads; and imposing fines of up to \$5,000 or imprisonment of up to five years on those who breach any of the above orders.

The current situation requires additional tools not held by any other federal, provincial or territorial law. These disruptions and illegal blockades are being supported by funds that appear to come from foreign sources. Therefore, the following first-time deterrents will be put in place: directing Canadian financial institutions to review their relationships with anyone involved in the illegal blockades and report to the RCMP or CSIS; giving federal institutions new, broad authority to share information on anyone suspected of involvement with the blockades with Canadian banks and financial institutions; and giving banks and other financial service providers the ability to immediately freeze or suspend an account, personal or corporate, without a court order.

As the Prime Minister mentioned earlier this week, we cannot and will not allow illegal and dangerous activities to continue. Blockades have stifled the flow of goods between Canada and our largest trading partner, the United States. The RCMP has arrested 11 individuals who were part of the blockade at Coutts. According to the RCMP press release, the group was said to have a willingness to use force against the police if any attempts were made to disrupt the blockade. As part of the operation, the RCMP seized long guns, hand guns, body armour, high-capacity magazines and a large quantity of ammunition.

Meanwhile, residents in the city of Ottawa continue to be subjected to what has now been weeks of unlawful behaviour that has challenged the capacity of local law enforcement and closed local businesses. In recent days, Ottawa residents have taken to the streets themselves in order to prevent additional vehicles from joining the occupation.

● (1745)

The invoking of the Emergencies Act sends a strong message to protesters across the country. The protesters have been heard. They should stop hurting this nation. It is time to go home, please.

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If a protester is a company owner and their truck is being used in an illegal blockade, it is time to put it back on the road so it may serve a better, more productive purpose.

Mr. Gerald Soroka (Yellowhead, CPC): Madam Speaker, in your speech, you are basically implying that there are acts of terrorism that have been performed or are going to be insinuated throughout this. You and your fellow colleagues have always talked about—

• (1750)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): All questions and comment must be addressed through the chair and not directly to the member.

Mr. Gerald Soroka: Madam Speaker, as I was saying, the Liberals are talking about acts of terrorism or types of terrorist activities, but what proof has actually been brought forward? We have never talked about this, and we were never told about this.

That is what I am questioning. What information has this member not been sharing with the public or with her fellow members of the caucus?

Ms. Anju Dhillon: Madam Speaker, when a group holds a city hostage, when they hold its people hostage and try to compel change through force and violating the rights of others, that is terrorism. When a group scares people, honks throughout the night and people are confined to their homes, that is terrorism. There is a women's shelter here, where women who are already victims of abuse and have suffered trauma are terrified to go outside.

This is pretty much the definition. Our city is being held hostage and this is no way to ask for change. There is peaceful protest. There is legal protest, and this is not it.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Madam Speaker, one of the convoy leaders, an individual named Chris Barber, was just arrested about 10 minutes ago, which leads us to believe in what the acting Ottawa police chief said. At his press conference this afternoon, he said that there would be a strong, forceful response and that this weekend would not be a repeat of the previous ones.

Is the Emergencies Act still relevant, given that seven out of 10 provinces refuse it, and all the places in Quebec and in Canada that were blocked by truckers have been cleared, apart from Ottawa?

Ms. Anju Dhillon: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question.

Yes, this law really is necessary. No one has been able to get the individuals on Wellington Street to move. The people who were able to bring about change in Coutts—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. Unless they have the floor, I would ask members to be very respectful of those who do. If members have questions and comments, wait for me to ask them when it is time for questions and comments. Wait for me to put that question to the floor.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle.

Ms. Anju Dhillon: Madam Speaker, this legislation does not force the provinces to use the measures in the act. The government is giving them the option if they need it. No one is being forced to use them, and jurisdiction is still respected.

In order to solve certain problems, this legislation is indeed necessary.

[English]

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, as I helped my neighbour recently, pleading with the occupiers who have held residents in Ottawa hostage, back into her home, she said to me that nothing she does matters. Nobody cares and nobody is helping. Unfortunately, I could not say anything to ease her concerns. It should have never come to this. A lack of clear leadership on the part of the government is why we are here today. Workers have lost wages, businesses have shut down and the health and well-being of the residents of Ottawa have declined.

Does the member agree we could have avoided being where we are today if the Liberals had shown immediate and clear leadership from the outset?

Ms. Anju Dhillon: Madam Speaker, we respected jurisdiction and, as the Prime Minister said, if he were to be asked for additional help, he would give it. He was asked and he gave it. This was as quickly as our government could have acted. I really hope that everybody can get on board with this and realize that things need to be settled and people need to go back to their peaceful lives. They can continue protesting legally and peacefully, but not the way it is happening right now.

• (1755)

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner (Calgary Nose Hill, CPC): Madam Speaker, tonight I make an appeal to every Canadian. We are a nation on the brink. Our country has not been tested like this in a generation.

After two long years that have tested nearly every one of the societal systems that sustain our peace, health and prosperity, we have reached a tipping point of confluent crises. Many cannot afford food, energy and housing. Our health care system is broken. Many have lost jobs and are struggling with the burden of a loss of identity and meaning that comes from work. Many are struggling with children who have had more days out of school than in—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member. I may have missed it because I was sidetracked, but I am wondering if the member mentioned that she was splitting her time.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Yes, Madam Speaker, I am splitting my time with the member for Fundy Royal.

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Many are struggling with barriers, magnified over the last two years, such as racism, misogyny, bigotry and poverty. All of us, whether we admit it or not, are struggling with the trauma that comes from the loss of personal control that happens when our freedoms are restricted, when trust in government institutions and democratic systems is eroded, when we are in conflict with one another, and when there is a lack of clarity on when or if life will ever return to what it once was. Most of us are guilty of finding solace in social media algorithms, politicians and news outlets that discourage us from finding common ground with one another while rewarding us when we calcify or radicalize our beliefs.

To the convoy in front of Parliament Hill, let me be clear. Protest can be peaceful but still break the law, and the blockade occurring in downtown Ottawa is breaking the law. Trucks have never been allowed to legally be parked in the middle of a major thoroughfare, or on the Ambassador Bridge, or at the middle of border crossings.

To those who are illegally blockading public infrastructure, the law must be respected. They must move out, and not afford the federal government the opportunity to attempt to justify the use of the Emergencies Act with recalcitrance.

To those who do not believe COVID restrictions should come to an end, let me also be clear. As one of my Liberal colleagues stated last week, not everyone can work from the comfort of home. Precious few of the class of politicians and bureaucrats who have been making the decisions to extend restrictions, with no plan to do the heavy lifting of fixing the broken systems, have actually experienced the conditions of frontline workers in Canada over the last two years. If they cannot find empathy and common ground with the people who bear the burden of their restrictions, then they have lost the authority to be in their position. Be better and rise to the occasion.

To those who would inflame these frustrations and divisions with rhetoric, outright lies, diversions, borderline slander, conspiracy, uncompassionate behaviour and hate for their own political or personal gain, instead of leading us through the breach, for shame. Left or right, we will resist them with critical thinking, understanding and radical compassion.

To those who would use these frustrations and division to preach violence against leaders, frontline workers and those who do not share their brand of rigid world view, for shame. Left or right, right or left, we will resist them with the law and with courage.

To those who would use these frustrations and divisions to suggest that our democracy should be overthrown or thrown out, for shame. Left or right, right or left, we will resist them by fighting to protect our democratic system, strengthening it and cherishing it.

I turn now to the matter at hand, which is the historic and unprecedented decision by a Prime Minister of our nation to invoke the Emergencies Act. A representative democracy only survives when it can demonstrate to the people who put the trust of their liberties into it that their voices will be heard, that due process will be given, that the independence of the judiciary will be upheld, that Parliament will reign supreme and that the rule of law will be maintained.

Over the past several years, we have witnessed the federal government attempt to take the Speaker of the House of Commons to court. We have seen the firing of Canada's solicitor general over refusals to interfere in the independence of the judiciary. We have seen the suspension of Parliament, massive spending with minimal scrutiny, hiding of documents, delayed freedom of information requests, underfunded auditors and more. We have also seen federal COVID restrictions extended with no metrics or end game. Not once has the current government demonstrated that it will give back the power that it took from the people of Canada. For that reason, the Emergencies Act, in the hands of this Liberal government, should be opposed.

The federal government has not demonstrated to Canadians that existing laws and measures, which are bound by judicial oversight, are not sufficient to end the illegal blockades. That is, there is no evidence that we cannot end illegal blockades without the use of the Emergencies Act.

In Ottawa, systemic failures of local law enforcement and delayed reaction by all levels of government likely have led us to this juncture. However, the federal government has not made a compelling case that the suspending of normal democratic processes via the Emergencies Act is necessary to resolve the situation. The reality is that the federal government went from doing virtually nothing about the crisis to invoking the nuclear option that is the Emergencies Act. At a time when they are asking Canadians to trust them, the members of the government are not providing briefings to parliamentarians on the situation or on what action they have or have not taken.

There are many existing laws that could be used by the federal government, but it has not explained why or how they are not sufficient, which undermines the argument of proportionality. For example, while many Liberal partisans will say they cannot direct the police, the fact is that the federal government very much can offer direction to both the RCMP and the Public Prosecution Service of Canada.

● (1800)

Section 5 of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act states:

The Governor in Council may appoint an officer, to be known as the Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, to hold office during pleasure

This section actually provides this type of direction.

In another example, the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada has the power to direct the Director of Public Prosecutions under section 10 of the Director of Public Prosecutions Act.

The federal government also has the authority under section 273.6 of the National Defence Act to issue directions authorizing the Canadian Forces to provide assistance in respect of any law enforcement matter if the Governor in Council or the minister, as the case may be, looks at several considerations.

All of this is to say that the federal government had multiple legal options when it came to showing some leadership to put an end to this crisis through law enforcement and prosecutorial means. Instead, the Liberals chose to go straight to the Emergencies Act, without justification to Parliament. In fact, blockades at the Ambassador Bridge and the Coutts Crossing were resolved prior to its invocation. This lack of clarity is reason enough for opposition.

The Liberals insist that these measures are compliant with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, as the Emergencies Act itself states that any temporary measures must be compliant with the charter and the Bill of Rights. However, many civil liberties advocates and experts have already expressed concerns that the OIC, the Order in Council, has many issues with respect to the right of Canadians to peacefully assemble under section 2, the right of all Canadians to life, liberty and security of person. Under section 7, for example, how can they conscript towing companies without violating their liberty? Section 8 provides protections against unreasonable search and seizure. How can they freeze assets or report transactions without violating this section?

The Liberals argue that all such violations are reasonable limits and justifiable under section 1 as proportionate to the objective of clearing the blockades. The issue with section 1 arguments is that these matters are for the courts to determine through well-established legal processes like the Oakes test. All of this could take a much longer time than the Emergencies Act could be in effect, but would have an impact on the actions taken while it was in effect.

To justify the use of the act, the Liberals should table a charter statement to further explain their reasoning as to why and how what they are proposing is charter compliant. The fact that they have not done this is reason to oppose the act.

Further, the Liberals have not engaged the Privacy Commissioner to demonstrate how Canadians' right to privacy would be maintained. Today I wrote to the commissioner to ask him to begin an inquiry into this matter.

The illegal blockades in Ottawa must end. The escalation of rhetoric and tension in our country must end. COVID restrictions must end. A path forward to empower and inspire Canadians in coming through the brokenness of the last two years is what we should be focused on at this juncture, not extending government power over the people of Canada without jurisdiction or justification.

This is an unprecedented use of power in Canada. We should be looking for every way possible to de-escalate the situation, as was done at the Ambassador Bridge and at the Coutts border crossing using existing processes. The use of the act should never be normalized. In debate today, I fear it is becoming so.

Our nation needs hope. We need to come together. Further extending the power of the federal government without scrutiny, with-

out use of oversight by the judiciary, will not heal these divisions. For that reason, I believe the act should be opposed.

I call on every Canadian watching this debate tonight to come together in unity and move forward through the crisis of the pandemic.

● (1805)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to read a quote.

What we have seen in the occupation of Ottawa and blockages at border crossings is not the right of protest enshrined in our constitution, but illegal activity that represents a national security and economic threat to Canada.

That is a quote from February 14 from Peter MacKay, a previous member of Parliament, as I am sure this member knows very well.

I am curious if she could comment as to whether or not she agrees with Peter MacKay's assessment of what is going on.

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Madam Speaker, former minister MacKay was faced with many national crises and many instances when he had to use his power as a minister to help de-escalate situations in the country. That is the exact opposite of what the government has done.

At this juncture, instead of trying to seize power from Canadians, we should be trying to give it back to them. That does not mean that these blockades should not end; they should. The federal government should be assisting law enforcement in doing so. However, instead of it looking at ways to de-escalate the situation and give power back to Canadians, the Liberal government is doing the opposite. For that reason, this act should be opposed.

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech and the references she made to democracy. Today, my democracy is suffering. I am concerned about my democracy. It seems to me that the Emergencies Act or the War Measures Act is the final weapon in a democracy.

This week, we heard protesters say that they would keep going and would not stand down. That is usually a left-wing slogan, but now we are hearing it from the right. However, as the member mentioned, the left and the right are no longer relevant here.

The government's attitude is that it is going to plow ahead. However, at some point, we must talk to one another. The government did not show leadership on this. Is my colleague's democracy suffering today as well?

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[English]

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Madam Speaker, we should be trying to find ways to de-escalate tension and find common ground instead of using division and escalation of tension for personal or political gain. This is something that has happened far too long in this country, and it needs to stop. Our country is at a breaking point right now. We need to figure out how to make people have hope, how to feed them and how to fix our broken health care system. That is what people are looking to us for.

The use of the Emergencies Act is unprecedented and unnecessary. It does not secure our democracy; in fact, it erodes it, and for that reason, I will be opposing it.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Qujannamiik, Uqaqtittiji.* I would like to thank the member for Calgary Nose Hill for her statement.

Yesterday we heard from the member opposite that the Emergencies Act was not needed to settle the rail blockades of 2020, the Oka crisis or the crisis at Caledonia, but these are not comparable to today's realities. The Emergencies Act is a drastic measure for the sole purpose of protecting our safety. For the last three weeks continuing to today, our safety continues to be threatened.

We have heard today from the member's party in a way that I interpret as trying to minimize the dangers being posed by these extremists. Can the member explain why her party has chosen to ignore the behaviour of these extremists while it continues to put Canadians' safety at risk?

Hon. Michelle Rempel Garner: Madam Speaker, we need to respect the rights of indigenous and first nations persons in Canada.

At this juncture, I believe that the illegal blockades in Ottawa must end. I said that throughout my speech. I also outlined how the federal government could be using many of the tools that are at its disposal or could have used them in the past, but instead chose the nuclear option of the Emergencies Act. This benefits no one. This power grab takes away power from everyone in Canada, including first nations and indigenous persons. We should not be supporting it. We should be trying to find ways to come together, to uphold the rule of law while resolving our differences without giving further power to the Government of Canada.

• (1810)

Hon. Rob Moore (Fundy Royal, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is a privilege to speak in this House this evening on what is a very important matter. Today we are debating the unprecedented measures the government is taking by invoking the never-before-used Emergencies Act.

I want to be clear that I am not arguing that there is no place in law for the Emergencies Act. What I am arguing, along with many others, is that it is a completely disproportionate tool to effectively deal with these protests and that the government's rationale for using it has way too many potholes to even begin to enumerate.

The predecessor legislation to the Emergencies Act, the War Measures Act, was used only three times: once in World War I, once in World War II and then in the FLQ crisis in the seventies. In order to even think about invoking the Emergencies Act, we have

to look at the context in which its predecessor legislation was used and how rarely, in fact, it was implemented.

Number one, there has to be a national emergency. When we look at how the act itself defines a national emergency, the act describes a national emergency as an "urgent and critical situation of a temporary nature". Now we all know that the protests are not an "urgent and critical situation of a temporary nature". I am sure the Prime Minister would have jumped into action 20 days ago if that was indeed the case.

Regarding the act's requirement that a national emergency be of a temporary nature, that part I can agree with, because the situation has been so temporary. In fact, all of the blockades at the international border between Canada and the U.S. had already been cleared before the Emergencies Act was ever implemented, completely without the benefit of this legislation.

The definition goes on to say that a national emergency "seriously endangers the lives, health or safety of Canadians and is of such proportions or nature as to exceed the capacity or authority of a province to deal with it". Let us be honest: The truckers parked outside of Parliament today do not seriously endanger the lives of Canadians. Again, when it comes to international border crossings, the provinces have both the capacity and the authority to bring that to an end, and indeed they already have.

The act goes on to describe a national emergency as one that "seriously threatens the ability of the Government of Canada to preserve the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of Canada and that cannot be effectively dealt with under any other law of Canada." If an emergency does not fit that description, then the Emergencies Act is not to be used. If a few hundred parked trucks pose a threat to the preservation of the sovereignty and security of Canada, one of the greatest countries in the world, a G7 country, that is a sobering testament of the government's dismal and failed leadership, leaving our country so vulnerable that its very existence could be called into question by a group of protesters on Wellington Street.

When we look at this situation through the vantage point that we have of being here in Ottawa, I think it is very clear to all members in this House that the threshold for a national emergency simply has not been met, but, for argument's sake, let us say that the Prime Minister and his entire Liberal caucus truly and sincerely believe that the trucks parked on the street just outside these doors are a real emergency requiring unprecedented action from the federal government. To that I would just have to say, what a sad state of affairs. If this is what an emergency looks like to the Liberal government, what incredibly privileged lives they must lead, compared to the experiences that my own constituents in Fundy Royal have had over the past two years in facing the dire ramifications and consequences of lockdowns. Back home, an emergency looks like the gym owner who has lost their business after two years of personal sacrifices in the hope of keeping their business afloat; an emergency can look like the single mom who lost her job because of the government's vaccine mandate and then had that same government tell her, cruelly, that she could not collect employment insurance.

Ultimately, Liberals are trying to use unprecedented emergency powers to respond to an event that does not even meet the threshold of a national emergency as described in the act itself. While the emergency that the Liberals say they are trying to address is not an actual emergency, the consequences and infringements on the civil liberties and rights that we so dearly hold as Canadians are very real.

• (1815)

The Canadian Civil Liberties Association stated yesterday that the government “has not met the threshold necessary to invoke the Emergencies Act”. It also warns of a threat facing our democracy and civil liberties if the Emergencies Act is inappropriately applied, as it clearly is in this case. The B.C. Civil Liberties Association just today called on Liberal members and all members of the House to vote against this and for the Prime Minister to revoke the Emergencies Act.

Crises we faced as a nation without invoking the Emergencies Act include, in 1990, the Oka crisis, a 78-day standoff between Mohawk protesters, law enforcement and the Canadian Armed Forces; in 2006, a group of extremists now known as the Toronto 18 plotting to carry out violent attacks here on Parliament Hill; and in 2010, the G20 protests, which turned to riots in Canada's largest city, causing hundreds of thousands of dollars in property damages. Toronto's chief of police at the time was none other than the current Minister of Emergency Preparedness. It was also not invoked on October 22, 2014, when, as many members of the House will remember, there was a terrorist attack on Parliament Hill and the War Memorial, which killed Corporal Nathan Cirillo before Centre Block itself was stormed.

These were serious and at times fatal incidents that were entirely more dangerous and destructive than the truckers parked outside. The government invoking the Emergencies Act at this time just does not add up. Invoking the Emergencies Act bypasses the democratic process. We cannot become complacent and allow these unprecedented powers to become a tool of government to shut down dissent that it does not like. Civil liberties, the rule of law and democratic norms are never guaranteed. These principles require constant vigilance to defend. Canada was built on the foundation of these principles, and we cannot allow cracks to form.

Two days ago, I met with a man who immigrated to Canada from Romania. He had tears in his eyes and said that it was a sad day for him. He lost his father to the Romanian regime under a brutal dictator and came to Canada in hopes of finding freedom. Coming from a totalitarian regime where one is persecuted for one's political beliefs, he recognizes what he sees here. It is hard to imagine what it must feel like to live in a country where a person is not allowed to think or speak freely without being under the threat of persecution, but this gentleman I spoke with knows it all too well. The division being sowed by the Prime Minister and the great lengths he is going to stomp out dissenting opinions are much too familiar.

That is what this is. The Prime Minister is trying to eradicate any opinions that do not match his. This is a political crisis for the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister's instinct, unfortunately, and we have all seen it in the House over and over, as recently as yesterday, is to divide. We know that not everyone who disagrees with

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the government is a racist, misogynist or white supremacist, but it is a lot better for him if everybody thinks that. Just yesterday in the House, the Prime Minister accused a young Jewish member of Parliament of standing with swastikas. We might be wondering what triggered him to make such a disgusting statement. The member for Thornhill dared to ask the Prime Minister when he lost his way, since he stated in 2015 that if Canadians were going to trust their government, their government needed to trust Canadians. It speaks volumes that pointing out his own hypocrisy sent the Prime Minister into this rage.

The Prime Minister has no problem joining in protests that are promoting the ideology he agrees with. We all know this in the House. When he agrees with it and it is a good look for his brand, he is there. Now that the protests do not align with his views, he is going for the nuclear option of invoking the Emergencies Act. The thing about being the leader of a free and fair democracy like Canada is that we do not get to pick and choose who gets to speak out and on what issues. The Prime Minister does not get to unilaterally suppress the civil liberties of people he does not like. That is what dictators do.

All Canadians should be concerned by the actions of the Prime Minister and his Liberal government. All Canadians should be concerned when a group is targeted by the federal government for its political beliefs. Indeed, all Canadians should be concerned by the precedent being set by the government. I will be proud to vote in opposition to this government overreach.

• (1820)

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. In accordance with Standing Order 43(2)(a), I would like to indicate that the remaining Conservative Party of Canada caucus speaking slots are hereby divided by two.

Ms. Ya'ara Saks (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have heard the words of my colleague on the other side of the House. As a Jewish member of Parliament and a descendant of survivors of the Holocaust as well, I, like many Canadians, was shocked to see Nazi and Confederate flags. I was dismayed, angry and horribly hurt.

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How many Nazi flags does it take? How many donors from the U.S. Capitol riots does it take? It is 1,100 people and counting who have donated to these illegal blockades. How many guns need to be seized? How much vitriol like “honk honk”, which is a term for “Heil Hitler”, do we need to see by these protesters on social media? How many times do we have to see clear indicators that what is out there is not about the hard two years that every Canadian has suffered? This is about something much deeper, darker and uglier that is threatening the stability of the House, the work that we do as legislators each and every day for our constituents and the democracy that we have to uphold.

When will it be an emergency for you and your colleagues across the floor—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member knows full well that she needs to address her questions and comments through the Chair. I have been trying to signal the member because there are other people who would like to ask questions as well.

The hon. member for Fundy Royal.

Hon. Rob Moore: Madam Speaker, clearly all members of the House denounce anti-Semitism of all kinds. The Conservatives have been saying that it is time to move on; it is time for the trucks to go. We have been saying that, but what is very clear is that the Emergencies Act is an absolutely inappropriate tool. Seizing the bank accounts of individuals who we disagree with because of their political beliefs is unprecedented and it is wrong.

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Fundy Royal for his speech and for rising to oppose the Emergencies Act. I am doing so as well. I remember that, in question period either last week or the week before, because this situation has been going on for three weeks, the government was asked why it was not taking action, why it was not moving, why it was not doing anything about the protesters. The answer was that it was up to Ottawa police to handle the situation. Three weeks later, the government invoked the Emergencies Act. It makes no sense. How did we get to this point?

The Ottawa police chief announced that they are finally going to take action. What is the member expecting to happen this weekend?

[English]

Hon. Rob Moore: Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister at one point said that measures like this should be a last resort, but in this case it was his first resort. He did nothing to de-escalate it. In fact, as many people have said, he has thrown gasoline on embers. All the border crossings are open. I walk among the protesters every night on my way to my apartment from this place and they have been peaceful. Everyone in the House knows they have been peaceful. This is an inappropriate tool to use on a peaceful protest.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Madam Speaker, to the member's final comment, it is clear that Ottawa residents would disagree completely. Some residents have been the target of racist, misogynistic and homophobic attacks by people involved in this illegal occupation.

Let us be clear. This has lasted as long as it has in part because of the way in which the Conservatives, including the Conservative leader, have aided and abetted the illegal occupation. Just today we heard from news media that a Conservative MP was giving a thumbs-up to members of the illegal occupation.

What will it take for the Conservatives to condemn the illegal occupation and take a stand against those who want to overthrow democracy and against movements led by white supremacists?

● (1825)

Hon. Rob Moore: Madam Speaker, a lot of members in the House seem to be confused. If something is an emergency or an inconvenience or if there is something we want to change or disagree with, it is a matter of debate. The fact of the matter is, to enact the Emergencies Act, the territorial integrity, security and sovereignty of Canada have to be at risk. No one can seriously claim that the protest on Wellington Street is impacting the territorial integrity and sovereignty of our country. If it is, we have bigger problems than we think.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind members that if they do not stand, I cannot acknowledge them because I do not know they want to speak.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I apologize for not rising. I am still working on my new knees.

I am honoured to rise tonight in one of the most important debates we have had in this place in the time I have been a member of Parliament, and I am on the horns of a dilemma.

I want to acknowledge that I am standing on the traditional territory of the people of the Algonquin nation. Their patience and tolerance with us is indeed generous, and I say *meegwetch*.

This is a very difficult debate, and it is difficult for many reasons. One reason for me is that I have not yet decided how I will vote, neither has my parliamentary colleague for Kitchener Centre. We are looking deeply at the Emergencies Act and its implications, including the downsides, which are evident, and the need for it, which remains a question.

This speech will be more legalistic than usual. I am essentially going to go through an exercise of statutory interpretation, compare it with the facts and see where we are. I am actually grappling with two questions tonight: How do we vote, and how do we analyze the legal questions?

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In this debate today, and from 7 a.m. until midnight tomorrow, as well as the day after, the day after, and part of Monday too, we are going to hear debate not grounded in statutory interpretation, but filled with a lot of emotion. A lot of charges and countercharges will be heard. Both sides have already generously festooned this debate with wedge issues and red herrings. However, I certainly think Canadians, the citizens of this country, need to know what we are talking about, and I will do my best to bring it home.

The first question is this: What is the Emergencies Act?

It is very important to say it is not the War Measures Act. The War Measures Act, as used by the current Prime Minister's father, Pierre Trudeau, in the FLQ crisis, was an egregious violation of rights and freedoms right across the country. It was a suspension of civil liberties everywhere all at once. It was directed against people of Quebec, and even people with no connection whatsoever to anything radical, who were merely political opponents of the government of the day, were rounded up.

There was an official apology in the last session of Parliament. By the way, when the War Measures Act was invoked in the 1970s, police in Vancouver rode into peace camps and started beating people up, because civil liberties were gone right across Canada, and they did not need to have a reason. This is not that.

The Emergencies Act is the work, which I have to say impresses me, of reflective parliamentarians who gathered in the 1980s, when they had no imminent emergency to which they had to respond. They looked at public welfare, such as a pandemic, and how we would respond to that. Would we need the Emergencies Act, and what kind of emergencies would it be for? They looked at war. They looked at natural disasters, and they looked at the situation the government has now invoked, the declaration we are debating tonight, which is of the public order emergency category.

However, when they did that work, those parliamentarians made it clear that this act, by its very language, meant the military could not be called in. By its very language, it says the Charter of Rights and Freedoms will be honoured, and unlike the War Measures Act, it created parliamentary oversight, part of which we are doing here tonight. For any government using this declaration for an emergency, Parliament must debate the matter and vote within seven sitting days. As well, Parliament will have a committee to continue to oversee what takes place under the Emergencies Act to make sure it conforms to the law. As well, 20 members of Parliament and 10 senators, at any time during the 30-day life of this emergency declaration, can gather and request that we debate it again and vote again.

So, in a minority Parliament, this does suggest that the executive, in other words the cabinet and the Prime Minister, do not have the power to call the Emergencies Act. Obviously, they have done the declaration and it is in effect right now, but there is parliamentary oversight, something that was not present under the War Measures Act.

This is described as a public order emergency. Under the Emergencies Act, that is "an emergency that arises from threats to the security of Canada and that is so serious as to be a national emergency".

● (1830)

In analyzing this definition, it turns out that the words "threats to the security of Canada" might not mean what one might take as a plain meaning when we think to ourselves what a threat to security is. No, it is specifically described as being the meaning that we would find in the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act. We go to another act to find the definition for threats to the security of Canada.

This is fascinating. I think I may be the first one to mention it. Threats to the security of Canada in the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act is defined with four points to describe it. I will read only (b) because that is the one that most applies in this circumstance. According to the act, threats to the security of Canada include:

(b) foreign influenced activities within or relating to Canada that are detrimental to the interests of Canada and are clandestine or deceptive or involve a threat to any person,

The second part of that definition that we get from the Emergencies Act itself says that not only must it be a threat to the security of Canada, such as the one I just read out in definitions from the Security Intelligence Service Act, it must also be so serious as to be a national emergency.

For the national emergency definition, as others have referenced in the House, we go back to the Emergency Act:

3. For the purposes of this Act, a national emergency is an urgent and critical situation of a temporary nature that

(a) seriously endangers the lives, health or safety of Canadians and is of such proportions or nature as to exceed the capacity or authority of a province to deal with it, or

(b) seriously threatens the ability of the Government of Canada to preserve the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of Canada

I question whether that test been met, whether that threshold been met. That takes further interpretation based on the facts. I personally, and I found this in the declaration itself, so the government is also troubled by this, am troubled by the foreign influence aspect of what we are seeing across Canada.

The declaration which we are debating tonight includes the point that the protests "have become a rallying point for anti-government and anti-authority, anti-vaccination, conspiracy theory and white supremacist groups throughout Canada and other Western countries." It says, "The protesters have varying ideological grievances, with demands ranging from an end to all public health restrictions to the overthrow of the elected government".

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That does seem very consistent with our first question about whether this is a threat to the security of Canada, under the meaning in the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act, when foreign influenced activities within or related to Canada are detrimental to the interests of Canada, such as blocking access to trade, blocking communities and shutting down communities. Also, are they clandestine or deceptive? Yes they are, if the money is coming from overseas, people are using anonymous email addresses and they are sending money into Canada for the purpose of disrupting our nation.

What is that purpose? Where do we find further evidence of what foreign influence might be attempting to visit on Canada, but also on other political regimes? This is from yesterday's Associated Press: "How American cash for Canada protests could sway US politics". In this article, a series of journalists working for Associated Press makes the case that this convoy and the various protests across Canada under the banner of "freedom convoy" is "really aimed at energizing conservative politics in the U.S. [and elsewhere]. Republicans think standing with protesters up north will galvanize fundraising and voter turnout".

No wonder we have luminaries of the far right south of the border such as Texan Republican Ted Cruz and Georgia Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene calling the protesters in Canada heroes and patriots. They are the darlings of Fox News right now. Senator Rand Paul said that he hopes the truckers come to the United States and "clog up cities". In other words, one aspect of what raises this to the level of national emergency is that it also has tentacles. The longer it goes on here, the more it is intended to inspire disruptions in other economies, including our number one trading partner. Does it rise to the level of a national emergency?

• (1835)

This is a harder one for me. Does it rise to the level of a national emergency? We have seen blockades being removed. They were geographically easier. There were fewer people. The logistics of the Ambassador Bridge is not the same as what is going on right now outside this place, and I disagree with colleagues in this place who have said that, if we are here in Parliament, it means it is safe. That is not the case.

Friends of mine in this place and members of their staff have had feces thrown at them as they go back and forth to work. We have had people yell at us and abuse us, as we try to go through the streets. Be that at the moment I am someone with a disability, I cannot get here at all without Parliamentary Protective Service protection and assistance. No, it is not our usual Parliament Hill. We do not feel safe here.

Going to the next point of evidence that I want to bring before us, I am very concerned about the nature of our safety and security here. We are not just any city in Canada. We are the national capital. We have attracted a certain type, and I am not going to put a broad brush on everybody who showed up in Ottawa to support the convey. Clearly there are people there thinking it is sort of like a street party. There are people there who are not politically radicalized, but the thread that runs through all of this is a radicalization with an inherent threat of violence.

That came forward more clearly than anything in the Guardian today, in a very chilling article by a Canadian reporter, who I must say I have known for years. My goodness, Justin Ling is distinguishing himself in this crisis as someone who actually goes out, does reporting and digs up information. Today, in the Guardian, the headline was, "Canada was warned before protests that violent extremists infiltrated convoy".

The hon. member for Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner made a point earlier today to excuse the protest. He said, it is not their fault, they were infiltrated. Exactly. According to the article in the Guardian today by Canadian journalist Justin Ling, assessments from Canada's Integrated Terrorism Assessment Centre, known as ITAC, which is part of Security Intelligence Service Canada, or CSIS, reported before the convoy got near Ottawa that the convoy organizers "advocated civil war".

Convoy organizers hold up the U.S. January 6 insurrection against a fair democratic election promoting the lie that the election was Trump's and it was stolen from him. They hold that up as their model. According to Justin Ling, CSIS and ITAC warned the City of Ottawa police that this was the nature of what was coming to Ottawa.

It was not a secret. They left with great fanfare to drive across the country. When this is all over, we will have to find out what happened within the chain of command in the Ottawa police to ignore these warnings. Some officers, not all necessarily, all but welcomed the convoy. There are reports from local Ottawa journalists that when they interviewed truck drivers, they said that they only planned to stay a little while but then the police told them they could go park on Wellington, and they would not have to leave for a very long time.

Had those truckers not been truckers, but indigenous people coming to assert rights on indigenous territory, they would not have been allowed to get a single stick into the ground to construct a single thing before being arrested quite quickly, or had they been people of colour, or environmentalists. My goodness, look at how we treat camps of homeless people, moving in brutally. The Emergencies Act has not been needed to knock over lots of homeless people in lots of brutal police takedowns.

We know right now that there is an intention on the part of many of these convoy participants to not leave. I do not want to worry about every social media crank that puts things up on Twitter, but I know that freedom convoy social media is saying to get downtown to Victoria to take the Legislature, and they are not going to leave until all the mandates are gone. Forget public health advice. They are going to demand that the government goes, that the mandates go. Who knows?

It was also reported in this article about warnings from ITAC that it thought the use of vehicles, trucks and fuel could present a real significant threat of violence.

● (1840)

All too often, those of us here in Parliament have wondered and asked security forces whether anyone knows what is in all those trucks. We do not know, so I think we have, clearly, a situation that has been allowed to become intolerable and dangerous, but I am still not comfortable voting for the motion, and I will tell members why.

The emergency measures regulations, as described, are overly broad. When the Prime Minister said this was coming forward, he said it would be geographically circumscribed to the specific areas where we see that normal lines of authority and protections for public life and health are missing. We have an emergency. That is clear. This was promised to be very limited and specific, but the emergency measures regulations define infrastructure as basically everything and then say it applies right across Canada. The designation of protected places under section 6 of the regulations is far too broad and applies to all of Canada.

That is a concern I have. I also know I have heard many people ask for clarity. At what level of financial donation, or financial support of illegal activities, does one's bank account get seized? I highly doubt the Government of Canada plans to seize the bank account of anyone who made a \$20 donation on GoFundMe to the "freedom convoy". I doubt it. I think we are looking for proximate connection: the kind that will exert the pressure that makes the convoy go away.

Where are the pressure points? They are insurance, finances, registration and the chance to make a living as a trucker when this is all over. I do not think the Liberals intend to go after a \$20 bank account donation, but I have not heard them say that. I am not comfortable voting until I see more clarity that circumscribes the overly broad reach of the regulations.

I will also say I hear from many people, virtually all the time, asking how we know this will not establish a precedent that allows a crackdown on civil liberties. I want to read one more section into the record very specifically. This is from the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act, in the definition that has been transplanted into the motion we are debating tonight. It addresses what is a threat to the security of Canada, and it says, at the bottom of the paragraph of which I have only read subsection (b), it "does not include lawful advocacy, protest or dissent, unless carried on in conjunction with any of the activities referred to above."

I feel quite secure. I do not plan to get arrested again. It was not fun. It was way outside of my comfort zone and the judge hated me, so I got a much more significant fine than my friend, who is now the mayor of Vancouver. I do not plan to go out and get arrested again, but I believe that non-violent civil disobedience is a vital part of our democracy. It traces its roots all the way back to Henry David Thoreau in the 1800s. It was then picked up by the exemplar of non-violent civil disobedience, Mahatma Gandhi, and then taken up by Martin Luther King, Jr.

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There are reasons why in a democracy we must have peaceful protest and the right and ability to break the law, if we believe that law to be unjust, but that does not include the right to destroy other people's lives and livelihoods in the process. That does not include a right to refuse to take the consequences of one's own actions or to say, "I will go quietly with you, officer." That is the essence of what I did when I performed non-violent civil disobedience and what my colleague, the hon. Minister of Environment and Climate Change, did before he was in office. He also believed that something as important as the survival of life on earth and the climate crisis was worth giving up his own sense of safety for, by submitting himself to arrest.

These are complicated matters and complicated questions, and I would beg of all of us that we must listen to each other. I am so concerned that so many of my constituents believe it is actually a peaceful protest out there. They think it is. There is nothing peaceful about hunks of metal taking over a city. Trucks do not have charter rights. Honking a horn, as the judge said in granting the injunction, is not an expression of free speech. These trucks should have been stopped before they got anywhere near the centre of our national capital. They were not. That is what constitutes the emergency, but I need the government to show me that the regulations will be tightened up before I can vote for this.

● (1845)

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to assure my colleague that the oversight and certainty she is looking for are certainly there within the regulations. This is meant to target individuals who are breaking the law. Of course, the issue of proportionality, as well as reasonableness, is embedded in the regulations and I invite her to reflect on that. It is important to distinguish between those who may have innocently donated or with the right intent and those who obviously donated with the intention of breaking the law. I want to remind her there is an element of reasonableness already embedded in the regulations.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, I would say to my hon. colleague, the parliamentary secretary, that he should read the emergency measures regulations. There is no certainty in here. There is no precision. It is far too broad. I could read into the record critical infrastructure and how it is defined to include ports, piers, lighthouses, canals, tramways and bus stations. However, this is not in any way specific to the circumstance we are in right now, and that is what makes me have a good deal of resistance to voting yes, while I do think we need to do more because we have a current emergency.

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Mrs. Cathay Wagantall (Yorkton—Melville, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member's intervention tonight. I also appreciate the pain she is in and certainly hope she is well soon.

The order in council released by the government authorizes the government to do the following. As I think this would add to the member's concerns around certainty, I will quote what is in the order in council:

...other temporary measures authorized under section 19 of the Emergencies Act that are not yet known.

The government is authorizing itself to do things. It essentially asks the House to hand it unlimited authority. We have seen in the past, in matters such as the documents from the Winnipeg lab, that the Prime Minister has little or no respect for parliamentary oversight. The SNC-Lavalin scandal again demonstrated his lack of respect for the independence of our justice system.

How does the member feel about adding that particular section of the order in council to her list of reasons why she would be very apprehensive about supporting the Emergencies Act?

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, the fact is that we will have the opportunity over the next four or five days to find what is wrong here. Members of Parliament understand that something must be done about what has currently happened. Where we are now is not about the city police not having the original jurisdiction, which could have prevented this. It is an entrenched, well-funded, well-supported effort that is not only successfully shutting down the centre of Ottawa, but I feel successfully menacing the parliamentary procedures in this place.

We have an opportunity through this debate for government members to come forward to clarify that they are not, in the order in council, giving themselves a blank cheque. One of the Quebec members from the NDP made the point that this is not a blank cheque, but I think it could be tightened up so we actually know the limits of what we are about to approve, which should be geographically confined, as well as specific to the circumstances.

● (1850)

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Saanich—Gulf Islands for her speech. I know she is a great democrat, perhaps one of the best in this House.

She gave a detailed, nuanced and constructive analysis. We have not heard a lot of constructive comments or a focus on dialogue from the government these days.

My democracy is suffering too, under the circumstances. I am very concerned about the fact that the government is responding so radically with the Emergencies Act.

Could my colleague share her thoughts on the government's arrogance, lack of planning and demagoguery, especially since it announced it was invoking the Emergencies Act?

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague. I agree that the debate is emotionally charged on both sides. This does not help our society find a solution that will bring our country, our provinces, together. I am disappointed in the level of discourse

and the demonizing of those with different opinions. We must have a minimum level of respect for each other in all of our debates in Canada. That is essential. That is one of the things that defines Canada. We are not a country that gets divided over dog whistles.

[English]

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have to say, over the last couple of days, I have heard, first of all, inaccurate and complete anti-indigenous racism in the rhetoric around what is going on outside. This is not a peaceful protest. This is an illegal occupation. To be stigmatized within what is going on out there is absolutely damaging and violent to indigenous people from across this country.

I want to read something to the hon. member very quickly. It was written for The Guardian by Arwa Mahdawi. She writes:

There's a lot going on in the world right now. If you're not Canadian, then the protest in Ottawa might not be top of your list of things to worry about. But I'm afraid you should be worried. You should certainly be paying attention. What's unfolding in Ottawa is not a grassroots protest that has spontaneously erupted out of the frustration of local lorry drivers. Rather, it's an astroturfed movement—one that creates an impression of widespread grassroots support where little exists—funded by a global network of highly organised far-right groups and amplified by Facebook's misinformation machine.

We know that the Soldiers of Odin and the yellow jackets are involved in this. They are posing a threat to our democracy. Our democracy is under threat. I would like to caution the member when referring to indigenous people as examples when we are talking about an alt-right, white supremacist movement fuelled and funded by the white supremacist movement on the other side.

Does the hon. member agree that is not a fair—

● (1855)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, I made that point earlier today to the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, who was trying to say that somehow it was hypocritical that the government did not crack down on Wet'suwet'en people, who he referred to as protesters. Those were Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs with legal rights derived from the Constitution of this country and Supreme Court of Canada decisions. I could not agree more with what she said, and I will add nothing to it except to thank her for making those points.

Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for her speech, which is always eloquent. I think we all learned something from her today.

What should a responsible leader, a prime minister, wait for before declaring an emergency? What kind of egregious harm should befall a country and its citizens before we do something, or do we stop it where it is?

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, I feel as though the city of Ottawa and many Canadians are in the situation of a battered wife, where the police ask if her husband has used a gun on her or hurt her yet. We are menaced by an occupation, and we do not want to wait any longer to have this problem solved. We found guns in Coutts. We know that this group has been infiltrated by the alt-right global network, which the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre referred to earlier.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for London—Fanshawe.

I will start by acknowledging that we have all been in the pandemic for two years, and frustrations are mounting. People certainly want to be able to get on with their lives. To some extent, this has culminated in what we have seen over the last few weeks. However, make no mistake: We really do need, as parliamentarians and indeed as an entire country, to acknowledge the intense gravity of the situation we find ourselves in. This truly is a watershed moment in Canadian political history, because we are now, as a House, being asked by the government to confirm the declaration of a public order emergency that was proclaimed on February 14 of this week.

This is something that has never happened before. This is the first time that this act has been invoked in this way. I and, I suspect, many members of Parliament have been receiving concerns from constituents who are concerned over this drastic step. I owe it to the great constituents of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford to talk about this extraordinary time and why we have found ourselves here.

We need to have a serious conversation about why we find ourselves in a place where the enacting of the Emergencies Act is suddenly a necessary action, because it should never have come to this. The use of the Emergencies Act, even the consideration of its use, is an acknowledgement that we have had a failure of leadership from many different levels of government. The citizens of Ottawa rightly feel abandoned by their own police. The provincial government has not been there, but more importantly, the federal government has not been there. That is what I am here to focus my remarks on.

We are now two and a half weeks into an occupation. It might have started off with many people who joined this movement thinking it was a protest. Certainly people have that cherished right in our democracy. The right of citizens to peacefully assemble, protest, make their views known and push for change is very fundamental to a well-functioning democracy.

However, what we see in Ottawa and what we saw at many of Canada's border crossings were not protests. They were not peaceful assemblies. They were occupations and they were blockades. They started having a very negative impact on residents, on small business owners and on workers. That is where the line was crossed.

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People in Ottawa did not feel safe in their own homes. We saw reports of attempted arson in some of the buildings. We know that people have been suffering verbal abuse on a daily basis. Sometimes it has been physical. They have had to deal with all sorts of noise complaints and ongoing pollution from idling trucks. The city of Ottawa, our national capital, has seen some of our most precious and honoured national monuments defiled and, in some cases, completely walked over. It has been completely unacceptable.

The border blockades have impacted far more people. We know that trade between Canada and the United States numbers in the millions of dollars every day. Factories in southern Ontario had to shut down, impacting families there. Many agricultural manufacturers, processors and producers out in the Prairies and across Canada were negatively impacted by the blockades. They were having an impact on those people.

It is those people we need to keep our remarks focused on to answer the question of why we are here today, suddenly debating the invocation of the Emergencies Act.

The Emergencies Act, of course, was first brought in as a piece of legislation all the way back in 1988. Pursuant to section 17(1) of that act, we have had a public order emergency declared by the Liberal government. There are a few things that come about as a consequence.

● (1900)

Now the government has the ability to designate specific areas and declare that any assemblies in those areas will henceforth be unlawful. This would include the downtown core of Ottawa so that the main thoroughfares can be cleared of all of those trucks and so that the residents can get their lives back. It will also include some of our critical infrastructure, notably our ports of entry with the United States, the Windsor Ambassador Bridge; Coutts, Alberta; and Emerson, Manitoba being the most recent examples. However, we also saw disturbances in Vancouver and in other ports of entry, such as Sarnia.

The act is going to allow the federal government to direct essential services, such as mobilizing tow trucks to help with clearing those streets. It is going to give FINTRAC the ability to cover crowdfunding. Also, the federal government is going to have the extraordinary power of freezing the commercial bank accounts and personal bank accounts of people who are funding these illegal occupations. It is a very real and extraordinary attempt to cut off the funding that is supporting the occupation of Ottawa and all of this misery. As well, it is going to give the RCMP the power to act as provincial police officers and municipal police officers and enforce their respective laws.

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I certainly have personally wrestled with the invoking of the act, wondering if I am doing the right thing in supporting it, but what gives me some level of comfort, and I want to be very clear to the constituents of Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, is that this is not a blank cheque. The powers we are granting to the government will be carefully reviewed on an ongoing basis. I will not hesitate to withdraw my support if I feel the government is overstepping its confines. By that I mean that the application of these powers has to be specific and it must be in relation to the disturbances that we are seeing from the blockades and the occupation. These powers must be used only in relation to that situation, and they must be quickly withdrawn once public order has been restored.

It has taken a long time to get to the point where we find ourselves now. I am very proud that my caucus colleagues in the NDP and I have been trying to push the government to take this crisis seriously, because the warning signs were there from the beginning. As the public safety critic, I was able to initiate a study at the Standing Committee on Public Safety into crowdfunding platforms and their possible involvement in funding movements like this. I was also able to move a successful motion to call upon the RCMP, the CBSA, the Ontario Provincial Police, Ottawa police and the minister for public safety to eventually come before our committee to explain how we got to this point. Why did we have such an intelligence failure and lack of coordination over the last two and a half weeks, bringing us to the point where we now have to use the sledgehammer of the Emergencies Act?

Of course, I have to recognize my colleague, the member for New Westminster—Burnaby, and his private member's bill to basically ban symbols of hate, which we unfortunately have seen evidence of in this occupation. Also, our leader was able to initiate an emergency debate in the House of Commons so that we could give parliamentarians their first opportunity to focus on this situation.

In conclusion, Parliament is where we make the laws of this country. It is the pinnacle of our democracy, and every single one of the 338 members who serve in the House of Commons was duly elected to this place to make laws and to hold the government to account on behalf of the citizens in their ridings. To try to subvert that is an affront to the people who participate in our democracy, and we must uphold that cherished right.

I will end by saying that it is with great reluctance that we are going to be giving our support to these emergency powers, but I can assure people that we will not take our eye off the ball and we will not hesitate to withdraw our support should any powers be used past their intended purpose.

● (1905)

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague and I have the privilege of working together on the agriculture committee. I always find him to be balanced, reasonable and quite eloquent in his remarks. I did not catch all of his speech, but I did catch the tail end.

I have often heard members in this House, particularly Bloc Québécois members and Conservative members, say that they want to see more leadership from the Government of Canada. Of course, this member would know that policing is inherently in the municipal jurisdiction and the provincial jurisdiction, and that really the

role of the federal government would be to impose some of the measures we have seen today. Ultimately, the very last resort would be to call in the army.

Can the member at least opine on what he has heard from leadership? The Conservatives are calling for the government to acquiesce to what the protesters are calling for, while the Bloc members say that this should not apply in their jurisdiction. What does the member think, in terms of leadership from the federal government? Does he agree with this as a step to giving the tools to the provinces and municipalities to address the situation at hand?

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Madam Speaker, I enjoy serving at the agriculture committee with my colleague.

Specifically with respect to the last two and a half weeks, I would say that history will not be kind to municipalities, to the province and to the federal government. There was a failure at all levels, but the federal government had an important role to bring all of those separate pieces together. There was a failure in intelligence and there was a failure in coordination. It was as though we were just asleep at the switch in figuring out how bad this situation was eventually going to become.

Yes, I am glad that we are now taking this important step to reassert control and to give people their lives back, so that workers, small business owners and residents can actually enjoy their lives again.

Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have been waiting awhile to speak, and I want to speak on behalf of my constituents of King—Vaughan.

I have been flabbergasted today by the number of emails I have received from the constituents of King—Vaughan. I would like to share this one with the hon. member: “The freedom convoy is not asking that people do not wear masks if they choose to. They are not telling people not to get vaccinated if they choose to. They are not telling people not to stay home; if they don't feel safe, they should. They are simply saying that we should have the freedom of choice to do what we feel is best for us as individuals. That right, that freedom, is what our brave and heroic veterans fought for us in the wars. This is the right of our country to be free and strong.”

I would like the member's comments, please.

● (1910)

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Madam Speaker, I very strongly agree with individual rights, but we also have responsibilities that come with those rights. The responsibility we have as individuals goes beyond our personal selves and out to the larger community as a whole.

We have just gone through two years of an incredibly deadly pandemic. I know we have had our failures, but we have had success in dealing with this disease in comparison with other jurisdictions that have had a more libertarian approach. This is about saving lives and about making sure that we get through this pandemic together. There have been tough choices that people have had to make, but with that individual freedom comes a greater responsibility to the community as a whole. That is how I would answer that question.

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for sharing that he is finding this difficult, that he is troubled about it and that it is not easy for him to approve this measure. I appreciate his honesty.

However, he also said that he was not giving the Liberals and the government a blank cheque by supporting this measure, which I do not understand. How is the NDP's support not a blank cheque? What kind of measures would it take for his party to see reason and reject the use of this act? What would it take to change his mind?

[English]

Mr. Alistair MacGregor: Madam Speaker, it is not a blank cheque, because in reading the act, we can see that there is considerable room for Parliamentary oversight. Furthermore, all it takes is for 20 members of Parliament to indicate that they no longer wish to have this act in force. If they submit a letter, we can initiate debate, and debate will conclude with a vote on whether these powers should remain in force, so there is that strong parliamentary democracy oversight. As I said in my speech, if I feel the government is overstepping its bounds, I will not hesitate to withdraw my support for this current course of action.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise today. I feel that we are standing at a crossroads.

I have heard so much frustration and disappointment from people in London. They are frustrated by this pandemic that will soon mark its third anniversary. People are frustrated that they have sacrificed and struggled to help one another. They have done the work that we asked them to do to keep people safe. To them, I want to give my thanks. I want to tell folks in London that I understand their frustration. I am tired of this pandemic too. I share in the wish for this to be over, but I also see the bigger picture here.

People are not just frustrated because of the pandemic. This is much bigger than that. They are frustrated that, even though people are working harder than ever, sacrificing more and more, their government has offered less and less. There is a growing sense throughout Canada that our elected leaders are not listening and do not appreciate the struggles of Canadians. The protests that we have seen in our streets and our communities are a symptom of that frustration. It is understandable why someone would feel like that, because for years now successive Liberal and Conservative governments have asked Canadians to do more with less, to pull themselves up by their boot straps when they do not even have shoes. Today, many people feel that their government has let them down, especially when they needed support the most.

These last few years have been tough on my community, like so many, but within this last year we experienced the loss of the Afzal family to an extremist act of hatred and violence. In spite of that, I saw my community come together in incredible acts of love and kindness. That is what I hold on to tonight.

I grew up in a very political household and watching my mother at community meetings and standing up for what she believed in, fighting for a better world, truly shaped how I saw my role in the world. I knew that I benefited significantly from the systems and

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programs that people and governments had created for me and that I had a responsibility to pay that forward. I came to this place because I wanted to make the necessary changes for people, to pay it forward.

As people continue to struggle, I fear that we will lose that sense of community and that people will turn away from each other more and more. The more people struggle, the less they have for themselves, the less they feel they can give to others. The more they have to fight for the little that they have and the less that they have to fight for, the greater the divide between the richest in this world and the rest of us, the worse this will get. People will turn on their governments and they will turn on each other, because they believe their governments have turned on them.

Canadians are looking for answers and they are looking for solutions. The system has been rigged and they want to do something about it. Solutions offered by right-wing politicians and extremists online must be called out as entirely, completely unacceptable.

I am often in awe that Conservatives seem to provide simple solutions to the complex problems that we face. This is not unique to Canada. We saw these simple solutions offered in the U.K. on the vote for Brexit. They said that life would get better, but it did not. We saw many simple solutions offered by Donald Trump, just south of us, ones based on racism, sexism and fear. They did nothing for working Americans. Their lives did not improve under his administration. We see these so-called solutions being offered in this House as well. Lift all public health measures and let neighbours and friends fend for themselves. Simple solutions are often the most dangerous.

I hope that this protest will end shortly but the reasons for it will not go away. Look at any crisis. It takes a long time to get to that critical point, and it takes even longer to fix it.

Let me be very clear. Nothing makes the racism, the hatred or the threats of violence that we have seen in Ottawa over these past days acceptable. However, to truly address the causes that have led to so many people feeling disenfranchised, to feeling like they are not being heard or that they are abandoned by the government, resulting in their resolve to occupy the streets in Ottawa or critical infrastructure across Canada, we have to address the systemic issues at the heart of the matter.

New Democrats are offering alternatives to move forward, rather than what is offered by the right wing that has allied with them. There are concrete measures the government can make to address rising inequality in our country. We can tackle rising drug costs with a national pharmacare plan. We can tackle the housing crisis that is impacting every community in Canada, and my home city of London, by getting the Canadian government back into the business of building housing. We can take on poverty and disparity in our streets by establishing a guaranteed basic livable income.

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• (1915)

We can address the lack of education and access to it by making post-secondary education accessible, removing those financial barriers. We can take on the growth of low-paid insecure work by updating labour codes, creating a living wage and tipping the scale back in favour of Canadian workers. We can sign trade agreements that protect Canadian jobs, instead of making it easier to ship them overseas. We can strengthen and safeguard workers' pensions, ensuring pensioners can retire with dignity and security. We can ensure the rich pay their fair share and close tax loopholes.

Many people are rightly concerned about the impact of the Emergencies Act. It should have never come to this. The use of the Emergencies Act, and even the consideration of it, is an acknowledgement of failure of leadership from all levels of government, including the Prime Minister. They have allowed things to escalate unchecked since the beginning, and I share the concern of many Canadians and people from my constituency that the government may misuse the powers in that act, so I want to be very clear. We will be watching and we will withdraw our support if at any point we feel these powers are being misused.

People in communities across our country are feeling the impacts of the convoy. Health care workers, retail and grocery store workers, truck drivers themselves, small business owners and residents have been harassed, intimidated and even assaulted during these illegal occupations. Thousands of workers have been forced to stay home from their jobs, making it harder for them to feed their families and to pay their rent. Canadians have been missing the national leadership they need during this crisis. They are tired of jurisdictional excuses, and they just want this to stop. We owe it to them to use every tool available to stop these occupations that are harming Canadian workers and their families and to work on a plan to get this to end.

I want to reassure my constituents that the NDP is taking the use of the Emergencies Act very seriously. We will not give a blank cheque to the government. We also believe the federal government, and all governments, need to take responsibility before things are allowed to escalate further. We cannot abandon Canadians to deal with this on their own.

Over the coming days we need to see action from our police in ending this occupation and returning the streets back to our communities. Over the coming weeks New Democrats will remain vigilant in watching and protecting Canadians' rights and freedoms, and holding the government to account. In the next few months we will push for more supports to remain until the pandemic is over and to call for a science-based approach to see us out of this pandemic.

Better is possible, but it will take tough and courageous choices for us to get there. It is not too late to make a better world.

• (1920)

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I think the member did a very good job of outlining why these measures are justified.

I want to ask her a question about what will happen after in terms of combatting hate, and what members of this House, across party

lines, can do to do just that. We have seen hate expressed by the alt-right in the United States in recent years, and evidently it has made its way northward, unfortunately.

What can we do, collectively as elected officials in the House, to work together to fight hate? We have seen its effect in London, clearly.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen: Madam Speaker, this is something that we have been talking about in London for quite some time, especially after the murder of the Afzaal family. We must come together and ensure that there are legislative solutions. I know that we have been pushing for the government to introduce legislation on online hate. I believe that has now come forward again. We need to ensure that is passed. We need to hold those Internet companies and social media companies accountable as well to be a part of that solution.

I think overall larger solutions involve education. They involve ensuring that we, as I said in my speech, provide for each other and make sure that we are not closing in on ourselves because of that fight against poverty and that fight against desperation. We have to work harder on those social programs and those social solutions that provide for each other, so that we can share with each other and fight for each other and be together.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member talked about withdrawing support if New Democrats see abuse. As she knows, the Emergencies Act provisions are already in force. What we are essentially talking about here is a confirmation vote by the House of Commons on whether to keep these provisions in place. What we should be doing is preventing harm from happening in the first place. What my caucus and many Conservative members want to do is to prevent the harm we see going on with innocent people having their bank accounts frozen based on commentary that has been made by the Minister of Finance.

I want to draw the member's attention to what the NDP caucus did in 1970, 11 years before I was born. I was born in a country where there was martial law at the time. In 1970, Tommy Douglas took a courageous and principled stance, many people would say. I would have probably disagreed with his position, but it was definitely courageous to do. He stood against the War Measures Act at the time. Today, the NDP has decided to side with the government and allow the government extraordinary powers for 30 days. I wonder if the member would explain why.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen: Madam Speaker, I have to recognize that those are two very different situations. The thoughtfulness that Tommy Douglas and his caucus put in at that time about the War Measures Act and the implementation of it is the same thoughtfulness that my caucus has taken on the implementation of the Emergencies Act. The leader of the NDP, the member for Burnaby South, talked about that today. He told the Prime Minister directly that New Democrats will not let him off the hook and we will be watching.

I stand here today, like I said, with a heavy heart because so many things are at play. I have spoken to people on the street who are worried and have been assaulted, and that cannot stand. The hatred cannot stand.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert has time for a brief question.

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, something my colleague said did not sit right with me. At one point, she said people were tired of jurisdictional excuses. That seems strange to me because I get the sense that that is part of the reason why we are here tonight.

Vaccination rates in Canada and Quebec are among the highest in the world. People here have, more than most, followed public health measures. Despite that, we are one of the last countries to lift restrictions, and that is basically what the people outside are tired of. I understand them. I am tired of it too.

Maybe people are tired of talking about jurisdiction, but it matters to the provinces. Provincial premiers, including the Premier of Quebec, want the government to increase health transfers to strengthen our health care system. If the system had had adequate funding, the crisis might not have been quite so bad.

• (1925)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): That was not a brief question.

[English]

There is no time at all, actually, but I will allow the hon. member to give a very brief response.

Ms. Lindsay Mathysen: Madam Speaker, the investments the hon. member is talking about are absolutely long-term solutions. What I was referring to were excuses that the federal government consistently makes to avoid its responsibility when it comes to what it has to do to ensure it is fulfilling its role to the provinces.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, from the beginning, I would like to reflect on the comments the Prime Minister made earlier. He talked about families and the importance of their freedoms and their rights. He also talked about our small businesses, the economy and the impact of what we have been witnessing over the last few weeks, and how critically important it is, when we have this dialogue over the next number of days, that we do not lose focus of those particular points. The impact on Canadian society is, in fact, quite significant and severe.

Here we are, after a couple of years of going through the pandemic, approaching the third-year mark. What we should have been talking about, and what I would have liked to be talking about, are the heroes of the pandemic. I think of the community I represent, Winnipeg North, and the people who have responded so well and encouraged others. We stepped up together. When we were hit with the pandemic, we saw people of all political stripes, volunteer organizations, individuals, private businesses and governments of different levels all coming together and recognizing that the battle that had to be overcome was the pandemic.

Statutory Order

We are starting to see more light at the end of the tunnel. It is, in good part, because of the residents of Winnipeg North and residents across this country who said they wanted to listen to the science, follow health experts and get vaccinated. The vaccination rate we have in Canada is virtually second to no other place in the world. As a result, we have been able to see some provinces, even the federal government, look at loosening some of the mandates.

What we are seeing today is not what I would have liked to be talking about. It is not a true reflection of Canadians, our values and the hard work we collectively put in together to get us to this point in battling the coronavirus. I could have spent a great deal of time talking about the individual effort or, from my perspective, what the government in Ottawa has been able to come up with to support Canadians. These are very tangible things. That is what I would have preferred to talk about.

When we look at the need for the Emergencies Act, let me reflect on the walk I have made every day since the convoy has been here, as many of us have, and the types of things I see. Downtown Ottawa should be full of activity, much like downtowns in Winnipeg, Edmonton, Toronto, Montreal, Halifax and Vancouver, big cities and small cities alike. We all value our downtowns. They contribute so much to who we are in many different ways. They are a hub of economic activity and are opportunities for people to connect, even nowadays when we are starting to see more of the mandates being lifted.

• (1930)

I walk down, and no matter the time of day, I can look down Queen Street and see that in all the skyscrapers there are no people. It is because of the convoy. If we go one block over onto Wellington Street, we see protesters who are not protesting in the traditional way. They are individuals who have put up blockades. They are individuals who are shutting down downtown Ottawa. It is not just happening along Wellington. As I said, I walk down Wellington and up Metcalfe to get to my apartment. Metcalfe has been the same way.

If this were happening in Winnipeg, I would not tolerate it, and I suspect that many residents in Winnipeg would be quite upset about it because it is not a legal, law-abiding protest. It is hurting the people of Ottawa, in particular the downtown area.

There are other things I have observed. I do not know how many red and yellow gas cans I have seen underneath large semis and on the roofs of vehicles. There are cars and trucks that are constantly running. At past one o'clock in the morning last Saturday I could hear the horns blaring, and I am quite a ways out from downtown area, on Lisgar. I can only imagine what it is like for those who are even closer. Imagine bringing children into an environment where they are constantly inhaling gas fumes.

We see different tents being put up right on Wellington and hay being brought in. I take it that is to provide some sort of comfort on the ground. I have no idea, but it surrounds the tents that are being permanently put up on Wellington. I have seen several tents. I have seen them on Metcalfe too. Those are just in the areas I walk every day.

Statutory Order

I see an incredible truck right below the flame. It is a crane of sorts and has a big iron ball on it. Members in the chamber would be aware of it. That is a destruction ball. It is the type that swings in the air to bring down buildings. I do not know what is inside those trucks. I suspect no one in this chamber knows what is inside those trucks.

I truly believe the need to act is there and it is very real. I am disappointed in the Conservative Party in its approach to dealing with this issue. If we put all the facts on the table, I think a vast majority of Canadians would understand the need for us to invoke the Emergencies Act. I will go into that.

I find it interesting that the Conservatives are once again working with the Bloc. It is almost like a given with the Conservatives and the Bloc. They talk about other coalitions, but there is no coalition stronger in the House of Commons today than the unholy alliance between the Conservative Party of Canada and the Bloc Québécois. That is the strongest alliance I see.

At the end of the day, those members are being critical because NDP members are at least giving this serious thought. They are listening to their constituents, as I am listening to mine, and they realize that these blockades have to come down. They are hurting people. They are hurting our economy. They are hurting our society in many different ways.

The official opposition is all over the place. I was recently shown a picture of the interim leader of the Conservative Party dining out with some of the organizers of the event. I would be very interested in having the Leader of the Opposition tell us what she talked about when she was having dinner with them.

● (1935)

Let me talk about inconsistency. On the one hand, we have the newly elected interim Conservative Party leader advising senior Conservatives on this in a leaked email. As CTV News notes:

Newly elected interim Conservative Party Leader...advised senior Conservative MPs not to tell members of the trucker convoy to leave Ottawa and instead make the protests the prime minister's problem, according to an internal email obtained by CTV News.

In an email sent on Monday, the then deputy leader told her colleagues "I don't think we should be asking them to go home."

How does that fit the interests of Canadians? I suggest that is very much a slant of politics. It is pure politics coming from the official opposition.

To go to another point, Politico notes, "[The] Opposition leader...wants [the Prime Minister] to step up to solve the 'crisis,' just a week after meeting with protesters and telling them, 'Don't stop, it's working.'" She is out there dining with them and telling them, "Don't stop, it's working."

The other day when I was speaking inside the chamber I said they have to be consistent. Inside the House, the Conservative leader says the blockade is bad and it is time for people to go home. Anyone who is following the debate tonight can get that quote and much more. It did not really have an impact outside, though. The comment I had for the member then is that it is one thing to say something in here, but what is she saying outside? Take a look at the social media feeds from Conservative Party members. Listen to

some of the words they are espousing even today inside the chamber. They are giving a mixed message at best, and I would suggest they are causing more harm than good.

However, they have their friends in the Bloc who are more than happy to assist them in the best way they can. I tell my Conservative friends that the Bloc has a different agenda. The Bloc's agenda is a lot different, I would like to think, from the Conservative agenda. Before members start criticizing other political parties, they might want to start re-evaluating the associations they have inside the chamber on this issue and, at the same time, the associations they have and role they play with the convoy outside and the protest.

The irony of the protest does not escape me. Toward the end of January, it started off with truckers who were concerned about mandates for truckers going into the United States. Before anyone arrived in Ottawa, the United States made it very clear that unless they are vaccinated, they cannot go into the United States.

Mr. James Bezan: Who called the White House and told them to do that? Was it you, Kevin?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, no, the President of the United States did that. I do not have a phone line, so I did not tell the President to say that.

Then what ends up happening? If we fast-forward to today, we have these semis and trucks that have started to shut down downtown Ottawa. This is not to mention the other blockades.

● (1940)

I want to quickly go over that. I think of the weeks of illegal blockades and the occupations, and how important it is that our borders remain open. In Coutts, Alberta, I think of \$48 million a day in trade. In Windsor, it is roughly \$390 million. In Emerson in my home province, it is \$73 million a day.

Members ask why we took this action. I can make reference to the mayor of Ottawa's declaration of a state of emergency here in Ottawa. I can talk about the Premier of Ontario's declaration of an emergency in the province of Ontario.

Let me talk about my home province of Manitoba. I read yesterday's Winnipeg Free Press. I have been able to get a copy of the February 11 letter through the media, and the article states:

"In a February 11 letter obtained by the Free Press, Stefanson asked [the Prime Minister] to take "immediate and effective" action as she pleaded for "national leadership that only [the Prime Minister] and the federal government can provide."

That was just a couple of days before the act was brought in on Monday.

The article goes on:

Her February 11 letter said the situation was urgent and blockades that disrupt "this critical corridor—even temporarily—create potential dangers, impose severe hardships on all Manitobans and cause severe economic loss and damage to Manitoba and Canadian businesses."

Her letter warned of urgency and dangers. Again, I look at the impact at just the Emerson border. Here is another story that appeared in the Free Press:

The trucker blockade of the Emerson border crossing not only added additional time and costs to shipments but will also damage the reputation of the province, manufacturers and stakeholders say.

Although the RCMP announced on Tuesday afternoon that demonstrators are leaving and should be gone by Wednesday, Ron Koslowsky, the vice-president and head of Manitoba operations for the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters—95 per cent of whose Manitoba members rely on regular cross-border shipments at Emerson—said, of the Emerson blockade, “The impact has been massive.”

Winpak Limited, the large packing material manufacturer that is headquartered in Winnipeg and has manufacturing plants throughout the U.S., had to shut down one of its production lines because it couldn't get the raw material it needed.

Olivier Muggli, Winpak's CEO, said, “Overall the whole blockade damages the Canadian reputation at large and specifically Winpak. The Emerson thing hurt us significantly.”

The federal government invoked the Emergencies Act on Monday. The measures are geographically specific and targeted only to where they are needed. They will also be time-limited. We are not limiting people's freedom of expression in any way when it comes to peaceful demonstrations.

Since Monday, we have seen the Coutts blockade dismantled; on Wednesday, it was the blockade in Emerson. We have provided more tools for law enforcement, which in part are already being utilized.

At the end of the day, on this side of the House, we recognize that the harm to our society in many different ways is a direct result of these illegal blockades and protests, and we would suggest that the Conservative Party revisit its positioning.

It is not as if you have not flip-flopped before. Take another flop and get on the right side. Support what Canadians expect the loyal opposition to be doing and ensure that there is accountability on the measures that are needed at this time in order to bring back order and secure the type of trade and support that Canadians deserve and the opposition should be providing.

• (1945)

The Deputy Speaker: I know the member is an experienced member of the House. Make sure to speak through the Chair. I know he was really trying to engage the opposition on this one, but try to address your remarks through the Chair.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a commentary to make about the member's speech, just to set the record straight and correct the misinformation.

For the last three weeks I too have been walking downtown every weekend and every day across this line, and I have met a lot of very friendly people. Of course, some people are profane in what they say; this is a protest, after all. However, the member was talking about a wrecking ball on a vehicle. It is not a wrecking ball; it is actually a hook weight at the end of a cable, and there is a difference between the two.

I have met a lot of people with families. I stay at a hotel when I am down here, and I have met people who have brought their families here. There are music shows going on. The impression the member is trying to give to the general public and people back home in Calgary is that this is some type of riot that is going on downtown. Yes, people have blocked streets, and yes, we have said that they should go home. We have heard them and we are hearing them. We are addressing their concerns.

Statutory Order

However, what the government is doing here is going far too far. It is asking for powers that have not been given to anybody since the 1970s. It is asking for too much, more than the House should be willing to give. Every day that I have been here, I have not seen the same things the member has seen. I am getting thousands of emails from constituents demanding that we vote against this measure.

I just wanted to correct the member that it is a weight at the end of a hook and not a wrecking ball. I just want to make that correction. Also, the vast majority of the people I have met are friendly. I have seen people play street hockey on the street, but the impression the member is giving is that this is a chaotic scene. It is unpleasant, I understand, for people who live here. It has been unpleasant for three weeks for me as well.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the member kind of makes my point. The Conservative Party says, “What's wrong? There's nothing wrong with what is happening in downtown Ottawa today.” However, the activities by this blockade have shut down downtown Ottawa. There are no cars and there is no foot traffic and businesses are closing down. I do not know what the member might be engaged in as he tries to give the impression to the residents he represents that everything is okay in Ottawa, but it is definitely not reality.

Okay, maybe it is not a wrecking ball, but it is a 200-pound iron ball that is positioned right above the Prime Minister's office, which Stephen Harper used to be in. Is there any way in which that member can foresee problems with thousands of gallons of gas along Wellington Street on trucks and cars, on roofs and under vehicles?

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of things I would like to say about the passionate speech by my colleague from Winnipeg North, but there was one sentence that especially struck me. He said, “If I were in Winnipeg, I would not have tolerated it”.

Is the misfortune of the City of Ottawa, the mayor of Ottawa and the chief of the Ottawa police, who asked for 1,800 police officers only to receive 275, most of them having served in the Prime Minister's security detail, related to the fact that, with a few exceptions, most of the people here do not live in Ottawa year round?

Statutory Order

● (1950)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, unlike the case with some members of the Bloc, within the Liberal caucus all urban centres matter. No matter what size an urban centre is, whether it is in Quebec City, Montreal, Ottawa, Winnipeg, Brandon, Vancouver, Victoria, or any municipality, we are concerned when there are issues in that municipality that we should be concerned about. We have an obligation to be there, and that is what is good about what is happening through the Emergencies Act. It is very much focused on ensuring that people can feel comfortable and safe and that our economy can be protected. Also, those borders are critically important to our country, no matter where we live.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in my community I have received some complaints from folks who are upset because Confederate flags have shown up on their neighbour's lawn.

Going forward, after we can move past this convoy, ideally, and hopefully things settle down a little, where is the government going to go from there? How are we going to stop this from spreading in the way that we have seen it spread to communities, and prevent bolstering that hate and that horrible symbolism?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, that is an excellent question. Many years ago I used to be the critic for diversity. I often talked about the issue of racism. The best way to fight racism is through education.

I was so impressed when the member for Hull—Aylmer, in an S.O. 31, presented a statement on racism. If I were a school trustee in Winnipeg North, I would be inclined to encourage every young person in school to listen to that S.O. 31. It put a very strong personal touch on how racism hurts us all.

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have two quick questions for my hon. colleague.

The first is around powers. Just a few minutes ago I had the opportunity to speak to a constituent who was concerned that this was a broad overreach by the government. When I explained the different measures within the public order, he understood and said that it was reasonable because it was giving tools to the police to be able to address this situation.

Could the member speak about how these powers to give those tools are restricted under the Emergencies Act, and that it is about leadership, not just here in Ottawa but in his own city of Winnipeg and in other places of the country, to make sure that law enforcement, if they choose to use this discretion, have the tools to stop blockades and protests that are truly illegal?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I will give a good example. Yesterday, or maybe it was Tuesday, when I was walking down to Parliament Hill, a police officer was meeting with some of the individual protesters and handing out a piece of paper.

As I was walking by, he was referencing the Emergencies Act. This is another tool for law enforcement agencies to be able to ensure that the illegal blockades and protests come to an end. That is why we have it before us today. There are measures within it, such as a standing committee to review it on an ongoing basis. We will

also have an inquiry, once all is said and done. There are all sorts of transparency and accountability mechanisms to make sure that it is not abused.

It is a wonderful tool and it can be effective.

● (1955)

Mr. Gary Vidal (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to listen to my colleague from Winnipeg North. It is often both entertaining and enlightening.

It is interesting to hear him talk about the political aspects of this. It seems that the first thing that comes to mind is the pot calling the kettle black.

The Prime Minister expects us to believe that “the Emergencies Act will be “geographically targeted”, and that is a quote. That is what he told Canadians when he made the announcement. However, the Order in Council itself states that “a public order emergency exists throughout Canada”, and again that is another quote. We have nothing to suggest otherwise, nothing in writing. I can assure this House that the premiers from Saskatchewan, Alberta, Manitoba and many other provinces in the country do not want this in their provinces.

How does the member explain the contradiction, and why should we trust him and his Prime Minister when the first thing they did in the announcement of the act was mislead Canadians?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I would recommend that anyone who was listening to the member's question should take a look at what was in the Winnipeg Free Press yesterday in regard to the province.

There was a letter written by Premier Stefanson, virtually begging Ottawa to get more involved, saying it was urgent, there was a crisis. There is a serious problem in the province of Manitoba at the Emerson border crossing. It was devastating to their industries, and they need that border open. This type of legislation we are passing today is not only good for Manitoba; it is good for Ontario, it is good for Alberta, and it is good for all of Canada—

The Deputy Speaker: Resuming debate, the hon. member for Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman.

Mr. James Bezan (Selkirk—Interlake—Eastman, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is disappointing that we are here debating the use of emergency powers as has been laid out by the Prime Minister. This is really an indictment of failed leadership. This is about a Prime Minister who has not only dropped the ball when it comes to dealing with this crisis, but has also failed to unite Canadians because he constantly divides, stigmatizes, insults and marginalizes those who have concerns about vaccine mandates and the restrictions that have been brought in by the federal government. He does not seem to listen.

Statutory Order

I do not believe the Emergencies Act needs to be used. I do not believe the threshold has been met under the definitions of the Emergencies Act. I do not believe the federal government has used the powers it already possesses to deal with these situations. What I do believe is that in this order in council, under I believe section 19 of the Emergencies Act, there are open-ended powers being handed over to the current Prime Minister.

We know that, at the beginning of this pandemic, the Prime Minister tried to ascertain how much power and control was possible over Parliament, the treasury and the executive of the government, because he thought he needed to grab on to that power. We know that his lust for power brought us to an early election, because he thought he could win a majority in the middle of a pandemic. He ignored the plight of Canadians who were dealing with the issues surrounding the pandemic and he ignored the plight of the Afghan refugees who had worked alongside our soldiers and were trying to get to Canada, all because he wanted more power and thought he could get his majority.

In the past, we had the War Measures Act. I acknowledge that the Emergencies Act is a modernized version of that, but it still has the same ultimate goal of dealing with major catastrophes in our country. Have we had a major hurricane or an earthquake? Were we attacked? No, we were not. Are we in a world war, such as World War I or II? Have we gone through something like the 1970 FLQ crisis? Have leaders of government been kidnapped or murdered? No, there have not. There is no way that the sovereign nation of Canada is under threat so that we have to use the Emergencies Act.

What we see out on the streets is sometimes annoying to those who live there. I am a property owner. There is no doubt, and I denounce all of those who show signs of hate. I have spent my entire political career, and before that, denouncing racism, anti-Semitism and those who fly Nazi flags and dress up as Nazi soldiers. I denounce those who are carrying Confederate flags. We have to stop racism. Each and every one of those people who have infiltrated the convoy need to be called out and held responsible for those hateful acts.

However, at times, to get attention and make a point, part of being a Canadian is to have a peaceful protest. Sometimes that includes civil disobedience. I have said this in the House before. When the Liberals had their long gun registry I refused to register my long guns. That was my act of civil disobedience, to stand against an overbearing, overreaching Liberal government policy.

I will also say this because there is a lot of concern about how traffic, borders and infrastructure have been blocked. I always oppose blockades. We cannot hold our economy hostage. I believe everybody has made their point. I am glad they are going home, and they are going home from our border points without the use of the Emergencies Act. It was provincial governments, local policing and local municipal leaders who were able to negotiate and remove those blockades, the same way the current government has dealt with blockades in the past at our Vancouver port, pipelines and railway crossings. They went on for days. We did not call in the Emergencies Act to get those blockades removed, because we listened to the people and their concerns. The government refuses to talk with the truckers on Wellington Street. That is disturbing to say the least.

• (2000)

The biggest concern I have is that this is suspending our civil liberties and charter rights because it is open-ended at this point in time.

I am of Ukrainian descent and I want to remind everyone that under the War Measures Act, in World War I, my *baba* and *gedo* came to Canada on Austrian passports. They were declared enemy aliens and for four years had to go 20 miles one way to the RCMP station every week to register. Summer, winter, fall and spring, it did not matter what they were doing on the farm, they had to register, even though my *baba's* brother was fighting for Canada in World War I. They still had to report in and they had to for two years after the war ended because the government refused to lift the War Measures Act and that violation of their charter rights.

I am concerned that the Liberal government will want to continue to erode the civil liberties that we have now. We have to make sure that does not happen. I do appreciate and acknowledge that the Emergencies Act does provide parliamentary oversight, and that is why we are having this debate tonight, to make sure that we can ask for it to be revoked if it passes with the support of the NDP. I have to say that I am really upset that the NDP would stand against freedom and the charter and support the Liberals and the Prime Minister in this ham-fisted approach to dealing with the crisis they think is out on the street.

Section 2 of the charter, peaceful assembly, right now is undermined. I walk through the convoy every day. Everybody says hi and has been very polite. Sometimes they honk the horns, which at 10 minutes to seven this morning was annoying, but they do not do it all day long, just for short periods here and there. The first week it was a bit overbearing, I will say that.

Section 7 is life, liberty and security. How are the Liberals going to ensure those things to the tow truck companies when they are commandeering equipment to tow away the vehicles on the street right now? What is beyond the pale in all of this is that they are violating section 8 of the charter, unreasonable search and seizure. They are locking down the bank accounts of people who gave generously to help the trucking convoy. They could not join and felt they had no other voice, so they financially supported the convoy. Now having their bank accounts locked down is disgusting. This is an overreach of the Government of Canada and I am concerned, now that they are on FINTRAC, that they are going to be treated like they were funding a terrorist organization and will not be able to get loans, access their savings accounts or even get mortgages. That, to me, is really disturbing.

Really, what is next? Section 19 of the Emergencies Act and referenced in the order in council says that there are going to be other temporary measures authorized under section 19 of the act. That is not known.

Statutory Order

I again come back to the issue of failed leadership, inaction and paralysis by the Prime Minister. I have been here for quite a while, 17 years, and I am shocked that we do not have an emergency management plan for the Parliament buildings and Ottawa as the capital city. I was here when the terrorist attack happened in 2014. We witnessed what happened January 6, 2021, when the riot occurred on Capitol Hill. We know there should have been plans made to deal with a situation like this.

When the Minister of Emergency Preparedness was the Toronto police chief in 2010 and protests were taking place at the G20 in Toronto, in a couple of days 1,100 protesters were arrested. The RCMP, the OPP, the Toronto city police and regional police in the area were brought in to deal with the situation. If we did not need an Emergencies Act to do that then, why do we need it now?

It is time to de-escalate this situation. The Prime Minister has to stop stigmatizing, marginalizing, traumatizing and name-calling those who do not agree with his policies and bring people around, take the heat off and end these restrictive and divisive mandates so that we can get back to a normal life again and live as a strong, united Canada.

● (2005)

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his strong denunciation of hate, anti-Semitism and racism. I really appreciate that and thank him for doing that so strongly.

I want to also comment that the Emergencies Act specifically is designed to uphold the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and I am also happy to hear Conservatives speaking so highly of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms as well.

The question I want to ask my hon. colleague, in a sense, I think he answered part of when he spoke about the danger to tow truck operators. Why is he concerned with their security if everything that is happening out there is so peaceful?

The second question I would like to ask is because I know he has a long history when it comes to protecting the safety and security of Canadians. He spoke about the financial transactions and he spoke about January 6. The Anti-Defamation League in the United States has put out a list of 1,100 donors who also donated to the January 6 insurrection in the Capitol. How can he square that circle and does he not believe that foreign interference in our democracy is an issue that we must stand firmly against?

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, I think the minister misunderstood what I was saying about the tow truck drivers. How can they have section 8 of the charter security when they are being forced to pull people that they do not want to tow? We have already heard this. A lot of tow truck drivers do not want to be out there towing because these are their customers. These are the people that they work with every day, and they do not want to be put in a position that is adversarial in nature. That is their concern. It is not that they are going to hurt them. It is that these are their friends. These are their customers, and why should they be forced into it? Their charter rights are being violated in this as well.

If the government is so concerned about foreign interference, why has it not denounced what we have already seen and what was linked to the Communist regime in Beijing interfering in the last federal election here that cost us as the Conservative Party at least nine seats? Why do they not denounce when Tides Foundation and other money from the U.S. flows up and funds things to block our energy products and our transportation systems in this country?

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my colleague seems to be skeptical about the idea of seizing the bank accounts and financial resources of certain protesters. He seems to be skeptical about the idea of towing the trucks of some of the protesters.

I do not agree with the Emergencies Act at all, because it is like killing a fly with a bazooka. However, my colleague seems to be suggesting that no measures are possible. I wonder how he would stop what is going on out there.

● (2010)

[English]

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, we know that there are a number of provincial, municipal and federal laws that are already in place, including the Criminal Code, that can be used to deal with the situation out on the street. Sitting on the street illegally parking, guess what, they get a parking ticket and they get towed. It is just a matter of having enough police members out there to do it.

As I used in an example, we witnessed, with both the Olympics in 2010 in Vancouver as well as the G20 meeting in Toronto in August 2010, that there were lots of police able to be brought in from across the country by using federal, provincial and municipal powers to provide the proper security at the Olympics and to arrest over 1,100 protesters that were at the G20 summit and have them all locked away to make sure that everyone else was safe.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I wanted to mention that there have been some words tonight about this being an inconvenience or an annoyance. I want to point out the privilege that we have in the House so that we can look at something like this as just an inconvenience and an annoyance when there are families and individuals struggling right now with no income because of their lack of ability to go to work.

I want to speak about the policing. Why does the member think that policing has not been enforced even though we know that there are infractions happening and crimes happening on the street right now?

Mr. James Bezan: Mr. Speaker, I think it is pretty clear that we have had such weak leadership from the Prime Minister. He has not, at all, provided any direction. The public safety minister and the Minister of Emergency Preparedness have not been at all concerned about this until it came to the eleventh hour. They should have been acting on this sooner. They should have had more police on the streets. They should have had proper ticketing and arresting of individuals, especially those who were promoting hate out on the streets.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak this evening to the government's unprecedented invocation of the Emergencies Act. This act has been on the books for 34 years, and in those 34 years it has not been used on a single occasion: not during the Oka crisis, not during Caledonia, not in the wake of September 11, and not following the 2020 blockades of critical infrastructure, including railway lines and pipelines, that went on for two months. Never before has this act been invoked.

There is a good reason that this act has never been invoked before, and that is because it is exceptional legislation meant for the most extreme circumstances. It provides the government with sweeping powers that infringe upon the charter rights and civil liberties of Canadians. These are powers including prohibiting public assemblage, seizing property, freezing bank accounts without warrant and limiting or prohibiting travel within Canada. I could go on. These are extraordinary powers indeed.

In light of the exceptional nature of this legislation, intended for the most extreme circumstances, the threshold that must be satisfied in order to establish that there is a national emergency pursuant to the act is indeed extremely high. An emergency under the act is an “urgent and critical situation that seriously endangers the lives, health or safety of Canadians, or seriously threatens the ability of the Government of Canada to preserve the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of Canada.”

Not only that, the emergency must be of a nature so as to exceed the capacity or authority of a province to deal with it, and so no other law on the books can effectively deal with the situation.

It is patently clear that the very high threshold has not been satisfied. Indeed, it has not come close to being satisfied.

The government, in justifying the invocation of these extraordinary powers, talks about ending blockades. When one turns to the order in council issued on Monday that specifies the nature of the purported emergency, the order in council speaks of the continuing blockades of critical infrastructure, including trade corridors and international border crossings. It speaks to the adverse impacts these blockades have had with trading partners, particularly the United States, and it speaks of a breakdown in the supply chain and availability of goods as a result of these blockades.

However, there is a big problem for the government. There are no blockades in Canada today, on the Canada-U.S. border or anywhere. There were no such blockades on Monday, when the government invoked the order in council and the Emergencies Act.

● (2015)

There were blockades on the Canada-U.S. border at Coutts, Windsor and Surrey. Those blockades were unlawful. They were wrong, and they were dispersed prior to the invocation of the Emergencies Act under tools already available to law enforcement and under existing laws.

I remind the government that in the act, in order to utilize the Emergencies Act it must be demonstrated that no other laws on the books can reasonably be used. That simply has not borne out to be the case.

Statutory Order

We are now left with the situation here in Ottawa. There are trucks outside on Wellington St. in front of Parliament Hill. There are some protesters. In addition to the street in front of Parliament Hill being affected, there are some streets immediately around the parliamentary precinct and downtown Ottawa that are affected. Yes, it has created unpleasantness. Yes, it has been a nuisance. Yes, there have been illegal activities by certain people who are here. That does not make a national emergency.

Indeed, all of the tools that exist are there and have been used. For example, the honking of horns has largely been addressed by way of an injunction issued by a judge. The Criminal Code, transportation laws and municipal bylaws are tools on the books to address this situation. What cannot be justified is invoking the Emergencies Act.

The Emergencies Act is not needed and is not warranted, because there is no national emergency. What we have is a Prime Minister who has invoked the Emergencies Act absent a national emergency. That is an abuse of power on the part of the Prime Minister. It is a perversion of the rule of law. It threatens the rights and freedoms of Canadians right across Canada, not just those who are standing outside Parliament Hill. It also sets a dangerous precedent of normalizing the extraordinary powers authorized pursuant to the act.

The Prime Minister knows the threshold has not been met, but the Prime Minister does not care because, for the Prime Minister, it is all about political theatre. The Prime Minister knows that what he is doing is wrong and that he is acting unlawfully. The members on that side of the House, the members of the NDP, the coalition partners of the government, have a choice. They can follow the law pursuant to the Emergencies Act, or they can aid and abet this abuse of power on the part of the Prime Minister. The choice is clear.

● (2020)

The Deputy Speaker: Since I have taken the Chair, I have noticed a lot of helpful people trying to help everybody out in their speeches. I know where the help is coming from depends on who has the floor, but we have lots of debate to do and there are lots of opportunities to speak in the House and ask questions.

Let us get to questions and answers. The hon. Minister of Families, Children and Social Development has the floor.

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite and I were elected together in 2015. We have gotten to know each other, and one thing I have gotten to know about him is that he stands, or has stood, for law and order. The member opposite has said that there is no national emergency and that there are maybe some illegal activities, but those illegal activities taking place are okay and not that bad. There was \$450 million in trade a day blockaded. The Emergencies Act was announced on Monday. There were still blockades at that time at our border points. Today, in Windsor, Ontario, a woman was arrested for threatening to bomb the house of the mayor. A blockade was stopped on its way to the Ambassador Bridge. In fact, if we just walk out of Parliament, there is a blockade in Ottawa.

Statutory Order

The member opposite is saying, to the thousands of residents who have been held hostage for the last 20 days, that their safety and security do not matter. What is he saying to the Canadians who elected members in all parties in the House just a few months ago, and to the people who are out there who he served coffee to, who he took pictures with, who have said they want to overthrow, not the government, every elected member—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for St. Albert—Edmonton.

Mr. Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, the issue at hand is whether the threshold has been met to invoke the Emergencies Act. That is the question. Based upon a review of the legislation, it is very clear that the bar has not been set, with respect to the blockades. It was existing law enforcement tools and powers under the authority of the provinces that dispersed the situation. At Coutts, the situation was dispersed by many of the protesters themselves. What the Prime Minister needs to do is turn down the temperature, instead of pouring fire on this situation.

With respect to the hon. minister, I say this could be ended very quickly. The path toward ending it is for the Prime Minister to move forward and lift his punitive and discriminatory vaccine mandates. That would resolve this issue.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: I am doing my best to include all the political parties in the discussion so that they can ask questions. I see that the questions and answers are a bit long, however.

The hon. member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert.

• (2025)

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will try to be quick. We in the Bloc Québécois are fiercely against, but for other reasons. We break out in hives every time the federal government sticks its nose in Quebec's business, in general.

I very much liked my colleague's speech and I understand his position. However, for the past two or three weeks, we have seen members of the Conservative Party take selfies and record videos with the protesters here in Ottawa and elsewhere. How many Conservative Parties are there in the House?

[English]

Mr. Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, there are 119 Conservative members of Parliament who are working every single day to fight for their constituents, including those who have been adversely affected by the government's tyrannical policies.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I know my hon. colleague frequently refers to indigenous peoples who are peacefully protesting on their unceded territories. I wonder, if he was in government, what he would do if a national police service refused to enforce the rule of law, as it has been doing at Wet'suwet'en. This includes what we saw with militarized police: They took an axe, a chainsaw and an attack dog to take down the door of two unarmed indigenous women on unceded territory. This is something that was affirmed in Supreme Court rulings. We are now witnessing police in Ottawa who have been dangerously lenient to these so-called "protesters". I would refer to it as an illegal

occupation. In fact, we even have photos and news broadcasts of police officers hugging blockaders.

I am wondering this. What would the member do if he was in government?

Mr. Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, the ball is in the Prime Minister's court. He created this crisis. It is up to him to solve the crisis, and solving the crisis does not begin by invoking the Emergencies Act. It cannot be justified in the circumstances.

[Translation]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Mr. Speaker, Karl Marx said that history repeats itself at least twice. The first time as a tragedy, the second time as a farce.

For Quebec, the War Measures Act is part of a tragic memory. Today, after three weeks of crisis, including one where he was completely absent, the Prime Minister needs to live out his "just watch me" moment by playing tough guy to salvage his failed leadership, which has been criticized by two of his own members.

Let us summarize. In the days leading up to the protest on the weekend of January 29, the organizers said that this would not be a simple protest but a Woodstock, and it would last until all health measures were lifted. This sent a very clear message. It was no secret that the truckers were not there to lodge their complaints in the time it took to tour the neighbourhood and then leave. They were there to stay. "Woodstock" means it will last a long time.

The Prime Minister then took some time to deal with his cold. A few days later, he broke his silence to insult and stigmatize the truckers, hurled some more epithets and went back to bed.

During the first week, one could almost imagine that the crisis was good for the government, politically speaking. It even led to the swift and unimpeded ouster of the official opposition leader. However, the immediate political gain soon gave way to disbelief that the situation was turning against the government. The longer it went on, the more it became clear that the Prime Minister had no idea what to do about this hot potato.

For two and a half weeks, the Prime Minister offloaded the problem onto the Ottawa police. To varying degrees, all political parties were calling on the Prime Minister to act, of course, and promoting very different solutions.

On February 7, the former Ottawa police chief, who was still in the position at the time, asked the federal government for 1,800 additional officers. In the end, the RCMP sent just over 275 officers, but mainly to protect the Prime Minister and Parliament Hill. According to the Ottawa police chief, only 20 officers were assigned to the protests.

The City of Ottawa reached out to the protest organizers to ask that some of the trucks be moved to make life a little easier for residents. Why did the feds not pick up the phone?

Where was the federal government in all of this? Frankly, no one was flying this plane. Even the most basic level of leadership would have been to create a crisis task force to coordinate all of the levels.

Is this any surprise, given how this government and this Prime Minister have managed previous crises? Just think of the railway crisis with the Wet'suwet'en or the early days of the COVID-19 crisis in 2020, when almost everyone was calling for the borders to be shut down in the face of a virus about which we knew very little. Very little was known about it at the time. Nevertheless, the government decided to let things be. In the case of COVID-19, this government let things get so bad that Valérie Plante, the mayor of Montreal, decided to go to Dorval International Airport herself. Now, in 2022, nothing has changed.

Now, all of a sudden, at the very moment when many health measures were being lifted and provincial, federal and municipal government authorities had managed to remove other occupations, the turtle now thought it was the hare. The Emergencies Act, the successor to the War Measures Act, was going to be invoked, even though the Prime Minister had proclaimed for three days that he would not use it. As soon as things were starting to get resolved without the federal government, it wanted to make sure it went on record as having done something. Talk about an admission of failure.

The Emergencies Act gives the government special powers. The government can issue an order for the regulation or prohibition of travel, the use of specified property or any public assembly that may reasonably be expected to lead to a breach of the peace. It can designate and secure protected places, assume the control, and the restoration and maintenance, of public utilities and services, and authorize or direct any person to render essential services and provide reasonable compensation in respect of services so rendered.

● (2030)

It can also impose, on summary conviction, a fine not exceeding \$500 or imprisonment not exceeding six months or both, or, on indictment, a fine not exceeding \$5,000 or imprisonment not exceeding five years or both.

To be clear, the Emergencies Act is not illegitimate in and of itself. A state of exception is an integral part of democracy. Any government that wishes to confront crises it hopes will be temporary by definition must have measures to deal with states of exception.

However, the state of emergency being short-lived and temporary, these measures must be time-limited. We recognize that it is not optimal and is not intended to be permanent. The situation may require the suspension of the usual democratic system to fix a problem that calls for an especially rapid response. Everyone knows that. I am sure every party in the House will agree.

The Emergencies Act is typically used for disasters, states of emergency and international crises or when the country is at war. It can be applied justly—that is important, it absolutely can, that is not even debatable—but only as a last resort. In this case, there are other measures available.

The Emergencies Act is an extreme decision that came after two weeks of initially treating this as a minor problem. The government allowed the situation to fester. They let things go off the rails and deteriorate, and then suddenly they cried wolf. It was an about-face.

Statutory Order

Why not use regular legal recourse and regular legal institutions? If the occupation of downtown Ottawa is illegal, then why do we need an exceptional law instead of just enforcing the regular laws?

Let us look at some examples. Protests were held on February 4, 5 and 6 in Quebec City. There was no siege, no occupation. The city was prepared. Law enforcement made their arrangements. The Quebec City police service allowed trucks to drive within a certain perimeter, which had been planned, but it made sure to enforce municipal bylaws. The fundamental right to peaceful protest was fully respected, but it was also clear that protection and security would be provided to all, both protesters and residents alike. Did we need the Emergencies Act in Quebec City that day? The answer is no.

On February 13, 13 people were arrested at the border crossing in Coutts, Alberta. They had weapons, including military-style semi-automatic firearms, body armour, and large capacity magazines. One of the leaders of the group had even made videos calling for people to take up arms against the government, but the blockade was taken down and the border crossing is open today. Did we need the Emergencies Act to do this? The answer is no.

As far as I know, threats and calls for insurrection are already illegal and were illegal before the Emergencies Act.

On February 14, the Ambassador Bridge blockade, one of the biggest flashpoints in this crisis, came down. Was the Emergencies Act needed for that? The answer is no.

There is always a way, using the conventional legal tools available. As far as I know, blocking a street and inciting violence are always illegal. Do we need special emergency legislation to remind us of the obvious? The answer is obviously no.

The provinces and municipalities already have the means to act. The federal government does too, if it could be bothered to do so, but that is another story.

The worst part is that the government order will have serious consequences, the most important of which is that it will divide the population. Much as the Prime Minister did when he insulted the protesters at the beginning of the crisis, he is putting a heavy partisan spin on the events, thinking that he will probably come out on top of this unhealthy polarization.

Perhaps the fire is slowly burning out, but there is nothing like adding some fuel to rekindle it. I hope the government is ready for the renewed populist anger and frustration that lies ahead. The government has not only shifted the problem, it has made it worse. Seven out of ten provinces are openly opposed to the invocation of the Emergencies Act.

Statutory Order

● (2035)

The Quebec National Assembly unanimously voted to express its opposition to and rejection of the application of the Emergencies Act on Quebec soil. All parties backed the motion: Coalition Avenir Québec, the party in power; the Parti Libéral du Québec, which I would like to point out is not a sovereigntist party; Québec Solidaire, which is not considered to be sympathetic to truckers' positions and claims; the Parti Québécois; and the Parti Conservateur du Québec member. The entire Quebec legislature stated with one voice that it would not go where the government wants to lead us. This is the message we are repeating in the House.

In Quebec, the trauma is real. As we know, in 1970, 500 people were detained without due process. They were workers, mechanics, booksellers, activists, poets, artists, free spirits whose only crime was to want Quebec's independence. This was all made possible by the proclamation of the War Measures Act by a so-called champion of rights and freedoms, Pierre Elliott Trudeau. Ottawa never published the official list of the people arrested under that law.

The invocation of the War Measures Act resulted in 32,000 warrantless searches. Of the 500 people arrested, 90% were released without charges, and 95% of those charged were eventually acquitted or had their charges dropped. Today we even know that the list of innocent people who were arrested was drawn up by Ottawa. The police had asked Trudeau, Marchand and Pelletier, who were known as the "three wise men", to fiddle with the list, removing some names and adding others. That is the kind of thing that happens in a banana republic. René Lévesque stated that the Trudeau government of the day had behaved like a totalitarian government in peacetime. He was quite right.

These are different times, and every context is unique. The old War Measures Act was not inherently illegitimate either. It was used twice, for the two largest, most tragic global conflicts of the 20th century. The use of the War Measures Act was not warranted in October 1970, however. We now know that the RCMP commissioner at the time had confirmed that the investigations were going well, that the police forces were co-operating and that measures like those in the War Measures Act, in particular the mass arrests, would slow the investigation into the events that October.

The report on the events of October 1970, written by Jean-François Duchaine and released in 1980, confirmed that the idea of calling in the Canadian army came from the law enforcement community, but that the idea of using the powers set out in the War Measures Act did not come from the RCMP. In other words, according to the RCMP, which is hardly a separatist think tank, the problems could have been fully managed under ordinary laws, without suspending the fundamental rights of Quebecers.

Does the use of special legislation for partisan purposes remind anyone of anything? In 2022 as in 1970, in both cases, its use could have been avoided by simply turning to the conventional institutional rules of the rule of law.

Any parallel has its limits, of course. I am aware that the Emergencies Act differs significantly from the War Measures Act, which it replaced in 1988. We know that, so there is no point using it as an argument.

The preamble to the new act refers to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Canadian Bill of Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. This is largely symbolic, because the old War Measures Act also had to comply with these documents even though it did not symbolically include references in its preamble.

One other big difference is that Parliament must now decide whether to invoke the new act within the next seven days. That is why we are debating here and why we will be voting on this subject soon.

● (2040)

I do not want anyone to misconstrue what I am saying and suggest that I think the situations are identical, because that is not the case. However, despite the major differences between these two laws, as well as the different time periods and contexts, one truth remains. The government is irresponsibly trivializing an extraordinary piece of legislation that has radical provisions, which may be justified, but are radical nonetheless, by using it when there is nothing to indicate beyond all doubt that we had to make use of this last resort. It is as simple as that.

If there is any evidence to suggest that all legal avenues and current statutes, whether federal, municipal or provincial, are no longer sufficient, we would like to see it. It must be tabled and the government needs to convince us. We will be the first to reconsider and study this legislation, if that is the case, but we need to be convinced. So far, we have seen no such evidence. This is an inappropriate use of the legislation.

One thing I know for sure is that the current government's chaotic handling of this crisis will likely be taught in history books for years to come as a monumental mess. It will also undoubtedly be studied in leadership schools as a perfect example of what not to do.

Great captains are made in rough waters. The Prime Minister is certainly no great captain, but we will not let him or this government sink the ship.

We in the Bloc Québécois clearly oppose this unnecessary, unfair and unjustified proclamation of the Emergencies Act.

● (2045)

Hon. Pablo Rodriguez (Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when it comes to complaining, we can always count on the Bloc Québécois. Last week, they told us that we were not doing enough. Today, they are telling us we are doing too much. They are like a mother-in-law who is never in a good mood, never happy. We do not know. We are told that we are doing too much, not enough and not too much.

However, I did not hear the Bloc talk about the fact that what is going on outside is illegal. It is a siege. There are people who cannot sleep, who cannot go anywhere, not just on the Ottawa side, but also on the Gatineau side.

I did not hear them talk about all the retailers who could see a light at the end of the tunnel and who were looking forward to re-opening their stores. Then, suddenly, they could no longer open because of what is happening outside, because those who are outside could not care less about these people. Shame on them for that.

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, we will leave the shame and guilt aside.

I find it unfortunate that the Minister of Canadian Heritage has so little appreciation for his mother-in-law. I hope she is not watching. We salute her nonetheless. At least he said he loved her.

I find it odd that he did not hear us say that it was illegal, because we did. In my speech, I specifically stated that if it was illegal, it was also illegal before the Emergencies Act was invoked. We were telling the government to act, but within the scope of existing laws. It is that simple. There is no need for special legislation to remind us that something that was already illegal is still illegal. We do not need special legislation to state the obvious.

[English]

Mr. Gary Vidal (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Mr. Speaker, far be it from me to quote an NDP MP in the House, but considering the Honourable Tommy Douglas was from Saskatchewan, maybe I will do it this one time. In describing Pierre Elliott Trudeau's use of the War Measures Act, he said it was like "using a sledgehammer to crack a peanut".

I am sure my colleague from the Bloc would agree that what is happening outside pales in comparison to what was going on in 1970. He referred to that in his comments. What does my colleague think the great Tommy Douglas would do if he were here in the House of Commons at this moment in time?

[Translation]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, we cannot make dead men speak. However, and I clearly said this when speaking about both situations, there were real and existing difficulties in both cases.

In both cases, the use of the War Measures Act or the Emergencies Act is not justified. We have institutions. We have police. We have the army. We have laws. Occupying a city, or kidnapping a minister, as was the case, is illegal and was already illegal. There is no need for a special law to reaffirm this. Everyone knows it.

The government could quite simply use the ordinary institutions and laws to respond to the situation.

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague. He did a great job of explaining things. I could never have made a speech like that. He did a great job of explaining the difference between the Emergencies Act, which we are debating now, and the War Measures Act in 1970.

That said, emergency legislation, even if it does not apply in Quebec—which is still uncertain—is still retraumatizing for Quebecers. It seems highly likely that it will apply in Quebec. I myself participated in movies about those days. There are plays and books about it. Once I was even a part of a performance about the trial of Michel Chartrand, "le procès des cinq", which was after 1970.

Statutory Order

People have not forgotten. That is pretty obvious right now. Our offices are getting calls from thousands of people telling us to vote against it. They could not care less about how it is written. What they care about is what it means, and that is what scares them.

Could my colleague comment on the trauma triggered by this bill?

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, the trauma is there, and we must not think of the trauma as illegitimate or irrational. It was an extremely serious situation, for many reasons. We in the Bloc Québécois even moved a motion on our opposition day in 2020 on the 50th anniversary of the October crisis. We simply wanted an apology for the victims. There was no sympathy on our side for any form of criminality.

There were victims in that crisis, and we know that federal leaders were called upon to fiddle with the list of people to be arrested. Many people do not realize how very serious this is.

RCMP officials said at the time and again a few years later that things did not need to go that far, that the existing institution could have taken care of it. However, it seems that psychological warfare was used. Unfortunately, it has had long-lasting side effects.

● (2050)

[English]

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I was quite gobsmacked while listening to the member's speech, particularly because the member started by saying that the Government of Canada should have acted sooner. The Bloc Québécois normally has a lot of respect for jurisdictions. We were there to support municipalities. We were there to support the provincial governments that asked for our assistance, with additional forces and creating an integrated command. We were there right from the start. Had we done something sooner, they would have been screaming that we were overreaching as a federal government.

His own critic for public safety, on Monday, said that the federal government needed to show leadership. Does he not think the federal government is showing leadership by creating tools that allow the provincial governments to use their discretion to stop protests across the country, including the ones at Lacolle that are being contemplated by provincial police in Quebec?

It is great that the member mentions the National Assembly of Quebec, because 72% of Quebecers agree with this measure. What does the member have to say to them?

[Translation]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of questions there.

To begin with, a poll is a poll. It is talked about, negotiated, studied and disputed. We did not analyze the details of the methodology. The important thing to look at is the question being asked.

Statutory Order

I am sure Quebecers agree that the act should apply in Ontario or other places where it is needed, but the act does not say that. In its current form, the order will apply everywhere.

That is what I tell Quebecers. I tell them that the National Assembly is 100% the legitimate legislature of Quebecers. That is where their representatives are. Every political party, regardless of its political affiliation, says so. It is clear, simple and precise. There is no debate. In fact, a vote in the House is a lot more scientific than a poll. Let us be clear about that.

We have taken a lot of time to explain that. We are asking the government to take action, but it seems that the members opposite are unable to take action without interfering.

As soon as we tell them to take action, it is as though all courses of action are equal. That is not what we are saying. For example, the government could have provided the City of Ottawa with the resources it was asking for. It could have done many things.

One thing is for sure. I have explained it many times. I spent 20 minutes explaining it. I even explained it in response to some questions. There is a difference between actions taken in accordance with existing legislation and actions taken in accordance with special legislation. The real problem here is that the existing legislation was not used, yet the government invoked special legislation.

[English]

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will ask the member a question on policing. Some members tonight have talked about a slight inconvenience and annoyances, but others have spoken about the fear in the community. As we have all seen, the police have not been able to address crime and have not been able to enforce bylaws for municipal-level infractions.

I wonder if the member could tell us why he thinks policing has not been enforced in this situation in Ottawa.

[Translation]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay: Mr. Speaker, from what I saw, the police in Quebec City managed to enforce the law. They managed to enforce the law at the Ambassador Bridge and in Alberta, when they arrested people who had weapons. There are several examples of where the law was enforced.

There has been a serious management and leadership problem in the very region we are in right now. It is as simple as that.

[English]

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I rise to speak on a historic and unprecedented situation facing our country. For the first time since its passage in 1988, the Emergencies Act is being invoked by the Prime Minister. The law outlines a type of situation that would merit its invocation. It notes that it must only be used during an emergency that arises from threats to the security of Canada that are so serious as to be a national emergency.

While it is the Prime Minister's decision to invoke the act, it is the duty of members of the House who have been placed here to ei-

ther reject it or ratify it and ensure, if the measures are taken, that they are justifiable and appropriate.

The act enumerates four circumstances that would justify the use of its powers. Let me outline those emergencies described in the act, and hold the circumstances of the current standoff up against these provisions, to see if today's situation meets any of these criteria.

Criteria one involves espionage or sabotage that is against Canada or is detrimental to the interests of Canada, or such activities directed toward and in support of such espionage and sabotage. I have seen no clear evidence that blockades have been infiltrated by spies or other acts of espionage, nor has the government brought any such evidence forward to the House.

Criteria two involves foreign-influenced activities within or relating to Canada that are detrimental to the interests of Canada, and are clandestine or deceptive or involve a threat to any person. The Prime Minister has alluded to foreign funding by individuals, however it remains unclear how this is detrimental to the interest of Canadians. There is no foreign country that is financing or otherwise supporting the blockades financially, and that is the test. If the Prime Minister believes it is a foreign government funding this, then he has an obligation to share that with the House.

Criteria three involves activities within or relating to Canada, directed toward or in support of the threat or use of acts of serious violence against persons or properties for the purpose of achieving political, religious or ideological objectives within Canada or a foreign state. There has been no concerted, violent effort made by any members of the blockade. In fact, we saw mostly peaceful removal of the protesters on the Ambassador Bridge. Isolated acts of violence do not equate to full-blown acts of violence that are aimed at achieving political objectives.

Criteria four involves activities directed toward undermining, by covert, unlawful acts, or directed toward or intended ultimately to lead to the destruction or overthrow by violence of the constitutionally established system of government in Canada.

Every day I have been walking to my office and to the House of Commons, like all MPs, unimpeded by protesters. To be sure, they have effectively blocked several streets, created a lot of noise and made life more difficult for those of us living downtown. Well, what has happened in downtown Ottawa in the last three weeks is nothing remotely close to the violent overthrow of the constitutionally established system of government in Canada.

The Canadian Security Intelligence Services Act explicitly prohibits the use of these kinds of powers on lawful protests or dissent. If the present circumstances do not warrant using the act for the first time, they absolutely pale in comparison to the previous times the act's predecessor was invoked.

I was a legislative assistant to the government that created this act to replace the War Measures Act to prevent the suspension of charter rights and government overreach. Through our long history, there are only three other times this has happened, during the two world wars and during the October Crisis, when there was an armed insurrection and a diplomat and a politician were kidnapped. Pierre Laporte was murdered and bombs were set off in Quebec.

It was a horrible experience and, even still, some called it overreach. Does a traffic jam on the street in front of Parliament Hill merit the same type of response as those three incidences? Of course not.

● (2055)

The act must only be used as a last resort. That is what the Prime Minister said. If this measure is his last resort, what were his plans A, B and C, because we did not see them. Did he make himself available to meet with the delegation of protesters to hear them out? Of course not. Did he dispatch a delegation of his ministers to meet with them, any key caucus members or senior officials other than the RCMP? Of course not. The government's report to Parliament on the Emergencies Act consultations confirms this.

There are 58 engagements on that list. I searched through the details of the 58 engagements. Did I find a reference to one government official, one minister or the Prime Minister meeting with Canadians on this? No, I did not. The government and the Prime Minister had meetings with themselves, not with Canadians. They went from sitting on their duffs in unproductive meetings to implementing the most heavy-handed act available to government. The Prime Minister said he did not take it lightly, but the evidence in his own documents shows otherwise.

The government does not need the Emergencies Act to arrest illegal protesters. This is done often, just ask the Minister of Environment. Cutting off the funding of an illegal activity does not require the Emergencies Act. The proceeds of crime legislation deals with that. The deputy director of FINTRAC, in a statement before a parliamentary committee, said that there is no evidence of foreign extremist financing behind these demonstrations. There is no need then for the Emergencies Act to stop foreign funding.

For 21 days, the federal government has had the regular legislative tools to deal with the Ottawa protests, but it has not used them. It has not stopped one jerry can of fuel, one hot tub or one barbecue propane container from being carried through the protest right by the police. Meanwhile, provincial governments in Ontario, Manitoba and B.C. used standard policing tools to dispense with the protests.

Days before the convoy had even arrived in Ottawa, the Prime Minister was stigmatizing and vilifying the participants. He called them racists and misogynists, a fringe minority that holds unacceptable views. This is how the Prime Minister operates. He divides, stigmatizes and drives wedges between himself and those who do not agree with him, and he does it for the most naked of political reasons. He thinks it makes for good politics for himself and the Liberal Party, and that it goes over well with his base.

This is not a prime minister for all of Canada or all Canadians. This is a very selective prime minister, one who picks and chooses

his causes based on the degree to which they further his vain, glorious self-image or the interests of the Liberal Party. Not long ago, the Prime Minister calculated that it would be in his interest to opine on the agriculture reforms that were being proposed by the Government of India, the world's largest democracy and a fellow member of the Commonwealth.

In the ensuing diplomatic spat that resulted from his unsolicited and righteous remarks, the Prime Minister justified his intervention in the domestic affairs of the world's largest democracy by saying, and I know the government is listening, "Canada will always stand up for the right of peaceful protest anywhere around the world", except apparently at home. The Prime Minister passionately supports the principles of free speech and peaceful protest. It is just the practice of free speech and peaceful protests that he opposes, especially at home in front of the symbol of free speech and democracy, Parliament Hill.

Conservatives sympathize with those Canadians who have been affected by the blockades. Critical trade links were halted, but have now been restored, and many small businesses have had to shut their doors in light of the protests. The protesters here in Ottawa brought a message and that message has been heard. The Conservatives have heard them. We will stand up for them and for all Canadians who want to get back to normal life. We will not stop until the mandates are ended.

● (2100)

Canadians have sacrificed so much. We all know that. Every member of Parliament has heard and seen first-hand the sacrifices. However, in a country more divided than ever, the Prime Minister has decided to purposely politicize the pandemic for his own gain.

● (2105)

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, as I was listening to the member's remarks, I felt like we were living in two different worlds. It is not lost on me that he kept talking about these peaceful protests that ended quietly and through dialogue. I saw the news, and in Coutts, Alberta, they ended because there was a huge cache of weapons. That is something that is quite concerning to all Canadians. He was talking about the premiers who could do this without emergency powers. In Ontario, they actually enacted—

Ms. Elizabeth May: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Standing Order 16 and Standing Order 18 are being violated. I cannot hear the minister trying to ask a question because of the heckling from the people she is trying to ask the question of.

Statutory Order

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I have stopped the clock. I will allow the minister to ask her question again, and I do ask members, that if they have other questions and comments, to wait until it is their turn. I am sure the member for South Shore—St. Margarets can answer without the help of his colleagues.

The hon. minister.

Hon. Karina Gould: Madam Speaker, while I always appreciate the comments, I do appreciate the opportunity to ask this question.

The member was talking about premiers who were able to do this without emergency measures, but in Ontario last Friday, the premier actually brought forward a state of emergency, which comes with extraordinary powers. They were then very supportive of the federal government bringing this forward because of the extraordinary damage to our economy and the security of Canadians at border points, as well as right here in Ottawa. What I hear from the members opposite is a complete disregard for the safety of people in Ottawa.

When will the member recognize that people are unsafe and they are scared? It is our job, as parliamentarians, to protect them.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Speaker, I agree with the minister. We do live in two worlds. Your world, where you watch the CBC to find out what is happening—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Please address comments through the Chair.

The hon. member.

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Speaker, the minister and the government watch CBC to get all their news. In our world, we actually go and talk to people. We go to the protests at the borders, where the people are, to find out what they are saying to try to represent them in Parliament. We do not just sit in West Block talking to each other in those ineffective meetings, which always happen on the government's side and that produce absolutely nothing. The government went from zero initiatives to the most draconian piece of legislation that exists in this country, and—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I do want to get to more questions and comments.

The hon. member for Beauport—Limoilou.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have been listening to my colleagues since this morning because this is an extremely important issue.

What I am hearing does not make sense. It is like a book without a cover or anything written inside. Some people think everything is sombre and sad, but others are living in a magical land of unicorns. Where is the middle ground?

Could my colleague tell me what measures should have been taken sooner, based on that middle ground?

[English]

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Speaker, I think the Prime Minister should have actually enforced the existing laws and tools he has be-

fore him without using the act. I am hearing from members opposite that it is not his job. That is the problem with the government. Nothing is its job. Whether it is inflation or this crisis, it is always somebody else's fault.

My colleague from Nova Scotia, who I respect a lot, has also said that it is not our problem, that we did not create the economic crisis we are in. I am sorry, but you did. That is your excuse for everything in this House.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would like to remind the member he is not to use the word “you”. That would prevent me from having to get up so often to redirect him.

The hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, I heard some words around this House today saying that people are not talking to constituents, that people are not talking to workers, and that members of Parliament are not talking to their communities. I just want to say that we are. What I am hearing is that people have been traumatized by this.

I wanted to ask something of the Conservative Party and the member who says they will stand up for the occupiers. Will they endorse illegal occupations going forward, or is it just this one they are supporting?

• (2110)

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Speaker, I do not think I said that. What I said is that we will stand up for ending the mandates.

In her relationship with the Liberals and supporting bringing in a reduction in people's freedoms, I would pose a question to her. Why is she not listening to the people she is hearing from who are complaining about wanting these mandates reduced and relieved? Provinces are doing it. Provinces out west are doing it. All kinds of provinces are doing it. The government is ignoring and continues to ignore the needs of Canadians who want to get back to a normal life. It is putting its own political agenda ahead of everybody in order to try to wedge and divide us.

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am glad to be speaking to this bill. Actually, I would rather not be speaking to this bill and these measures. I do not think it is necessary and is a total overreach of the government for political expediency. It is inappropriate and very selective. That will probably be the nature of my comments tonight.

First of all, I want to thank all the staff here this evening: the table officers, interpreters, food services and maintenance. We appreciate what they do for us in these late hours of the night. The cafeteria workers are here half an hour later than we finish tonight, so I thank them. I also want to thank the Parliamentary Protective Service, which has had long hours on the Hill for the past three weeks in order to keep order. Its members have been having a lot of polite conversations with the protesters and approaching them with a calm, professional demeanour.

If the Liberal government would have had the same approach, I cannot help but wonder if the situation would be where it is today. As a matter of fact, I am sure it would not be. The government made absolutely no effort to reach out. It is not just in the past three weeks. This is the approach it has had over the years, during and before the pandemic.

I cannot think of a single time the Prime Minister or any member of the cabinet have even taken a minute to voice any degree of willingness to listen to the Canadians who disagree with the measures the government has taken to promote the exclusion of Canadians based on vaccination status. The Prime Minister and many other Liberal caucus members try to paint anyone not fully vaccinated or not supportive of exclusionary mandates as enemies, questioning whether they should be tolerated.

This is Canada we are talking about. We are known for our tolerance. We are known for our multiculturalism, yet this is the type of approach the government is taking constantly. It is its mode of operation.

Last year, when 50 churches were burned down, the Prime Minister said:

One of my reflections is I understand the anger that's out there against...institutions like the Catholic church. It is real and it is fully understandable. The shameful history that we are all becoming more and more aware of and engaging ourselves to do better as Canadians.

Those are such pious words. It is wrong. The burning of churches, for the Prime Minister and the Liberal government, is understandable, but there is no desire to show concern for those protesting now. He told several church leaders that evangelical Christians were the worst part of Canadian society.

An hon. member: What are you talking about?

Mr. Marc Dalton: Madam Speaker, yes, exclusionary tolerance is what I am speaking about. I am talking about 8%—

• (2115)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order, please.

I just ruled on this a few minutes ago for the minister, and now the minister is doing exactly what I asked somebody not to do. I know the ministers want to ensure they are role models in the House. I ask them to hold their discussions and thoughts until the appropriate time.

I would also ask opposition members not to engage in discussions, especially when I am speaking.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge.

Mr. Marc Dalton: Madam Speaker, I am happy to answer questions afterward.

I think of something that the Prime Minister once said regarding exclusion and intolerance. He spoke about an event that killed several people and wounded hundreds, many of them losing arms and legs. He said, "But there is no question that this happened because of someone who feels completely excluded.... And our approach has to be, okay, where do those tensions come from?" Who was he

speaking about? It was the Boston Marathon bombers, not the families and others here in front of us. That is his approach to those he might identify with and he is excluding many others. It is shameful. It is divisive.

Why now has he no willingness to understand where these tensions come from? It is because he knows the answer to the question of why there are these tensions and problems is in the mirror. He just has to look in the mirror.

Does the Prime Minister think that calling anyone who is not fully vaccinated or is against his exclusionary mandates a bigot or a racist is a way to help relieve tensions? No, it is not.

Does asking if their very existence should be tolerated help relieve tension? Of course it does not. What it does do is drive wedges through the population and the Liberals are masters at using wedges. That is their way to win elections: using wedges. They do not care if they divide Canada. Shame on the current government.

That is what the Prime Minister and his colleagues like to do. For them it is a great electoral strategy. All this is an electoral strategy. Do not just ask me. Ask the members of the Liberal Party. It is obvious from this side, as well as to different members on that side within their benches. They cater to 35% approximately maybe out of Toronto, Montreal and downtown Vancouver because they expect to win the election with that if they expand it a bit. They do not care what they are doing to Canada. They do not care that they exclude most of Alberta, Saskatchewan and rural parts of Canada. They believe the Conservatives are Nazis. As long as they get 35% and can sit on that side they do not care what happens to Canada.

Do they care? I do not think so. It is ridiculous. Honestly, principle is a lot more important than just winning elections. They dismiss other parties. They are obsessed with poll numbers. I understand polling is important.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Maybe the hon. member is just walking in, but it is not questions and comments at the moment.

Was there a point of order down there?

An hon. member: Madam Speaker, I rise on the same point of order. The ministers on the government side—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I took care of it, yes.

An hon. member: It's shameful.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I already ruled on that.

Again, I would ask the hon. members of the government side to please hold onto their tongues until it is time for questions and comments.

Statutory Order

The hon. member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge has two and a half minutes left.

• (2120)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc Dalton: Madam Speaker, the Liberals are obsessed with polls. A number of times today, the member for Kingston and the Islands used polls to taunt the Bloc Québécois. He said that Quebecers would no longer vote for the Bloc.

Thank God the Bloc Québécois and the Conservative Party have a very different approach to that of the Liberals, who are being propped up by the NDP.

[*English*]

We do not agree with the Bloc on most things, but we do understand the Bloc's—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. Are we still having a debate in between? I will tell members that I actually had a call from someone from Wendover this week who indicated it is really not pleasant for him to listen to debates or votes when people are heckling in the House. I am sure if he is listening tonight he will appreciate the fact that I put that forward.

Again, question and comments will be in just under two minutes. I am sure the hon. members and ministers can wait until then to ask a question.

The hon. member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge.

Mr. Marc Dalton: Madam Speaker, this is a precedent-setting, first time ever invocation of the Emergencies Act. They did not seem to be so quick to impose it recently when there were blockades. I disagree with blockades or violence anywhere. I have spoken out against it as an MLA in British Columbia and as a Conservative MP. They pick and choose, and go way over. The blockades were actually gone before this imposition. This is totally unnecessary. This is totally for the purpose of diversion.

Let me just say one thing and that is this. Why are we having this all of a sudden? It seems to me it is a couple of things. Their pandemic strategy might be what is going on here, to impose mandates on truckers who needed to drive back and forth in the past two years to keep the supply chains open, bring that in and try to double down when there is push-back. They do not care if tens of thousands of Canadians are losing their jobs. I talked to them. I have talked to truckers. I have talked to many others.

There is no compassion. It is like this is political fodder for them to win, to strategize, without thinking, without realizing how many countries are opening up and how many provinces are opening up. No, they are going to double down on this right here.

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the hon. member made some interesting comments. I was glad to hear him denounce violence, although I did not hear that with regard to the blockade here in Ottawa. I was concerned by some of the rhetoric he was using. I think we all need to be reducing the volume and de-escalating.

However, he was being very accusatory toward the members on this side, who have always stood against violence.

I would like to ask the member opposite how he feels that the words that he used de-escalated the situation. I would like to ask him about the—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I have other people who would like to ask questions as well.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge.

Mr. Marc Dalton: Madam Speaker, I do not happen to be the Prime Minister. I am not. The Prime Minister is the person right in the front, supported by the cabinet, supported by the Liberals. Here is the thing. I used direct quotes from our Prime Minister. He said them. I am not just making things up right here. These are the words. He called them misogynists, racists, extremists, Nazis. These are the words.

It is always flippant. Is it the truckers, is it the unvaccinated, is it Christians, is it this, the west or whatever? We will keep our little power base, maybe grow that bit. I'm sorry; it is inappropriate for Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I believe that my colleague will agree with me that what is happening outside no longer has anything to do with vaccines, masks or health measures. It has moved way beyond that.

We are hearing that the movement was infiltrated by extreme right-wing groups. We are also starting to hear that the Emergencies Act is going to throw fuel on the fire, that it will result in further radicalization. The more protesters are told the police are going to move in, the more they will want to stay. Does my colleague agree with me?

Mr. Marc Dalton: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his comments. Some people are claiming that there are terrorists. However, if that is true, why did the police let them come to Parliament Hill? My wife walked here. When I walk here, most of the people say hello to me. If the danger is imminent, where are the police? How come we can still walk around? Those are good questions.

• (2125)

[*English*]

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have had to be in this House for a couple of years where the anti-indigenous racism is fierce. I understand that it is an intense moment, but we are in the process of recovering our children. We just discovered 52 children in unmarked graves.

This member of Parliament used our pain as an example. I would like to ask the member if he has humanity and will apologize for his comments.

Statutory Order

Mr. Marc Dalton: Madam Speaker, I happen to be indigenous. My family went to residential schools. I understand that, but that is not what this is about. This is about the Emergencies Act being imposed as it has never been before. It is disgraceful.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, following up on the question from the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre, I also heard anti-indigenous racism, as did most indigenous people in those areas. It is not right to burn down the churches, but the quote from the Prime Minister was absolutely appropriate to the circumstances of the pain of discovering the bodies being found of the children who were stolen from their homes who never came home, as the hon. member for Winnipeg Centre just said. I do think the hon. member could have expressed himself more clearly to show some sign that he understands the pain of the communities that are going through this now. It is retraumatizing people across this country in our indigenous communities.

Mr. Marc Dalton: Madam Speaker, these are examples of the tolerance and intolerance of our Prime Minister and the Liberal Party primarily. I just gave a variety of examples, including the Unabomber. There are all sorts of different examples. There are so many. There is a constant approach, and we oppose this imposition of the Emergencies Act as extreme.

Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Fleetwood—Port Kells.

It is with sadness, but with resolve, that I rise to take part in this historic debate. The country, and indeed the world, is watching what is happening here. I hope that we can prove to be worthy of this moment in Canada's history.

I would like to begin by thanking the members of the Parliamentary Protective Service who have been working hard to keep us all safe and to ensure that the people's servants can continue the people's work uninterrupted. It is so important that our work continues, and that we show the people outside, and indeed the world, that our democracy is strong and that we will not be intimidated.

We are three weeks into the occupation of Ottawa. Centred as it is on our workplace, we have been unable to avoid its impact. As we reflect, I would ask that we remember that some members' experiences may be different from mine. Some may feel comfortable walking through the lines without fear. As a racialized woman, a very visible Muslim because of my choice to wear the hijab, my experience has been different. I cannot ignore the ties to white supremacy, Islamophobia and anti-Semitism within this movement.

One of those arrested in Coutts for possession of a weapon and other charges has a history of Islamophobic social media posts and memes, pushing the conspiracy theory that the Prime Minister is working with "Islamists" to take over Canada through immigration. We have seen how online hate can transition to real-world violence, so it is with worry that I walk to Parliament each day, watching carefully those around me. It is a heavy weight to carry. It weighs on my soul. My husband and my children are worried for me, but I told them I am going to keep showing up. I will not be intimidated.

I would like to address some of the points I often hear from the supporters of the occupiers. They say this is a peaceful protest. It is just hot tubs and bouncy castles. No. It is much more. These num-

bers are maybe a day or two old, but Ottawa police have launched more than 172 criminal investigations. They have made 18 arrests, laid 33 charges, and issued over 3,000 tickets. In Coutts, four have been charged with conspiracy to murder RCMP officers, and there have been 13 arrests, with the seizure of more than a dozen long guns and hand guns, as well as ammunition and body armour. In Windsor, police have made more than 42 arrests, and have seized 37 vehicles since the protests there began. People have been verbally and physically assaulted for exercising their freedom to wear a mask. This is not a peaceful protest.

Actions do not have to be physical to be violent. Preventing someone from earning a living, going to work or running a business is a violent act. The Rideau Centre and many other downtown Ottawa businesses have been closed for weeks because police cannot guarantee people's safety from maskless protesters seeking to intimidate and frighten employees and customers. Hundreds of minimum-wage retail and food workers are unable to go to work and earn the money they need to pay their rent and feed their kids. The closure of the Ambassador Bridge cost \$360 million in two-way trade every day it was closed. Auto workers and others reliant on that trade faced temporary layoffs. This is not a peaceful protest.

The two major grocery stores in the downtown core have been forced to close at times during this occupation for safety reasons, making it difficult for residents to even buy groceries. Bus service has been shut down through most of the core, and not everyone is able to walk, especially at -30°C as it has been some days. This is not a peaceful protest.

● (2130)

Protesters are making residents feel unsafe walking their children down the street. They are taking away their freedom of movement by occupying the streets, polluting the air with diesel fumes 24-7 and with honking so constant and loud that it took a court order to somewhat reduce it. This is not a peaceful protest. It is torture.

I support peaceful protests. For those people for whom this is about vaccine mandates, especially those outside of Ottawa who do not see what life has been like for people here in Ottawa, I want to say that is a fair debate. They have a right to protest and be heard, and I understand their frustration.

Statutory Order

We are all frustrated. We are all tired of this pandemic. I want it to be over as much as they do. I have family overseas I have not been able to visit in two years. Believe me, their voice has been heard and understood. However, we cannot just wish this pandemic away. Canadians have sacrificed too much. I believe, I hope, we are close to the end, but I do not want to risk seeing restrictions lifted too early and people dying who did not have to. That is the challenge here, I believe.

I support people's right to protest on these points. They can peacefully park their vehicles, take the LRT downtown, stand on the lawn and protest all day. Peaceful protest does not mean blocking city streets. It does not mean blocking trade and commerce. It does not mean threatening and intimidating local residents who are just trying to live their lives. It is time to give the people of Ottawa their city back.

Allow me to say to the people of Ottawa that I am sorry. We are sorry for what they have had to live through and endure. They do not deserve this. I will not prejudge the commissions and the inquiries that will follow. Right now, the focus must be on restoring order, but they have deserved better from all of us.

I would like to speak to our staff. I started my career in politics as an assistant at Queen's Park, and I know how hard our staff works. We get to go home on the weekends, back to our ridings and away from this occupation. They have to stay here because our Ottawa staff live here, many of them in Centretown or the ByWard Market, in the heart of this.

I urge my colleagues to ask their staff, whom we could not do our jobs without, how they feel. How are they doing? How is their mental health through all this? What is it like on the weekends, when we have gone home but thousands more people, bent on trouble and violence, descend on the downtown core? I am so sorry they and their families have had to go through this. I am sorry that some have had to watch as their bosses have posed for photos with the people making their lives unbearable: photos that they then have to post on their bosses' social media. I am sorry, and I hope they have the support they need to get through this.

I believe in the Charter of Rights, but I feel as if so many who quote it have not really read it. With rights come responsibilities, and their rights do not override my rights. We have a responsibility to one another. That is part of living in a democratic society. Canada is founded on the principles of peace, order and good government. Across our country today, that is under threat by a foreign-funded movement that, under the guise of vaccine mandates, seeks to disrupt our lives, disrupt our trade and commerce, and disrupt our faith in our institutions and in one another.

The measures in this act are targeted. They are proportionate. They respect the charter, and they give the police the tools and the powers they need to restore law and order in our country. It is time to put our democracy first. I will be supporting this order.

● (2135)

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, there is certainly much from the speech by the Liberal member across the way that I would like to comment on, but there was one specific thing she said that really piqued my interest.

The member referenced that there would be commissions and inquiries related to the response to these blockades. I am glad to hear that. I wish that the Prime Minister had said that. I am pleased to hear that the government is willing to look into it.

If the Prime Minister's actions, and the actions of other members of the Liberal government, are found to have been inflammatory and to have played a role in what has been taking place, will the member accept the findings of those commissions and inquiries?

Mrs. Salma Zahid: Madam Speaker, having now declared the public order emergency, this declaration will only last for 30 days unless renewed. Our government is conscious of the need for transparency and parliamentary oversight as we have undertaken this action, so in the coming days, a parliamentary committee will be struck to provide oversight while the emergency is in effect.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, this morning, when the Prime Minister invoked the Emergencies Act, he said something that was rather interesting. He said that invoking this law was not something to be done lightly, that it was not the first, second or even the third option, but the last resort.

We really wonder what three options the government considered before invoking the Emergencies Act that we are debating today.

[English]

Mrs. Salma Zahid: Madam Speaker, as the Prime Minister has made clear, the Emergencies Act is not the first option exercised or even the third or fourth. It is important to remember that local police are the first responders and the force of jurisdiction. In the case of Ottawa, it is the Ottawa Police Service. From the beginning, since the City of Ottawa began to make requests for support and resources, the government has worked with the city to ensure the RCMP is providing the support the city asked for.

First the City of Ottawa declared an emergency and then the Province of Ontario did, and we continue to coordinate with and support local authorities. We established an integrated command centre with the Ottawa police, the OPP and the RCMP to bring more resources forward. Only when it was clear that this crisis was national in scope and that existing authorities available to the local police of jurisdiction were insufficient did the government reluctantly take this action.

● (2140)

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have worked with my hon. colleague on several committees and associations, and she is always so good to work with.

There have been a lot of discussions in the House on both sides about the level of dispute outside. On the other side of the House, Conservative members have said that this is about honking annoyances and traffic jams. Those are the two things I have heard over the course of today's debate.

I am wondering if the member could share her thoughts on the dangers of downplaying what we are seeing outside. I have spoken to people about the assaults and the harassment they have endured throughout this convoy.

Mrs. Salma Zahid: Madam Speaker, it has always been a pleasure working with the hon. member on many committees.

I totally agree that peaceful protests are an important part of our democracy and that everyone should have the right to peacefully protest, but these are illegal blockades blocking our trade corridors and our borders. As I mentioned in my speech, the closure of the Ambassador Bridge cost \$390 million per day in lost trade with our most important trading partner, the U.S.

These are not peaceful protests. These are illegal blockades. We need to finally end these illegal blockades so that the people of Ottawa can have their lives back.

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have a message tonight for all my colleagues here in the House of Commons and especially for everyone at home in Fleetwood—Port Kells, who are rightfully having a good debate right now about the justifications for using the emergency measures act. I want to provide my own thoughts and the rationale behind my support for the government's actions. To do that, let us focus specifically on the questions in this debate. Is the government's use of the emergency measures act justified and are the measures being invoked legally?

The second question is the easiest to answer because that answer is yes, if the measures being used to deal with this situation conform with the legislation that has been on the books since the 1980s. Given that this is the first time the legislation has been used, there should be scrutiny of the measures to make sure that they do conform with the law. However, that is the easy part.

We have to talk about the justification. The act is right to the point. It says:

a national emergency is an urgent and critical situation of a temporary nature that

(a) seriously endangers the lives, health or safety of Canadians and is of such proportions or nature as to exceed the capacity or authority of a province to deal with it, or

(b) seriously threatens the ability of the Government of Canada to preserve the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of Canada

Let us take that apart and look at the evidence.

Does the current situation endanger the lives of Canadians? Well, the border disruptions certainly endangered the economic quality of life of Canadians and therefore their well-being. There is ample evidence of that in Windsor, especially in the auto sector, and for so many businesses and their employees in Ottawa. The threats of physical violence toward people in Ottawa's downtown neighbourhood have been real, and charges have been laid against 13 people

in Coutts, Alberta, apparently because they appeared ready to murder RCMP officers.

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Does the activity endanger our health? There is no doubt that the premature lifting of public health measures, as demanded by the protesters, would do this. We saw this very clearly in Alberta last year when it lifted the mandates for the best summer ever. It was not. We do not want a repeat of that. However, the stated aim of the protest is to force the government to abandon public health measures regardless of the advice from the Public Health Agency of Canada and provincial authorities.

Do the blockades endanger safety? When protesters harass and bully people and threaten assault, yes. When protesters allegedly try to set fire to a residential building in Ottawa, gluing the doors shut in the process, yes, indeed. When police found that cache of weapons that was seized in Coutts, Alberta, how could there not be a perception that public safety was endangered?

Does the situation exceed the capacity or authority of a province to deal with it? This is not true in every case, but certainly in some, notably in Ontario. It is why the use of the emergency measures act clearly sets out that it can be specifically targeted to locations where provincial authorities need additional help to restore order. One point that has been raised a few times is that all these things were cleared up just as the emergency measures act was being announced. Let us face it. We want to prevent people from bringing disorder back to those locations, which is a real and current threat.

Do the current actions threaten Canada's sovereignty and security? The manifesto of this group calls for Canada's democratically elected government to be deposed and for the government to be turned over to a committee made up, in part, of them. We can put a check mark next to that one.

There will be some who say the answer is no and that if we consider the protesters at face value, it is just some good old boys and girls and kids in big trucks challenging the government to preserve God-given and charter-enshrined rights and freedoms. However, people who believe that, like some of our Conservative colleagues, have been deceived. They have been gamed by crafty, intense, grey-faced agents of passive aggressive manipulation and sedition. One can only imagine the information our security services have on them.

The gaming that they performed has been intense indeed. Canada has had a long and sometimes very colourful history of civil disobedience where people break the law and the police show patience and restraint while protesters make their point. Then, having made their point on a reasonably transparent agenda, they and the government trade ideas, the deal is done and the protesters go home.

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• (2145)

Well, those behind the blockades and occupations know this and have gamed us to a fare-thee-well. They allegedly gamed the Ottawa Police Service too, telling them they will do their thing for a few days and then leave, while planning to use the grace period to dig in. They may have also gamed Ottawa's mayor, who thought there was a deal to get some of the trucks out of the residential areas until one of the leaders, Patrick King, stepped in and said there was no deal and they were not going anywhere.

Do the current actions seriously threaten Canada's sovereignty and security? Well, the evidence says yes. When we take a close, honest look at the people calling the shots in the protest, do their actions seriously threaten Canada's sovereignty and security? Yes, absolutely.

Patrick King, who has demonstrated significant influence in the Ottawa occupation, has deposited a great deal of material online. I am going to quote him, and the "you" in the quote refers to the Prime Minister: "someone's gonna make you catch a bullet one day. To the rest of this government, someone's gonna...do you in." At another point he said, "The only way that this is gonna be solved is with bullets."

The 13 people charged in Coutts, Alberta, by their history of arrests and violence, represent a very clear danger to police and to Canadian society. Do members want to know what their motto is for change in Canada? It is "gun or rope". How many times have we seen news of mass shootings, tragic bloodshed and loss of life only to find out in the aftermath that there were signs the authorities should have picked up? Well, signs have been picked up, and the government will not want the postscript to an act of domestic terrorism to be an indictment by Canadians that we did not act.

This gets us to the real point of the protest, the real agenda of the people behind it. Theirs is a world of anger, resentment and hate, of minorities, immigrants, liberal values and the democracy they represent. The core people behind the protests are precisely as the Prime Minister has described them.

Many agree. Glen Pearson, writing in National Newswatch today, noted:

This hatred for hatred's sake doesn't find an easy landing in Canada, as it might do south of the border. But as the convoy protest revealed, the hate movement is increasingly interested in this country, hoping to undermine its authorities and replace them with chaos. The goal of such insidious agents was never to help the truckers succeed but to make sure the governments and security forces didn't.

Some of the messages put out by the protest leaders make it abundantly clear than Glen Pearson is right that the blockades and occupations have little to do with vaccine mandates and even less to do with truckers. They say Canada should eliminate vaccine mandates for truckers operating back and forth across the U.S. border. They know this is a ridiculous rationale for the protest as long as the U.S. demands anyone entering their country be fully vaccinated. We could eliminate our vaccine mandate right now for truckers, but those truckers would still be out of work and still be out of luck. Some 90% of our truckers agree. They are fully vaccinated, so this foolish premise for the protests has no traction.

The protest leaders and their political familiars frame their actions as legitimate dissent of government actions. That is allowed in

Canada. However, the protest leaders have tried to obscure the methods they are capable of using and are possibly threatening to use. Well, we are onto them. They know and we know that those methods are not allowed. They are illegal, and given the size and scope of the blockades and occupations, and even the amount and sources of funding to support them, Canada's security and sovereignty are most certainly under attack.

Two-thirds of Canadians agree with justified, careful measures applied with the emergency powers in the act, with parliamentary and legal oversight and in co-operation with the provinces that need our support. That is what this debate is intended to examine. The majority of Canadians will be looking for justified, careful and measured opposition in this debate, offered in the interests of doing what is best for the country, because what is best for Canada, even when difficult to do, is our government's agenda. It should be the agenda of everyone debating this measure over the weekend.

• (2150)

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Madam Speaker, given my former career as a Crown attorney for the last 18 years, I want to draw on your reference to Mr. King and his comments directed toward the Prime Minister, which in my view constitute a threat to do grievous bodily harm. Do you not think this would provide the police with ample authority, under the Criminal Code, to lay criminal charges in relation to uttering death threats or anything of that nature, as opposed to imposing of the Emergencies Act?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the member that he is to address his questions through the Chair. He might try to not use the word "you" during his responses.

The hon. member for Fleetwood—Port Kells.

Mr. Ken Hardie: Madam Speaker, these are crafty rascals that we are dealing with here. If we examine the words used by Mr. King, he did not say that he would do it and he did not call on anybody to do it; he just said that it could happen, but the implication and the inference is definitely there. Should he be arrested for that? Probably not, but he is gaming the system like the rest of them, knowing that they can get away with so much.

Is it right, though? Would the member agree? I do not think he would.

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, all evening, I have felt that my Liberal colleagues have been taking great delight in trying to associate us with those members who refuse to recognize that some of the protesters have been engaging in reprehensible acts. We have been saying for three weeks that some of the protesters' behaviour has been reprehensible. They may have ties to far-right groups. Everyone agrees on that.

Now, one needs to have principles in life, and having principles means not invoking a legislative measure that would suspend freedoms. That is what the Emergencies Act does.

I would like to ask my colleague if he is aware that the government could have used other existing measures, rather than trying to kill a fly with a bazooka.

• (2155)

[English]

Mr. Ken Hardie: Madam Speaker, I will refer to somebody on Twitter who said something kind of colourful. He said something like, "You know, if you've got somebody walking along waving a swastika and you've got 100 people walking along with him, you've got 101 Nazis." However, I will set that aside for a second.

What has happened here? The federal government has warned that it is concerned about this situation. We have offered additional support to the municipalities. We saw that the municipality, in this case Ottawa, was unprepared to deal with the issues it was facing, and the flouting of the law brought the law into disrepute. The escalation, step by step, brought us to where we are today, and the premise of my remarks tonight is that I believe the government is thoroughly justified.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Qujannamiik, Uqaqtittiji.* I would like to thank the member for Fleetwood—Port Kells for his statement.

The Conservatives seem to be attempting to use the chamber as a vacuum. Listening to them downplay what is going on is such a great concern. Without the benefit of the news and the social media, people could be persuaded that this is not a serious national issue. What can the member say to those Canadians who are not in Ottawa, Windsor, Edmonton or Winnipeg and are not experiencing the danger directly?

Mr. Ken Hardie: Madam Speaker, first and foremost, this does not apply to the people in the places that the hon. member mentioned. They can go and protest anything they like, and as long as their local officials do not believe it is illegal, they are good to go. However, the nature of this act really helps us pinpoint the areas where illegal actions cannot be condoned and supported by anybody in good faith and need to be dealt with very thoroughly.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is hard to believe we are here. I certainly did not expect this to be my experience when I was elected into the 44th Parliament, as I am sure many of my other colleagues did not either.

The starting point for this discussion is how we even got here. How did we get to a point that the Prime Minister invoked the

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Emergencies Act, previously known as the War Measures Act? To give context to the gravity of this action, the War Measures Act was invoked only three times: during World War I, during World War II and during the FLQ crisis. The Emergencies Act has never been invoked until now. What is it? It is "An Act to authorize the taking of special temporary measures to ensure safety and security during national emergencies and to amend other Acts in consequence thereof".

Leah West, associate director of the prestigious Norman Paterson School of International Affairs and assistant professor of international affairs, national security law, counterterrorism and cyber-operations, has recently been featured in a CBC article regarding the Emergencies Act. She said, "To invoke a national emergency, the government would need to be saying that these protests threaten the security of Canada, our sovereignty or our territorial integrity. I have real concerns about fudging the legal thresholds to invoke the most powerful federal law that we have." If members take home anything of what I am speaking about tonight, it is that quote right there.

The Canadian Civil Liberties Association said, "The Emergencies Act can only be invoked when a situation 'seriously threatens the ability of the Government of Canada to preserve the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of Canada' and when the situation 'cannot be effectively dealt with under any other law of Canada'." It went on to say, "Governments regularly deal with difficult situations and do so using powers granted to them by democratically elected representatives. Emergency legislation should not be normalized. It threatens our democracy and our civil liberties."

I will go back to my original question: How did we get to this point? Let us go back 21 days and ask how we got to the point that so many Canadians got so angry that they mobilized across the country, drove thousands of miles and spent thousands of dollars just to be heard.

Protesting takes different levels of commitment. People can sign a petition, join a social media group or mobilize. Mobilizing takes another level of commitment. What happened to make people so frustrated that they mobilized across this country?

The other day I was walking to my office in the Confederation Building. For those who know Ottawa, it was a very cold day, about -25°C. It was freezing. I walked down Wellington Street and saw the trucks. I have walked this route since the day I was elected, a female, by myself, and I never felt unsafe. As I walked, I thought that they must want to go home, so I asked. I stopped and asked one of the truckers, "Do you want to be here? Don't you want to go home?" They said, "Yes, of course we do, but no one is listening to us."

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I remember walking to Parliament Hill during the first few days of the protest and speaking with police on the ground. They were polite and engaging. The police have been fantastic. I asked them how they were managing, and they said pretty well. They told me this protest was nothing like Caledonia. They said they had been working protests for decades, and force always escalates a protest. They said force never works for a peaceful resolution. They said the number one thing that works is when protesters are heard. They asked me if I knew why the Prime Minister refused to acknowledge them. I told them I wondered the exact same thing.

● (2200)

Just for fun, I thought I would Google crisis management tactics, just to see what Google had to say. Of course, a top seven useful tactics list popped up, and I am going to share it.

Number one, tell the truth.

Number two, own it and speak from the heart.

Number three, have a plan.

Number four, provide a respectful response.

Number five, use the moment as a learning tool.

Number six, say the same thing to everyone.

Number seven, take all stakeholders into account.

The Prime Minister has a lot more tools at his disposal than Google, yet he still jumped to invoking the Emergencies Act before using the simplest of tools. I do not know that any of those seven tactics has been used by Prime Minister.

Last Thursday, February 10, the Conservative Party put forth a motion in the House asking for a plan, communication and transparency. The Liberal government, whose members have been over-speaking my entire speech and who have no respect, clearly, for the House, voted no. Canadians want and deserve clear and transparent communication. If they do not want to listen to me, they should leave.

On Monday, during a press conference, the Prime Minister said, "Some people will say that we moved too quickly, other people will say no, we should have acted weeks ago. The reality is this, the Emergencies Act is not something to take lightly. It is not the first thing you turn to nor the second nor the third."

I asked the Prime Minister to please tell Canadians what the first, second and third actions were that he took before invoking the Emergencies Act. I, along with the rest of Canada, am still waiting for an answer. The relationships that have been destroyed in the country may never be rebuilt. The division, segregation and stigmatization have deeply and negatively impacted Canadians.

There have been countless opportunities for the leader of the country to unite Canadians, but instead of bringing us together, our Prime Minister says things like, "They are extremists who don't believe in science. They are often misogynists, also often racists. It's a small group that muscles in and we have to make a choice in terms of leaders, in terms of the country, do we tolerate these people?"

Those are the Prime Minister's words. This is a far cry from the Prime Minister we can quote from 2015, when he won and said, "A positive optimistic hopeful vision of public life isn't a naive dream, it can be a powerful force for change. If Canadians are to trust their government, their government needs to trust Canadians."

Where is that Prime Minister? Where did he go?

Our office has received thousands of emails and messages from very scared and confused constituents. Some of the messages I have received today alone are the following. People are very concerned about the serious misuse of power and the overreach of federal government.

One constituent sobbed on the phone that she is frightened and cannot sleep because it reminds her of the October crisis. Another constituent phoned in because he feared he would be arrested if he spoke in public in our local community. People have phoned in, very concerned, that the act is already being implemented and that this debate is purely window dressing.

The general public is confused as to the extent of the powers, and that there is no check on the government's implementation. People are afraid that their bank accounts will be frozen, not because they donated but because they have supported the truckers on social media. Constituents are worried that if they donated even \$50 their accounts would be frozen and forever jeopardize their credit ratings.

What are the facts that make the government believe that the blockades are associated with the threat of serious violence for an ideological purpose? What is the legal basis for this extreme action by government?

A constituent wrote to me right before I spoke tonight, and he told me that he received a scam email that his account had been frozen. Has the government acknowledged that this Emergencies Act may have opened the door for fraud and for innocent Canadians to be further traumatized?

Another constituent wrote to me and said, "I am a senior, Michelle. I cannot pay for my food. I cannot pay for my mortgage. Why is the government not dealing with this?"

To the people of Ottawa—

● (2205)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Unfortunately the hon. member's time is up. I am sure she will be able to add during questions and comments.

The hon. Minister of Families, Children and Social Development.

Hon. Karina Gould (Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the hon. colleague asked what the basis is for invoking the Emergencies Act. There is \$450 million a day in trade that is being blockaded by illegal activity. The illegal occupation here in Ottawa is harassing and holding Ottawa residents hostage. The other reason is we have seen very clearly in the news that 52% of those who have donated to support this campaign have actually been from the United States, 1,100 of which supported the January 6 insurrection.

Those are very clear reasons. I ask my colleague on the other side when she thinks foreign interference in our democracy is appropriate.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Madam Speaker, I guess my answer would be exactly what I said in my entire speech: How did we get here? What are the first, second and third actions that were taken before invoking the Emergencies Act?

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am a bit of an odd duck and when I have questions, I do research. Right now, I am reading the Criminal Code. It is long, but interesting.

The things that have been happening here are illegal under the Criminal Code, but nothing has been done about that. On behalf of our citizens, can my colleague tell me what measures should have been put in place before today?

[English]

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Madam Speaker, I think it goes back to a lot of what I was saying in this speech in speaking with the police and different police chiefs about meeting with these protesters. The police were obviously able to clear the blockades at the border crossings by negotiating, talking and listening. I think that is the big piece that was missed. I do not think we needed to go to the strongest parliamentary action to get to this point.

• (2210)

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for talking about how they received messages. I wanted to say that when I was in my riding this morning, I was able to be on the phone all morning. I was actually answering the phone calls that were coming to my office. I heard many stories and listened to many people today who are afraid, folks who have been duped by lack of information and are misunderstanding what is happening, not just here in Ottawa but right across Canada.

How does my colleague think the miscommunication can be cleared up for the majority of Canadians?

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Madam Speaker, that is a great question. I formerly worked in media, and it has been unbelievable to see how people are getting their information from information silos. I think it is one of the biggest contributing factors to the division we are seeing in this country. There is a really big discussion that needs to happen about media and the information that is being released to the public.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I think the hon. member put her finger on something very

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important, which is what she described as silos of information. There seem to be echo chambers of information.

I have constituents who have written to me pleading that it is a terrible lie that convoy protesters went into the Shepherds of Good Hope, accosted staff, demanded to be fed, assaulted a security guard and assaulted a homeless person. They firmly believe this is a lie.

This organization is supported by my church when I am in Ottawa, St. Bartholomew. I have a lot of friends at Shepherds of Good Hope. This was witnessed and this happened, yet the spinning around this from the convoy supporters is extraordinary.

Can the hon. member confirm that she accepts that some convoy protesters have committed assault in this community and terrorized community members?

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Madam Speaker, I think this whole discussion is part of what I am trying to say. How did we get to a point where each person thinks they are so right and people are so divided? It comes back to the leadership at the very top. When we have a leader telling Canadians that some of the people in this country are bad people, it divides us, and that is the biggest problem we have in this country. We are no longer united; we are divided.

Mr. Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today, and I take no pleasure in having to be in this place this evening to debate the invocation of the Emergencies Act. I will say from the outset that I strongly oppose this measure, and I will be voting against it.

In its current version, the Emergencies Act has never been used before. It was invoked this week. It was passed in 1988 to add parliamentary supervision and to make changes to its predecessor, the War Measures Act. The War Measures Act was only used on three occasions: during the First World War, World War II and the FLQ crisis in Quebec.

Let us be clear. The protests that are happening outside of these walls are a political emergency for the Liberal government. It is not a national emergency facing Canada. Furthermore, it is a political emergency for the Prime Minister, and it is one of his own making. He has no one to blame other than himself, his cabinet and his Liberal backbenchers for allowing this situation to arise and to get to the point we are facing today. This week, the Prime Minister admitted that the Emergencies Act was not something to take lightly. In fact, he indicated it is not the first thing to turn to, nor the second.

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Canada's Conservatives continue to press the Liberal government on what those first and second options were. We continue to wait. Instead of dialogue with a recovery plan and a path forward, the Liberal government is so devoid of leadership that it has decided to double down and continue to revel in the practice of the politics of disunity and disharmony. It is concerned more with capitalizing on the divisions caused by wedge issues, rather than working to bring all Canadians together.

The Prime Minister has made no effort to de-escalate the situation. Instead, he has insulted and disrespected Canadians. When this issue grew into a national movement, instead of listening to what concerned people have had to say, his government opted to implement the most extreme measure in response to deal with these protesters in downtown Ottawa.

Let us also be clear. The Emergencies Act was not needed before the border blockades were cleared up. Police in law enforcement agencies in Ontario, Alberta, Manitoba and British Columbia were able to use their existing powers to end those blockades without incident. What is different with policing in downtown Ottawa?

In my riding, a protest was planned for the Peace Bridge in Fort Erie this past weekend. Due to the work of the local police authorities of the Niagara Regional Police, OPP and the Niagara Parks Police, they were able to address the issue, allow the protest to remain peaceful and have their views heard before the protests came to a natural end. Effective planning and policing was responsible for this, not the invocation of the Emergencies Act. Imposing the power of the Emergencies Act sets a dangerous precedent. The Government of Canada should not have the power to close the bank accounts of hard-working Canadians, simply on the suspicion of supporting political causes of which the government does not approve or support.

This is a slippery slope, and it is not how any government should operate in a free and democratic society. In fact, the Canadian Liberties Association is now planning to sue the federal government over the Emergencies Act, news which only broke a few hours ago. About the government's decision, it said, "Governments regularly deal with difficult situations, and do so using powers granted to them by democratically elected representatives. Emergency legislation should not be normalized. It threatens our democracy and our civil liberties."

The protest in Ottawa is entering its fourth weekend. If this was such a pressing public order emergency, as the Liberals want it to appear, then why did it take so long for them to act?

Two weeks ago, the City of Ottawa declared a state of emergency because of these protests, so seized with the matter that on that same day, the Prime Minister needed to take a personal day off, despite being in the same city. Let us not be deceived. This again is not a national emergency. This is a political emergency for the Liberal government, and it is one of its own making.

Ultimately, the job of government, of all elected representatives, is to work together for the greater good to bridge differences, find accommodations and propose solutions for the benefit of all. That is why I chose to stand for public office. It is to help people. I am sure all elected members here in the House feel the same way.

• (2215)

Canada's Conservatives proposed such a solution. In fact, it was a way out of this mess, which the Liberal government with the NDP foolishly chose to ignore. Our motion called on the government to put forward a plan that would outline the steps and dates when federal COVID-19 mandates and restrictions could be rolled back. This approach would have reduced the temperature across the country on this pressing issue, and it could have addressed the concerns of many Canadians, not just those who were protesting. Conservatives offered the Liberals this olive branch. Instead, they turned it down and unnecessarily invoked the Emergencies Act.

We are more than two years into this pandemic, and Canadians simply want a return to their normal lives. When will we get there? Perhaps it will be when the current federal government displays the needed leadership in getting Canadians the health care tools they need and are looking for, for themselves, their families and their loved ones.

Since the early days of this pandemic, Canada's Conservatives have been strong proponents of both vaccines and rapid testing. Why is it only this week that we were debating allocating \$2.5 billion toward the acquisition of rapid tests? We should have been debating that a year and a half ago. That would have been the federal leadership Canadians were looking for and desperately wanted and needed. This is the type of federal leadership that is sorely missing from the government sitting across from me. Leadership means bringing people together. Instead, the Prime Minister is polarizing Canadians, wedging Canadians against one another and constantly working to divide us. It is a political strategy that only serves to benefit the Liberals at the cost of our national unity, economic stability and the well-being of our beloved country and citizens.

It also disappoints me greatly that the Prime Minister and his Liberal government are delaying access to critical health care tools that can give all Canadians greater freedoms and choices, especially as they pertain to managing their personal health care and family well-being. Where are the additional resources our provinces have been asking for, in terms of federal health transfers to address the lack of surge capacity in our health care system? For two years, the provinces have been asking for this. Rather than live with the existing very limited capacity, which is constantly at risk, why not invest in our health care infrastructure now to increase this capacity and create relief?

This past January, many of my constituents in Fort Erie, Stevensville and Crystal Beach were angered when the Niagara Health System was forced to close the Fort Erie urgent care centre because of staffing shortages elsewhere in Niagara. This is evidence that our province and our local health authorities require additional resources and the support that the federal government needs to enable. What is the Liberal response to this? The Prime Minister says the government will look at health care transfers once this pandemic is over. That is simply unacceptable.

It has been two long and difficult years. All Canadians deserve a federal government that is here to serve them and protect our national best interests. That means it does not matter what their political party is, where they live in this country, what faith they follow or what their vaccine status is. This is the team Canada approach that we all need. All Canadians deserve so much better from their federal government than we are getting now.

From the very beginning of COVID, the Liberal government was grossly unprepared for this pandemic, just as it was unprepared to deal with the protest when it arrived in Ottawa four weekends ago. The weight of responsibility for this pandemic and Canada's response to it is on the federal government's shoulders, yet instead of working collaboratively to solve the issues facing Canadians, this Prime Minister's attempt to turn the page is the invocation of the Emergencies Act.

Throughout the country, provinces are reducing their public health restrictions, and have put forward plans to reopen their economies, yet the federal government continues to remain silent on its plans to fully reopen areas of federal jurisdiction, especially in time for our all-too-important summer season in areas that are dependent on tourism, such as in my riding of Niagara Falls.

The Emergencies Act is not justifiable to deal with the protesters in downtown Ottawa. Let the police and local law enforcement officials do their jobs, just as they have done at the international border crossings that were blocked in multiple provinces. While the police do their important work, Canada needs its Prime Minister to start doing his by producing a plan to end all federal COVID-19 mandates and restrictions so all Canadians can get on with their lives, peacefully and together.

• (2220)

Mr. Chris Bittle (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I heard from the member for Niagara Falls, and many of my family members are constituents of his. He talks, and has talked for a long time, about ending the mandates and following policies such as those in the United States, which see a death rate so much higher. If we apply the same death rates to Canada as the United States, there would be an additional 60,000 Canadians dead.

My grandmother, who is a constituent of the hon. member's, needed emergency surgery last month and got it because of lockdowns, because politicians stood up and took steps, because of mandates and because people got vaccinated.

Who among his constituents does he want to sacrifice by throwing public health aside? Could he stand up and tell us whom he would be willing to throw away?

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Mr. Tony Baldinelli: Madam Speaker, as I said earlier, we were all elected to this place to help people. I got into this business because I want to help people. The job of government is to bridge the differences that exist on both sides of the House. Instead, what the current government likes to do is revel in the politics of disunity. It likes to play the majority against the minority. They want to play those wedge-issue games that only serve to protect their interests.

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Tony Baldinelli: Let me finish. I will say this at this time. I am here to help people. Why are they not?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. parliamentary secretary had an opportunity to ask his question. He should not be heckling or trying to have another discussion while the hon. member is responding.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert.

• (2225)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, everyone in Quebec is against this law.

All of the members of the Quebec National Assembly, the Premier of Quebec, Québec Solidaire, the Quebec Liberal Party, the Parti Québécois, the CAQ, everyone is—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I see that, on the government side, the hon. Minister of Canadian Heritage does not want to wait his turn to speak. This is not the first time I have risen this evening, so I would ask everyone to calm down a little and wait their turn to ask a question.

The hon. member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert may continue.

Mr. Denis Trudel: Madam Speaker, my mother would have tanned his hide.

Every member of the National Assembly is against this act. It is a trauma trigger in Quebec because of what happened in 1970 with the War Measures Act. Even though this act is not the same as the one that was in place in 1970, people still associate it with something traumatic. Individuals were arbitrarily jailed, civil liberties were suspended, and it was a very difficult time.

A year ago, we moved a motion in the House calling on the Prime Minister to apologize for the 500 arbitrary imprisonments in October 1970. Does my colleague think the Prime Minister should have apologized for what happened in October 1970?

*Statutory Order**[English]*

Mr. Tony Baldinelli: Madam Speaker, not only does Quebec have concerns with this legislation, but I believe five provinces altogether have expressed their concerns with the implementation of this act. What we are asking this government is why it had to take that extraordinary step of implementing the Emergencies Act. What data, proof or situation forced the government to do this and not use the existing Criminal Code elements or the existing legislative regulatory authorities?

Again, we had a protest at our border just last weekend, and police were able to accommodate it without the Emergencies Act. Why was this step needed? In fact, it is not.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I agree. I think this conversation has been quite divisive. That is concerning. I understand why people are angry and frustrated. It has been a long two years for us all, but I am wondering if my hon. colleague would agree with me that some of the images we are seeing in terms of police involvement, some of the reports and some of the clips we have seen with police hugging people blocking borders, are concerning. A former RCMP officer is one of the organizers as is former military. Should that require a public inquiry?

Mr. Tony Baldinelli: Madam Speaker, we all believe in the rights of Canadians to peacefully protest, and I think we all agree that some of the images and actions we have seen are not to be tolerated or allowed. We said weeks ago that we believe this blockade should end and that those truckers should go home. It is time for them to go home. It is time for this protest to be over. It is time for Canadians to start working together and stop playing these divisive games, so that we can do the best for all Canadians and get back to work.

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Nepean.

Being a member of Parliament is an awesome responsibility. In our system, the 338 of us have enormous power to establish the laws of this nation and oversee the activities of our government. Each and every debate we have and each and every vote we take is important, but there are still some debates and votes that are more important than others. This is one of them. The Emergencies Act has never been invoked in its 34-year history. Any time we increase police powers or limit civil liberties, we have to ensure that what we are doing is reasonable and proportionate.

This is an important debate and Canadians are watching us. We are all tired and frustrated after living with an epidemic for two years. Nerves are frayed. Politicians are passionate people and we often use overheated rhetoric, especially on social media. However, we need to turn down the volume.

I have been watching the House over the last two weeks and growing more and more concerned. Last year, my friend, the Conservative member for Parry Sound—Muskoka, and I wrote an op-ed and reminded Canadians we can disagree without being disagreeable. Both he and I used to be mayors. In the municipal world there is far less partisanship. We can disagree about policy and vigorously debate while still being respectful, but I have not seen much of that over the last two weeks. There have been far too many

personal attacks and insults and generalizations based on party membership, instead of respect for people as individuals.

Most policy decisions are not black and white. They are grey. Let us show Canadians we can listen to one another and recognize that even if we disagree, we all love our country and are advocating for what we believe is best for it. We do not want to end up like our American neighbours, who over the last couple of years seem to sometimes live in two different realities depending on what cable news network they watch. That responsibility is not one man's; it is all of ours.

● (2230)

[Translation]

Members should ask themselves two questions about the Emergencies Act.

First, do we believe that the requirements of the act have been met, that is, does the situation meet the definition of a national emergency under section 3 of the act?

Second, even if it does meet that definition, is invoking the act a good idea?

[English]

On the question of whether or not the definition is met, we have to look at the circumstances we have been witness to over the past few weeks. The right to peaceably assemble is a core constitutional right under section 2 of our Charter of Rights. Freedom of expression is too. People have every right to complain about the government, including here on Parliament Hill. However, as many others have said before me, a blockade is not a peaceful assembly.

Over the last several weeks, we have seen bylaw after bylaw flouted in Ottawa. Blockading streets with trucks, including residential streets, is not peaceful assembly. Honking horns all night long and polluting the air by running engines 24-7 is not peaceful assembly. Harassing and assaulting residents, threatening journalists and closing small businesses is not peaceful assembly.

As we have seen, the blockades have had a confused leadership, with various ideological grievances ranging from ending all public health restrictions to overthrowing the elected government. Then these blockades expanded to border crossings across the country to impede the incredibly important trade relationship between Canada and the United States. The U.S. is our most important trading partner, with approximately \$2 billion in goods travelling across the border each day. Over the last 10 days, there have been blockades or attempted blockades at the Ambassador Bridge in Windsor, at Sarnia's Blue Water Bridge, at the Peace Bridge in Fort Erie, in Emerson, Manitoba, in Coutts, Alberta, and in Surrey, B.C. These blockades have led to a disruption in the flow of goods and services, the cutting of shifts at Canadian manufacturing plants and concerns being raised in the United States about whether Canada remained a reliable trading partner.

In addition to the blockades at the border, protesters attempted to impede access to the Ottawa airport and threatened to blockade railway lines. They also made bomb threats to hospitals, and noxious substances were mailed to MPs. People linked to the blockades in Coutts were arrested with a large quantity of ammunition, and four of them were charged with conspiracy to commit murder.

I could go on, but my time is limited. In my view, the current situation meets the definition in section 3 of the act.

However, that does not yet satisfy the second question legislators must ask. We also need to determine if we believe the use of the act is a good idea at this time. We need to weigh the need for public safety against the potential limitation of civil liberties. We need to determine if there are other and better ways of ending the blockades.

I want to start by noting that for weeks Ottawa police were unable to manage the situation to anyone's satisfaction. Under our Constitution, policing powers are generally provincial and then delegated to municipalities. The only federal role would be offering support when asked. However, from the beginning, there were questions in the House from all parties about what the Government of Canada was doing to manage the situation.

I was one of many who said that people did not care about jurisdiction here, that they just wanted all governments to work together to fix the problem. However, the problem was not getting fixed adequately. The police clearly needed more resources and more tools in the tool box, and somebody needed to step forward and take charge. Invoking this act is a way for the federal government to give police more tools in the tool box and to step in where necessary, which is exactly the leadership that was being asked for.

I want to thank former prime minister Brian Mulroney, who is otherwise known today as Mark's dad, former minister Perrin Beatty and all the members of Parliament in 1988 who replaced the War Measures Act with the Emergencies Act. If it were the War Measures Act we were debating, I would be squarely against it. Under the War Measures Act, in the days before the charter and the Bill of Rights, we had gross violations of human rights, such as the roundup of Japanese Canadians in the Second World War.

The Emergencies Act is very different. This act is subject to the Charter of Rights, it is subject to the Bill of Rights and it even

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makes note of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Yes, there may be temporary added minor limits to civil liberties, but any such limits have to remain compliant with the charter. This means that any limitation to a right still must be reasonable in a free and democratic society. It also means the courts will continue to have oversight.

It is somewhat ironic to me that various members who have complained about rights being limited here have themselves supported the use of the notwithstanding clause by provincial legislatures, which truly has the effect of undermining charter rights. I oppose the use of the notwithstanding clause in all circumstances.

I also note it is important that members of Parliament have continually and rightly asked for involvement and oversight regarding decisions being made related to ending these blockades. The Emergencies Act provides exactly that oversight. The invocation of the act and any extension need to be authorized by Parliament. A parliamentary review committee consisting of MPs from all recognized parties and senators needs to be established to review the exercise of the powers under the act and report to Parliament at least once every 60 days. After the emergency is over, there has to be an inquiry into the circumstances under which the declaration was issued and the measures taken for dealing with the inquiry.

● (2235)

[*Translation*]

The last point I want to address is that some people think the act should not apply to certain provinces. That makes no sense to me.

Two orders were made. The first concerns emergency economic measures, such as allowing insurance companies to cancel or suspend insurance for a vehicle involved in the illegal blockade. It would make no sense for that not to apply to a vehicle from the other side of the river, from Gatineau, involved in the blockade in Ottawa.

It also allows banks to freeze the accounts of people participating in illegal activities. Here again, it would make no sense for that to apply to bank accounts belonging to people who reside in Ontario, but not to people residing in Quebec.

[*English*]

In conclusion, I believe that invoking the act is indeed a reasonable, wise and proportional decision to take in the current context, and I support the motion.

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Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, in the first part of the member's speech, I heard his concerns about heated rhetoric and things like that. I am wondering if he can comment on the Prime Minister's comments yesterday regarding one of my Jewish colleague's questions.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Madam Speaker, that is exactly the type of question that, in my view, is part of the problem. I asked everybody on all sides to tone down the rhetoric. That is on my side and the other side. We all have that responsibility, all 338 of us. To single out one member when all of us have an equal responsibility is wrong.

I personally want to say that I deeply appreciate the member for Thornhill. I enjoy working with her, and I will continue to work with her in a good way going forward.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am a planner. When I saw the 70-kilometre-long convoy headed this way, I thought there would be no problem. I thought there would be a plan in place that would involve coordination between various officials. Then I realized that that was not necessarily the case.

On February 7, the federal government was asked to provide assistance, in the form of 1,800 police officers to support the city and law enforcement officials.

Could that have been done earlier, on both the city side and the government side, and should 1,800 police officers have been sent, rather than 275?

• (2240)

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague, who is always very reasonable.

As I think I said in my speech, we are all extremely disappointed by what has happened in Ottawa. For various reasons, the Ottawa police were unable to adequately address the situation.

The federal government does have obligations, and it has taken action to increase resources in Ottawa. However, getting RCMP officers from all across the country to Ottawa does take time. They have to be flown or bused in, and they have to be trained on exactly what is happening on the ground here. These things take time.

The federal government has now assumed its responsibilities, and that is what we are debating today.

[English]

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for bringing some humanity back to the chamber tonight.

This pandemic is a story of sacrifice and solidarity. It is one of grief and loss. It is one of heroes. While the majority of Canadians have done all they can to get us through this pandemic, there are a sinister few who have decided to capitalize on Canadians' kindness and good nature and sabotage our social fabric.

Does the member agree that there are sinister actors here whose actions are meant to hurt Canadians, significantly and negatively

impact Canada's reputation and economy, and destabilize our civil peace?

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member, who always speaks so intelligently in this chamber. Yes, I think there are such people, and I think the member for Fleetwood—Port Kells gave a great description in his speech of what was happening.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I want to echo what the member just said about the member for Mount Royal. The tone of the member's comments was, as ever, extremely helpful.

We need to lower the temperature in this place and be honest with Canadians about the difficulties we face and why it is important to distinguish between what the War Measures Act was and what the Emergencies Act is. The Mulroney government repealed the War Measures Act and put in place a far more thoughtful piece of legislation that does not in any way suspend civil liberties. However, I still have concerns about it.

I ask the hon member for Mount Royal if he believes that in the course of this debate we might even see some changes from the government in terms of the regulations, to be very specific.

Mr. Anthony Housefather: Madam Speaker, I am always inspired by the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands. I listened to her very thoughtful speech earlier today, and I am sure many others did as well. I would be very happy to speak to her off-line about the questions she raised.

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as we enter the third week of occupations and illegal blockades, we need this Emergencies Act for two reasons, in my opinion.

Number one is that it is time to uphold the rule of law.

Number two is that it is time to take action to protect our critical economic infrastructure before this makes permanent damage to our economy.

As we all know, the rule of law is a political philosophy that involves the belief that all citizens and institutions within a state, country or a community are accountable to the same laws.

Canada is a wonderful country with a very diverse population. People of different ethnicities and different faiths live together to make Canada the best country in the world. Canadians have come to Canada from over 100 different countries. According to Statistics Canada, 120 languages are spoken in my riding of Nepean, although 60% to 65% of my Nepean residents speak English as their first language.

Some Canadians came to this country several generations back. Some came several decades back. Some are recent arrivals. Many Canadians came to this country for the freedom it offers to all its residents. Many came fleeing persecution in the countries in which they were born. Many came to Canada for the economic opportunities that it provides. Many came to Canada to provide better lives for their children than they had.

There is one common denominator to all Canadians, especially the new Canadians who came to Canada. The fundamental reason is that Canada upholds the rule of law. Upholding the rule of law is so important, and it is so built into the fabric of our country, that the current situation is unbelievable to many Canadians.

Whether it is for economic opportunities or better lives for their children, the fundamental reason for the security this country provides for hard-working Canadians to generate wealth for the economic development of the country, and for their families and their children, is the rule of law.

It is unbelievable for many Canadians that the rule of law is so openly flouted, and that the rule of law is made a mockery. It is possible that our law enforcement agencies built their systems and processes around the assumption that Canadians, generally speaking, uphold the rule of law. Maybe this is the reason why we see an occupation today by a foreign-funded group holding our men and women in uniform in contempt.

We need to support our hard-working men and women in uniform. We need to provide them with the tools they need to restore law and order. This is the reason for the Emergencies Act, which is targeted, reasonable and proportionate. It strengthens and supports law enforcement agencies so that they have more tools to restore order and protect critical infrastructure.

The second reason for the Emergencies Act, as I mentioned, is to protect our critical economic infrastructure. Canada is rich today. We enjoy a very high standard of living because of continued economic growth. This economy of ours is very much dependent on our trade.

Trade accounts for 60% to 65% of our GDP. This trade is dependent on the smooth flow of good and services across the border with our biggest trading partner.

• (2245)

This economy and this trade have given us wealth. They allow us to take care of our seniors. They allow us to provide affordable housing. They allow us to deliver quality health care to all Canadians, irrespective of their income status. For a small, foreign-funded group of Canadians to misuse the freedom of expression and the freedom to protest to damage fundamental and critical economic infrastructure is simply not acceptable. It is time for us to act before permanent damage is done to our economy and, in turn, to the Canadian way of life.

This big economy, and this big trade we have, did not only come about because of hard-working Canadians. It is also made possible by investors from different parts of the world who found Canada to be a good place to invest. We have major foreign companies in the automobile sector, the aluminum sector and the steel sector making investments in Canada. They do this because Canada is always open for business, because Canada offers little disruption to conducting business, and because Canada allows the free trade and flow of goods and services.

This assumption is made by international investors, and it is the guarantee that international investors have come to expect. It is being fundamentally challenged and it is time to act now.

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Foreign-funded groups have crossed the line and we have to act to protect the interests of all Canadians. It is time to reinforce the principles, values and institutions that keep all Canadians free. The blockades and occupations are illegal. They are a threat to our economy and our relationship with trading partners. The foreign-funded groups are a threat to our supply chain and the availability of essential goods, such as food and medicine. The foreign-funded groups have become a threat to public safety.

Let me be clear: Every Canadian has the right to express their opinion, their disagreement, or even their anger. They have that right. I will be the first person to defend those rights in our wonderful, free and democratic country. However, this right does not extend to the foreign-funded groups depriving other Canadians of the right and freedom to enjoy a peaceful life. The right to disagree does not extend to foreign-funded groups blockading our critical economic infrastructure. The right to protest does not extend to foreign-funded groups causing harm to families and small businesses, and destroying jobs and the economy.

As the Prime Minister has said, under the Emergencies Act, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms continues to protect Canadians' individual rights. We are not going to call in the military. We are not limiting people's freedom of expression. We are not limiting freedom of peaceful assembly. We are not preventing people from exercising their right to protest legally.

Today, I ask all members of the House to take action against the illegal blockades and occupations that are harmful to Canadians. I ask all members of the House to stand up for families and workers.

• (2250)

Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member made numerous references to the reason to impose this act now. It was to protect critical infrastructure. I lost track of how many times he mentioned critical infrastructure, so I would ask two things. Could he identify which critical infrastructure this act is to protect today? Is the intent to keep this legislation in place to prevent future critical infrastructure attacks that I am not aware of?

Mr. Chandra Arya: Madam Speaker, as I mentioned, the occupations and blockades are not legal. These are done by foreign-funded groups. I am surprised to note that some of our hon. colleagues stand in solidarity with these foreign-funded groups who are taking action, occupying our cities and blocking the trade flow between Canada and the U.S.

• (2255)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Minister of Canadian Heritage seems to be a bit agitated this evening. He has been called to order a few times now. Had he been asked to leave, I would have found that to be disproportionate, and I would have defended him because I like him. It would have been disproportionate.

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Now, I have a question for my colleague. Is it possible that the Emergencies Act is disproportionate?

I have been saying all evening that this is the equivalent of killing a fly with a bazooka. There are many other options available to us. We are setting a precedent and that is what scares me.

Governments will be able to reuse this legislation later, and possibly for more dubious purposes. I am not suggesting that the government has bad intentions, but there may be future governments that use these measures for purposes that are less palatable than what we are seeing today.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on that.

[English]

Mr. Chandra Arya: Madam Speaker, this act is necessary. It is proportionate. As we have made very clear, this act does not affect the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We are not bringing in the military. This act, as my hon. colleague knows, is not the War Measures Act. This is a new act, which is quite mellow, I can say, compared with the previous act.

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, when I speak to people here in my riding of Victoria, they want action to be taken. The use of the Emergencies Act, while some have concerns about it, makes it clear we are at an emergency state. It is an acknowledgement of the failure of leadership at all levels of government, but really of the federal government, which allowed things to escalate unchecked.

One thing I have heard asked time and again is why it took weeks to deal with this issue, when there are clear links to white supremacy. There were clear concerns from the beginning. When it comes to how the RCMP and the government deal with land defenders, indigenous rights activists and environmental activists, there is a very different approach.

I am curious whether the member is committed to changing this in the future. What is his government going to do to address these inequities?

Mr. Chandra Arya: Madam Speaker, it is right for people to have some concerns. This act is being applied for the first time, so there are some legitimate concerns. The issue of whether we should have brought this act in five days ago or two days later can be debated, but the time came when it was critical to our economic infrastructure to end this occupation by mostly foreign-funded groups. I think the government took these steps at the right time and in coordination with all other levels of government.

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask my hon. colleague this. Tonight, a lot of references have been made that we need to listen to Canadians and to our constituents, so I would like to ask the member for Nepean this. What do his constituents think of this occupation in Ottawa?

Mr. Chandra Arya: Madam Chair, the people of Nepean are so concerned. For them, it is unbelievable that a few groups of people can so blatantly flout the rule of law and misuse their freedom to the right to protest. They occupy parts of Ottawa and bring misery to families and business owners.

Mr. Damien Kurek (Battle River—Crowfoot, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is, as always, an honour to stand in this chamber and address the issues that are impacting Canadians. However, I stand in this chamber tonight to speak to an issue that should make every one of the 338 members of the House take a moment to pause: the invocation of the Emergencies Act, an act passed in 1988, which was the successor to the War Measures Act.

If I could, I want to talk a bit about the history and why it is so important to understand that, in the context of where we are this evening. The War Measures Act was invoked three times in the history of this country: World War I, World War II and the FLQ crisis, under former prime minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau.

I find it incredibly troubling that this is the context in which we find ourselves today. Wars and murdered politicians is the context for the debate that we find ourselves in here today.

The invocation of the War Measures Act was an extreme measure to deal with significant issues. I do not think there would be a member of this House who would not agree with the need for a mechanism like this to exist, because the reality is that there are instances where significant action needs to be taken. We see this Liberal Prime Minister invoking this Emergencies Act, taking and granting himself and his government unprecedented authority that includes significant things that suspend, for example, due process.

The members opposite do not necessarily like to consider the precedent of the decisions that they make. The precedent is being set by the invocation of this act that it is okay to suspend due process, a fundamental aspect of a modern democracy to ensure there are not things like unreasonable search and seizure. Although the members of the government talk about the Emergencies Act being subject to the charter, there are aspects of it that are allowed to be overridden because of what the Emergencies Act allows. It is important to acknowledge those things as we enter into this debate.

We see there is this seemingly flippant approach to such a serious issue, which is setting a precedent, that I would simply ask this question of the members opposite and members of the NDP who have indicated that they are going to support this: If this were former prime minister Stephen Harper who had invoked this act, would they be celebrating it? Would they be laughing in their seats? Would they be poking fun and seemingly enjoying the fact that they are taking away the right to due process and that they are suspending certain aspects of our Charter of Rights and Freedoms? That is an important question that I hope every member of the Liberal Party and every member of the NDP considers carefully.

An unprecedented step was taken three weeks after the Prime Minister did nothing but inflame tensions in what is a time that Canada, I would submit, has never been more divided. The context for this is the fact that there are and continue to be protests taking place in the streets of Ottawa. The members opposite do not like to listen to this because it is inconvenient to their narrative, but I, along with my Conservative colleagues, have condemned the blockades, illegal activities and hateful imagery associated with it. The members opposite do not like that because it disrupts the divisive narrative that their leader continues to forward.

• (2300)

We have done that while also being the only party in this country that has been willing to actually acknowledge the fact that over the course of the last number of months there has been an unprecedented level of division that has alienated Canadians.

Now that is funny. The member opposite just said that we have somehow stoked these tensions. That member, I expect, when he goes to a Liberal caucus meeting next time around, would be quick to accuse—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

• (2305)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order. I would like order in the House so we can listen to each other.

Mr. Larry Brock: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, I appreciate that you are in the Chair, but your predecessor ruled on four occasions, on points of order, that the Liberal members of Parliament, including ministers, who continually talked over my colleagues who were speaking on this very—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have asked the hon. members to preserve order in the House. I would ask the hon. member to respect the fact that I have asked for order, and we will let the hon. member for Battle River—Crowfoot proceed. I will ask again if necessary.

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, to the subject at hand, we have a Prime Minister that has torqued issues, dating back prior to the last election that he called, misleading Canadians time and time again.

We have the fact that the Liberals have put policies forward in this country that have alienated a group of Canadians who albeit are in stark disagreement with many of the members opposite and quite frankly the vast majority, if not all members, of the House. They have torqued those tensions to segment 10% or 15% of this country and called them names that, if those labels were applied to any other subsection of society, there would have been outrage.

That is the legacy of the Liberal government members. Time and time again, and we have seen it throughout the debate, they will accuse others of doing exactly what they are doing. That is what we are seeing across the aisle, time and time again.

I would submit that after three weeks of doing nothing except inflaming the tensions that exist across this country, including with the protests outside and including with some of the blockades that happened across this country, the Prime Minister did nothing for three weeks. He did absolutely nothing, yet when a poll came out

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that said only 16% of Canadians would vote for the Prime Minister, all of a sudden he went nuclear. He took out the sledgehammer.

Now he is somehow trying to justify it, when the reality is that any reasonable interpretation of the act, which has very clear guidelines for the conditions that need to be met for the invocation of the Emergencies Act, shows clearly they have not been met. We have heard a lot of that over the course of this evening.

In the last couple of minutes, there are a few things I would like to touch on. We have a Canada that is divided. That is the Liberal government's Canada. It is tragic, but it is true. I hear it every day. We have a Canada that has state-sanctioned discrimination. That is the Canada under the Liberal government. We have a Canada in which I hear members opposite continually joke about the fact that there are blue-collar workers that drive trucks that are somehow the scourge of society. That is Canada under the Liberal government.

It is unbelievable that we have come to this point. We need to take pause and think very carefully about the path forward. My challenge to all of those who would consider supporting the invocation or the continuation of the Emergencies Act would be this: Think about the precedent that has been set. Think about, if it was their political foe who was using similar logic under similar circumstances, would they be so quick to engage in this as their option as a path forward? Think about the labels that have been applied by their leader, and if that would be an acceptable way to lead this country.

Members of the NDP, members of the Liberals, they have a choice. The highest elected office in this land is that of the member of Parliament. Many Canadians do not actually realize that. Every member of this House has the opportunity to make their voice heard. When members, on what will be a vote likely Monday evening, have their chance to cast their vote, to stand in their place, let them think long and hard about the precedent they are setting with the invocation of this act, because we can stand up for democracy in the midst of what is an incredibly challenging time for our country.

• (2310)

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, as my hon. colleague from Battle River—Crowfoot summed up the number of parties in this place, he forgot the Green Party, which he would probably like to forget, but the reality is that we are the caucus that has not yet declared how we plan to vote. I would encourage him to give me some reasons to decide to ignore the horrific language and heckling that has taken place all day from those benches and encourage me to vote with them.

What specific arguments does he think he could muster that would say that this was a time for the Greens to vote with Conservatives?

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, although the Green Party does not have official party status, it is a party that is represented in this place.

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My answer to my colleague would be this. Does this crisis meet the precedent that she would wish to be set, not just for the current government to invoke the Emergencies Act but for any future government to do the same? Does the context in which we are having this debate meet that criteria? This is not about voting with or against Conservatives. This is about whether or not—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Longueuil—Saint-Hubert.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to apologize to my colleague for the fact that I am going to ask him a rather easy question. It is late and we are running out of ideas.

If I understand politics, it is a question of leadership, especially in times of crisis like these. During a crisis, governments need to make major decisions that affect all citizens, and they have to convince people that these decisions are the right ones.

At this time, seven out of 10 provinces do not agree with the Prime Minister's decision to invoke the Emergencies Act.

I will throw my colleague a softball. Is this not about a lack of leadership on the part of the Prime Minister?

[English]

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, I could not agree more with my colleague from the Bloc. I am glad to hear that Bloc members will not be supporting this draconian measure as a response to what is a Liberal failure.

This is a political crisis. This is not a national crisis that justifies the invoking of the Emergencies Act. Rather, it is a political crisis that is the consequence of a Prime Minister who has failed time and time again. He has failed for six years. He has failed over the last three or four weeks. The unfortunate reality is that we have a country that is more divided than ever. This is the consequence of failure and I am appreciative that the Bloc will not be supporting these draconian measures—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Brampton North.

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I do agree with my colleague opposite on one point, and that is feeling bad for the truckers. I feel very sorry for the truckers. I happen to represent one of the largest constituencies with many truckers. Those truckers called my office and called me directly and they were upset. They were upset because they were stuck at the Ambassador Bridge and Coutts without food and water for days on end. The same thing happened in Surrey and in Emerson.

I am standing up for the truckers. I am standing up for all of the hard-working truckers that, day in and day out, are bringing in our supplies. What would the member say to all those hard-working truckers?

Mr. Damien Kurek: Madam Speaker, it is unfortunate that the member obviously did not listen to my speech. Liberals brag about 90% of truckers being vaccinated, and that is good. I support vaccination, but the fact is that 10% are forced to lose their livelihoods

because of the political decisions of a leader who has refused to acknowledge that there are disagreements.

I am pleased that the member is listening to her constituents, but I would be incredibly surprised if she has not heard the alternative opinion. I certainly have, and I acknowledge that fully. I speak with those people who have differing opinions from my own because that is what this place represents. It is an absolute shame that the government is more concerned about silencing those who it disagrees with than engaging in a dialogue that could unify the country. That has to stop and the Prime Minister is dividing the country for his personal political gain.

My fear is, and this is a genuine fear, that if we continue down this path, our country will be torn apart. That is the consequence of failed leadership and the member, I hope, will reflect very carefully on whether she is willing to set the precedent that a prime minister of a political party—

• (2315)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The time is up.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Peace River—Westlock has the floor.

Mr. Arnold Viersen (Peace River—Westlock, CPC): Madam Speaker, I must admit it is hard to follow the member for Battle River—Crowfoot's passionate speech.

Nonetheless, here we are tonight debating, after it was implemented without a vote in the House of Commons, the Emergencies Act. I want to take us back about two years. I remember distinctly the talk was about whether the vaccines would be mandatory. There was a study several years ago at the health committee about mandatory vaccines and it was determined at that study, which I believe was in 2011, that it was unconstitutional to make vaccines mandatory.

Fast forward to 2020, we have a global pandemic and the government is saying that vaccination will be our way out of this, and 70% was the number that was floated around as an appropriate level of vaccination. The Prime Minister assured everyone that it would not be mandatory in any case.

Then we came to the election, and suddenly vaccines were becoming mandatory. The government said on the eve of an election, which the Liberals called in the middle of a pandemic, that mandatory vaccines were going to be brought in. Get the jab or lose the job. I remember Conservatives ran on a mandate that said no mandatory vaccines.

The Prime Minister said some of the most divisive things that we have ever heard a prime minister say. In an interview he asked if we have to tolerate these people. What kind of a question is that? Is that something a prime minister would say? Before he was Prime Minister, he said, “Canadian is a Canadian is a Canadian”. Then, when it suited his political ends, he was suddenly asking if we have to tolerate these people.

I want to talk about the use of the term “these people”. It has been pointed out to me that people have lost their jobs for using the term “these people”. Unfortunately, the Prime Minister did not lose his job over that.

One of those people is a good friend of mine, an RCMP officer. He had had COVID and had an antibody test. It proved he had antibodies, yet suddenly he was being faced with a mandate to be vaccinated or lose his job. He has five kids. He dreamed his whole life of being an RCMP officer. Now his livelihood, the way he feeds his children and pays for his house, is being put on the line because he must get vaccinated with a vaccine that does exactly what his body has done already in giving him immunity to the virus.

That is the crux of the issue. This mandatory vaccine that has been forced upon us. The Liberals say the country is united and 90% of the people are vaccinated, so why would I be worried about the last 10%. One of the things in democracy is that it has always been about the protection of the minority. Otherwise, we would just live in a dictatorship or tyranny of the majority. There is that reason, and the other reason is that, just because 90% of the population is vaccinated, does not mean that every one of them wanted to be vaccinated.

The fact of the matter is that it was after 50% of the population was vaccinated, the Liberals came in with mandatory vaccines. They forced people to get vaccinated. They say they did not force anybody, but they did say people had to get vaccinated or lose their job. That is not selling vaccines on the merits of vaccines. That is coercion, not informed consent.

It is like they are saying to Canadians, “That’s a nice job you have there. It would be too bad if something were to happen to it. By the way, we have this nice vaccine over here.” This is an immense coercion taking place on behalf of the government. Then there was the demonization and terrorization, on behalf of the government, of those folks who were not vaccinated.

● (2320)

In some provinces people were not even able to go the grocery store if they were not vaccinated. That is the backdrop for which we have these protests occurring across the country. The Prime Minister knew that. For over a week, we watched the Canadian flag being waved on overpasses and side roads. Everywhere the convoy went, people came out to greet the convoy, and those images were stunning.

The Prime Minister knew the convoy was coming across the country. He had ample time to react, decide what to do, and determine if the mandates were working. We had 90% of the population vaccinated, when the goal was 70%. The number of cases were declining. The week the truckers were coming across the country he could have paused for a moment and reconsidered everything.

Statutory Order

Deena Hinshaw and Theresa Tam both said that, but for some reason, the Prime Minister could not come to the conclusion that perhaps he should look at that, so here we are.

The truckers came across the country opposing the mandates. Perhaps there is a website that talks about insurrection and things like that, but the vast majority of the people who stood alongside the road waving their Canadian flags, who did not come to Ottawa but who supported it, were not thinking of an insurrection. They were supporting an end to the mandates.

Here we are, entrenched, and using the largest gun in the arsenal, so to speak, the Emergencies Act. While, at the same time, the border crossings and critical infrastructure that were blocked are no longer blocked. We have seen blockades of critical infrastructure before in this country. We saw the rail blockades of early 2020, which created a significant hardship for this country. The propane that comes out of the ground in Alberta and is put onto trains and shipped to eastern Canada to heat homes was not able to make it there.

However, the Emergencies Act was not invoked at that time. I would not have advised that we invoke it at that point, but there was critical infrastructure being blocked. We have seen blockades of critical infrastructure and roads with respect to projects being built in this country, yet I would not advocate for, nor did we see, the emergency measures act invoked in those cases.

We have recently seen the destruction of millions of dollars of equipment in northern B.C.’s Coastal GasLink project, but the Prime Minister does not seem to acknowledge that, nor is he suggesting we use the emergency measures act with respect to that. However, here we are in Ottawa, where I have not heard of any damage occurring to property, but this has been declared a national emergency for which we must use the largest, most powerful piece of legislation we have in this country to deal with this so-called emergency.

I want to talk about the foreign money pouring in across the border that the Liberals bring up time and again. I would first like to know how much foreign money we are talking about. That is an important piece. Since I was elected, I have been advocating for us to look at the foreign money that is coming across the border. We know the Tides Foundation has put over \$700 million into an anti-oil sands campaign in northern Alberta. It appears the Liberals agree with that, because they have turned a blind eye to foreign money influencing our politics.

However, when the Prime Minister gets a black eye or his polling numbers are being affected, suddenly the Liberals are worried about foreign money influencing Canadian politics. It is about time they are worried about that, but to freeze the bank accounts of Canadians over this so-called foreign money is crazy.

● (2325)

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Qujannamiik, Uqaqtittiji.*

Statutory Order

I am feeling quite compelled to compare this debate to when COVID-19 was first announced in November 2019, and how long it took before lockdowns were instituted. Lockdowns were not instituted until April 2020, and that would have been about six full months after the first case.

We keep hearing the Conservatives say that Canadians are being alienated and they cannot be any more divided, and we keep seeing the Conservatives being supportive of the extremist activities by posing with them for photos. These extremists have been allowed to spread disinformation and terrorize residents in Ottawa and other places for the last three weeks. These extremist views are spreading partly due to the Conservatives supporting them and encouraging them.

Can the member please share if he feels that these extremist activities will continue, even if the act was not instituted, and even if—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to give the hon. member a chance to answer.

The hon. member for Peace River—Westlock.

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, I reject the underlying premise of the entire question. I have a question back to her. Does whatever is happening in Canada rise to the level of needing the Emergencies Act implemented across Canada? It was not used in the spring of 2020 when rail lines were shut down for 18 days and Quebec ran out of propane. It was not used due to the damage that is currently happening at Coastal GasLink. It was not used when the G20 was in Ottawa, or when 9/11 happened.

Does the member really think that the Emergencies Act is appropriate at this time?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the answer to the member's question is very simple. Yes, it does. Think of the hundreds of millions of dollars that go through our border every day from the U.S.A. to Canada. Think of Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta. Those are three specifics. Think about the ports, whether they are in B.C., Quebec or any other jurisdiction in Canada. The difference between the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party is that Liberals truly care about the jobs and the impact this is having on Canadians. Look at Ottawa today. The downtown is shut down.

Why will the Conservative Party not recognize the reality that this is necessary? The Conservatives should be doing the responsible thing, and stop flirting with protesters, get onside and support what the government is trying to do.

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Speaker, it is surprising to me. I suppose, since I come from Alberta, downtown Ottawa jobs being more important to the Liberals should not surprise me. However, when jobs in Alberta were being threatened by a rail blockade two years back, there was no mention of the Emergencies Act at that point in time. There was no mention of it. It was business as usual with the government trying to resolve the situation.

I would also point out that, at that time, the government sent out an army of ministers to talk with whomever they could to try to alleviate the situation. The opposite took place in this case. There

was no dialogue with the truckers in the convoy as they came across the country. There was no acknowledgement that their concerns might be valid. There was not even a second thought to lifting the mandates. The Liberals have inflamed the situation and have completely mismanaged it.

• (2330)

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, we said right away that we would be voting against the motion on the Emergencies Act, but certainly not for the same reasons as my colleague.

I am hearing something here that is a little unsettling, and that is the connection being made between freedom and vaccination. In his speech, my colleague told us that his parents cannot go to restaurants because they are not vaccinated. That is not up to the House of Commons, it is up to the provinces.

This unfortunate connection they are trying to make to keep sowing confusion helps no one. The member's speech actually tempted me to vote for the motion.

[English]

Mr. Arnold Viersen: Madam Chair, fundamentally, this entire situation started when the government put a mandate on truckers to be vaccinated in order to cross the border. The mandates are fundamental to the entire situation we are dealing with today.

I will make no apologies for bringing that up.

Ms. Anita Vandenbeld (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation.

As elected officials, our most important responsibility is to protect our citizens and keep them safe. In the past three weeks in Ottawa, I have heard first-hand the many unacceptable, dangerous and threatening situations that the people of Ottawa have faced as a result of illegal blockades and occupation in our city. This includes threatening public safety through intimidation, harassment, racial and homophobic slurs, physical assault, sexual harassment, vandalism, openly displaying symbols of hate, such as the Confederate flag that I saw with my own eyes, and incessant noise, which is impacting particularly the most vulnerable. Imagine children with autism or seniors with dementia having to hear the honking constantly, all night.

There is also the blocking of ambulances, preventing people from being able to go to medical appointments or pick up prescriptions, forcing the children's hospital to take on extra security, and desecrating our national monuments, including the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Businesses, schools, and vaccine clinics are closed. People are losing paycheques. People are driving trucks around elementary schools and in neighbourhoods, while swearing at and terrorizing little children. They are blocking the road to the airport. Trucks with large containers of fuel and other flammable materials are near open campfires and fireworks, not to mention what is happening at our borders and elsewhere in the country, including the cache of weapons that was found at Coutts.

I have heard from constituents who have expressed their frustration about a lack of enforcement of the rule of law. Many are leaving Centretown to stay with family and friends elsewhere, or even leaving the city. The people of Ottawa have been appealing to the federal government to step in and restore order. That is why I am very relieved that we are invoking the Emergencies Act. I have constituents who are writing to me, such as Judy, who is a senior. She wrote, "I am so glad the government enacted the Emergency Measures Act. It is the right thing to do, and I will sleep better tonight."

This is not something that is done lightly. The Prime Minister was clear that this is a temporary, proportionate, geographically specific and scalable measure to restore law and order. It does not in any way limit the Charter of Rights, and it is subject to parliamentary oversight as evidenced by this very debate.

[Translation]

It is about providing certain tools that will put an end to the abusive, hateful and illegal occupation of our city and other critical infrastructure, while guaranteeing that freedom of expression and political dialogue can occur in a respectful and peaceful way.

These tools include the following measures: freezing the accounts and suspending the insurance of trucks used in these blockades; compelling tow truck drivers to comply with requests from law enforcement; requiring all crowdfunding platforms to register with FINTRAC; seizing bank accounts and prohibiting foreign funding of blockades; authorizing the CBSA to stop foreigners who plan to cross the border to join an illegal protest; increasing the powers of police to enforce the law, impose fines and jail offenders; designating, securing and protecting critical sites and infrastructure to ensure the provision of essential services; and prohibiting the use of property to support illegal blockades.

● (2335)

[English]

The rule of law is a fundamental precondition to living in a free and democratic society. What we have been seeing in our city, and across the country, includes some very organized groups with significant foreign funding whose stated aim is the overthrow of our government. It calls for harm to come to elected officials. Groups with links to far-right extremists, who are unleashing hatred with violent rhetoric and conspiracy theories, are actually deputizing themselves to be able to arrest other citizens. This is an attack on our democracy and institutions of governance. I fully support the use of the Emergencies Act under these circumstances.

Statutory Order

I want to be clear that I come to this conclusion very reluctantly. I was on the board of the Alberta civil liberties association in grad school. I did my doctoral studies in Canadian constitutional history, and I have spent most of my career on human rights and democracy promotion. I have lived and worked in parts of the world where I have put my own safety at risk to fight for the rights to free speech, democratic accountability and rule of law.

I would do no less for our same rights as Canadians. I just never thought that I would actually have to. Freedom of speech is not the same as freedom to drown out other people's voices. It does not give people the right to break the law. The convoy and occupation of our downtown forced many other people to cancel their events because of security, including the vigil for the anniversary of the Quebec City mosque attack.

Freedom of speech does not include throwing excrement at a young woman on her way to work or threatening others with sexual assault or bodily harm just because they are wearing a mask. It does not include making obscene gestures at six-year-olds on a school trip, throwing objects at journalists or flooding 911 lines. It does not include blocking health care workers so they cannot get to the hospitals where they can save lives. It certainly does not include arson or pushing into a residential apartment building and barricading the exits with handcuffs.

Freedom of speech does not mean taking away the rights of others to live in safety. I have worked in countries where force determined whose voices were heard, where the law was flouted with impunity, where might made right. That is not freedom and that is not democracy.

What the Emergencies Act is doing is making sure that this lawlessness does not take hold or grow roots in our country. It is giving powers to law enforcement to make sure nobody is above the law. It is legal. It is constitutional. It is temporary and it does not override the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It is only being used in proportion to the existing threat, and it is subject to parliamentary oversight as well as an inquiry after the fact.

I would like to quote from Alex Neve, the former head of Amnesty International Canada:

This is not a matter of giving up on human rights by shutting down a protest. Quite the contrary, this is a matter of upholding human rights by ending an occupation that is a source of fear, menace, hardship and harm.

Another issue that I would like to discuss this evening is the taking away of people's livelihoods.

*Statutory Order**[Translation]*

I also know that many of my constituents have had to close their businesses or have lost work hours and paycheques because of the blockades. The Minister of Finance has announced that there will be compensation for businesses and employees who lost income because of this.

[English]

I have also heard from many constituents who have sympathy toward the stated aim of the protests regarding ending vaccine mandates. I encouraged them to continue to share their concerns with me in that regard. However, the decision to lift public health measures or to strengthen them must be one taken by elected officials based on advice from public health experts, not based on pressure and threats by people in the streets.

I know that the past two years have been very hard. Some of us have lost loved ones to or because of COVID. Many of us have family members who struggle with mental health or addictions aggravated by isolation and the closing of schools and workplaces. Many of us have parents or grandparents we have not been able to see in order to keep them safe, but we have done our part and we know that it will not last forever. Vaccines have saved tens of thousands of Canadian lives and already we are seeing optimistic signs.

I would also like to emphasize that I understand that not everyone participating in protests was in agreement with the harassment, threats, hatred and extreme language and objectives expressed by many of the leaders and participants. If so, it is well past time to leave the protest and go home. It is no longer peaceful nor legal in its tactics and aims. There are other forums to express views responsibly.

I also think that Canadians need to start talking to each other again. This is already causing rifts within families and friendships. We need to start being decent to each other again, to really hear each other, but we must also make sure that we do that respectfully and without violence. Going into the streets and causing harm to others is not the way to be heard. Threatening people and taking away their safety and livelihoods is not democratic dialogue. Breaking the law is not okay.

I wish that the Emergencies Act were not necessary, but in a democratic society we must stand up against illiberal forces that would deny other people's rights to safety, security and free expression.

● (2340)

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Madam Speaker, the finance minister, the Attorney General and the Minister of Public Safety have all been unable to provide a clear and articulate answer to this pressing question. What is the donation threshold by which a financial institution will freeze an account under the Emergencies Act?

Ms. Anita Vandenberg: Madam Speaker, if my hon. colleague were to look at the terms, they say very clearly that this will occur if the purpose is to “further the illegal blockades”. In fact, I would go so far as to say that 52% of the donations are coming from outside of Canada. Of those, 1,100 are coming from people who also

donated to the January 6 insurrection in the United States, so this is an incredibly important measure.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Madam Speaker, as I listened to my colleagues talk about these crimes all evening, I kept thinking the same thing: They could all be dealt with under the Criminal Code.

My question is the following: Why was the City of Ottawa not given more assistance and police resources to ensure that the Criminal Code could be enforced before moving directly to the Emergencies Act?

[English]

Ms. Anita Vandenberg: Madam Speaker, we did not head directly to the Emergencies Act. In fact, members will recall that we provided the City of Ottawa with supplemental police officers three times, as well as intelligence capabilities and command capabilities. However, the fact remains that the city and the province have declared states of emergency. They were unable to deal with the extent of this and the entrenchment of the people who are blockading and occupying Ottawa. Therefore, this is necessary. There are certain things, as I mentioned in my speech, that we can do, including cordoning off certain areas, going after crowdfunding and online cyber-currencies, and making sure that tow trucks will be able to take some of these large vehicles away.

I think it is absolutely necessary. This is the kind of thing nobody wants to use, but the fact is that in this case, the peace and safety of Canadians are at stake.

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, it should never have come to this. In a speech before this one, a Conservative member brought up the Coastal GasLink pipeline and implied that somehow the destruction of property there was equal or worse than what we have been witnessing: firearms, arrests for conspiracy to murder, attempted arson of a residential building and convoy members deputizing themselves and claiming they have the authority to detain and arrest others. Some are even saying they have guns. In expressing sympathy with the convoy participants, the Conservative member denounced indigenous land defenders, and this is all too common. Canadians have witnessed the huge difference in the way indigenous and racialized protesters are treated compared with the way the convoy has been treated over the past few weeks by the RCMP and governments.

I would like the member to tell Canadians how her government is going to address the disproportionate treatment of racialized and indigenous people who engage in peaceful protests and who defend their own land, compared with these groups.

• (2345)

Ms. Anita Vandenbeld: Madam Speaker, I note that the member she referenced, the member for Peace River—Westlock, also called this a “so-called emergency”. He can tell that to the people of Ottawa.

Yes, I do agree with my hon. colleague that there will have to be a really serious rethinking of how policing is done in this country. We have to look at the unconscious biases and the differential ways in which different groups of people are treated by policing and by our justice system.

Right now we need to deal with what is happening here in our city, in Ottawa. The member articulated very well some of the terrible things that residents in Ottawa are going through. I know she shares my belief that we need to get back to a place of peace and a place where people can live in safety.

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Rural Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to rise at this late hour, and I want to take a moment to thank all the House of Commons staff, the interpreters, and you, Madam Speaker, for your indulgence and dedication as the House sits long hours until midnight. Thank you to everyone.

We have been patient for more than 20 days, while these illegal blockades have disturbed the lives of Canadians, harmed our economy and endangered public safety. It is now clear that the local police forces have been very much unable to enforce the law effectively, as my colleague Anita just pointed out.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I remind the hon. member that he cannot refer to his colleagues by name.

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon: I apologize, Madam Speaker.

To my colleague who spoke before me, I would like to say that the police service was indeed severely affected. We are invoking the Emergencies Act to enhance the ability of provincial and territorial authorities to deal with the blockades and the occupation and keep Canadians safe, protect jobs and restore confidence in our institutions.

In my riding, Highway 50 connects the Laurentians to Ottawa. That was the highway the convoy took to get from Quebec to Ottawa, which was very disruptive.

I got tons of calls from people all over my riding expressing support for the government and our Prime Minister. Some of those calls were from truckers and truckers' associations. These are people who went to the polls in 2021, exercised their right to vote, and placed their trust in me for a third time.

That tells me it is just a minority of people making all that noise outside, bothering the people of Ottawa and Gatineau day and night, and refusing to move their trucks even though the police have asked them to do so several times.

The Emergencies Act provides law enforcement with new authorities to regulate crowds, prohibit barricades and ensure that our essential corridors remain open. The Emergencies Act allows the

Statutory Order

government to mobilize essential services such as tow trucks, and it gives the RCMP the ability to act more quickly to enforce local laws. The act also provides more power to stop the flow of money to protesters. These measures are targeted, temporary and proportionate.

It is a good and effective piece of legislation whose use is temporary. It is the last resort. This is about keeping Canadians safe, protecting Canadians' jobs and restoring confidence in our institutions. For two years, Canadians have been making sacrifices and helping each other get through this global pandemic. Canadians' lives have been turned upside down for two years now.

The federal government has been there since the very start of the pandemic, working side by side with the provinces, for the well-being of Canadians. We will continue to be there. Workers from Argen-teuil—La Petite-Nation, self-employed workers and businesses have been able to benefit from these programs, which we must remember were adopted unanimously by all 338 members of the House of Commons, who all agreed on the benefits that we gave to Canadians. Those benefits were necessary.

The Canada worker lockdown benefit helped a lot, as did the employment insurance program, the wage subsidies, the Canada recovery sickness benefit and other Canada recovery benefits, the wage and hiring supports, the rent support, the jobs fund, the extension of work-sharing agreements, the credit programs, the financing for large employers, and the Canada recovery caregiving benefit. These are all ways that we gave during the pandemic.

Today, we need this act. Today, we will continue our work. We will be there for Canadians who have been taken hostage by these illegal blockades. We have been there from the beginning of the pandemic, and we will still be there to continue our work, the work that the majority of Canadians elected us to do.

The government has issued an order, which takes effect immediately, authorizing Canadian financial institutions to temporarily cease providing financial services if the institution suspects that an account is being used to help illegal occupations and blockades. What we are asking Canadian financial institutions to do under this act is to review their relationship with any person involved in the blockade and to report them to the authorities. The accounts of businesses linked to illegal blockades will be frozen and vehicle insurance revoked.

This is about ensuring the safety of Canadians, protecting people's jobs and restoring confidence in our institutions.

• (2350)

Since the government has now declared a state of emergency, we have tabled the declaration in Parliament within seven sitting days as required.

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Our government is aware of the need for transparency and parliamentary oversight. That is why the government is giving Parliament the information it needs to be able to play its role.

The declaration is for 30 days only, unless it is renewed. However, we can revoke the state of emergency sooner, and we sincerely hope we will. What is more, the specific measures set out in the Emergencies Act are limited, subject to many controls and guaranteed by Parliament. They have to be consistent with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The Emergencies Act does not involve the army. That would fall under the National Defence Act, which is not what we are invoking today. This is a matter of keeping Canadians safe, protecting people's jobs and restoring confidence in our institutions.

This is very important for the people of Argenteuil—La Petite-Nation and for everyone in the nation's capital, who deserve peace. For 20 days, the blockades have been illegally disrupting the lives of residents in the nation's capital and hurting our economy. It is time for us to do something about that, because they are jeopardizing public safety and the supply chain that we have here at home.

I have heard horror stories from people who have called me. My colleague who spoke before me listed a number of measures the police have had to take that were related directly to the protest location. We have not yet talked about the people in my riding who have been affected indirectly, having been denied access to their workplaces. Local businesses have had manufacturing contracts cancelled. For example, my brother's company has trucks on the road, and his employees could not access the work site to do their jobs. He had to cancel contracts and relocate workers who were supposed to be on job sites in Ottawa.

This situation has affected many more people than we realize, even here on Parliament Hill. The opposition parties say that this is affecting only Ottawa and that perhaps there were other things we should have done besides invoking the Emergencies Act, but this is having consequences everywhere, whether in my riding in Quebec or elsewhere in Canada.

• (2355)

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague, and I have a simple question for him.

I wonder how my colleague feels, as a member from Quebec, about having to defend a law that is unanimously opposed by all MNAs in Quebec City.

His premier and probably his own MNA, or the two or three MNAs in his riding, oppose this legislation. They may have even emailed him to let him know they do not need this law because nothing is happening in Quebec.

This legislation is like using a cannon to kill a mosquito. How does my colleague feel? Surely he feels at odds with all—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague opposite for the opportunity to answer his question. It is mind-bog-

gling to me to see the Bloc so desperate for something to say that it is making up needs.

Not once have we spoken about needing to go into Quebec if it was not useful. The Bloc is on dangerous ground here. Even the Bloc leader has compared this to wartime legislation. We have never made mention of wartime legislation. We have never talked about there being any need to send the army into Quebec.

We will never invoke this act if it is not necessary.

[English]

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Qujannamiik, Uqaqtittiji.* I am very concerned about the extremist ideologies spreading across Canada. I have seen threats from as far as New Brunswick.

Is it not important to prevent further support of these extremist views from taking root in the rest of Canada?

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for mentioning that this network has ties to some extremist groups that are dangerous to our society, to the supply chain, to our families, to the common good, to security and so forth.

The act is appropriate and will be in force for the next 30 days. It will be enforced mainly in Ottawa, but perhaps elsewhere as needed, although I hope that other provinces will not need it.

[English]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to ask the member a question about civil liberties. There are many Canadians who will have donated to the convoy before recent developments, certainly without any criminal intent. They maybe donated as an expression of their concerns about mandates, before any of the blockades had started.

Based on the justice minister's comments to Evan Solomon, it appears that the government is contemplating freezing the bank accounts of people who have donated as a response to, allegedly, what their views are with respect to Donald Trump or something else.

Is the member concerned that this is a serious civil liberties issue? People without criminal intent, who may have donated in good faith without knowing some of the things that have gone on since, could lose—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We have to give the hon. parliamentary secretary a chance to answer. We are about to run out of time.

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Lauzon: Madam Speaker, in an effort to keep this brief, I will summarize the question.

The act is clear. Institutions will be responsible for investigating anyone who made illegal contributions and will have to provide this information to law enforcement, which will also have to conduct a thorough investigation. I have faith in our justice system and our law enforcement system—

Statutory Order

• (2400)

[*Translation*]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order. We will have to stop it there.

[*English*]

It being midnight, pursuant to an order made earlier today, having reached the expiry of the time provided for today's debate, the House will resume consideration of the ratification at the next sitting of the House.

Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until later this day at 7 a.m., pursuant to order made earlier today.

(The House adjourned at 12 a.m.)

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