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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



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HOUSE OF COMMONS

Saturday, February 19, 2022

The House met at 7 a.m.

Prayer

• (0700)

[*English*]

CANCELLATION OF FRIDAY SITTING

The Deputy Speaker: Before proceeding further, I want to acknowledge what happened yesterday.

With the agreement of the party leaders and in consideration of the safety of members and staff, a decision was made to cancel Friday's sitting. Early yesterday, a police operation was initiated to address the demonstration that has occupied Wellington Street and the downtown core for the last three weeks.

[*Translation*]

The progress made thus far by police authorities, in collaboration with the Parliamentary Protective Service, is now allowing us to resume our work.

On behalf of this chamber, let me express our sincere gratitude for the dedication and professionalism of the police authorities, the Parliamentary Protective Service, as well as our Corporate Security staff and the personnel of the House Administration. It is through their support that these extraordinary sittings are possible.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

[*English*]

EMERGENCIES ACT

The House resumed from February 17 consideration of the motion.

The Deputy Speaker: I wish to inform the House that, pursuant to an order made on Thursday, February 17, the House be convened this day for the sole 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.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will share my time with the member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue.

This crucial debate is not to be taken lightly. It was prompted by an event that will go down in the history of the Canadian federation, though not as one of its most glorious moments.

Let me say off the top that I am against the use of the Emergencies Act as set out in the orders, and I am definitely against its use in Quebec. To support my argument, I will review what the act does.

As its name suggests, the Emergencies Act is a tool of last resort that can only be used when a situation is so imminent, so overwhelming and so insurmountable a threat, that it is strictly impossible for the government to control it under existing legislation.

The consequence of the application of the act is that the executive may, by order, impose measures to ensure the safety of Canadians, the territorial integrity of the country and the protection of the constitutionally established order. This may include prohibiting movement or assembly, regulating the use of specified property, taking control of public services, imposing fines or even summary imprisonment.

Given the potentially antifreedom and undemocratic nature of the measures that can be imposed, Parliament has taken care to specify an exhaustive list of situations that can justify invoking the act. Accordingly, the only grounds for the government to invoke the Emergencies Act are as follows.

The first is a public welfare emergency. It should be noted that since the act came into force, none of the devastating floods, winter ice storms or wildfires that Canadians and Quebecers have faced has led the government to use these extraordinary powers.

In addition to natural disasters, the definition of a public welfare emergency also includes disease. It is especially pertinent to note that the global health crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic did not require the invocation of the Emergencies Act, even though it has caused over 35,000 deaths in Canada and nearly six million deaths worldwide to date, and it is about to mark its ill-fated second anniversary. Despite their exceptional nature, the actions taken to respond to the needs created by this unprecedented crisis were possible without resorting to the Emergencies Act.

Statutory Order

Third, the declaration of an international emergency, which is defined as a situation or acts of coercion involving the use of force between countries, may constitute grounds for invoking the Emergencies Act. Similarly, if Canada were to go to war, that may justify the use of the exceptional measures allowed under the Emergencies Act.

The fourth and final rationale provided as justification for a government giving itself these extraordinary powers is that of a public order emergency. Since that term is rather vague, the legislator was good enough to provide a definition in section 16 of the act:

public order emergency means an emergency that arises from threats to the security of Canada and that is so serious as to be a national emergency;

For the members who are wondering what a national emergency is, section 3 of the Act specifies that it:

...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 and that cannot be effectively dealt with under any other law of Canada.

That is significant. My colleagues will agree that the wording is very explicit as to how severe the circumstances must be to justify invoking the Act. Whether it is invoked for one or the other of the reasons I just mentioned, it is an extremely serious measure that must not be taken lightly by the government. It should be a last resort—a tool to be used only after we tried to turn off the leaky tap, used every tool in the box and called in the plumber, but the tap is still leaking.

● (0705)

This is the first time since the Emergencies Act was passed in 1988 that a Prime Minister of Canada has felt the need to resort to the special powers it confers. Its previous incarnation, the War Measures Act, was invoked only three times, specifically, during the First World War, during the Second World War, and during the episode of October 1970, an episode that deeply scarred the people of Quebec.

To be fair, I would like to note that the two pieces of legislation are not comparable and we have to be careful about comparing everything from that perspective.

The Emergencies Act requires the government to show that it is facing a dangerous and urgent situation that it finds impossible to deal with it under ordinary laws. The government failed to demonstrate any such thing in the statement of reasons it submitted to parliamentarians. Even worse, it did not even try to do so, since it has remained completely silent on the topic.

I want to explain to members why. It is simply because there is no good reason to justify using this special legislation. There is no legal vacuum preventing the government from resolving the crisis in Ottawa.

The vast majority of protests and blockades that we have seen over the past few weeks have been brought under control or removed without the use of the federal Emergencies Act. The Sarnia, Fort Erie, Coutts and Ambassador Bridge blockades were success-

fully removed. All of those border crossings are now back up and running, and trade with the United States has been re-established, so it seems that law enforcement was able to put an end to these protests without needing to use any special powers.

What is it about the Ottawa protest that makes it so unstoppable that it cannot be dealt with under the existing legislative framework? What laws are insufficient to resolve the crisis? Why do those laws not allow us to deal with the situation effectively? We do not know. The government has never said.

What is more, before invoking the Emergencies Act, the Prime Minister dragged his feet for two long weeks rather than trying to resolve the crisis. How can he claim, after—

● (0710)

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Windsor West on a point of order.

[*English*]

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, I have a point of order. I apologize for interrupting my colleague. I think it might even be a question of privilege.

There has been erroneous discussion about the Ambassador Bridge in my riding being open for business. It is not in the normal—

The Deputy Speaker: That is getting into debate. The member can ask questions.

Mr. Brian Masse: Children cannot get to health appointments—

The Deputy Speaker: That is debate. If the member wants to ask a question, I will make sure he does.

The hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Mr. Speaker, thank you for letting me continue after that interruption. As we all know, questions and comments come after members' speeches, so I will pick up where I left off.

After trying nothing at all, how can the Prime Minister claim that we now need to use a legislative atomic bomb? What happened between February 11, when he was saying that the Ontario Provincial Police had all the resources needed to put an end to the crisis, and February 14, three days later, when he invoked a law that has not been used in over 35 years?

Why did the Prime Minister extend the application of the act to all of Canada when six provincial premiers and the Premier of Quebec have openly spoken out against the use of the act on their territory?

On February 15, the Quebec National Assembly unanimously adopted a motion that states “that no emergency situation currently justifies the use of special legislative measures in Quebec” and that “it ask the Canadian government not to enforce the Emergencies Act in Quebec”. This could not be any clearer. Why did the Prime Minister choose to go against this consensus reached by Quebec and some of the provinces?

I would like to close by adding that I stand with the citizens of Ottawa and Gatineau, who have been prevented from enjoying their neighbourhoods, their city and their peace of mind for more than three weeks. I myself have spent these past few weeks in the region, and I have directly experienced the extent of the nuisance caused by the illegal protests to all residents.

It is time to put an end to the siege of the City of Ottawa. Citizens must get their lives back. That is why the Bloc Québécois understands that certain measures must be taken, but it does not believe that the use of such a legislative hammer is justified. The Emergencies Act was designed to address the shortcomings of existing laws, not the shortcomings in the government's and the Prime Minister's leadership.

• (0715)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, put quite simply, the member is wrong. When close to half a billion dollars a day in international trade is impacted, when a downtown is seized with blockades and so forth, and when the interim chief in Ottawa talks about how the use of the Emergencies Act has been of great benefit, I would suggest that the member is wrong.

Does the member not realize that the vast majority of Canadians recognizes the importance of re-establishing order for the residents of Ottawa, and that showing the rest of Canada that the federal government, in working with the municipality and the province, can enforce the rule of law is an important aspect of a democracy?

[Translation]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for Winnipeg North for his question.

I was very clear in my speech: There are no grounds for invoking the Emergencies Act. The government has not proven there are any grounds.

How is it that the blockades at Fort Erie and the Ambassador Bridge were removed without the Emergencies Act?

Why does Ottawa currently need the Emergencies Act? What is the legal void?

If someone on the government side could answer these questions today, they might be able to convince me.

The police had all the means and tools they needed. Even the Prime Minister said so.

[English]

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member for the Bloc laid out perfectly why this was an expansive overreach on the part of the government. One of the things that is extremely concerning to me, and I think the Deputy Prime Minister actually confirmed this the other day, is that the government is intending to impose some of the measures in the Emergencies Act on a more permanent basis, including financial tracking of individuals. This causes a problem not just here in Ottawa but right across the country, including in Quebec.

Statutory Order

Is the fact that she is talking about a more permanent measure of tracking the bank accounts and the transactions of Canadians disturbing? It should be.

[Translation]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

The Deputy Prime Minister said that the Emergencies Act would make it possible to freeze protesters' bank accounts or stop illegal funding.

That is not true, however. The existing Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act already provides for that. This act allows financial institutions to freeze funds that are either obtained through criminal activity or used to fund criminal activity.

The government is trying to spin things, but there is already legislation in place. What the government is saying is completely untrue.

It is not possible to invoke the Emergencies Act without reasonable grounds, as set out in the act.

[English]

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I apologize for the other interruption. I wanted to make sure the member had correct information and did not spread misinformation. The Ambassador Bridge is open, but not in its full context. Now the barriers are in my community along the side streets to keep those 14 kilometres secure.

Not only are businesses, emergency service vehicles and regular life and jobs inconvenienced, but traffic is slower, which is affecting many other people. Today, as well as every single day since the blockade, including with the subsequent repercussions due to other barriers, children cannot get to doctor's appointments.

What would the hon. member like to say to those families who are having to delay medical appointments, which have already been delayed due to the pandemic, even further because of the new blockades? They prevent them from getting to those medical appointments. This is a fact, and I would like the hon. member to address the families right now who will not get to their appointments, not only for themselves but for their children.

• (0720)

[Translation]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Mr. Speaker, my colleague spoke about correct information, and I love information, but what I love most are laws.

There are laws already in place that provide for blockades to be removed. The Emergencies Act will not magically allow for all blockades to be removed. Police forces already have the tools and skills to do so.

The Bloc Québécois understands that a piece of legislation can be insufficient. This legislation can then be amended by order in council. However, the Emergencies Act does not give authorities a magic wand to fix everything.

Statutory Order

[English]

The Deputy Speaker: We still have quite a few days of debate. I know we are getting noisy already. It seems like everybody has that first coffee in them and they are feeling ready to go, but I just want to make sure that we respect each other's rights in this chamber. I want to make sure we have an opportunity to speak and ask questions, that we can actually hear the questions, and that we can actually hear the responses as well.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Abitibi—Témiscamingue.

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to join the debate on the legitimacy of invoking the Emergencies Act. This is a very important and urgent subject. I know the members are eager to hear my point of view. I thank them for being here.

I salute the police forces for their work, their professionalism and their actions yesterday. I would like to thank the people of Abitibi—Témiscamingue for being so resilient, and I applaud our health care workers, who have been working so hard for us for so many months. I would also like to thank child care and education workers, who have braved this virus every day and enable children to learn and grow.

So many other people have worked hard to keep our local economy going, which I am proud of. I speak on behalf of a resource region known for its ability to innovate and recover from tough economic times. That is our path forward.

I appreciate the gravity of the unique situation we find ourselves in here and throughout all regions of Quebec and Canada. The pandemic certainly caused a great deal of harm, which we tried to control through measures that restricted our freedoms, but everyone knows these measures are temporary. People are perfectly aware of that and have said as much in many ways. We hope this all comes to an end without violence.

We are currently debating the Emergencies Act to make it clear to the Prime Minister, as well as Liberal and NDP members, that we do not want this legislation to be invoked. This Prime Minister invoked it for the wrong reasons. First, he has failed to convince us that this is a dangerous and urgent situation all across Canada. The danger is in Ontario, in Ottawa. The provinces possess the necessary powers, and they do not want this legislation invoked on their territory. Second, we are being told that dealing with this situation under existing laws would be impossible. That is false.

I hope all members understand just how far-reaching the use of the Emergencies Act is, but I doubt it. The act gives the federal government special powers to deal with urgent and critical situations. In other words, these are situations that can only be resolved by granting the federal government even more rights, and it has the right to do so only if other means have been exhausted. That includes dialogue. This act must be used sparingly. We have the privilege of deciding whether the time is right. We have an obligation to weigh each of the requirements of the act.

The Prime Minister of Canada shirked his responsibilities and clearly lacked leadership, judging from his actions and bad decisions. He added fuel to the fire and made enemies of the far right and even the people on the left. It is a serious mistake to lump all the protesters together at this point.

Every analysis and crisis management expert agrees that it is premature and inappropriate to invoke this legislation, but the government will not budge and is acting tough. As the saying goes, the devil is in the details. It is rather embarrassing at this stage for the Liberal Prime Minister to admit that he is making a mistake and that he will pay for his poor choices. I hope he is seriously thinking about his future.

Now, what is happening with the provinces? To be clear, I think the Government of Quebec has done its homework. In Quebec, we do not want to give power to a Prime Minister who has shirked his responsibilities. The Bloc Québécois will fight hard against legislation that is being used to cover up the Prime Minister's political failure. We are definitely voting against the Emergencies Act. We do not want this legislation in Quebec, period.

The use of this legislation has to be better and clearly justified to members of Parliament and senators. The effectiveness of this measure is questionable. It has become very clear to everyone that the Prime Minister invoked the Emergencies Act not to end the protests that are blockading downtown Ottawa and border crossings across the country, but to restore the public's trust in him. He is using it to score political points yet again.

Can the government do whatever it wants? The answer is no. The act imposes limits. The government is also limited by Parliament, fortunately, because the House of Commons or the Senate can put an end to this declaration.

What is more, every two days, Parliament reviews the decisions the government has made. Parliament can then amend or reverse them. What should this legislation be used for? The Emergencies Act imposes special measures. It gives the government the licence to order actions to be taken within specific boundaries and restore the order that existed before the crisis. There is therefore a start and an end.

● (0725)

If anyone causes a disruption or is proven to be the source of a disruption, the government can impose harsh penalties, including imprisonment. The consent of provincial governments is required.

The Emergencies Act allows the government to limit or prohibit travel to or from a specified area, limit or prohibit any public assembly that may disturb the peace, designate and secure protected places, and assume control of public utilities and services.

Towards the end of the 1980s, the government decided to repeal the War Measures Act to allow debate on emergency measures. It would never have believed that a Prime Minister would invoke it unless there was an exceptional situation and unless all other means had been exhausted. The members of the House put many conditions in place at the time, including a debate in the House of Commons and a debate in the Senate, to ensure that the government would never be tempted to appropriate such powers for political reasons.

It is outrageous that the Liberal government has brazenly ignored the spirit of the act to further its own interests and avoid taking responsibility for its bad decisions. That is truly deplorable. It is very clear to me that the threshold required to invoke the Emergencies Act has not, in my opinion, been reached. What the NDP and the Liberals are doing is wrong, and they are doing it blindly, wilfully and deliberately, without checking the facts. That is irresponsible.

We must not turn our backs on the people who gave us the privilege of governing them. These people are out in the streets because they came to tell us that they are not doing well and that they want to have the same rights as they did before the health crisis. It was expected that things might get out of hand, and government inaction has played a major role in what is now looking like a siege around Parliament Hill.

How can the government invoke the Emergencies Act when it is unwilling to take a clear stand and has failed to live up to its responsibilities?

We asked the federal government to show us a plan. Protesters from Quebec and Canada are telling us that they are fed up and that they want to get back to some semblance of normal life. That is starting to happen. The Government of Quebec has made some announcements in that regard.

The Prime Minister is acting as though he has not been listening to the provincial press conferences. I sincerely believe it would be in his best interest to do so. He would realize a lot of things, starting with the fact that everyone thinks this is a bad idea at this point. If he had been involved from the beginning of the crisis, he would realize that there have been mixed reactions from people. I want my constituents to know that we read the many emails that we get at our offices. People have expressed many emotions, including excitement, relief, indifference, doubt and disappointment.

The powers that the Liberal government has given itself are not even appropriate. The federal government should not have the right to freeze bank accounts before it has even presented a plan for a potential return to a much less restrictive environment, as other governments have done.

In practical terms, people have been victimized by this pandemic, particularly seniors. People have lost economic power, and businesses in all sectors have had to adjust. To make it through, we have been trying things with regard to health measures, guidelines and what is being asked, and understandably so. The pandemic has affected everyone across Quebec and Canada.

The most important thing will always be information, or what people are told. The public seeks out quality information; failure to provide it results in knowledge gaps and confusion. Having doubts

Statutory Order

is fine. Speaking out and protesting are fine. Calls for insurrection and abdication, on the other hand, are not. It was the government's job to answer our questions and give us accurate information. If it had done so at the right time, we would not all be here. When measures are needed and relevant, and people's freedoms must be altered, it is paramount that these people and all of us are notified.

The Prime Minister surely cannot tell us that he has not had any available resources over the past three weeks. He knows full well that there were ministers who could have freed up resources to help the Ontario government and the Ottawa Police Service. Ottawa police asked for more resources to manage the convoys, but the federal government merely told them that RCMP officers were stationed around the Hill.

Was that truly necessary? Would it not have been more appropriate to station them elsewhere, knowing that several convoys of trucks were heading for Ottawa?

When trucks stop at a red light, that is one thing. When they stop and park in the middle of the street, that is a whole other thing, and it is illegal. I do not support this occupation in any way.

The federal government dragged its feet while the City of Ottawa was asking for reinforcements, because it knew all too well that the truckers would not be gone on the Monday following the start of the protests. The Prime Minister of Canada certainly could have stepped up and shown that kind of leadership.

• (0730)

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I agree with my colleagues across the way. It is sad that we have gotten to a point where the government is forced to bring in emergency measures.

I do want to point that I was there in 1970, and I remember well what happened. An elected official was assassinated. This was not just any man; he was an elected member of the Quebec National Assembly. There is a reason no minister in the Quebec National Assembly today will go out without safety precautions.

I have a question for my colleague today. The Legault government and the City of Quebec reacted well and did what needed to be done. This was unfortunately not the case in Ontario and elsewhere. However, how does my colleague explain the fact that, according to a poll, 72% of Quebecers support the government's use of the Emergencies Act?

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her comments.

No, I was not there in 1970. I was not born yet. Nevertheless, what stays with me is the trauma that hundreds of Quebecers endured and are now reliving with this situation.

All governments have a responsibility, and this government did not take that responsibility. To me, it sounds like there is propaganda coming out of this government. It is using symbols and not listening to what is going on outside, which I think is even worse than what is being said.

Statutory Order

What is going on right now is unacceptable. Yesterday I saw a woman on a mobility scooter saying “peaceful, peaceful” to police officers, and she was trampled by a horse.

The government has responsibilities.

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Abitibi—Témiscamingue for his speech. I would also like to thank the member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, who spoke earlier.

My colleagues did a great job of contextualizing the big difference between the events of 1970 and the 1988 act invoked by this government. This act, which was drafted and passed by Brian Mulroney's Progressive Conservative government and sponsored by Minister Perrin Beatty, sets out very specific conditions. For one thing, the act cannot be used for partisan purposes. It is to be used only if it meets criteria that this government, unfortunately, has not met.

I would like to ask my colleague a question.

Ottawa was under siege for 17 days. For 17 days, the Prime Minister did absolutely nothing. In fact, on February 11, he said the police had all the tools they needed to respond. Three days later, he woke up and said this act had to be invoked.

Can the member help us understand the Liberal prime minister's completely irresponsible behaviour?

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague.

I cannot explain what happened. We are in a democracy. We are supposed to be in a democracy. I doubt it, at the moment.

I have a hard time realizing that I am in the House, but I feel so privileged to be here and to have a voice. There are people outside who wanted to reach out, who wanted to have a dialogue. They were never given the chance to speak.

I am not a spokesperson. I am double-vaccinated, I wear a mask, and I do everything I can. I still think that vaccination is the best way out of the pandemic.

However, it was important to listen, and the government did not listen to the people, the most vulnerable and ordinary people. That is why we are putting ourselves in a dangerous situation right now, and I am very worried about the repercussions.

• (0735)

[English]

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the Ambassador Bridge in Windsor in my riding is opening slowly, but the barriers that were on Huron Church Road to block the trucks are now blocking side streets. Those are Jersey barriers put up for security. The OPP, the RCMP and the City of Windsor are all manning those right now. Life is not normal. As I mentioned earlier, children are missing doctor appointments.

I would like a direct answer from the member. What would he tell those families they are supposed to do? Right now, their lives are in disarray. It is not just businesses, emergency vehicles access or simple things like groceries and trying to get life back to normal,

it is also people missing medical appointments, counselling and therapy.

What would he say to those families right now, because those Jersey barriers that were blocking the bridge are now blocking people from their communities, and they are being left to pay for this by themselves?

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Windsor West, who is probably one of the people I respect the most in the House.

I would simply say that there are many victims we never hear about, including those with mental health issues. The pandemic has probably claimed more victims among people who were ignored, who gave up their freedom, who were locked in rooms, who gave up their health and their lives, and who were unable to get medical appointments.

Indeed, I think the fact that we are where we are today raises serious questions.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Hull—Aylmer.

I rise today to explain to my colleagues in the House and my constituents in Châteauguay—Lacolle the reasons I am supporting this motion, the purpose of which is to confirm the declaration of a public order emergency made by the government under section 17 of the Emergencies Act.

Canada is a country that upholds the rule of law. By declaring a public order emergency under the Emergencies Act, we are abiding by Canadian law and acting within the framework of the law. Enacted in 1988 by the Mulroney government, the Emergencies Act clearly sets out the criteria for declaring a public order emergency. Our government believes that the situation meets these criteria, hence this action.

The Emergencies Act contains a number of guarantees and various checks and balances, including parliamentary oversight. That is why we were here until midnight the other night, and that is why we are here at 7 a.m. this morning.

All measures taken under the act must respect the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. These measures will be time-limited, geographically targeted, reasonable, and proportionate to the threats they are intended to address. The Emergencies Act serves to strengthen and support all police forces across the country. We saw this yesterday on Wellington Street, when police finally managed to form a cordon in order to push back the participants of this illegal protest.

Six measures have been put in place to control the situation.

First, public assemblies that lead to a breach of the peace and go beyond lawful protests have been regulated and prohibited. The protests in Ottawa and at the Ambassador Bridge are illegal.

Second, places where blockades are to be prohibited, including borders, border crossings and other critical infrastructure, have been designated and secured.

Third, persons have been directed to render essential services to relieve the impacts of blockades on Canada's economy. For instance, tow truck drivers are being compelled to provide their services, with compensation.

Fourth, financial institutions have been authorized and directed to render essential services to relieve the impacts of blockades, including regulating and prohibiting the use of resources to finance or support the blockades.

Fifth, the RCMP has been authorized to enforce municipal and provincial laws, as needed.

Sixth, fines or imprisonment are being imposed.

We want to use these measures to keep Canadians safe, protect their jobs and restore their confidence in our institutions.

The Emergencies Act was passed in 1988 by the Mulroney government and also contains several important limits, checks and balances, and guarantees. As required by the act, on several occasions this past week, the Prime Minister and his cabinet consulted the provincial premiers and their respective governments.

Having declared a public order emergency, we tabled the declaration in Parliament. In the next few days, a parliamentary committee will be established to provide oversight while the state of emergency is in effect.

The declaration is in effect for only 30 days, unless it is continued. However, the government may also revoke it much sooner. Personally, I hope that will happen. Parliament also has the ability to revoke the declaration, as clearly specified in the act. It also has the power to amend or revoke any order adopted under the act. Furthermore, all orders must be tabled in Parliament within two days of being made by the government for review by parliamentarians.

● (0740)

We can certainly ask ourselves how we got here. Why has a declaration of emergency become sadly necessary here in Canada, a country that always ranks high in terms of freedom, democracy and social peace?

I cannot comment on the police operations here in Ottawa or on the lack of interest shown by the Ontario government, at a time when the City of Ottawa clearly was not able to respond to the threat posed by the protesters here on Wellington Street. Despite the undeniable fact that municipalities are under provincial jurisdiction pursuant to the Constitution Act, 1867, the Ford government dragged its feet and only took action when protests broke out in Windsor and elsewhere in Ontario. I believe Ontarians will be going to the polls soon, and it will be up to them to decide how to judge their elected officials.

Statutory Order

As an MP, my concern is what goes on in the House. As a backbencher, I noticed that since the start of this so-called freedom protest, which quickly became an occupation and an attempted insurrection, some MPs have been exploiting the protest for partisan purposes. They also axed the leader of their own party.

When these MPs took photos with protesters who were holding flags emblazoned with racist and hate-fuelled symbols, they claimed they had done it inadvertently or, even worse, that there were no such flags there. These members deliberately and egregiously denied and minimized their actions, all while tweeting support for the protest and lending credibility to the organizers and their dangerous plans.

I could give many more examples of all of the deception being used to sow division. We are well aware that some members in this House are masters of partisan tactics. Their strategy is to divide Canadians in hopes of profiting off of that division. These members should be ashamed of themselves. They are prepared to put our security, our economy and our democracy at risk to further their own partisan ends and advance their political careers, or even simply to get an interview on Fox News.

Again, I agree with our government that the blockades by both persons and vehicles at various locations throughout Canada represent a state of emergency. These blockades have a direct connection to activities that are directed toward or in support of the threat or use of acts of serious violence against persons or property, including critical infrastructure, for the purpose of achieving a political or ideological objective within Canada.

I agree that these blockades are having adverse effects on the Canadian economy. Canada's economic security is threatened by the impacts of blockades of critical infrastructure, including trade corridors and international border crossings. These blockades have broken down distribution chains and are hurting Canada's relationship with its trading partners, in particular the United States.

In response to this state of emergency, our government, with the utmost caution, invoked the Emergencies Act. Canadians across the country can have confidence in the fundamental principles of our beautiful country of Canada: "peace, order and good government".

● (0745)

[English]

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, at one point the hon. member asked how we got to this point. She then proceeded to blame everybody else, including Ontario Premier Doug Ford, but failed to place any blame on her own Prime Minister for wedging, stigmatizing and dividing people, calling them racist, misogynist and extremist, and asking whether we have to tolerate these people. What we are seeing in this country, in the manifestation of protests across the country, is a logical conclusion to the identity politics the Prime Minister has played.

Statutory Order

I want to ask a question specific to the Emergencies Act. The order in council released by the government authorized the government to impose other temporary measures authorized under section 19 of the Emergencies Act that are not yet known, which basically gives the Prime Minister and the executive branch of government unfettered power over their citizens. How could anyone, even on that side, logically support that?

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Mr. Speaker, I find a question of that nature on the Emergencies Act very unusual coming from someone in the Conservative Party. It was his own party that wrote the law. I have huge respect for the work that was done by former prime minister Mulroney and the minister—

Mr. John Brassard: On a point of order, the hon. member should know that I am not referring to the act. I am actually referring to the order in council.

The Deputy Speaker: We are getting into debate.

I will let the member for Châteauguay—Lacolle finish her answer.

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Mr. Speaker, when it comes to how we got to this point, there are these things called jurisdiction and due process. Policing needs to happen at the municipal level. When it fails there, it must be the province. The municipality is the creature of the province, and the province did not do its job.

[Translation]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we are all familiar with the saying “do as I say, not as I do”.

That is what the Liberals are doing right now. It is important for them to have polls to back them up so they can justify resorting to the Emergencies Act. The member for Châteauguay—Lacolle said earlier that over 70% of Quebecers support its use.

However, she forgot to mention that only 347 people were surveyed for the poll. The Quebec National Assembly unanimously opposed the use of the Emergencies Act. Seven of the 10 Canadian provinces are also opposed to the invocation of the Emergencies Act. Does this mean nothing to the Liberals?

What bothers me the most is when the member talks about the rule of law. The rule of law is the opposite of arbitrary law.

Which of the laws in force today is so inadequate as to justify enacting the Emergencies Act?

• (0750)

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Mr. Speaker, manipulating statistics is a common tactic.

The Bloc Québécois members are okay with it when it suits their purposes, but not when it does not. However, Canadians are looking at the situation and seeing with their own eyes what is happening outside.

They are also seeing that all levels of government are assuming their responsibilities as they should. In fact, I would like to commend the Legault government for what it has done to date.

[English]

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we are looking at a situation that is completely out of control. In my province of Alberta, 13 armed insurgents have blockaded our infrastructure. We can look outside of the House of Commons. Where we are is very, very upsetting, and we never should have been in this situation.

How are we going to make sure that we have put things in place so this cannot happen again? What is the government doing to ensure that this cannot happen in the future?

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan: Mr. Speaker, there are different processes laid out in the law, including setting up a joint committee of parliamentarians and senators. I certainly look forward to seeing that progress and hope to see the hon. member on that committee.

[Translation]

Hon. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to say hello to all of my colleagues on this Saturday morning. It is unusual for the House to sit on a Saturday, but our entire country is dealing with a situation that is quite out of the ordinary.

We are here to participate in a very important debate on the use of these emergency measures. I am not a lawyer. I do not know and cannot figure out all of the little details, but in my opinion, we need look at only two things. First, the Ottawa Police Service said yesterday that it would be unable to put an end to what is happening in Ottawa and the national capital region without the special measures set out in the Emergencies Act.

Second, we are here on a Saturday morning. Yesterday, it was not safe enough for MPs or senators to come to Parliament. We made an unusual decision to cancel a sitting of Parliament, which is why we are here on a Saturday morning to hold this debate.

All of the party leaders in the House—the Conservative Party, the Bloc Québécois, the NDP and the Liberal Party—agreed with the Speaker of the House of Commons that something was happening here, that it was not safe, and that parliamentarians could not come to work. That is very uncommon.

What I would really like to talk about is the other measures applicable to the funding of extremist groups.

• (0755)

[English]

I was born in Montreal into one of a few Black families in my area, in a predominantly Jewish neighbourhood in a francophone city, a francophone province, an English country and a largely English continent. I like to consider myself a minority within a minority within a minority within a minority. It offers me an interesting view of things.

I can see the way the dominant view is carried out because that is the dominant view. It is natural; it is in the air. However, I can also step back a bit and just see things a little *ex centrum*, or off centre. I have always felt that is a strength. I always think it is an ability to see life a bit more fully: three dimensions instead of two and more colour than just in black and white.

When I saw what was happening in the lead-up to this convoy, there were things that I was able to see that I do not think other people would see as clearly. Perhaps I am wrong, but give me a chance to explain it.

[Translation]

We know the convoy organizers are the same people who have tried to organize other protests about random issues. In 2016, we had Motion No. 103 against Islamophobia. They tried to rally folks and spark a grassroots protest against the motion. I am talking about Tamara Lich, Benjamin Dichter, James Bauder and Patrick King. Those very same people tried to get Canadians up in arms so they could spread their white supremacist way of thinking.

They failed in 2016, so they tried again last year with the United We Roll campaign. Again, there was not much buy-in.

This time, they succeeded for one good reason: Canadians are tired. Everyone is exhausted. Nobody likes the pandemic, nobody likes restrictions and nobody likes lockdowns. The virus does not care what we think. Canadians are exhausted, and these people took advantage of that general sense of fatigue.

The people who showed up to express their disagreement with mandatory vaccination, lockdown measures and all the other measures implemented by federal, provincial and municipal governments have the right to do so. I am not talking about those people.

The people I am talking about are the organizers who exploit that exhaustion to recruit people on social media and spread messages of hate. We know very well that algorithms enable groups on social media to use extremist statements to attract other people, who then make more frequent appearances online. There is no way to avoid that. When people are constantly exposed to hate, they eventually start buying into that way of thinking.

In 2016, when Motion No. 103 was moved, the movement engaged some 10,000 people on Facebook, according to the Canadian Anti-Hate Network. They spread their message and, at one point, they had almost 200,000 subscribers, which was unheard of.

● (0800)

[English]

They hit gold. They now have what is estimated to be over a million people on Facebook. This one million people they have identified do not know what is about to hit them. They are going to get messages over and over again, hateful messages, intolerant messages and misinformation, and guess what? They are also going to be solicited for money. Look at the money that has come in.

All of us in the House face very strict financing rules. With the transparency and financing rules, we can only give a maximum of \$1,650. That is a good thing. When we give to a charity, there is a whole bunch of transparency and reporting when it happens.

Statutory Order

Guess what happens when these folks give through crowdsourcing? There is nothing. There is no transparency, not at all. They raised \$16 million on one site and another \$16 million on another, 40% to 50% of which, it is estimated, came from outside the country. The names are ridiculous. It says Mickey Mouse gave and so did the current Prime Minister. He obviously did not contribute. That is not good.

The financial measures we have are for good reason. If nothing else, it was worth putting them in the orders. I hope that legislation will follow so that on a permanent basis we can get this kind of wrong money out of the Canadian political system.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we heard the justice minister, just two days ago, talk about the financial measures that the member opposite referenced and say that they are going to be used to target people who have political views, not hateful or intolerant views but views that he finds unacceptable. They are going to be targeted by these financial measures included in this law.

The concern that we should have in this place—

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: It's foreign interference; you're right.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, while the member for Winnipeg North knows not to interject, he talks about foreign interference. We are talking about Canadians having Canadian bank accounts frozen because they have political views that the justice minister does not like. That is not a liberal democracy. It is, frankly, illiberal and I would like to know how the member opposite can, in good conscience, support this kind of gross overreach and infringement on Canadians' charter rights.

Hon. Greg Fergus: With great ease, Mr. Speaker, because this money is not going to normal political speech. Let them give donations to those who want to support this, but they are giving money that is anonymous, that is unverified and that can come from foreign sources to get to politics through the back door as opposed to the front.

Who were the people collecting and distributing this money before it was shut down? Are Lich, Barber and King the people we want to have access to this funding, which people gave in good faith because they wanted to talk about vaccine mandates but is being used for completely different purposes? There needs to be some transparency on it.

If the hon. member had listened to me carefully, he would have heard me say that this is a great temporary measure now and that we should pass a law to deal with this going forward.

● (0805)

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech, which contained some very interesting nuances.

Statutory Order

My question is about the truckers who were on the street. Once again, there are not many left this morning. Does my colleague really believe that the measures that have been implemented, such as seizing bank accounts and trucks or closing mortgage accounts, will have an impact on truckers, most of whom are from here, by which I mean Canadian?

Hon. Greg Fergus: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for his question.

Again, the answer is yes. In the news, we clearly saw a trucker who was part of the blockade here in Ottawa saying that he had to leave because he had received a notice from his bank informing him that if he did not leave the illegal blockade, his assets could be seized. He added that he employs 55 people.

It has worked. It will prevent potential blockades from happening in Windsor. We also heard from the Ottawa Police Service and the Windsor Police Service that with these measures, they finally had the ability to prevent—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. It is time for questions and comments.

The hon. member for North Island—Powell River.

[English]

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I hope all of us in the House are taking on the serious responsibility of the decisions we are making here.

The member opposite and I have had conversations about both of us being parents to children from the BIPOC community and how worrisome it is. On this planet and in this world in which we live, when we send them out the door, just because of who they are, we do not know that they are always safe. As we talk about implementing this act, I wonder if the member could talk about how we will make sure we are accountable for every step and be rigorous so that we protect all people in this country.

Hon. Greg Fergus: Mr. Speaker, what I really like about this piece of legislation, and I would like to congratulate Brian Mulroney and his government for having introduced it, is that the Charter of Rights applies to it at all times. It is fixed for a certain amount of time and parliamentarians have to come together to talk about it. I have every confidence because it is targeted, it is appropriate and especially it is time-limited.

Mr. Michael Barrett (Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we find ourselves here, this morning, discussing another attempt by the Liberal government to make a mad grab at power, a gross overreach. We have seen it before.

We know that the Liberal-NDP alliance have started their heckles because they want to silence me, just like they want to silence people they do not agree with.

We know that, at the very beginning of this pandemic, the first thing the Liberal government attempted to do was make a mad grab at power. It wanted the ability to spend unlimited amounts of money and to raise taxes, to tax Canadians as it saw fit, without parliamentary oversight, for nearly two years.

Her Majesty's loyal opposition was awake at that late hour, and we stepped up. We stopped that overreach. Here we are, at an early hour on a Saturday morning, in an extraordinary sitting of this place, while the government looks to use extraordinary processes to attack people they disagree with. We heard from the justice minister. He said it on TV for all to hear that, if people have political views that he disagrees with, the government is coming for their bank accounts.

If people agree with the justice minister and have the same distaste for the same politicians, maybe this time they are not worried. However, what about the precedent that it sets when a future government that has a different political view goes after the bank accounts of their enemies or people it disagrees with?

We, in this place, have a responsibility to safeguard the rights of all Canadians. We have heard a lot of talk about the impact in downtown Ottawa, so I want to start with that. The residents of downtown Ottawa have seen protests and celebrations in their neighbourhoods for years. It is a feature, normally, of living at the heart of Canada's democracy. As of late, it has been anything but. Many of them are now represented in a class action lawsuit against the protesters.

I would like to, for the House, share what their lawyer, a fixture in the human rights legal community, has to say about the government's invocation of the act:

[This] seriously infringes on the Charter rights of Canadians.

That is the lawyer representing the folks downtown in Ottawa. He said:

...I am acutely aware of the trauma experienced by Ottawa residents, I fully agree that the Emergencies Act is a dangerous tool that was not required.

Who better to pronounce on the urgency of the situation in downtown Ottawa than the human rights lawyer who is representing the downtown Ottawa residents?

Let us talk about the other remedies that have been used to address people as part of this movement. At the Ambassador Bridge, the Windsor border crossing, we saw police of jurisdiction resolve the blockade of our international border. They did it over a two-day period without the use of the Emergencies Act. In Coutts, Alberta, we saw the same result with the existing resources and the existing laws. The police of local jurisdiction there, through police intelligence, identified that there were weapons and ammunition at a nearby site, and they effectively interdicted it without a shot being fired, using the local laws and the local resources. It was not an emergency.

We had the greatest public health crisis in more than a century, which the government presided over, and an economic downturn, the worst in a century, which the government presided over. It deemed neither emergencies. We have an opioid crisis where people are dying on our streets every day, and the government does not declare that an emergency. It is not taking extraordinary steps to deal with that.

● (0810)

However, it goes back to that power grab and it goes back to a pattern that we have seen with this Prime Minister. Every time that he finds someone he disagrees with, and this is no exception, he dismisses them, he degrades them and he dehumanizes them. This includes millions of Canadians because they disagree with him. He said they hold unacceptable views and they take up space. He said they are mostly misogynists and racists. The majority of Canadians, millions of these same Canadians, have said that any signs or expressions of hate or intolerance are unacceptable. They condemn them and I condemn them.

Anyone who commits an illegal act is individually accountable for that, but we have laws to address that. The charges that are being laid in Ottawa are for mischief and “conspiracy to commit”. We do not require an Emergencies Act to deal with these things. We have a public order operation taking place on the streets of Ottawa. It is not a national emergency.

However, it sure was a great opportunity for this Prime Minister to do those things that he does best: to divide Canadians. That is not the job of a Prime Minister, and it is a shame that he finds common cause among the government benches and with the third party in the House. History will not be kind to those who approve of this illiberal power grab. That is not who we are as Canadians.

Many of the folks who are protesting at different places across Canada, who are raising their voices, are tired. We are all tired of COVID. They wanted a plan. They wanted to know how far until we get to that off-ramp because many of them, including those I have met and spoken to in front of this place, are vaccinated. Some of them are not. They just want to know when it is going to be over.

We gave the government an opportunity to present a plan. We asked for it a year ago. We did it again in the last week. The government refused to provide a plan. Meanwhile, those who are following the science, science presented by people like Dr. Moore in Ontario, have signalled when the COVID measures will end in the jurisdictions that they are responsible for.

Before these folks arrived in Ottawa or at those other locations in Canada, Dr. Tam, representing the Public Health Agency of Canada, said that the government needed a new plan. We have not heard that from the government, because this is a great opportunity to pit neighbour against neighbour, family member against family member. It is an opportunity this Prime Minister never misses.

We are wide awake this morning. We have seen what the government has tried to do and we are here to say that it is not acceptable. It is not our Canada. Folks who want to protest absolutely have the right to do that. Folks who want to use their right to freedom of expression absolutely have a right to do that, and there is a place for that on the lawn of Parliament Hill.

Statutory Order

The folks who are moved through the public order measures out front, or who have moved on days ago after visiting the seat of our democracy, need to come to the appropriate places to protest, which are the lawns of their city halls and provincial legislatures and the lawn of Parliament Hill, and exercise their rights, balanced with the responsibility of doing so in a lawful way. That is what Canadians do. They do not try to effect extraordinary measures that subvert the regular rule of law and the charter rights that Canadians hold sacred.

This Prime Minister knows better. His ministers know better and the back benches know better. Let us find out, when we vote on this, if they are prepared to tell Canadians that this really is a country that respects the rule of law, a liberal democracy. Let us find out what Canada really stands for.

● (0815)

Mrs. Brenda Shanahan (Châteauguay—Lacolle, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is good to hear the member opposite, with whom I served on the ethics committee, talking about a Liberal democracy. There are different tactics that can be used to discredit one's adversary. There is discrediting someone with a constant barrage of insults and slurs. There is distraction, deflection or “whataboutism”. All of these are used to divide people.

Which tactic is he using today?

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, I talk about a Liberal democracy because the government of this country is represented by the illiberal party of Canada, it would appear. The tactic I am using today is reminding the government of the foundation of our democracy, which is the rights of Canadians. When citizens are afraid of their government, and that is the goal the government seeks, they have got it backwards. The government should be afraid of its citizens because our citizens hold the power. That is the key to freedom.

● (0820)

[Translation]

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes for his comments.

I would like to ask him a simple question.

Why was the Quebec government able to control and resolve a similar situation in two days, without using the Emergencies Act?

*Statutory Order**[English]*

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, the premier of Quebec was able to effect that result in the same way that Toronto was able to effect the same result as they did in Montreal or in Quebec City, which was by using the existing laws of the local jurisdiction and using their existing resources. That is exactly what could be done here in Ottawa. It is what was done in Windsor, it is what was done in Coutts and it is what is being done elsewhere. We are seeing the government try to confuse Canadians and conflate a couple of issues so it can make an unjust grab at power.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one of the things I really hope we are going to get out of this is a full inquiry into the complete breakdown of law in Ottawa that allowed this thing to metastasize, and the fact that dark money was used from America and the Cayman Islands. These issues have to be fully investigated.

I know the interim Leader of the Opposition thought this was a real opportunity to let this thing drag on, and said day after day to go out, meet and talk with the leaders. Chris Barber is a vicious racist who likes truckers as long as they are white. Tamara Lich is a woman who wants to break up our country. I know some of the Conservatives do not have a problem with that. Pat King is a man who talks openly about shooting the Prime Minister of the country. I have never, ever heard a single Conservative stand up and say that those views are fundamentally wrong. There is a problem in our nation when we decide that it is okay to burn down the house of democracy to watch the Prime Minister jump out the window, or to support people who talk about killing the Prime Minister.

I want to hear the member condemn that language.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, I condemn it. I also condemn the member opposite's party supporting this grab at power and propping up its coalition partners in the Liberal Party. I am not sure what rationale was given behind closed doors, because we have not heard the rationale. We have laid out very clearly that the laws of local jurisdiction are effective enough. Instead, the government looks to settle scores with its political foes by using an unprecedented power grab, and it is unacceptable.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I feel that the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes may, in rewatching his remarks, regret any sense of equivalency between condemning people calling for the killing of our Prime Minister and the decision made by the NDP to vote in favour of the declaration.

The hon. member said that the declaration would allow the freezing of bank accounts for people the government does not agree with. I think I have this right. I am not sure how I am going to vote on this. I really want clarity around what the thresholds are for the government interfering in the bank accounts of anyone. I want to see that clarity. I do not think it is right to mislead Canadians into thinking that this law would allow the threshold that, if someone dislikes or disagrees with someone else, their bank accounts would be frozen.

Would the member like to clarify this?

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, to the member opposite, the following is a question from Evan Solomon, the host of CTV's *Power Play*, to the Minister of Justice:

A lot of folks said, "I just don't like your vaccine mandates and I donated to this, now it's illegal, should I be worried that the bank can freeze my account?"

The Minister of Justice responded:

If you are a member of a pro-Trump movement who is donating hundreds of thousands of dollars, and millions of dollars to this kind of thing, then you ought to be worried.

If someone supports Donald Trump, the government is coming after them. That is unacceptable in a Liberal democracy.

Mr. Adam Chambers (Simcoe North, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is discomfoting to stand here today. It is a sad and dark time for our country. Unfortunately, this does not overstate current events.

I have watched with concern the lawlessness paralyzing Ottawa and key border crossings in Ontario and other provinces. Never before has the Emergencies Act been invoked. It has sat on the shelf during some quite challenging moments in our country.

Viewed as a last resort, this act gives the federal government enhanced powers in times of crisis. Its justification and intricacies of procedures are being worked through the House for the first time. There is no precedent. Instead, we are making precedent. The arguments we make, the evidence we evaluate and the tone we take will be judged by future generations.

Everyone has the right to peacefully protest any government policies. This is a fundamental freedom in a democracy. It protects the rights of individuals to express their views, even when those views are not shared by everyone. While these protests are a fundamental part of democracy, so too is the rule of law. We cannot allow prolonged blockades or barriers that paralyze trade corridors, pipelines, railways, supply routes, ports or urban cores at any time. We are not at liberty to decide which laws should apply in some situations but not others.

In a rule-of-law country, consistency matters. It is the foundation upon which legal precedent is built. People who join protests to encourage violence or the overthrow of government undermine democracy, but let us be very clear. Not everyone who has participated in these protests is looking to overthrow the government. Many are looking just to be heard, peacefully. To them I say that we hear them. I hear them.

Somewhere along the way, we entered a state of lawlessness, but the answer to lawlessness cannot be more lawlessness. The government is asking us to suspend certain laws to deal with those breaking others. We are being asked to undermine democratic principles to address some who wish to see democracy itself undermined.

The threshold for invoking the act is supposed to be high, and quite rightly. This is a temporary law that will give the government awesome and extraordinary powers: powers to freeze assets with no recourse, and to compel citizens to act contrary to their own interests in favour of the state's.

In the House, just days ago, the Prime Minister presented a timeline. He held a cabinet meeting on Sunday and a caucus meeting on Monday, followed by a meeting with premiers and finally a press conference on Monday afternoon. Why did it take days for the Prime Minister to address the House, and what evidence has he presented?

It is difficult to determine whether the government is justified without adequate information. There were no briefings. No secret intelligence has been shared. Whether it is incompetence or malfeasance is truly regrettable.

Why was the committee not struck immediately? Is there evidence pointing to significantly compromised public safety or impending danger? Should that not have been made immediately available to members, or at least a subset representing all parties? If we wanted to take the politics out of this, information would have been made immediately available. Otherwise, a conclusion might be that this was politics.

Why do ministers of the Crown opt first to give details to media before the House? Ministers have held press conferences and conducted interviews implying that terrorists are at the steps of Parliament, but have offered the House no evidence. Is it then surprising that Canadians are losing faith in our public institutions? Perhaps it is because the Prime Minister and the government have shown the House and institution little respect.

After all, at the beginning of the pandemic, the government proposed giving itself unlimited spending powers for almost two years without the oversight of Parliament. The same government prorogued Parliament to frustrate a committee investigation. To this day, we still have not seen the Winnipeg lab documents that members of the House have asked the government to provide. Forgive me for being skeptical that this move is justified without seeing the evidence.

We must not understate the impact of the ability for individuals to have their bank accounts frozen. This will not just be a 30-day impact. It could affect their ability to receive financial services for 30 years or more. Individuals whose relationship with the state has already been strained, if not completely severed, will be further ostracized from broader society.

This power must be used sparingly, if at all, and the government has provided very little detail on how it intends to use this power. For example, what is the process through which individuals will be identified? Will these powers be confined to protest organizers, or will they apply to anyone who has shown up to Parliament Hill or donated to the cause, no matter how large or small the amount? What recourse, if any, do individuals have against financial institutions if these powers have been mistakenly or unevenly applied?

Statutory Order

• (0825)

These powers are not merely incidental. They should not be dismissed, downplayed or underestimated. I approach every decision with an open mind, but the consequences for individuals are too great, and the precedent this sets is too monumental to waive away legitimate questions or concerns. We are setting a dangerous precedent.

We should be very careful before we use the awesome power of the state. That this moment is the seminal moment upon which we would decide to invoke a never-before-used act seems disproportional, when there are other actions that the government could have taken.

We should be very careful about normalizing the use of a blunt tool in circumstances such as these. If we must consider using the Emergencies Act every time there's a protest that lasts over a certain period of time, we have much bigger problems. In many ways, that the government has resorted to invoking this act is an indictment of its overall handling of the situation.

I am therefore left with no reason but to impress upon my colleagues that the threshold has not been met, and as a matter of law, if I am wrong, the threshold has been seen to be met by a court that the government is not justified in its use of the act.

While the Emergencies Act is the question before the House today, we should reflect on what has led us here and the lessons we may draw for the future. The hallmark of any democracy is the ability to have reasonable debates with each other about how society functions, but somewhere along the way, we have lost the ability to listen to each other or to consider the perspectives of our neighbours. We are too quick to call something black or white and too quick to demand that each other pick a side. Pro or against, right or left, we leave little room for nuance, reflection or compromise anymore. It should be okay to disagree.

I am sympathetic to those who are frustrated with the pandemic and the government's response. Many of us are frustrated. We are frustrated with overly punitive travel restrictions and redundant and confusing testing requirements, and we are worried about losing livelihoods because of making a medical decision.

We have seen rules that seem more often grounded in politics than in science. This has left deep divisions in society that will take some time to heal. It has been a long two years, and there are no clean hands in this battle of rhetoric.

It is therefore up to all of us to be part of the solution. I am left to consider whether I could have been quicker to call out abhorrent behaviour, or how I could have shown greater empathy to my neighbours. What can I do now to be a positive actor inside and outside of the House?

Statutory Order

The tone must start from the top. The Prime Minister must be hopeful, because Canadians need to see a hopeful way ahead. Continued hyperpoliticization will only make the situation worse. It is not leadership when a prime minister discounts and dismisses the views of millions of Canadians with whom he disagrees. It stigmatizes, sows division and escalates.

We must show empathy over judgment, promote dialogue over silence and prefer persuasion over coercion. We must be looking for opportunities to de-escalate. We need to bring people closer instead of pushing them further away.

Great leaders possess the capability of self-reflection. We must acknowledge the possibility that people descended on our nation's capital, or crowded overpasses across the country, in part because of their frustration with being demeaned and marginalized for political gain. It suggests that self-reflection is required.

In 2013, the Prime Minister, as the leader of the opposition, said, "The role of the prime minister is to build a stronger country, not make it easier to break apart." This is a time for leadership. This is the prime minister I would like to see show up for work. Canadians are depending on him.

• (0830)

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague on the tone of his comments today.

It would be a much better reflection on all of us if we continued to seek out the things that we can agree on and tried to solve some of these problems at the end of the day, not make them worse. Canadians are watching this debate.

I watched events yesterday, as many of us did. With all of what I heard my colleague say, I heard interim chief Steve Bell, other former police chiefs and RCMP leaders say clearly that they could not have done what they did yesterday, which is only part of resolving this issue, without the Emergencies Act.

Did the member not hear the same things that I heard yesterday? Does he not agree that this is an important piece of legislation for all of us to support and move forward?

• (0835)

Mr. Adam Chambers: Mr. Speaker, I listened to the same press conference yesterday, and what I heard the chief of police say was that it was helpful to have the emergency measures act.

I know we like to debate semantics a lot in this House, and I am sure we will for the rest of today and into tomorrow, but something that helps to accomplish something is different from something being absolutely necessary to use. I think that is a significant difference. We will get to the bottom of this. I am sure there will be an inquiry and lots of time to play armchair quarterback, but that is what I heard when listening to the chief of police's response yesterday.

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I sincerely thank my hon. colleague from Simcoe North for his remarks. We may have just heard the most constructive and

balanced speech we will hear in this debate. I find this very comforting, and it gives me confidence for the future. I offer my sincere congratulations to my hon. colleague.

I would like to hear more from my colleague. Basically, this is about our democracy and the message we are sending to Canadians. I wonder if my colleague could talk about how we should be communicating with Canadians and what message we want to send, particularly through the media. Is the government being selective in that regard? In the current context, is the government using the media, the people and the army for political purposes?

[English]

Mr. Adam Chambers: Mr. Speaker, I say thank you to the hon. member and I look forward to the day when I can stand in this House and respond in the member's first language of French. I hope to be able to do that by the time I leave this place.

It is very important for all Canadians to recognize that we have become very polarized in the media. My hon. colleague brought up the media. We can choose which views to insulate ourselves with, but I think it is important for all of us to keep an open mind. At the end of the day, the question is whether the government is justified in using and bringing down the awesome power of the state when perhaps it was possible to use other means. We saw resolutions at other border crossings that had been blocked without the use of the Emergencies Act, and I think the question we must ask ourselves is whether this response is proportional. Is the punishment proportional?

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am good friends with Bruce Stanton, as are many members of Parliament, who was the exceptional member of Parliament for Simcoe North. I would like to say, through you, to the current member for Simcoe North that his speech today displayed the same high level of parliamentarianism that we have come to expect from Simcoe North, and I am happy to say that it continues.

I think the member would acknowledge that the people of Ottawa have suffered enormously through this occupation. We have seen thousands of jobs eliminated, small businesses close and permanent injury caused to the residents of downtown Ottawa. The pollution, noise and intimidation have been unbelievable. Given that, there is an importance for parliamentarians to respond. As he said, we have to ensure that our neighbours are taken care of.

There have been a couple of proclamations under the Emergencies Act. As one of our colleagues mentioned, the police have said that the measures that were put in place through those two sets of regulations have made a real difference with respect to additional people not coming to the Hill. So far, we have escaped serious injury.

Would the member agree with me that the fact that thousands of people were unable to join the call of the convoy leaders to join them on Parliament Hill this weekend has potentially saved lives and certainly saved people from—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Simcoe North may give a short answer.

Mr. Adam Chambers: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for the question and for mentioning the great work of the former member for Simcoe North, Bruce Stanton, whom I hold in great respect.

Again I think it comes down to proportionality. We saw court injunctions used quite effectively. A young woman went to court and received an injunction to stop the trucks from honking their horns, and that day it stopped for a significant period of time, so the question should be whether the act is necessary and was absolutely the last resort for the government to use. I will wait to see the answers.

● (0840)

[Translation]

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Egmont.

[English]

It is with sadness that I rise in this House this morning because of the circumstances outside of our Parliament, but with the privilege to bring the voice of our community of Orléans, a community that has sent me once again to the House of Commons in 2021 with the clear understanding of the importance of the public health measures.

We are here today to debate the motion regarding the invocation of the Emergencies Act. This law, the Emergencies Act, was passed in 1988, bringing in new parliamentary oversight through a requirement for compliance with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and we invoked it on February 14.

As a society, we need to put this in perspective with the values we all share, particularly democracy and the rule of law. From an Orléans perspective, many people have called in the last 22 days.

[Translation]

After two years of the pandemic, a general sense of fatigue had set in, but thanks to an extraordinarily high vaccination rate, the stress levels of families and business owners were beginning to come down. The hope of returning to some semblance of a normal life was on the horizon. It was palpable.

[English]

Then a convoy of trucks decided to overstay their welcome in our national capital. We are now at Saturday, day 23. People, neighbours, family members and residents, when I do my groceries at our local stores, have shared their thoughts with me. They want us to do something.

After working hard with our municipal partner and after the City of Ottawa declared a state of emergency on January 6, the Province of Ontario followed in declaring a state of emergency as well on February 11. We need to understand what our downtown businesses and its residents have endured for the past 23 days.

I was a former business owner in Orléans before politics. As exciting as it was to own a business and be an entrepreneur, it is hard work. We have payments to make, payroll to look after, employees to manage and rent to pay. Business owners in Orléans and in Ot-

tawa are our neighbours and our friends. They are people we have gotten to know, people we have developed friendships and relationships with. It has been hard for them since the beginning of the pandemic.

My heart goes out to the people who live and reside in downtown Ottawa and to the businesses that were expecting to open on January 31. They were looking ahead to happier days. They were looking to do what they love to do. They were hoping to open their businesses. They were hoping to be there for their employees, and I have to say that we were hoping to support them.

I have to say it again: Small businesses are the heart of our economy. I speak monthly with my local BIA, the Heart of Orléans BIA. We know our businesses needed our government's support since the beginning of this pandemic, and we did. We brought in several measures to support them.

I will repeat that January 31 was to be a new beginning for our businesses. It was supposed to be a good day for them, since the provincial Progressive Conservative government here in Ontario was loosening public health measures. Unfortunately, it was not for our downtown businesses.

We have worked so hard for the past two years. We have joined forces among each other for the better good of our communities, our provinces and our country. We have listened to the experts. We did what had to be done to see our loved ones and to protect our seniors.

● (0845)

[Translation]

We were hoping for a return to normalcy at last, but that did not happen for everyone. It was a very different situation for residents and merchants downtown, who were denied this opportunity.

[English]

It is because they had to suffer from this illegal blockade, and this is not acceptable.

[Translation]

It is hard for me to explain how I feel about this illegal blockade. For 23 days, we have been unable to enjoy the beauty of the capital, move freely in the streets, socialize with our friends or get to our place of work.

What can I say about the impact of this illegal blockade on the quality of life of the residents, on the health of our students and that of people living with a disability? What can I say about the impact on our social stability, our mental health and our environment?

That is why we are here now. That is why the government invoked the Emergencies Act. We have to put an end to this nightmare.

*Statutory Order**[English]*

We are now at a point where the government felt the need to invoke the Emergencies Act to supplement provincial and municipal capacity to address this illegal blockade.

I want to reinforce that the emergency declaration would be for a maximum period of 30 days. These measures are targeted, temporary and proportionate. We are invoking them only after exhausting all options. They will allow the RCMP to enforce municipal, provincial and federal laws; allow the federal government to mobilize essential services, such as tow trucks; give new authorities to law enforcement to regulate crowds, prohibit blockades and keep essential infrastructure open; and provide enhanced power to stop the flow of money supporting the blockades. That is important for the people who are listening here in Orléans to understand.

Let me be clear with respect to what invoking these measures will not do: It will not invoke the military, it would not limit our freedom, it would not limit a peaceful assembly and it would not suspend fundamental rights.

Sometimes when we talk about Ottawa among friends and family, we make comparisons with other capitals or cities, and we sometimes describe Ottawa as a quiet, not too lively city. Well, I can absolutely assure them that today I stand in this House to say that I am looking forward to once again enjoying my quiet city, my quiet downtown, where we can walk with our family, where we can enjoy time with our children visiting a museum, for example, and where we can go to see our loved ones or just have a safe and simple walk in our neighbourhood with our favourite pets.

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have a constituent who wanted me to ask a question about outside interference in our democracy.

Klaus Schwab is the head of the World Economic Forum, and he bragged how his subversive WEF has “infiltrated” governments around the world. He said that his organization had penetrated more than half of Canada’s cabinet.

In the interests of transparency, could the member please name which cabinet ministers are on board with the WEF’s agenda? My concern is the—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The member was in a really good question there, but the audio and the video are really bad. I apologize. Let us try again.

The hon. member—

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of order.

That member was openly promoting disinformation. That is not debate. We have to call out disinformation—

The Deputy Speaker: We are getting into debate again.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Lambton—Kent—Middlesex.

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague talked about how this piece of legislation does not take away freedom of speech or freedom of assembly, but we have come to a point where people from all over the country felt that they did not have a voice. We are at a point where we have

used the biggest thing that the government can do to silence the voices of Canadians who are here to be heard.

What are the first, second and third things that the government did to avoid getting to the place we are at now with this piece of legislation?

• (0850)

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, that is a very good question because it gives me the opportunity to share what the government has done since the very beginning. We have been in touch with our municipal and provincial partners.

Since we are talking about democracy, I need to share a story with the House. Before entering federal politics, I was a provincial member of Parliament. Every single Thursday, a Canadian of Asian descent went to the grounds of Queen’s Park to recite all day long, in a language that I did not understand, his thoughts about the world. As a Canadian, I was proud to listen. I know that in other countries people do not have a chance to do this, and what we have seen here is not a peaceful protest.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Mr. Speaker, there are two elements to this order, and the main one has to do with the economy. Yesterday, it was demonstrated that the banks had frozen the accounts of some of the truckers, as well as the loans tied to their trucks. Now that that has been done and the truckers have gone home, will these restrictions be lifted, and when will it happen?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. As parliamentarians and as a government, it is not for us to dictate police instructions and operations or what the justice system is currently doing. I will leave that to the people who are better qualified than I am when it comes to the legal process that has been triggered in the past few days. I would just note that the GoFundMe page has stopped supporting the participants of the illegal blockades here in Ottawa, because it became apparent that these people may not have had the best of intentions.

[English]

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Qujannamiik, Uqaqtittiji.* The ideologies associated with these extremists and the symbols we have seen waving through the blockade are dangerous. This has been well organized by leaders of extremist groups. Arrests that started yesterday continue today. We still see the extremists rooted on Wellington Street. The leaders of the extremist groups must be held accountable for their actions with the full extent of the law.

Does the member for Orléans agree that these extremists have taken extraordinary measures to endanger our democracy and that we need to do our duty to ensure these ideologies do not spread further?

Statutory Order

[Translation]

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her very delicate question. From the beginning, we have seen people brandishing hateful flags and encouraging conversations that go as far as to say that the Prime Minister of Canada should die, that he should be killed. I agree with her that in Canada, we must deal with issues involving extremists.

[English]

Mr. Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am, with mixed emotion, rising this morning to participate in the debate currently in the House. I say that because I have had many, many constituents of mine reach out to me about the troubling situation that was occurring here in their nation's capital. They were concerned about what was happening to the people living here in Ottawa, from the far distance of Prince Edward Island. However, they were also concerned about the tone of the dialogue that was occurring around the situation. Those constituents asked me why governments, in the plural, were allowing this to occur, why government could not take action.

In standing here today and listening to a lot of the debate, I note the discussion has been around protests. I have been in public life a long time. I have been the focus of many protests. I am sure, Mr. Speaker, you may have had a few as a provincial politician. Let us not gloss over what was happening here in the streets of Ottawa and call it a protest, which all politicians and parliamentarians have faced over the years. People have the right to protest. They have the right to peaceful protest. As I indicated, I have been the focus of a number of them. I fully respect the right of citizens to protest and express their displeasure with the actions of government at any time. However, we have to do it in a peaceful format. We have to do it with respect.

Let us be clear. What we have witnessed here in Ottawa is not a protest. Let us call it what it is: It is an unlawful occupation. It was meant to intimidate people and it was meant to intimidate parliamentarians.

Anybody who wants to take the time to educate and familiarize themselves with the objectives of the leadership of this group should take pause for concern and reflection. That is what has been so disheartening about watching this over the last three weeks. What was disguised as a trucker's protest was hijacked by individuals with ulterior motives. They are available for anybody to see. This cannot be tolerated by any government or any parliamentarian. No individual or group of individuals have the right to so blatantly trample the rights of other individuals, as we have witnessed here in Ottawa over the past several weeks.

It is fundamental that government protect the rights of all individuals, but to participate in an unlawful occupation chanting "freedom", while at the same time having such a blatant disregard for the freedoms and the mental stability and well-being of our fellow citizens, is just wrong. We can look at the interviews with people here in Ottawa. People with disabilities have been traumatized, forced to stay in their own homes. They cannot get out as they are scared. That is not the peaceful protest that this country promotes and endorses. That is, as we have called it, an unlawful protest. We cannot diminish the significance of the difference between the

protests that have occurred across this country and those that were intent on overthrowing a government. Anybody who wants to can take the time to look at the objectives of the organizers of this group, what they are doing, who was supporting them and who was funding them. All parliamentarians should be concerned.

● (0855)

The government took the action required to bring this unlawful occupation under control. I want to acknowledge and commend the men and women serving in uniform who are ensuring the laws of this country are being upheld. What we are witnessing is the removal of an unlawful occupation by a professional police force in a democratic country. That is what is occurring on the streets of Ottawa today: a professional police force operating under the rule of law in a democratic country. That is why we elect Parliament and that is why we elect government. It is to give the authorities and legal tools necessary to ensure no individuals' rights are trampled on by a few championing that they are there to protect their freedoms.

This debate will go on for a number of days, and it is interesting to listen to the various perspectives. I have been here for the last three weeks and I have watched it. In fact, I have witnessed some of the hate myself. When I was walking with my parliamentary assistant, he was told by a protester to go back to where he came from because he is brown. It was said in a very racist and harassing tone. My assistant has the same rights that I do because he is Canadian. We have to ensure that Parliament does not succumb to the hate that gets displayed by a few. We cannot champion it. Even by association, we cannot allow it to be legitimized as being right.

That is why I am speaking today. The people I represent in Egmont make up a community that embraces respect, and they support one another. It is a population that is proud of Canada and supports the unity of this country.

Something that has disturbed me over the last several weeks comes from watching one party. It was interesting. The combined failed leadership of the Conservative Party united with the interim leader of the Conservative Party, who united with the aspiring future leader of the Conservative Party, who by association was attempting to legitimize this unlawful protest. It was disturbing that the failed combined leadership of the Conservative Party, with the present leadership and the aspiring future leadership, by association, was attempting to legitimize this unlawful occupation.

As a parliamentarian, I will always stand for the rule of law. I will always support legislation that protects the rights of individuals and does not allow any individual to claim their right to participate in an unlawful occupation while trampling over the rights of other individuals.

● (0900)

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it has been interesting to follow this debate and hear the justification Liberal members have to support this unprecedented government overreach through the Emergencies Act. What is interesting are the assumptions Liberals members, specifically, have about these protesters, and those assumptions kind of fall in line with everything the Prime Minister has accused the protesters of being, that being that they are all racist and misogynist. It is really unfortunate.

Statutory Order

We have also heard members recognize the fact that Canadians are tired of this pandemic. They are tired, and they want to see a light at the end of the tunnel. With the recognition that Canadians are tired of the pandemic and mandates, why did the hon. member vote against our motion last week for the government to table a plan so Canadians could see an end to the mandates and have hope?

• (0905)

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Mr. Speaker, I was very specific. I referenced the leadership of this unlawful protest, not the combination of people on the street.

I voted against the motion by the Conservative Party because I will not support motions that are, and this may be unparliamentary, hypocritical. I am saying that because the majority of the mandates have been put in place by the provincial governments.

Let me clear for the record. I support the mandates and the measures taken by the Government of Prince Edward Island under the leadership of Premier King. I did not have the benefit of the medical advice that he was given, but I assume he acted on that advice in the best interest of Islanders.

That is why it will be in conjunction with provincial governments that these mandates will be eased.

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Egmont for his speech, which I would describe as quite constructive.

His speech was much more constructive than those of many of his colleagues, who seem to want to spread propaganda. I can also say that one other member has been constructive, and that is the member for Hull—Aylmer. I encourage all Liberal government members to adopt that same attitude.

I would like to ask the member the same question as the one my colleague from Rivière-des-Mille-Îles asked.

Do the government MPs realize the consequences for people whose bank accounts have been frozen?

I get the impression that the government is making all this up as it goes and has no answer to that question. It seems like the government cannot understand the consequences of the measures it has implemented.

Could the member for Egmont enlighten me on that? If not, could he get back to me by Monday night?

[English]

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Mr. Speaker, as a parliamentarian, I will support all legislation that seeks out, terminates and uncovers illicit funds that are coming in from foreign bank accounts to create turmoil in a democratic country.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, since this has been brewing, I have heard nothing but divisive language used in the House. It is like poking the beast of extremists. Leaders of this movement have ties to white nationalist movements, as we witnessed with some of those who were arrested yesterday, and they have hijacked movements for other purposes.

Why did the government let this go on for so long? Why did the government allow it to get so out of control that we are seeing what is happening right now? I also wonder if my hon. colleague, now that we have witnessed police hugging extremists in some cases, feels it is necessary to do a public inquiry into policing in this country.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Mr. Speaker, the obvious answer is that there is due process. The government must follow due process. The primary police force was that of the City of Ottawa, with its municipal police force. Then it went to the Province of Ontario and then the Government of Canada. The Government of Canada followed that process until the situation was addressed by the Government of Ontario.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Hamilton Centre.

I am always proud to stand in the House. I am certainly not proud of where we are today as a nation, but I am proud to be here, because when we are facing a crisis of this nature, it is incumbent upon all of us to step up and address it so people can live in safety and the rule of law is maintained.

How did we get here? Canada, with its traditional social solidarity, had among the lowest COVID deaths in the world, but when omicron hit us, and it hit us like a baseball bat, I think it threw us all. It caused us all a lot of psychological damage, yet in our region, I saw people lining up for boosters and vaccines. I saw volunteers and incredible social solidarity.

How did it fall apart so quickly? We are at a time when restaurants are reopening, when children are back in school, and when my dear mother and daughter can plan to go off to some warm climate, which is something I have never done as I am not a warm-climate guy, but they could because our country is opening back up again. We are coming through one of the hardest moments of this pandemic because of our social solidarity, yet we have seen a total fracturing.

As a New Democrat, I am willing to agree to measures to make this city safe, but New Democrats want a full public inquiry. We want an inquiry into the failure of the Ottawa police, the police board and the actions of the mayor to keep people safe, because we should never have been put in this situation. We need an inquiry to understand how it was that the Ambassador Bridge, a vital link to our nation, could be shut because people believe vaccine conspiracy theories. We also need an inquiry to look at the damage that was done to our economy. If we talk anyone in the auto sector, they will tell us that this damage will be long term. There needs to be an inquiry.

Just prior to this situation, I met with six people from the At-tawapiskat first nation who came to give a peace message to the government. Security was on them in a second, yet these guys out front were able to set up their bouncy castles and block all the major intersections, and there was no effort to stop them. That is why we need an inquiry. We need answers, and Canadians need answers.

In January, Canada's Integrated Terrorism Assessment Centre said that there were "likely" extremists involved and that there was a "trigger point and opportunity for potential lone actor attackers to conduct a terrorism attack" out of this convoy, which is not to say that the people who were standing on the bridges were part of that. However, Canada's Integrated Terrorism Assessment Centre recognized a danger of lone actors, so how was it that the people who came in with the trucks were invited right up onto Parliament Hill and allowed to park? Was that a security failure or was that collusion? I can tell members that there are trucks and other vehicles out there that just showed up for a protest and never thought they would ever get down here, yet they were put in a place outside of the Prime Minister's office. That needs to be assessed.

We know that the U.S. Congress is demanding Facebook to now explain the mass rise of fake overseas accounts that were promoting the convoy and Russian disinformation. We will never hear about that from the Conservatives. How is it that we can fail in our country on basic issues of security? We need to assess these things, and this is why we need an inquiry. People need to know whether this response was an overreach or not. We need to know how it was possible that so much money, foreign money, was being funnelled through a right-wing account that was used in the January 6 attack.

Any day of the week, I will say as a Canadian that I will stand up and make sure that dark money does not come into our country, and we need a law in place to make sure that accounts in the Cayman Islands are not directing political activities in the nation. That is not being partisan. That is our duty as politicians.

● (0910)

I know some Conservatives find that very upsetting, but there is enough blame to go around. I blame the Prime Minister and his failure to stand up to give us a vision when we needed a vision. I blame Doug Ford, who was off snowmobiling and kept missing key security briefings. There is a lot of blame to go around, but I certainly blame the Conservatives, who seem to think there is a political advantage to promoting extremists. They are telling the Prime Minister of our country to meet with the leadership, a leadership that came to this capital with an MOU calling for the overthrow of a democratically elected government. How is it possible that we are at a point where it considered okay to go out and meet with people who want to overthrow the government?

Who were those people, the people that the interim leader said we need to make this sustained and be a problem? Chris Barber, a vicious racist, likes truckers as long as they are white. He is one of those the interim leader said we were stigmatizing. Pat King singled me out for having the temerity to speak, as is my right, in the House. He is a man who talks about shooting the Prime Minister and shooting cops. Another one who the interim leader thought our Prime Minister should go out and meet is Tamara Lich, a woman dedicated to breaking up our country.

Statutory Order

No, I will not negotiate with people like that. They belong in the crowbar hotel. We need the rule of law. What I have seen over the last three weeks has been shameful. We should never have needed these tools. These tools should have been used by the City of Ottawa to do ticketing. They should have been used in a proper manner, as the city of Quebec did, as the city of Toronto did, but we are in a situation now where this has been allowed to metastasize.

If the occupiers took over Thunder Bay or Red Deer, that would absolutely be local and provincial jurisdiction, but this is the nation's capital. We cannot be made to look like a failed state to the world, yet we cannot even manage to contain this. I talked earlier about my frustration with the failure of Ottawa police, but I look at the role the police have played over the last few days, and what we saw yesterday was policing at its best in this country.

I know police officers who have come down from the north. I know friends from the Quebec side, from the Sûreté du Québec, who are here. This is a terrible situation. It is a national embarrassment that we are here, but we have to have an assurance that people can travel in this city. That buddy who has a big truck and has decided he is going to block a major intersection for three solid weeks has more rights than someone who works at Metropolitain, a restaurant that has been shut down, or the young women I know who was harassed and insulted. They say it is all peaceful. It is all peaceful for a white guy with an upside down Canadian flag on their back, but it is not for someone who is a resident of Centretown being harassed in the grocery store for wearing a mask, or being insulted and told to go back where they came from. I have seen this.

Again, I blame the Ottawa police for not doing their job when they were supposed to, and I blame the mayor. It is our responsibility as legislators to say enough is enough. I want that inquiry. I want to know why the committee has not been struck. I want answers. I want to know that these tools will never be used against legitimate protests. We have to have answers.

I hold the government to account for that. I hold the provincial government to account. As a legislator, I am ready to do my job to say the rule of law and the right of people to be safe in their own city has to be a sacrosanct responsibility for all of us.

Statutory Order

● (0915)

[Translation]

Hon. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Ontario for his excellent speech.

I would like to ask him a fairly simple question. Is he, like me, prepared to conduct an inquiry to get to the bottom of this matter, understand what happened and why the situation was misjudged, and find ways to ensure that this never happens again?

[English]

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, we need an inquiry, and it has to be an independent inquiry because what we have seen in this Parliament is the inability for members to step up and put the nation first, as opposed to local and partisan interests. That independent inquiry has to have the power to compel witness testimony, and we have never had any rules or connections at the civic level, but in Ottawa, yes, I want to hear about the failure of the City of Ottawa and what happened here.

I want to know about what the Americans are asking about, about foreign overseas accounts that were flooding Facebook in the lead up to this. We need to know where that came from. We need to know how the dark money was used. We also need to be able to assess the claims that the government has made so that we are ensuring that there was not overreach, that the people who are charged were legitimately charged. There has to be oversight. I welcome the Civil Liberties Association saying it is taking this to court. We need oversight.

● (0920)

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Mr. Speaker, while I disagree with much of what the member has to say, he is absolutely right. It is a national embarrassment, because we have seen newspapers across the world and journalists documenting what has gone on, which is really a failure. It is a local policing issue that has gone out of control.

What we are here to debate today is very simple. Does the House confirm the declaration made by the government regarding the Emergencies Act? I have concerns that the government has not justified it. In fact, this is supposed to be the nuclear option when a province is unable to carry out its duties. Policing is a provincial responsibility.

Will the member be voting for the government or will he be voting against it?

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague, but I think he mixed up his lead-up to the question and where he was going.

The issue of oversight is fundamental. Has the government justified this? A committee is supposed to be struck and I want that committee to be struck. However, we are now in the middle of a major police operation, which I think even the Conservatives recognize. Actually, I withdraw that comment because I know the Conservatives are pretending that this is Tiananmen Square.

What we have seen is that police are undertaking the rule of law with representation from all over our region—

The Deputy Speaker: We have a point of order from the hon. member for Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes.

Mr. Michael Barrett: Mr. Speaker, knowing it is important that order is maintained in this place, perhaps you could invite the hon. member not to use inflammatory language and rhetoric that will create disorder, which he is attempting to do with a comparison between what is happening here and Tiananmen Square.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the member for that intervention. I think we should all try to work together on this and make sure that we do not inflame the situation more than we have to.

The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I know I am deeply offending the member of the “boo hoo” generation over there for talking about their own Twitter feed, which is promoting that this is Tiananmen Square. What we are witnessing is a police action undertaken within the full sight of the media. We have the representation of police from across the region—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Let us go on to the next question.

Question and comments, the hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques.

[Translation]

Mr. Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my take-away from my colleague from Timmins—James Bay's speech is that he supports the Emergencies Act because there is a national crisis.

Oddly enough, some former NDP MPs disagree. I would like to quote two former MPs, Svend Robinson and Erin Weir, whose statements appeared in an article published on February 18 in the *National Post*.

Svend Robinson stated that the NDP caucus in 1970 under Tommy Douglas took a courageous and principled stand against the War Measures Act, and that today's NDP under the member for Burnaby South betrays that legacy and supports Liberals on the Emergencies Act. He says that it is shameful and that a very dangerous precedent is being set.

Mr. Weir stated that it is disappointing to see the federal NDP today support the Emergencies Act when there really is not a national emergency as is settled in that legislation.

I would like my colleague to think about this. My question is as follows. The NDP said that it might stop supporting the Emergencies Act, but only on the basis of various emotional criteria that we are still in the dark about.

I would like my colleague to tell us what those criteria are.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I have two things to say.

First, I would like to thank the National Assembly of Quebec, which has offered its support to Ottawa residents by sending in the Sûreté du Québec and providing their expertise. I therefore thank Mr. Legault.

[English]

The second point for my friend, who has not been here all that long, is that he missed a part. When Brian Mulroney's government brought in the Emergencies Act, the New Democrats said this:

...we are pleased that the Minister has brought forward a proposal to replace the War Measures Act....

[We] do not want to reopen old wounds. Instead, I hope this Bill as amended will complete the healing process.

Yes, there is a difference between those acts.

• (0925)

The Deputy Speaker: We did get a little off base during questions and answers. We have to try to keep up with our time to make sure that all members have an opportunity to participate in the debate.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Hamilton Centre.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I share the sober concerns of my colleagues in the House who understand the grave implications of this critical moment in Canadian history. It is a moment of crisis for Canadian democracy. I believe in democracy. I will defend rights and have spent my entire life doing so. However, I want to ensure that our rights are defended by the rule of law, not by rhetoric or politics, and certainly not by decree of insurrectionist mob rule.

Having been present at the opening proceedings of this debate, I have listened intently to all parties. When I rose in the House for my member's statement, I noted the need for us to begin the important work of restoring faith in our institutions, and the need for greater transparency and accountability given what is before us in this debate on the declaration of the Emergencies Act and perhaps, more importantly, what is yet to come. What has been made abundantly clear to all Canadians is how fragile our democracy is and the work that will be required to fully restore it, regardless of the occupation's final outcome this week.

I should state that I still hope there will be continued non-violent de-escalations in the situation. I wish for no further escalations of violence. It may be too late, but those who have taken these streets should pack up and leave so we may return to the public health crisis at hand and continue to work in responding to the public health needs of Canadians suffering through COVID.

On top of that suffering, I want to acknowledge the disproportionate impact that this occupation has had on local residents and workers, including Parliament Hill staff and federal employees, who have been subjected to complete lawlessness during this 24-7 disruption of their lives. For three weeks, our nation and its capital have been seized by the threat of an ongoing and volatile occupation while the world looks on. I have heard directly from residents in Hamilton Centre a feeling of frustration and disappointment in all levels of government and a sense of deep failure by local police services to adequately maintain public safety and handle these ille-

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gal acts of insurrection that threaten our democracy and the rights of all Canadians across the country.

Over the past three weeks, we have watched assaults, attempted arson, widespread harassment at homes, workplaces and schools, the promotion of hate, and other concerning behaviours, such as convoy members giving themselves false powers to detain people. It concerns me that rather than denounce these actions and find ways to help Canadians who do not feel safe in their homes, some in the House have found it politically useful to encourage and embolden these actions, which run counter to our democracy. On February 14, 2022, the RCMP arrested 11 people, who have been charged with conspiracy to commit murder, after finding the following in three trailers: 14 firearms, sets of body armour, a machete and a large quantity of ammunition, including high-capacity magazines.

I should share my concern that I feel the government, in specifying the emergency, placed an overemphasis on the economic disruptions posed by the blockades, including the adverse effects on businesses and supply chains, without adequately referencing the threat of extremist white supremacy and the reported potential for violence. This is despite reports from the intelligence assessments prepared by Canada's Integrated Terrorism Assessment Centre that warned in late January that it was likely extremists were involved and said the scale of the protest could yet pose a trigger point and opportunity for potential lone actors to conduct a terrorist attack. I had to read about the seriousness of national security via The Guardian, while ITAC reported that supporters of the convoy had advocated civil war. They have called for violence against the Prime Minister and said that the protests should be used as Canada's January 6, in reference to the storming of the U.S. Capitol. If the government knew, as reported, that the intelligence agencies had been briefing the Canadian government as far back as late December on the possible threat posed by the convoy, why was this clear and present threat not better articulated in the proclamation?

It is my assertion that the overemphasis on blockades, the economy and the threat to capital is a failure of the government's proclamation in the public order emergency and continues to undermine the public's ability to fully grasp what is at stake here. It also speaks to how differently communities have experienced the impact of these threats. For those who do not feel an existential threat of white supremacy, the top priority is and remains the economy and the flow of capital. For those of us who do recognize and experience the real threat of violence posed by white supremacist extremists, this is about the threat of the stated intentions of the occupiers to overthrow our elected government and replace it with an ethnonationalist junta.

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● (0930)

I am from a city where if someone tells me they want to drop a bullet in my head, I am compelled to take them seriously, so I appreciate the solemn reflections earlier today from the hon. member for Hull—Aylmer. However, I want to reiterate that it will be critical over the course of this debate for the government to continue to clearly expand upon what I have outlined and what may go beyond what is publicly made available. For example, I call on the government to come clean with Canadians and clearly state the threats to security that many of us see from section 2 of the CSIS Act, which exempts protests in dissent, but with a special emphasis on subsection (d), which outlines:

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

Unpacking these important distinctions will be crucial for the public's ability to determine the proportionality of using part II of the act and safeguarding against government overreach, which we have seen time and again against sovereign indigenous land defenders, racial and climate justice activists and workers. The very legitimate concern is that the precedent set here could lower the bar for future use against legitimate protests in dissent.

I will state again that this is no time for talking points, spin or partisan attacks. Canadians deserve honest answers, accurate information and clear reasoning. How is it that we have gotten to this point? This declaration of a public order emergency, and indeed the entire debate, ought to be properly centred on public safety and not merely a defence of critical capital. We have witnessed the juxtaposition of brutal and excessive responses to legitimate protests, as experienced for generations by indigenous peoples of these lands and as ongoing in uncaded, unsundered Wet'suwet'en territory; the use of Canadian military to surveil the Black Lives Matter protest, as recently as 2022; the vicious response to climate justice activists at Fairy Creek; and the violent crackdown on police services against houseless residents and encampment support activists at Trinity-Bellwoods in Toronto and J.C. Beemer Park right here in my riding of Hamilton Centre. Many of these people, in this very moment, fear that the extended powers of the state's monopoly on violence will only serve to further target their causes.

From the place of this deep concern, I wish to put on the record a question for the government side. Will it clearly state whether the rights afforded by the charter, the supreme law of this land, will remain whole, or if, in its declaration, it is attempting to surreptitiously rescue any potential abuses of authority through section 1 of the charter? I believe this is an incredibly important point of law and is necessary to understand the scale and scope of powers granted under the provisions of the proclamation, along with its future potential use.

In my opening remarks, I spoke about the need to restore faith in our public institutions, perhaps none more compromised than the police, who have time and again been recorded in compromised exchanges with the occupiers, and who have been witnessed, in some instances, actively collaborating. Logistically, they have been aiding and abetting the occupation the entire time.

Canadians cannot maintain faith in our nation's safety and security institutions when faced with this early and ongoing de facto dereliction of duty by local police officers, whose weaponized incompetence and refusal to uphold the law in our nation's capital helped to ultimately bring us to this place. The reports about retired active duty national intelligence and military members, including Joint Task Force 2 members, about the RCMP and about former members of the Prime Minister's security detail further demonstrate the need for a national commission on policing. The last royal commission on policing was in 1962. It is why on Thursday I asked the Minister of Emergency Preparedness if he would commit to establishing a national commission on policing that would review the role of police in this national crisis, as well as the duties generally assigned to the police and their corresponding budgets, and if he would commit to a secretariat or some other office to report on the radicalization and use of public resources and security forces for undemocratic ends.

Today is an extraordinary moment in Canadian history, but there comes a time when democracy is truly tested. The question that remains and the one we will inevitably be forced to answer is this: How, as a nation, can we pull through this crisis, hold those responsible accountable and improve upon or abolish the failed systems and principles that forced us into this crisis in the first place?

● (0935)

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when one wants to undermine the security of a country, of a nation, one targets its critical infrastructure. For a trading nation, the most critical infrastructure is its border points. We saw what happened at the Ambassador Bridge, what happened in Manitoba and what happened in Coutts, Alberta. However, what many people do not realize is there were 12 additional protests that directly impacted port-of-entry operations, and in two cases, the protesters breached the CBSA plaza, resulting in CBSA officers locking down the office to prevent additional protesters from gaining entry.

Do those actions at the 12 points of entry, like at the Ambassador Bridge, not constitute a threat to the sovereignty and economic security of Canada?

Mr. Matthew Green: Mr. Speaker, they most certainly do, but I should reflect that as a sovereign nation, the first concern ought to be the safety and security of our citizens. The threat to overthrow the government by an ethno-nationalist junta has undermined it. It has been underestimated in this country for decades.

Intelligence experts continue to identify white supremacists and ethno-nationalist supremacy in this country as being the number one threats in domestic terrorism. Now is the time to take this seriously. Now is the time to look at the ways in which this movement has been infiltrated by national security experts at the highest organizing levels.

The general public deserves answers. We need to identify the true risks contained within this movement, and speak openly and honestly about them.

Mr. Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls, CPC): Mr. Speaker, all members can agree that words matter and actions matter.

I would like to get the hon. member's opinion on the justice minister's recent appearance on national television, when he spoke about the economic measures to be put in place. He mentioned that if people were part of a pro-Trump organization, they should be worried about their assets being frozen.

Because of those words, I had calls from constituents, particularly from seniors. They are vaccinated, but they made a \$70 donation to this cause.

Are their bank accounts going to be frozen? I would like to hear the member's comments on that and the government's actions on this.

Mr. Matthew Green: Mr. Speaker, as was identified in my remarks, I put on the record a question to the government side, demanding that it clearly state whether the rights afforded by the charter, as the supreme law of this land, remained whole, as indicated in the preamble of the declaration, or if the government in its declaration was attempting to rescue any potential abuses of authority through section 1 of the charter. That is the intention of what needs to happen with the investigation and commission as we respond to these issues as they unfold.

[Translation]

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his speech. He said it very well: Now is the time to combat the threat, and, make no mistake, far-right extremists are a threat to our democracy.

I do wonder however if he and his party sincerely believe that the government would have let the situation deteriorate to this point for three weeks if the protesters had been students or union members.

Does my colleague not believe that there are underlying reasons for letting the situation deteriorate like this for three weeks and then taking such extreme measures?

[English]

Mr. Matthew Green: Mr. Speaker, I would also reflect on the fact that just a few short weeks ago in the House, we recognized and mourned the tragedies that occurred in Quebec City.

For far too long, this nation has underestimated and understated the threats of white supremacists organizing within this country. It is time for the same politicians who joined these communities in mourning to step up now and denounce the white supremacist elements that clearly provide a violent and volatile element that goes

well beyond any student, climate justice or indigenous land defender elements that we have seen.

* * *

● (0940)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

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

That, notwithstanding any Standing Order, special order or usual practice of the House, for the purposes of Standing Order 28, the House shall be deemed to have sat on Friday, February 18, 2022.

[Translation]

The Deputy Speaker: I received notice from all recognized parties that they are in agreement with this request.

[English]

Therefore, all those opposed—

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I am sure it was an oversight, but as this is unanimous consent, every member of the House should have been consulted. I was not, but I wish to give consent.

The Deputy Speaker: I appreciate the intervention from the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

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

It is agreed.

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

(Motion agreed to)

* * *

EMERGENCIES ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to rise and speak on behalf of the constituents who elected me to come to the House.

It is important to lay out that within the Emergencies Act there is a threshold that has been established to justify its use, which is 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 effectively be dealt with under any other order of law. I do not believe the government has shown that this threshold has been met.

As many of my colleagues from all sides of the House have pointed out, this legislation has never been used in its current format. Its predecessor, the War Measures Act, was only used three times. The first was in World War I, the second was in World War II and the third was during the FLQ crisis.

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It is important to note that—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Timmins—James Bay is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, we are not discussing the War Measures Act. That no longer exists. This is an act brought in 1987 by Brian Mulroney. It is irrelevant.

The Deputy Speaker: We are debating the motion before us. We have given lots of members lots of leeway on what their speeches have or have not included.

The hon. member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake has the floor.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Mr. Speaker, I think it is pretty evident. Clearly the member opposite and members from the NDP are a little bit uneasy when we talk about the fact that this act's predecessor was the War Measures Act, because it was the NDP under Tommy Douglas who took a courageous stand against the use of the War Measures Act in the FLQ crisis. It is a piece there. The reason I bring this up is that the weight of those events should be a caution to all parliamentarians against making a decision to invoke an act like this lightly.

We have had numerous provincial politicians state that they do not support the use of the Emergencies Act. These include provinces such as Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, P.E.I., Quebec, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and my home province of Alberta. Numerous times over the past few days, the Prime Minister has said that using the Emergencies Act was not the first, second or third option. However, members on this side have asked many times what the first three options were, and we have yet to be given any concrete answers. In the absence of an answer, I am left to assume that step one was wait, step two was do nothing and step three was shift blame.

This is not the leadership Canadians expect or deserve. What we saw was a refusal by the Prime Minister to provide additional support to the Ottawa Police Service when they asked for it. In fact, on February 11, the Prime Minister stated that they had enough resources. A short three days later, on February 14, the Emergencies Act was invoked. What happened in those three days that dramatically changed everything? We have not been told that as parliamentarians.

In the past few days, my office has received hundreds of phone calls, and thousands of emails, on the use of the Emergencies Act. Many constituents shared with me their fears, their anxieties, their collective trauma and the sense of PTSD they had. They shared how they saw government overreach as a very scary precedent.

One constituent, Lindsay, wrote to me and said, “I continue to try and wrap my head around the fact of how we are here and why we are here. How have things gotten so out of control? I feel very fearful, anxious and upset with how our Prime Minister has been treating the people of this country. Both his actions and language are not in alignment with true Canadian values: peace, freedom or protection. He is continuously inflaming the situation and I cannot believe that I am living in fear in Canada”.

Many of the emails and calls that I had were from parents who were tearful because they felt afraid for their children. They felt like they had been ignored and left behind by the Liberal govern-

ment. Another constituent, Tyler, wrote, “I wholeheartedly disagree with the Prime Minister's decision to invoke the Emergencies Act. I firmly believe that his decision is unjustified and an abuse of power. It only serves to instill more fear and further divide the citizens of this wonderful country.”

Upon reflection, from all the correspondence and phone calls I have received, it left me wondering if perhaps the Prime Minister may have forgotten or missed the point as to why so many Canadians were protesting right now. I will help, and lay it out simply for him. Many are frustrated with what they see as government overreach. If the Prime Minister thinks that a solution to that overreach is adding more overreach, he is woefully short-sighted.

It is worth noting that the border protests in Windsor, Emerson, Coutts and Surrey have all ended peacefully. They ended through negotiation with local law enforcement and precise local police action. They all ended before the Emergencies Act was invoked.

I think this is an important point to highlight. It is incredibly important. I think those on the Liberal benches should take some time to reflect on this point. The laws of our country, and the widespread respect of the rule of law, were ultimately enough to get the protesters blocking the border to move. Police did their job by enforcing the laws currently on the books, and the protesters went home.

● (0945)

I am a passionate believer in the rule of law. Everyday Canadians' respect for the laws that serve the cause of peace, order and good government is something that makes me incredibly proud of my country. Yes, there are some among the protesters who probably do not share that same feeling, but I think it would be worthwhile for the Prime Minister to reflect on how his dubious leadership has contributed to some of these events.

Trust in the rule of law breaks down when people stop believing the law is equal and equally applied to everyone. This includes politicians ignoring their own guidelines with regard to COVID restrictions, a Prime Minister who treats ethics violations as a minor inconvenience, conflict-of-interest violations, election-law infractions and a woman fired from cabinet because she refused to break the law. We are considering enacting a law that has previously been reserved for world wars and deadly terrorism, because the protesters will not respect the law—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: —and here they are on the other side, heckling me—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Statutory Order

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Mr. Speaker, this is so inappropriate.

The Deputy Speaker: Let us all take a breath. We have been doing so well. We are getting to questions and answers, so I really appreciate it.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I certainly want to apologize for being inappropriate, but the member keeps talking about legislation that does not exist. I do not want her to look bad.

The Deputy Speaker: We are getting into debate. I am listening to the member as well. I know she is trying to put a full thought together, and sometimes I have to give members leeway in order to do that.

The hon. member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry. Sometimes, when we are passionate about something, we misspeak, even when we are reading something. I apologize for saying “uninformed” instead of “informed”.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry. The fact that members fail to give respect to members as they are giving their speeches is something that is a problem in the House. I believe right now what we need is honest, open communication and servant leadership. We need de-escalation and compromise. We need to make sure we are trying to get to a resolution peacefully.

My mother was a very wise woman, and she used to always say that when we treat people like people, they will act like people. I think we could all benefit from this advice right now. What we need as a nation is to have people come together. After two long years apart, we need to spend time finding similarities, rather than differences. We need to remember that, at the end of the day, we are all people.

I would urge all members in the House and all Canadians listening to remember that we are people. We need to treat each other with dignity and respect. We need to spend more time listening and find a way to peaceful resolution. I would urge all members to join in voting against the declaration of emergency.

● (0950)

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I listened intently to the member opposite's speech, and what I find concerning, and what I have heard from the Conservative bench for the last couple of weeks, is this. They are equating the idea that, although there are some individuals who have been involved in this occupation who are being peaceful, it is somehow lawful. We can have people who are peaceful, but I would argue that the House has really highlighted points where there are individuals who have much more sinister goals, so we do not have to go down that route. It is still unlawful, what was taking place. The interim chief of the Ottawa police remarked yesterday that the measures the government introduced were extremely helpful for being able to remove the occupation that exists in Ottawa. Of course, we know that some individuals are touting the idea that they will re-establish blockades elsewhere in the country.

Does that testimony from the chief of police in Ottawa not give this member some idea that these measures were helpful in removing a blockade in a G7 country's capital city?

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Mr. Speaker, I do not believe the member was accurately portraying what I heard from that news conference. I think it is very important to highlight the fact that the blockades at our borders were resolved before the invocation of the Emergencies Act, therefore showing that there are laws currently in place in this nation in our provinces and communities that could have resolved these problems.

[Translation]

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Fort McMurray—Cold Lake for her speech.

I would like to hear her speak about the War Measures Act and the Emergencies Act. We have heard several times that they are not the same, and I could not agree more. In my view, both existed and both still exist. There are still links between them. In the House of Commons, it does not do to pretend that certain things do not exist.

I will give an example that I really like: the 1982 Constitution. Quebec suffered the consequences of not signing the Constitution Act of 1982. We did not sign it, but it still exists.

I wonder if the member would speak to the relevance of the Emergencies Act and point out some links to the War Measures Act that was implemented during the First World War, the Second World War and the October crisis of 1970.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Mr. Speaker, my colleague made some important points. It is important to talk about history so we do not make the same mistakes over and over. It is important to know why the Emergencies Act was created. I think it is important to understand the reasons why it was used previously. I talked about that in my speech, and I will continue to reiterate the facts.

[English]

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her intervention, but I admit to having a great sense of despair in my own heart right now.

I think of when the first children were found buried in Kamloops, outside of that institution. When I was four, I was adopted into an indigenous family. I remember, when we found those children, my sister calling me and saying that she had to tell Daizy, my niece, about residential school and about Granny, and that she had wanted to wait a bit longer.

When we look at the reality that white privilege, white extremism and white supremacy are still so strong in this country and that many of the prominent organizers of this organization and occupation are from that community, we see how carefully we must walk. My granny, who went to residential school until she was 16, used to say, “You'd better stand straight where you are and know who you're standing next to”.

Statutory Order

Can the member talk about how her party has stood next to these folks who have diminished the realities of people in this country?

• (0955)

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Mr. Speaker, I was born and raised in northeastern Alberta and I've lived there just about my entire life. There are, unfortunately, in my community and in the region that I represent, a number of residential schools. The trauma piece is very real.

I want to thank the member for sharing her story. It is a space in our history that we acknowledge. In truth we will find reconciliation.

Mr. Doug Shipley (Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am rising here today, not to talk about the technicalities of the Emergencies Act but to discuss how we got here. How did we possibly get to the point where, after 34 years of governments not invoking the Emergencies Act, the current Liberal government feels it necessary to enact it now? Unfortunately, our country has experienced many dire situations in the past, yet those situations all came to a resolution without the unprecedented and dangerous step of invoking the Emergencies Act.

The 1990 Oka Crisis is one such example. During this crisis, protesters and the Quebec police engaged in a 78-day standoff. We witnessed gunfire exchanges. We mourned the tragic death of Mohawk elder Joe Armstrong and the tragic death of Quebec provincial police officer Corporal Marcel Lemay. Surely, violent deaths and gunfire could have warranted invoking the Emergencies Act, yet Prime Minister Mulroney did not invoke the Emergencies Act. Instead, cooler heads prevailed and the protest was negotiated.

On September 11, 2001, our closest ally, the United States, suffered a series of airline hijackings and suicide attacks, resulting in extensive death and destruction. Over 2,900 people were killed, including at least two dozen Canadian citizens. Surely the Emergencies Act could have been invoked under the war or international sections of the act, yet Prime Minister Chrétien did not invoke the act. Instead, we supported our American neighbours in any way we could and stood by our friends when they needed us most.

In the summer of 2013, Alberta experienced catastrophic floods that tragically claimed the lives of five Canadians and resulted in billions of dollars of damage. That summer, local states of emergency were declared. Did Prime Minister Harper invoke a public welfare emergency then? No, instead Canadians banded together to help southern Albertans.

On October 22, 2014, a gunman, whom I will not name, shot and tragically killed Corporal Nathan Cirillo at the Canadian National War Memorial. The gunman also injured three others and then stormed Parliament, the very heart of our democracy, yet again Prime Minister Harper did not invoke the Emergencies Act.

On May 1, 2016, our country witnessed the costliest disaster in Canadian history when Fort McMurray, Alberta, was devastated by wildfire. Over 80,000 people were forced from their homes and the economic damage of the wildfire was estimated to be upward of \$9 billion. Premier Notley declared a provincial state of urgency, yet, still, the Prime Minister did not invoke the Emergencies Act.

From January to March 2020, critical infrastructure such as pipelines and railways was blocked across Canada by protesters and environmental activists in response to the construction of the Coastal GasLink pipeline. This caused the construction of the pipeline to be halted, passenger rail to be suspended and commercial rail to be stopped. What did this Prime Minister do? Did he invoke the Emergencies Act then? No, he did not. Instead, the government negotiated with indigenous leaders and blockades came to an end.

Most recently, in November 2021, British Columbia experienced massive flooding. This natural disaster tragically claimed the lives of five people and resulted in short- and long-term disruption of Canada's largest port, Fraser Valley. The flooding severed critical infrastructure that connects British Columbia with the rest of Canada. Again, surely this disaster could have warranted the Emergencies Act as well.

Finally, let us not forget that throughout the COVID-19 pandemic the Prime Minister could have invoked a public welfare emergency, yet he did not because the provinces did not see it as necessary.

Why is this Prime Minister choosing to take the unprecedented step of invoking the Emergencies Act now? What makes this situation so much worse, so dire that the Prime Minister is compelled to invoke the Emergencies Act? Let me be clear. The situation we are currently facing does not warrant the Liberal government's invoking of the Emergencies Act. We are witnessing a clear-cut case of government overreach. This act is supposed to be used for emergency situations that cannot be addressed through existing laws.

Our country has gone 34 years without invoking this act. We have addressed real emergencies, natural disasters, terrorist attacks, domestic terrorism and even illegal blockades, yet no other sitting prime minister, including Mr. Trudeau himself, has utilized the powers of the Emergencies Act to address any of these situations.

• (1000)

Hon. Greg Fergus: Madam Speaker, I am rising on a point of order.

I am sure it was an oversight by the person who wrote the speech for the hon. member, but it is the common practice of this House to refer to members by their constituency or by the title they hold and not by their proper names.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I thank the member. I did not catch that while the hon. member was speaking, but I do want to remind all members that they are to refer to MPs or ministers in this House either by their title or by the name of their ridings.

The hon. member can continue.

Mr. Doug Shipley: Madam Speaker, this is a classic case of egregious government overreach. Every day, my constituency office receives hundreds of calls and emails from constituents who are concerned. They are concerned about the future of our country. They are concerned that the government is overstepping by giving itself the power to freeze the bank accounts and assets of Canadians without a judge's involvement or due process.

Let me remind my colleagues that this is the Prime Minister who claimed in 2015 that he was going to reform Parliament by empowering backbenches, diminish partisanship, restore civility and make the government accountable. Remember his phrase, "Sunny ways my friends, sunny ways."

What have Canadians gotten instead? A government run by the PMO, a government that runs roughshod over Parliament and its procedures and the accountability required. Nothing but cloudy ways, my friends, cloudy ways.

The Prime Minister's government has increased partisanship and diminished civility. He has attacked the very Canadians he was elected to serve, blaming them as "extremists" who were also very often misogynist and racist. Now the Prime Minister is insisting on bringing in this legislation that dramatically expands the ability of the state to interfere in Canadians' private lives.

Invoking the Emergencies Act creates a dangerous precedent that cannot be undone. Furthermore, there is no consensus among premiers to support this drastic measure. The premiers of Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, P.E.I. and Quebec have all said they do not support the act being invoked.

Canada's foundational principles are those of peace, order and good government. While the Liberals do not seem to understand good government, they have finally understood that order is necessary. Sadly, they have overreacted in doing so.

As opposed to taking a reasoned, measured approach, the government has overreached and implemented punitive measures. They have frozen individuals' bank accounts without a judge's involvement or due process. They impose vaccine mandates on truckers with no scientific evidence warranting such action.

As a Canadian and a Conservative, I will always support the right to peaceful, law-abiding protest. I believe this is a fundamental cornerstone of our democracy. I also believe in the rule of law and that the fundamental freedom of peaceful assembly does not include the right to blockade streets, highways, international border crossings and rail lines or disrupt supply chains. My position on illegal blockades has always been clear: Any blockades and barricades need to end. They only hurt Canadian families, businesses and jobs.

However, we can resolve this situation without the invoking the successor to the War Measures Act. I understand the frustration that the people who are protesting are experiencing. This pandemic has been hard on all Canadians. Many people have lost their livelihoods, their loved ones, and so much more throughout this pandemic.

However, truck drivers and their families are not terrorists. At the beginning of this pandemic, when many Canadians were isolat-

ing in their homes, I recall that truckers were out there ensuring we had the necessities of life we needed to survive.

As the Prime Minister said in April 2020, "While many of us are working from home, there are others who aren't able to do that, like the truck drivers who are working day and night to make sure our shelves are stocked. So when you can, please thank a trucker for everything they're doing and help them however you can."

Truckers are Canadian citizens who are worried about their futures and about the futures their children and grandchildren will inherit. Conservatives have heard the concerns of these protesters.

We asked the Prime Minister and his government to commit publicly to a specific plan and timeline to end federal mandates and restrictions, the least that Canadians deserve. Instead, the Liberals and the NDP refused to support our motion. Asking for a plan is reasonable, and their refusal to provide one is shameful.

I ask that all parliamentarians, as representatives of the Canadian people, listen to our fellow citizens. We must be willing to talk regardless of how difficult the situation is. We must not degrade, dismiss or name-call. We must work to rebuild trust in our public institutions. We must help those who have been left behind by the pandemic, and we must end these mandates.

I will conclude by asking all members of the House to try to restore the confidence that has been lost between the people and ourselves. I also ask all members to seriously consider whether we are truly experiencing terrorist threats or if the Liberal government is overreaching and setting a dangerous precedent for our country.

● (1005)

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have to say to my hon. colleague that much of his speech could have been written by any of us on this side. We all know that law and order are the fundamental backbone of our country. That is what we all want.

However, the hon. member cannot say to me or to the rest of our colleagues that what is happening outside could simply be handled by some police officers shoving the protesters away. This is an illegal blockade that has been there for going on four weeks now. The people of Ottawa have been terrorized. They have been denied their freedom.

For someone who equally respects law and order, how can he stand by and just let another weekend go by and not recognize that this was a measure we absolutely had to take?

Statutory Order

Mr. Doug Shipley: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for that question. I have always been for law and order. I grew up in a household where my father was a police officer. I do not know how we got to where we are today. Some people this morning asked for an inquiry. I think that is necessary to find out how we got here.

I believe these trucks were parked on the road and once they got there, they were very tough to move. I believe they should have been moved weeks ago. They should not have affected people in Ottawa so much. I agree, but we did get to this stage. What we really need to get down to is finding out the root cause. Where are this anger and divisiveness coming from in our country?

I was very pleased to hear the beginning of the member's question where she said part of my speech could have been written by the other side, because, quite frankly, when I first wrote this speech with the help of my staff, there were some things in there that we took out because I did not want to make this extremely partisan or extremely angry. We have enough of that right now. I appreciate the member's acknowledgement of that. I tried not to do that. We need to extend an olive branch to each side, including the people outside.

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his remarks and the ideas he shared with Parliament.

At this point in the debate, I am thinking about potential crisis exit strategies that might work. Sending the army and the police, including mounted police, into crowds of protesters is not going to calm people down. Eventually, we have to figure out how to end this crisis. Parliament will have to make compromises and reach out.

What crisis exit strategies would satisfy my colleague? Should the Prime Minister be pondering crisis exit strategies too, such as resigning?

[English]

Mr. Doug Shipley: Madam Speaker, I wish I could answer in the member's first language, but I am unable to; maybe some day.

I think we have become incredibly divided in this country. I like the way he worded the olive branch that I mentioned. We have to come together. The last two years have been very hard on everybody. This has frayed everybody's ability to get along and to be patient. We are all afraid. All of us, as parliamentarians, are getting inundated with phone calls and emails. I know members across the aisle are as well. We need to get through this somehow. We need to get back to being able to have reasonable discussions with each other. We do not always have to agree, but we need to be able to listen to each other, part ways and still get along.

Mr. Peter Julian (New Westminster—Burnaby, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his speech and appreciate his tone. These are important days and these are important discussions. The tone that he brings is appropriate.

He mentioned the service of his father as a police officer and we thank his family for their service. What the police have said is that the regulations that have been issued have been instrumental in avoiding serious injury so far, particularly with the designation of

places, which has meant that the convoy leaders were not able to achieve what they called for, thousands of reinforcements coming to Ottawa this weekend, because of the emergency regulation that allowed police officers to stop that.

Is it not important to ensure that there are no serious injuries?

● (1010)

Mr. Doug Shipley: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his kind words and for acknowledging my father's service.

Obviously, everybody's safety is the most important thing. We have talked a couple of times now about an inquiry and I really think it could be important to get down to the root cause. Over the past week or two, I have had a chance to speak to two very high-ranking retired OPP commissioners. Both have told me that the Emergencies Act was not needed and this could have been done without it. There have been some things happening from the beginning. There have been other things said to me that I do not want to use today because they could be inflammatory, but let us just say I have done my own research. I have talked to people and been informed that this really was not necessary to move these people along.

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to mention right away that I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

As we speak to the confirmation of the February 14 proclamation of a state of emergency, on the other side of these walls, the police are lifting the siege in Ottawa. We all want it to be done as peaceful as possible. As colleagues have done before me, and as others will undoubtedly do, I encourage the participants in this siege to leave without further delay.

I want to acknowledge the excellent work of the men and women who have been working since yesterday to bring order to the streets of the capital. This effective work demonstrates what we have been saying since the beginning of the siege: We do not need the Emergencies Act. We need concerted action by all police forces. We need a crisis task force and a coordination centre. As we have been saying for the past three weeks, we need a plan.

What has been lacking since the siege began is not the use of the Emergencies Act. What has been lacking is leadership from the top, starting with the federal government.

We are calling on the government to not use this legislation, as all governments have refrained from doing since 1988, or for 52 years, if we include the use of the War Measures Act, the predecessor to this act. More than half a century has passed since this legislation was used. There must be good reason for that.

Let us have a look at the legislation, which states:

WHEREAS the safety and security of the individual, the protection of the values of the body politic and the preservation of the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of the state are fundamental obligations of government;

AND WHEREAS the fulfilment of those obligations in Canada may be seriously threatened by a national emergency and, in order to ensure safety and security during such an emergency, the Governor in Council should be authorized, subject to the supervision of Parliament, to take special temporary measures that may not be appropriate in normal times;

That is part of the preamble at the beginning of the Emergencies Act, which serves as a warning of sorts, saying “handle with care” or “caution: dangerous material”.

The act states: “to take special temporary measures that may not be appropriate in normal times”. I really want to repeat that part again, because it carries a heavy burden in a democracy: “special temporary measures that may not be appropriate in normal times”.

The authors of this legislation and the parliamentarians who passed it warned us that we are entering at our own risk.

Such warnings should be taken seriously. At the same time, the Emergencies Act exists and must therefore serve some purpose. Parliament does not pass laws that it does not intend to use.

There is no doubt that this act serves a purpose, but it is meant to be used in extraordinary situations: in case of a public welfare emergency, a public order emergency, an international emergency or a war emergency. It is a law to be used in the case of a disaster.

Over the past few weeks, there has been a siege here. It is true. We are talking about angry Canadians who are unhappy with the public health measures, people who are irrefutably and without a doubt participating in an illegal activity. They deserve to be fined, to have their vehicles seized and possibly even be put in prison in some cases. Is that a disaster? Is it a national crisis? Is it an extraordinary situation?

Over the past few weeks, we have been witnessing a siege. The participants are misguided, ill-informed, fractious and fully aware that they are participating in an illegal activity. In many cases, these people have their children with them.

The police are dealing with this, but I would like to say that I find it extremely irresponsible to bring children into such a situation. I would ask those who brought their children here to leave, because they are putting their children in danger.

From day one we have been asking these people to leave. On Monday we asked the government to tell us its plan. On day six we asked that a crisis task force be created and that it include every police force. The government did nothing.

The people outside do not have the right to be there. At the end of day one, it was no longer a demonstration, but an occupation. At the end of the first week, it was no longer an occupation, but a siege.

What should have been an incident in our lives has become an episode in Canadian history. This government is writing these people into our history.

Statutory Order

We have before us a siege that required police intervention and not the invocation of legislation that is used in war time, in times of international crisis or during an earthquake.

This law was not needed during the ice storm. It was not needed during the Oka crisis, or the fires in British Columbia. It has never been needed in the past 25 years.

When the entire world was dealing with a pandemic in 2020, the government was not compelled to use the Emergencies Act.

• (1015)

We are supposed to believe that this out-of-control protest justifies its application today. That creates a dangerous precedent, much like lighting up that first cigarette after not smoking for years. The trick is not to have that cigarette.

Some of us have more conservative values, others more liberal ones. For some, the priority is clean energy, for others it is the fight against climate change. We can have a debate, insult one another in the House and get carried away. Some of us want Quebec to be a country, others want the federal government to be more centralist. We know that we will never agree on several issues.

However, I sincerely believe that all members of the House are democrats and care deeply about democracy. The Emergencies Act provides for “special temporary measures that may not be appropriate in normal times”. We do not need them, not for those people. Even though the government has chosen this path, we need not follow. The House must not support this proclamation. We must be bigger than that.

The Emergency Measures Regulations of Tuesday's order in council state, “A person must not travel to or within an area where an assembly referred to in subsection 2(1) is taking place.” Participating in a public assembly that could severely disturb the peace is prohibited. I understand that.

Nevertheless, people who are not in the area are prohibited from travelling to get there. That is what I am trying to understand. It is prohibited to have the intention to do something that is prohibited. Somebody who is about to do something, without however having done it, is guilty of an offence and could be fined. The government should have a good reason to make freedom of association a relative concept and jeopardize freedom of movement. I do not see it.

What I see are people who are committing mischief and other illegal actions, as well as trucks that are dangerously blocking public roads. I see crowds that should have been dispersed a long time ago and trucks that should have been towed a long time ago. From the outset, we have been calling on the police to intervene peacefully, but firmly. Invoking the Emergencies Act is frankly not necessary for that purpose. If it is invoked to deal with these people, if we open Pandora's box, if we smoke that first cigarette, where will that lead us?

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As I have said, I understand the purpose of the Emergencies Act, but if we confirm the declaration, it will say much more about us than about those in the streets. Yes, there have been biker gangs, white supremacists, racists and homophobes in this rather strange crowd. Yes, there are some people in the crowd who believe in the great reset, who think that the vaccine contains sterilizing agents and who believe in other conspiracy theories. There are also people who have disengaged from our institutions, who no longer believe in the government or in the media.

I want to acknowledge the brave women and men who are putting themselves in the middle of this to keep us informed. I am thinking of Raymond Filion, who was assaulted while he was out reporting. Being informed is freedom.

Frankly, there is more freedom for the media than for the opponents. This siege is not sympathetic, nor are the occupiers. Police intervention is necessary, and that is what is happening. However, the government has not convinced us of the need to use the Emergencies Act and should refrain from doing so.

• (1020)

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will present three facts, followed by one question.

First, the charter rights are not affected by our measures. Second, this act is very different from the War Measures Act. We are not calling in the army. This is very different from the October crisis. Third, according to a recent poll, 72% of Quebecers support our measures.

On Monday, my opposition colleague asked the federal government to show leadership. From day one, we have been working with municipal and provincial police forces, and we are implementing concrete, targeted measures under the federal act.

My question is simple. Why did the member change her mind about the necessary measures to combat illegal activities, especially in a context where the majority of Quebecers support these measures?

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

The Bloc Québécois has not changed its position. From day one of the siege, we have been calling on the government to do something, to take responsibility, to create a crisis task force and to work with law enforcement, the Mayor of Ottawa and the Premier of Ontario in a concerted and coordinated way. We asked for everyone to work together and for this government to show some leadership, because the siege was serving as inspiration for other protests in other parts of the country.

The other protests were well managed by the police without any need for the Emergencies Act. Right now, there is a siege in downtown Ottawa. However, this crisis is limited to one area. It is not a nationwide crisis and it does not justify the use of the Emergencies Act. If the government had shown some leadership, this crisis would have been over a long time ago.

[English]

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for her thoughtful speech and her concern, be-

cause the government has enacted powers that Canadians are certainly upset about. I am talking about the financial powers that the Deputy Prime Minister said will likely become permanent.

Could the member please comment on freezing people's bank accounts based on suspicion? I have been hearing from elderly constituents who are extremely worried about paying their bills. Could the member comment on that?

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

As I said in my speech, using the Emergencies Act now sets a dangerous precedent, given that it has not been used since being passed in 1988 and that so many governments have refrained from doing so.

The act gives the government and law enforcement the power to use extraordinary measures. We have heard the Prime Minister say that, even if the police do not need those measures, they can use them, and that is exactly the problem. They can use them.

What is more, opponents continue to get money through crowdfunding platforms. Has this had the intended effect? I am not so sure, but it is setting a dangerous precedent.

[English]

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, is this a national issue? Yes. We have heard the Conservatives and Bloc attempt to downplay what has led to today.

The people outside are not just truckers, and they are not just parking. This is extremism. This is a national emergency. We have seen violent extremist ideologies from the United States infiltrate Canadians. This morning, we heard Conservatives mention that Donald Trump is talking about fundraising in Canada.

I have three questions: Does the member agree that dealing with extremist ideologies from other countries amplifies that this is a national issue? Does she agree that this is indeed a national emergency, and does she agree that we need to prevent more Canadians from being infiltrated by foreign countries and other extremist ideologies?

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Madam Speaker, sometimes I do not know whether the question is coming from the NDP or the Liberal Party, because they sound the same.

Yes, it is a crisis, but it would not have gotten as serious as it did if the federal government had taken its responsibilities from day one. This is not a national crisis. All of Canada is not being targeted and under siege; it is a security perimeter in front of Parliament. The situation could have been dealt with by the police without the Emergencies Act.

• (1025)

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, first of all, I have no sympathy for what has been happening on Ottawa streets for the past three weeks. Fortunately, after 22 days of siege, the crisis may be over. As we speak, the police are dispersing and arresting the occupiers.

On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I would like to thank all the police forces for their courage, patience and professionalism. We have our fingers crossed, but we may well have avoided the worst. Let us be honest: We feared the worst, and the worst is still possible.

Since the beginning of the siege, the Bloc Québécois has recognized the right to protest, but not the right to occupy, to intimidate, to engage in hate speech, and so on. As I said, I have no sympathy for what has been happening for three weeks on the streets of Ottawa. However, my lack of sympathy should not colour my judgment when it comes to the use of the Emergencies Act. That is the national crisis. What is happening outside is extremely serious, but the police are dealing with it thanks to their well-coordinated efforts, not the federal government.

The national crisis is that, for the first time in history, the Prime Minister is invoking the Emergencies Act, an act that has never been used since being enacted in 1988, 34 years ago. This legislation limits fundamental freedoms, such as freedom of association and freedom of movement. It allows the federal government to intervene in Quebec territory, as well as in Quebec infrastructure, such as hospitals, dams and vaccination centres. It goes against the will of the Quebec National Assembly, which is unanimously opposed to its application in Quebec. It allows the government “to take special temporary measures that may not be appropriate in normal times”. The Prime Minister has claimed the right to take inappropriate measures. As parliamentarians, we must determine whether he has truly been able to justify taking these measures.

The Prime Minister is making a historic mistake by invoking the Emergencies Act for the first time ever. I repeat: This is the first time in history it has been invoked. That is why the Prime Minister's decision has two effects that will mark the future: trivializing and setting a benchmark. I say trivializing because he is using this act, even though he has not demonstrated that it meets the necessary emergency criteria at all. It is written in black and white that the Emergencies Act must only be invoked if the government is facing a national crisis that threatens its sovereignty, security and territorial integrity. That is serious. It almost describes a state of war. As we know, this legislation is an updated version of the old War Measures Act.

However, the crisis in Ottawa is not national. It is confined to downtown Ottawa and the neighbouring cities, such as Gatineau. Yes, there are other demonstrations in Alberta, Manitoba, and Ontario, and there was even a flash in the pan in Quebec City, but everything was resolved by law enforcement with the tools they already had. The simple truth is that every time governments and police forces have worked properly, in co-operation, they have prevailed. We are crossing our fingers, but the same scenario seems to be playing out in Ottawa. Each jurisdiction already seems to have all the tools to intervene.

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Dialogue is impossible when, upon seeing a convoy of protesters arriving in the federal capital and setting up in front of the federal Parliament to oppose a federal policy and call out the Prime Minister, the federal government spends three weeks saying it is the city's problem.

Moreover, Canada's territorial integrity is not under threat. What is happening is extremely reprehensible, but it is not an invasion.

Furthermore, there is no threat to Canadian sovereignty. Once again, we have our fingers crossed, but the police seem to have the situation under control.

What has been missing for the past three weeks is that the federal government should have been at the helm, carefully managing the crisis. Now it is embarrassing to see the government claiming that it had no choice but to resort to emergency measures. Over the past three weeks, we have watched the occupiers of the capital of a G7 country set up a hot tub, saunas, bouncy castles and street hockey games. Everyone who is present here has seen it first-hand.

Who in the House can seriously claim that every possible effort had been made to resolve this crisis? Does anyone really believe that?

That is why the Prime Minister is normalizing the use of the Emergencies Act. He is setting the precedent that the criteria to be met to use this legislation are discretionary.

• (1030)

He is setting the precedent that it is acceptable to use this legislation without the consensus of the House and maybe even without a majority. He is setting the precedent that it is acceptable to use it against the will of Quebec and most of the provinces. He is setting the precedent that the federal government can essentially use this legislation to say that it did something after three weeks of inaction.

The Prime Minister is using the Emergencies Act in an arbitrary and divisive way for purely political reasons. This normalizing will be used as a benchmark for every successive prime minister. The Prime Minister is charting a course for every future government. In the future, every political player who faces a crisis will look at how the Prime Minister of Canada invoked the Emergencies Act in 2022. They will all look at his decision and see that the bar for invoking the emergency measures is not as high as the legislation suggests.

Political posturing and pressure in times of crisis threaten to again lower the bar a little bit more, always just a little bit more. This will serve as a precedent for all future governments for assessing things like the funding of environmental movements; grassroots campaigns against climate change; student protests; tense labour disputes; protests on civil rights, self-determination or racism; or highly charged debates, such as a nation aspiring to independence. It will serve as the benchmark.

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That is why we must be prudent. That is why we must conduct ourselves as statesmen and stateswomen and rise above the fray. We must consider the consequences of our decisions on more than just the situation right under our noses. We must foresee the long-term consequences and think several steps ahead. We must separate our opinions from the legislative decision, the immediate political situation from the legislative decision. As politicians, that is the only way to respect the contract between citizens and the state.

We cannot control the future. I do not know who will be governing the country in 10 years. I am optimistic enough to hope that all future prime ministers will be careful, compassionate, discerning and aware of the impact of every decision they make. However, I have no guarantee of this. I am profoundly disturbed that the political significance of a last-resort emergency measure, a nuclear option, is being downplayed today and for all time.

As I have said before, I have no sympathy for what has been going on in Ottawa in the last three weeks, but that does not matter. I am opposed to the use of the Emergencies Act, despite what I have seen with my own eyes every day while coming to work. In the House, I am the member for Lac-Saint-Jean.

Every morning, I remind myself who I work for. I work for the people of Lac-Saint-Jean. I will not support a reckless decision that could one day impact the rights of my constituents in Lac-Saint-Jean and all Quebecers. I cannot trivialize invoking the Emergencies Act. I cannot carelessly chart this path for all future governments to walk on.

Frankly, I cannot be absolutely certain that the Prime Minister did not let his disdain for the occupiers influence his decision. I also cannot be certain that he was not influenced by the immediate political situation to make a decision that feels good today but will feel terrible tomorrow. I am not absolutely certain that he fully comprehends the impact of the legacy he will leave. I am also not absolutely certain that the NDP did not rush to support the decision in part because it too lacks sympathy for what has gone on in the streets of Ottawa. I am not certain that the NDP was not distracted by the immediate political situation, leading it to forget how important it is to protect rights and freedoms in the long term. The NDP seems to be thinking about what legacy it will leave today. That is good news.

We must remember the occupation of Ottawa as the crisis that led to proactive co-operation among governments and police forces. It must not be remembered as a crisis that normalized and set a precedent for the use of the Emergencies Act.

Let us make the right decision for the future of a healthy democracy, for the future of the social contract and for the future of the people we have the honour of representing.

• (1035)

Hon. Greg Fergus (Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister and to the President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his speech. I appreciate his candour in voicing his concerns. I also appreciate the fact that he is open to the opinions of others.

I too am not 100% certain that this is the absolute best course of action, but there is one thing I sincerely recognize. I hope my hon.

colleague can tell me about it. I do not want to trivialize the decisions we are making, but would my hon. colleague agree that we are somewhat trivializing the situation in terms of the extremist voices we are hearing in our politics, both in Canada and around the world?

Is it not time to set some limits before things get out of hand?

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Madam Speaker, I would never trivialize hate speech. I want to make sure that my hon. colleague knows that.

My colleague stated that he too was not 100% certain that we were making the right decision. That is what he just said.

However, when it is time to make a decision as important as invoking the Emergencies Act, it is vital to be 100% sure that it is the right decision.

[English]

Mr. Jeremy Patzer (Cypress Hills—Grasslands, CPC): Madam Speaker, all across the country, in the buildup to the convoy arriving in Ottawa, we saw multiple stops along the way. If the government had been listening to people and had been willing to look beyond and listen to what the rest of the country was saying and look at what people were seeing, there was enough forewarning that this was coming, but the government chose not to act and not to listen.

Does the member agree that the government should have been willing to look at other parts of the country? Just because it does not have representation there does not mean that it should not be listening to the concerns of other regions of the country.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Madam Speaker, when one is Prime Minister, one must listen to everyone who expresses an opinion anywhere in the country. I imagine that is part of the job. The main thing was that the Prime Minister needed to take action on day one of the protests.

I understand my hon. colleague's question, and I thank him for it, but if certain members of the Conservative caucus had not exacerbated the crisis, we might not be where we are today. The fact is, some Conservatives had photos taken with the protesters. They said that we should listen to them and encouraged them to hold the line.

Here is what happened. Lack of leadership on the Liberal side and encouragement on the Conservative side brought us to where we are now, here in the House debating an act that should not be invoked for this kind of protest.

[English]

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his intervention. I am certainly concerned that it has got to this point and that the government left it for so long.

I want to be clear, though. He refers to land defenders and environmentalists. A somebody who has been very engaged in movements, including Idle No More, I can say that we were peaceful. We never had guns. We never chose insurrection against the government. We never threatened to kill police. That constant measuring post in the House is deeply troubling and concerning. It fuels and feeds notions of white supremacy, which also fuel ideas in this illegal occupation.

Would the member not agree that minimizing what is going on out there is further encouragement for the kind of extremist occupation, led by white nationalists, that we are seeing outside?

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Madam Speaker, at the risk of repeating myself, I would never minimize hate speech. That is just not the kind of person I am.

I am worried about the future. I do not know whether, say, 10 years from now, the Reform Party will rise from the ashes like a phoenix and take over the Government of Canada. I do not know if that will happen in 10 years.

I also do not know whether, 10 years from now, when they look at what is happening now and what the government did in 2022 with the Emergencies Act, they will use it against an environmental movement blocking a street. I do not want that.

That is why MPs absolutely have to prevent the invocation of this act.

• (1040)

[English]

Mr. Maninder Sidhu (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to note that I will be sharing my time with the member for Lac-Saint-Louis.

I would like to start my remarks today by thanking you and the House administration staff for ensuring Parliament is able to function. I would also like to take a moment to thank all of the women and men in uniform for their service, working tirelessly to keep us safe and to restore law and order.

The last two years have been tough for everyone. Canadians stepped up to keep their loved ones safe by following public health guidelines. I would like to take a moment to thank everyone who has been there to protect the safety of our communities. I thank them for doing their part in fighting this pandemic. I would like to thank essential workers from across the country, who have worked hard to keep our communities safe.

I also want to speak about our hard-working truck drivers. The transportation industry has played a vital role over the past two years. When Canadians were advised by provincial mandates to stay home, truck drivers continued to work. They continued to work to provide medicine, food and supplies to keep our shelves stocked and keep our economy functioning.

Brampton is home to hundreds of trucking companies. The transportation sector is one of the largest employers in Brampton and contributes significantly to the Canadian supply chain. To all the

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truck drivers who have continued to work heroically throughout the pandemic, I thank them for their service to our country.

The workers represented by Unifor, Teamsters and the Canadian Trucking Alliance are doing their part in getting vaccinated and keeping the supply chain moving. They have clearly supported the need for truckers to get vaccinated and keep goods moving.

Over the last couple of weeks, I have also received many phone calls from truck drivers in my riding about the blockades. They were very clear. The individuals who have occupied Ottawa do not represent them, their opinions or the industry at large. The individuals in convoys who unlawfully block border crossings across our country are not representative of the hard-working truckers we know.

I would like to point out that there are individuals outside the chamber who brought trucks that do not belong to them. A constituent reached out to me the other day who is the owner of a trucking company. He called to tell me that they have a couple of trucks in Ottawa that drivers took on their own will for this occupation. They do not support what is happening outside and wanted to know how to get their trucks back. This should not be happening and is considered theft. I not only urge these truck drivers to return the trucks to their respective owners; I encourage those left outside to return home as well.

I support peaceful protest. It is part of our democratic right, and everyone has a right to exercise their freedom of speech. After all, we are the party of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Freedom of speech and democracy is what we are known for as Canadians, but when international trade into our country is being impacted at our borders, residents do not feel safe in their own communities and our businesses have to unwillingly shut down, it is no longer considered a peaceful protest.

The occupation on the streets of Ottawa is illegal. The occupations and blockades that popped up are a threat to our economy, supply chains and public safety. Residents of Centretown do not feel safe leaving their homes because they fear being harassed. Businesses are shut down because they fear for the safety of their employees. The individuals illegally blocking the streets in Ottawa talk about freedom for all, yet because of them, local residents are locked up in their homes. Small businesses who have already suffered enough over the course of the pandemic are closed. We must protect our critical infrastructure, like our border crossings across the country.

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This has a consequential impact on truck drivers trying to do their jobs by crossing the borders, who are unable to come home. That is not freedom. I have heard stories first-hand from concerned families of truck drivers who had to wait up to six hours one way to cross the border while transporting goods from the United States. Because of the blockades, they have had to sacrifice their time with their families. It has affected their mental health and put over 8,000 autoworkers out of work, impacting thousands of families across the country during the border blockades.

I have heard from residents in Centretown who feel unsafe leaving their homes and are being harassed for wearing their masks. Their mental health has been impacted with the absurd amount of honking and noise they have had to endure. As a father, I cannot imagine what new parents and families with young children are having to deal with. Businesses like the mall and many local restaurants have had to temporarily close because of the illegal occupations.

The illegal blockades have been disrupting the lives of Canadians and have been a threat to our economy and relationship with trading partners. The financial impact caused at the Ambassador Bridge was \$390 million per day; it was \$48 million per day in Coutts and \$73 million a day in Emerson, Manitoba. Let me emphasize this: That is the impact per day.

Canadians have been asking our government to take a stand against the illegal blockades and occupations and put an end to what is happening outside our institutions. We invoked the Emergencies Act to protect our communities and jobs, and to restore confidence in our institutions. It is also alarming that there is a significant number of foreign donations, and we need to be very cognizant of that. It is our responsibility to take this stand to protect our communities. As the Prime Minister said on Monday, when the Emergencies Act is invoked, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms continues to protect their individual rights.

As our government has said multiple times, the Emergencies Act measures are not being used to call in the military and will not curtail freedom of expression or the freedom of peaceful assembly. The Emergencies Act is being invoked because the blockades and occupations are a threat to our supply chains, to our economy and to our public safety. The Emergencies Act provides law enforcement with additional tools, prohibits blockades and keeps essential corridors open.

The RCMP and local police services have been provided with the additional resources they need to continue keeping our communities safe, and we have full faith in the important work they are doing. Since we invoked the Emergencies Act, most of our borders have now opened back up for critical trade. Now we must continue to work toward progress and ending the illegal blockades and occupations happening outside of the chamber.

We have been asking the convoy members to return to their homes for almost three weeks now. The police have been clear in their warnings to the protesters. They have been given the option to return home safely, yet they choose not to. We have confidence in the RCMP, OPP, Ottawa police and other local police services to restore law and order. These are not measures that are being taken lightly, and no one's democratic rights will be infringed.

• (1045)

We are doing what is necessary to keep Canadians safe, and the measures put in place by our government are working. These mobile convoys are a threat to our communities. They can show up anywhere and take over a city. We have witnessed it at our nation's capital and ports of entry across the country, and it is simply unacceptable. No one wants their livelihoods taken away from them, and as parliamentarians, we need to stand up for Canadians to stop these illegal occupations.

While some of the Conservative members opposite shake hands, give thumbs-up and high-fives, and pose for pictures with the leadership of the occupiers in Ottawa, let me remind members opposite that the convoy leadership, whom they meet with smiles, associates itself with far-right extremism that has been seen spreading hate and raising racist symbols and Confederate flags.

We will not tolerate that as a party or as a nation. We stand up against all forms of racism and hate, and we will always take a stand. These are not Canadian values and do not represent our country. Unlike some members in the Conservative Party, we are not promoting the leadership figures in the convoy and the activities occurring outside the chamber.

We have taken action to put an end to these illegal blockades. For once, I hope the members opposite stop, put the best interest of our country first and work with the government to protect and support our economy and public safety. We recognize the illegal blockades are a threat to our national security and will continue to do everything we can to keep Canadians safe.

We understand the pandemic has not been easy for anyone and the impact it has had on the lives of Canadians, but illegal blockades at the border, around the country and in Ottawa are not the answer. Businesses are suffering. Employees are suffering. Canadians are suffering. It is important that we continue following the science and working in the best interest of all Canadians.

The convoy members have made their point. It is now time for them to return home. I encourage the members opposite to step up and do the right thing by joining us and helping end this illegal occupation. I want to reassure those listening that charter rights are protected within this act, and that it is charter compliant.

I fully agree with the right to peacefully protest, like my colleagues in the House, but we all know this is no longer peaceful. In a democracy, we must stand against those who prevent others, with threats and assaults, from living freely in our country. There are sinister elements at work here, targeting our critical infrastructure at our borders, hurting our economy and hurting Canadians.

These sinister elements are financed by foreign money, and there must be consequences for those who engage in criminal behaviour. The increased measures in this act are allowing for greater financial scrutiny to enable our law enforcement agencies to effectively do their work and bring those responsible to account. Yes, we have made gains and progress, and we have seen our border crossings re-open, but as parliamentarians, we need to continue working to secure our progress and provide law enforcement the tools they require to end these illegal occupations and blockades.

One of the highest elected offices in Canada is that of a member of Parliament, and with this privilege comes great responsibility. I would like to read a statement from the House administration website before I conclude today:

Before a duly elected Member may take his or her seat and vote in the House of Commons, the Member must take an oath or make a solemn affirmation of allegiance or loyalty to the Sovereign and sign the Test Roll.

It continues:

When a Member swears or solemnly affirms allegiance to the Queen as Sovereign of Canada, he or she is also swearing or solemnly affirming allegiance to the institutions the Queen represents, including the concept of democracy. Thus, a Member is making a pledge to conduct him- or herself in the best interests of the country. The oath or solemn affirmation reminds a Member of the serious obligations and responsibilities he or she is assuming.

Now, before another member opposite gets the bright idea to go out there and shake hands, give high-fives and take pictures with those who affiliate with far-right extremist, racist ideologies, violent rhetoric and conspiracy theories, I remind members about the oath we all took to protect our democratic institution and serve in the best interest of our country.

• (1050)

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am finding it a little hard to listen to this member and the Liberal Party talk about the safety of the population. I just looked at the Twitter account of the Prime Minister and there is nothing there about Houston, B.C., nothing about eco-terrorists attacking with axes and the millions of dollars in damages. I am hearing nothing about that. I am hearing only about this.

When I left the House after speaking on Thursday night, a police officer opened the gate for me toward the convoy and told me to be careful. I thought to myself that there was danger here, but guess what he said next? He told me that it was slippery.

I am not saying the protesters should be here, but I would like to know why the member is not talking about what is happening in the real world.

Mr. Maninder Sidhu: Madam Speaker, since the member mentioned the police and what they are asking us to do to remain safe, I want to quote Ottawa's Chief Bell, who said yesterday, "Without the authorities that have been provided to us through these pieces of legislation, we wouldn't be able to be doing the work we are today."

These emergency measures have helped law enforcement authorities take away commercial licences of truck drivers, freeze bank accounts and cancel insurance, while compelling tow truck companies to help police remove vehicles.

Since we are talking about the wonderful work the police are doing, it is important to note that they are here to restore law and or-

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der on our streets across the country. It does not matter if that happens in Ottawa or somewhere in B.C. I know we can always count on law enforcement authorities, but we need to continue to give them the tools to do their jobs.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Madam Speaker, I am going to ask my colleague a question that I asked earlier and to which I did not get an answer.

One of the main measures in this order involves freezing the bank accounts of Quebec and Canadian truckers, and we hear that they would be frozen for a week. Could the member give me more information on that?

I imagine that some thought was given to this order. Is it for one week, yes or no?

[*English*]

Mr. Maninder Sidhu: Madam Speaker, in terms of the financial tools that we have given to police officers for tracking down funds from foreign interference, it is important to note that these tools were necessary so that we were able to make sure we protect our democratic institutions. They will help protect our citizens and Canada.

We in this chamber represent a democracy, and when we see sinister elements at work, we must do everything we can to ensure that we are able to protect our democratic institutions.

Mr. Charlie Angus (Timmins—James Bay, NDP): Madam Speaker, what we have seen here is a complete, manifest failure of leadership at every level that put us in this situation. The fact is, something that should have been contained through ticketing and normal police activity was allowed to metastasize to such a level that it became an international embarrassment that happened at the Ambassador Bridge.

I ask my colleague this: Will the Liberals agree to our call for a full, complete, independent inquiry into every level of this crisis that has been allowed to happen, and then follow up as well to ensure that these tools that we need to use now will not be misused in future? Where is the oversight committee, so that we can make sure that these are limited tools to be used to get people safe again in the streets of Ottawa, without any further government abuse?

Mr. Maninder Sidhu: Madam Speaker, I believe in transparency and oversight. As our justice minister has said, these measures are temporary, to restore confidence in our institutions and to restore law and order. We know that the Emergencies Act will help restore law and order, and it is working. We can see what is happening outside our chamber. Law enforcement is moving in full effect.

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I would note that they operate separate from our capacity as parliamentarians. We do not direct them, but we need to make sure we continue to give them the tools to effectively do their jobs. When I looked outside yesterday and saw Peel police in Ottawa, helping to restore confidence, it is because of the tools we gave in the Emergencies Act that police chief Bell has referred to. It is very important that we understand why the Emergencies Act was used and that it is extremely temporary, and that came right from the Minister of Justice.

• (1055)

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Madam Speaker, like my colleague who spoke before me, I would like to thank the members of the Parliamentary Protective Service and the peace officers who have come to Ottawa to deal with this unprecedented situation.

There has been a great deal of misinformation, misconception and misunderstanding around the pandemic and the public health measures that have been necessary, as well as about how these measures stack up against the guarantees in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. I have received a great deal of mail, even prior to what we are experiencing today in downtown Ottawa, about mandates and how they violate charter rights.

It is incumbent upon all of us to tell our constituents, which is what I have been doing, that the mandates and public health restrictions that are now being loosened and eliminated did not violate charter rights. If they had violated charter rights, court cases would have been brought, judges would have made decisions and mandates would have been struck down. That is just a fact of our democracy.

As a matter of fact, in Newfoundland, at the very beginning of the pandemic, there was a very serious public health restriction that barred anyone from entering Newfoundland unless they had some kind of medical document. That case was brought to the court, and the court found that public health measure was not a violation of charter rights. It is very important, and it is incumbent on us, as elected members of Parliament, to reassure Canadians that their charter rights have not been violated. Yes, these measures have imposed constraints, but the constraints are not necessarily a violation of charter rights.

Some will say in response that they do not want to talk about the courts because they are part of the government, or they are stacked with liberal-minded judges. Once we get to the point where there is no agreement on the structure of our democracy, and how it operates and functions, then it is impossible to have constructive conversations. Every law that is tabled in the House is accompanied by a charter statement. While orders in council do not require a formal charter statement, they are vetted for charter consistency.

It is also important to remind Canadians that what we have been seeing in front of Parliament and at many border crossings across the country is not peaceful, lawful protest. We have to remind Canadians that these have been unlawful protests that have surpassed what can reasonably be considered legitimate protest based on constitutionally protected rights and freedoms.

The so-called “freedom convoy” has not been without negative consequence, especially for the people of Ottawa. Businesses have been closed in downtown Ottawa, and workers who need to feed their families have not been able to work for three weeks. Their income has been stopped. As well, Canadians suffered income interruptions because of the blockage of supply chains at the border. These people have felt the very real consequences of these illegal blockades.

I will go back to talk about the people of Ottawa, and will quote from an article that appeared recently in *The Globe and Mail* about the mental health impacts of the blockade here in Ottawa on the citizens of this city. It says, “Experts worry that the stress could have long-lasting effects on the health of residents who have also been navigating life during a pandemic.” Then the article goes on to quote Ivy Bourgeault, professor in the school of sociological and anthropological studies at the University of Ottawa, who stated, “I don’t think, as a resident, that one can look at one’s environment in the same way again. That when there are other protests, this will be a trigger.” She went on to say, “Uncertainty and no control just causes enormous amounts of stress, and that is in addition to the chronic stressors that people have been dealing with in relation to the pandemic.” I could go on.

• (1100)

I would also like to speak about the economic impacts. I mentioned these before, in a question to one of the hon. members who was speaking. The point I was trying to make was that if someone wanted to undermine the security of a nation, especially a trading nation that imports most of its products from a neighbouring nation such as the United States, they would block the points of entry. It would harm that nation. They would block the Ambassador Bridge. They would block crossings in Manitoba and Alberta. They would block 12 additional points of entry. Of course, they would also breach the confines of the CBSA plaza in Fort Erie, resulting in a lockdown of the office to prevent additional protesters from gaining entry. That is what someone would do if they wanted to undermine the security of this country.

I have watched the reaction from the official opposition, and I do not want to be partisan because this is not a partisan issue. I have watched the reasoning and messaging coming from the official opposition for a couple of weeks. The first notion that the official opposition tried to float was that if the Prime Minister would sit down and have a cup of coffee with anti-democratic organizers, then everyone would go home happy. I do not believe that a so-called law and order party really believes in that notion.

Then, the official opposition had been giving credence to the notion that the police are directed by the federal government. If the protest is still there, it is the fault of the federal government because it controls the forces of law and order. Many people believe that. Many people have written to me, asking why we cannot do anything about this. I remind them that in a constitutional democracy, governments, whether municipal, provincial or federal, do not direct the police.

When the government finally did something by invoking the Emergencies Act, the official opposition recoiled in shocked surprise. They asked how we could possibly think of doing that, after telling the government that it was not doing anything. There is plenty of contradiction in the messaging coming out of the other side, but I would like to leave that aside for a moment.

Another point that has been raised is that this could have been handled normally using normal laws, but we saw for three weeks that the Ottawa police were overwhelmed. They could not do anything, and we saw that. That is a historical record. For three weeks, the Ottawa police could not get this situation under control. That was not the federal police. That was not the provincial police. That was the Ottawa police.

What did the Emergencies Act allow? It allowed the Ottawa police to be supported by police forces from, I think, seven other municipalities. What did the Emergencies Act allow? It meant that these police officers could join and help the Ottawa police in clearing out this blockade that is in front of the Parliament buildings, and they did not have to deputize each individual officer in some kind of bureaucratic process—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. The hon. members know full well that they will have an opportunity to ask questions and give comments, and I would ask them to hold their thoughts until then. They may want to jot them down as opposed to yelling them out.

The hon. member for Lac-Saint-Louis has a minute and 30 seconds remaining.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Madam Speaker, I think it is also incumbent upon us to tell our citizens what the Emergencies Act does and what it does not do. First of all, it is not the War Measures Act. I know that some members have tried to make a subtle link to that. Some have been less subtle, but it is not the War Measures Act. Second, the Emergencies Act does not suspend charter rights. Here we go back to charter rights. It is important that we tell citizens that the act is not suspending charter rights.

Third, the act does not give the federal government control of local police. Fourth, it does not take away the right of lawful protest. What does it do? It gives FINTRAC the ability to stop the flow of financial support, much of it coming from other countries, south of the border more specifically. That is an important power. FINTRAC still has to respect the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, because the Emergencies Act does not suspend the charter.

I will stop there and add some points through the answers I will give.

• (1105)

Mr. Dan Albas (Central Okanagan—Similkameen—Nicola, CPC): Madam Speaker, I certainly appreciate the member for his work on the environment committee as chair, but on this matter, he has said repetitively that the Emergencies Act is necessary so that there would not be a bureaucratic process for other law enforcement to come to the aid of the Ottawa Police Service.

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I am from British Columbia, and policing is actually a provincial responsibility. Peace officers are often called to support other areas when there is a policing issue. For example, B.C. LNG in November had 800 people protesting. That was all resolved utilizing existing provincial measures.

This member has also talked about the Charter of Rights, and how important it is in regard to COVID. However, what he has not talked about at all are the civil liberties of every Canadian. There are restrictions that have been placed on people who want to assemble and who want to be able to donate to whomever they like, right across this country.

He may not like what they are talking about, but would the member at least call upon the government to show that a proper review has been done on this emergency order so that charter rights are not being infringed upon unjustly?

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Madam Speaker, I would also like to say that I enjoy sitting on the environment committee with my hon. colleague, who is always well prepared for the meetings and holds the government to account.

The act also allows the police in Ottawa to create a no-go zone: to prevent people from across the country from converging on Ottawa on weekends to cause more disruption. This has been attributed as one of the reasons why this operation has been successful.

I must say that the charter still applies, and section 58 of the Emergencies Act required the government to give an explanation for why it was invoking the act. I would suggest that the member read that explanation.

[Translation]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague said that we need the Emergencies Act to secure the joint participation of police forces. That is completely false. That sort of thing is commonly done under ordinary laws. The same is true for criminal financial activity, which can be dealt with under existing laws. In fact, when we look at everything that is invoked in the orders, there is not a single measure that is not already enshrined in existing acts and regulations.

Why bring out the atomic bomb of the Emergencies Act when everything that is invoked in the orders is already written into ordinary laws? It makes no sense.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Madam Speaker, I think it is very likely that when we review the events and the existing legislation, there will be some fine-tuning to be done in terms of the government's ability to follow the tracks created by new technologies that allow money to be sent anonymously to support illegal activities. This will be looked at when the situation is reviewed after the act is withdrawn.

That said, it is very clear that the Ottawa police could not, until now, resolve the situation.

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● (1110)

[English]

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, the Bloc and the Conservatives keep saying that things are fine at the Ambassador Bridge, but I can walk two kilometres that way right now and tell the House that the Jersey barriers that were on Huron Church Road now are separating city streets and residents from themselves. On top of that, a convoy was just turned back again the other day, and it is estimated that more convoys might come back. Anybody can drive down here with three or four vehicles, get out of their cars and park, and basically delay \$400-million worth of goods and services per day.

I would like to ask the hon. member if city of Windsor residents and the people here deserve the proper supports from the federal government. We are protecting 14 kilometres of road to the highway, and at any point in time these are vulnerable. My residents are cut in half right now, including people in one of the poorest neighbourhoods in Canada.

Does he believe we could get support from the municipality? Right now, local residents are paying for this. It is not fair, and the threat and the danger are not gone.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Madam Speaker, the situation at the Ambassador Bridge was a motivating factor in the government's decision. The act allows police forces to create larger no-go zones. If there is a threat to a border crossing such as the Ambassador Bridge, it would hopefully help to keep the bridge open.

[Translation]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie (Joliette, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by commending the work of the various police forces. So far, the clearing of the protest has been carried out in a calm and orderly manner, under the circumstances. I hope to see that continue.

I would also like to thank the House of Commons staff and security service, whose outstanding efforts have made it possible for us to sit today under these exceptional circumstances.

This is an extremely serious debate. The Emergencies Act is the nuclear option of legislative tools. It is the last resort. Governing by decree is not right. The decision of whether or not to authorize the use of this legislation lies with all of us as members of Parliament.

What we decide will go down in history. We have the power to stop it or to give the government carte blanche. The decision falls squarely on our shoulders. I urge all parliamentarians across party lines to rise to the occasion in a way that reflects the gravity of the situation.

The Emergencies Act is special legislation that should be invoked only when it is absolutely necessary. It is invoked after concluding that ordinary legislation is inadequate to deal with an urgent and dangerous situation. I really want to emphasize again that invoking this act is the nuclear option and must not be taken lightly.

Some have argued that the act was necessary to send a message to the occupiers of Ottawa. There is no need to go nuclear to send a message.

The motion before us is not just about accepting the proclamation of emergency measures. It asks us to accept three orders that contain a series of measures. Our duty, as parliamentarians, is to study these measures and ask ourselves whether each of them is truly necessary and whether there is no other way to solve the problem. If we conclude that any of them is not really critical, then we must reject the motion.

The government could present a more suitable order if it thinks it is necessary. In that case, we will see. I am a Quebecker and a separatist. My colleagues will have no trouble understanding why the declaration of emergency measures feels like a punch to the gut to me.

Some have argued that the current Emergencies Act is completely different from the infamous War Measures Act that was used to intimidate Quebecers and tyrannize the separatists in 1970. That is true, and for good reason.

To understand the purpose of the act, let us go back nearly 34 years to when it was passed. The act was passed in 1988, after being introduced in 1987. What happened in 1987? It was another time, but it helps us understand the intention of Parliament at the time.

Brian Mulroney was in power. He was the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, which no longer exists. He was elected on a platform of reconciliation with Quebec, which is something that Canada no longer talks about.

In 1987, one of his reconciliation measures included signing the Meech Lake accord. He wanted to remedy a travesty committed in 1982, when English Canada amended the Constitution and reduced the National Assembly of Quebec's powers. This was done without us and against our will. The rest is history. The Meech Lake Constitutional Accord failed, as did the Charlottetown accord that followed, and there still has not been any reconciliation.

That same year, the Mulroney government introduced the act we are discussing today. It wanted to repeal the War Measures Act, a piece of legislation that had traumatized Quebec 17 years earlier. The Mulroney government was attempting to remedy the travesty of 1970 the same year it was trying to make up for the travesty of 1982. That is why the Emergencies Act is different from the War Measures Act.

This time, no police officers or soldiers will show up in middle of the night without a warrant and arrest innocent people whose only crime was having a different opinion. That will not happen this time around. Fundamental rights have not been abolished. There are safeguards now that did not exist under the accursed War Measures Act.

In the past, the government could invoke the act at will. Now, there are safeguards. We are one of those safeguards, but safeguards are only helpful if they are used. I urge everyone to make use of these safeguards today.

The first safeguard involves consulting the provinces. The act requires that the government consult the provinces and report back to Parliament. When this act was passed as part of the reconciliation with Quebec, no one ever thought that it would be imposed on us, because our consent was needed.

• (1115)

There was a requirement to consult. The government gave us a summary of its consultations, as required by law. It informed us that seven of the 10 provinces were opposed to the invocation of the Emergencies Act. Two of the three that agreed that the government had to invoke the act because of the problems in the city of Ottawa said that they did not need the act enforced in their provinces.

However, the government chose to impose this act from coast to coast to coast. The government is imposing this act on Quebec, which said no. The Government of Quebec said no. Members from all parties in the Quebec National Assembly, which speaks on behalf of the people of Quebec, unanimously said no. This unanimous decision from the Quebec National Assembly is nowhere to be found in the three orders that the government is asking us to approve. Consultations are meaningless to this government.

We understood that this act would never be imposed on us without our consent, but that is what is happening here. Reconciliation with Quebec, which, I will remind the House, was one of the cornerstones of getting the Emergencies Act passed, is being thrown out the window. The first safeguard to prevent government by decree failed. The government overrode it. The second safeguard is us parliamentarians.

The government is bound by the act to inform us that the provinces are opposed and that Quebec is opposed, so that we take it into consideration. The orders being imposed on us do not take it into consideration, however. The act applies to the country as a whole, regardless of whether or not there are problems, or whether or not Quebec is opposed. This is contrary to the spirit of reconciliation with Quebec that led to the passage of the act. Reconciliation with Quebec, respect for Quebec—that rings hollow now.

Let us get back to the act. Generally, two conditions must be met for the government to have the right to invoke it and for Parliament to be justified in approving it. First, there must be a dangerous and urgent situation. Second, it must be impossible to deal with the situation under existing laws, making it essential to move to governing by decree.

The Emergencies Act requires the government to justify its decision to invoke the act and to lay before Parliament “an explanation of the reasons for issuing the declaration”. On Wednesday evening, the government sent us a document entitled “Explanation pursuant to subsection 58(1) of the Emergencies Act”. In this explanatory document, the government cites five reasons to justify its decision to invoke the act.

(i) The occupiers threaten to use violence for the purpose of achieving a political or ideological objective.

(ii) The blockades, in particular blockades of critical infrastructure, threaten Canada's economic security.

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(iii) The blockades, in particular those at the border, are detrimental to Canada-U.S. relations.

(iv) The blockades threaten the supply of essential goods to Canadians.

(v) There is potential for an increase in the level of violence.

It is conceivable that the five reasons cited by the government may or may not be real. That is a matter for debate. Given that the Emergencies Act is the nuclear option, however, it sets the bar higher than that. Even if these five reasons were well founded, the fact remains that this is not enough. The government needs to meet one more criterion in order to proceed. Section 3 of the act states that it is not enough for there to be a crisis. The crisis must also be “of such proportions or nature as to exceed the capacity or authority of a province to deal with it” and one that “cannot be effectively dealt with under any other law of Canada”.

In other words, before it can invoke the Emergencies Act, the government must demonstrate that the crisis cannot be dealt with under ordinary laws and that it is absolutely necessary to resort to special legislation and government by decree. However, the government did not demonstrate this in the statement of reasons it gave to parliamentarians. Worse, it did not even attempt to do so, even though this is required under the act. It has remained completely silent on this.

By the way, I will ask again, what laws are currently insufficient?

The order states that it is prohibited to bring a child to an illegal protest. However, provincial child protection laws already prohibit exposing a child to a dangerous situation. That is already the case in both Quebec and Ontario. The Children's Aid Society, the Ontario equivalent of Quebec's Direction de la protection de la jeunesse, was already involved because Ottawa police had referred cases to it.

Exactly how are the regular laws are not effectively dealing with the situation?

• (1120)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I must interrupt the member.

It seems that there was an interpretation issue, but it has now been fixed.

The hon. member for Joliette may continue his speech.

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: As I was saying, as far as child welfare is concerned, the file is already open.

In what way are Canada's laws inadequate for coping with this situation? Why does the government consider the Emergencies Act to be necessary? We do not know—no one knows—because the government is not saying.

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The order provides for the possibility of having financial institutions freeze the accounts of those who participate in illegal demonstrations. However, the Criminal Code already prohibits the funding of illegal activities. This is already the case. The Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act already authorizes financial institutions to freeze the proceeds of criminal activities or funds used to finance such activities. This is already the case under Canada's existing laws. There is no legislative void.

In what way do these laws not allow us to deal with the current situation? Why does the government consider the Emergencies Act to be necessary? We do not know, no one knows, because the government is not saying.

In fact, not only has the government never said why this power was indispensable, it has also never said in what way it could be useful.

Last week, the government gave us a briefing on enforcing the act. What it told us about freezing bank accounts was disturbing. An assistant deputy minister from the Department of Finance explained how it would work. What the government told us was that it would be up to the financial institutions to freeze the accounts of those involved in the occupation in Ottawa. In other words, it would be up to the financial institutions to guess which of their members or customers are taking part in these illegal protests and then guess when they have left the protest so that their accounts can be reactivated. The government does not see itself as having any particular responsibility for this and says that it is the banks' responsibility. What a joke.

Banks are not the police. They cannot know who is blocking the streets of Ottawa. The government is washing his hands of this situation. It is utter nonsense.

Under the Emergencies Act, the government is required to explain why it cannot end the occupation in Ottawa using existing laws. Not only has it failed to do so, but it has also not even told us how the act would help here.

I will give another example. Pursuant to the executive order, the measures against financing criminal activity extend to crowdfunding platforms. Now, that is a good idea. In fact, it is such a good idea that it is already possible to take such action under existing laws.

Crowdfunding platforms are already governed by the provinces. We have laws already, and they work. For example, on February 10, the Ontario Superior Court granted an injunction sought by the province to freeze funds raised by the "Freedom Convoy 2022" and "Adopt a Trucker" campaigns on the GiveSendGo crowdfunding platform. That happened under ordinary laws without the Emergencies Act and without the government's order.

In what way do existing laws not allow for adequate management of the situation? Why does the government think the Emergencies Act is necessary? We do not know, we do not see and we do not understand.

Here is another example. The order authorizes insurers to suspend the occupiers' insurance. How are the truckers going to be able to leave if they are no longer insured? If the truckers' liability

insurance is suspended and an accident happens, the victims will not receive compensation for damages. How is it necessary or useful to take that away from victims?

The government had a legal obligation to show that each of the emergency powers it was giving itself was absolutely necessary to resolve the crisis. In the case of suspending insurance, not only did the government not seek to demonstrate the absolute necessity of this measure, but it did not seek to demonstrate how it was useful.

The order sets out a series of grounds for declaring a protest to be illegal, including the paralysis of critical infrastructure, significant obstruction of traffic, and so on. All of these grounds are included in one or more of the ordinary laws that are currently in force, whether it is the Criminal Code, highway traffic acts, or municipal bylaws.

Law enforcement had all the legal tools to deal with the various border blockades. We saw that in Windsor and Coutts. There is no legal vacuum that needs to be filled by proclaiming emergency measures, as the government itself admits. It was not the absence of legislation that brought Ottawa to a standstill. In the government's statement of reasons, it does not even try to argue that there was a legal vacuum to be filled by the special legislation. That is just pathetic.

The Emergencies Act is designed to make up for the inadequacy of existing legislation. It is not designed to make up for the government's lack of leadership.

I could have understood the government needing emergency powers to requisition tow trucks and move the trucks currently being used as barricades in Ottawa. Even though the government did not make that argument, I could have understood it. A one-section order to address this shortfall in a very limited area might have been acceptable.

● (1125)

The orders before us are not just about requisitioning tow trucks in Ottawa.

These orders amount to a carte blanche. They cover a series of actions without any apparent justification, and they apply throughout Canada, including Quebec, where there is no state of emergency.

These extremely broad orders are what the House is being asked to approve.

In all conscience, I refuse to do so. The Bloc Québécois refuses to do so.

The Quebec National Assembly has unanimously called on the House of Commons to refuse to do this. The criteria for invoking the act have not been met. The government knows full well that the current laws are enough; otherwise, it would have told us so.

The Emergencies Act does not address a need. All it does is save face for the Prime Minister, who let the situation get out of hand from the very beginning and wants to show that he is doing something. However, as I said, you do not drop an atomic bomb in order to send a message. Quebec does not want the emergency measures to apply in its territory.

The government held consultations and was told no. It should have taken that for an answer, but it did not. Will parliamentarians do their part by hitting the brakes? Will they stand up against government by decree, or will they instead listen to the Liberal Party?

We know that the Liberals will listen to what the government tells them. Once a lapdog, always a lapdog.

Now I will turn to the NDP.

In 1970, Tommy Douglas said that invoking the War Measures Act was like using a sledgehammer to crack a peanut. The law changed in 1988, but the situation remains the same.

Proclaiming the Emergencies Act and imposing it on Quebec, where there is no state of emergency, is today's equivalent of using a sledgehammer to crack a peanut.

Of course, the Emergencies Act is different from the infamous War Measures Act. It contains safeguards, brakes on the authoritarianism of government by decree, but the key brake is us parliamentarians. We have a heavy burden on our shoulders.

Once a lapdog, always a lapdog. When it comes time to vote, we will see if the NDP should be called the New Liberal Party or remain the New Democratic Party. The NDP essentially has the burden of choosing between a democratic government and a government by decree.

I am standing up and saying no to these three outrageous orders out of respect and love for my people.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Emergencies Act has already demonstrated that it can be effective. Law enforcement officers are, in fact, using it and it is being effective. We are very much concerned about the blockades shutting down downtown Ottawa and the blockades that have affected hundreds of millions of dollars in international trade on our trade corridors, and about the impact they are having today and will have into the future. These are very serious. We are talking about jobs and we are talking about health conditions. There are so many reasons to do this.

Does the member believe that law enforcement officers are wrong today for using the tool we are providing them? Are our law enforcement officers offside with Parliament?

• (1130)

[Translation]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, from day one the Bloc Québécois has been calling on the government to act, to roll up its sleeves and to prevent the situation from deteriorating.

The government allowed the situation to deteriorate and now, instead of moving in a measured way and using existing laws, it is using the nuclear option, the Emergencies Act, which is unnecessary.

Did the parliamentary secretary listen to my speech? Not a single measure that was invoked is necessary. The police forces were al-

ready able to work together. They did not need emergency legislation for that. It is nonsense.

The government and the Prime Minister are trying to save face because they have been asleep at the switch for three weeks. The government should be ashamed.

[English]

Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Liberals seem almost giddy today when talking about the effectiveness of what is going on out there. There was never any question that it was going to be effective. The question is whether it is justified. That is the question.

I listened to the hon. member's speech and I appreciated his tone and what he had to say. If we are using the Emergencies Act today for this, in what other situations would this precedent allow the Emergencies Act to be justified if it is justified for this?

[Translation]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I completely agree with him.

Everyone is saying that something needs to be done. This situation is a problem, but nothing justifies the nuclear option. The government was obliged to prove that there was no other option before it invoked the act.

The government did not even try to prove this in the official documents it sent us, nor did it review the existing legislation. We did that, and we did not find any measures that were lacking in the existing legislation and that would justify the use of this act, other than the potential need to requisition tow trucks.

The Liberal Party is making a questionable connection between the situation that needs to be resolved and the legislative atomic bomb it is dropping.

[English]

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Qujannamiik, Uqaqtittiji.* We know how quickly extremist behaviour and ideologies can spread. With the sheer volume of this demonstration, I am genuinely concerned that racism will grow, entrench and allow widespread violence to ensue. This extremism is dangerous and must be dealt with urgently.

I am not sure if the member heard the news last night, but the interim Ottawa police chief, Steve Bell, said, "Without the authorities provided to us through these pieces of legislation, we wouldn't be able to be doing the work we are today."

Does the member agree that extremist ideologies from other countries must be stopped and that Canadians must return to their Canadian roots of kindness to their neighbours?

[Translation]

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, I thank my esteemed colleague for her question and comments.

I want to be clear. We are criticizing the possible associations between questionable political positions, the unwarranted occupations and the use of the Emergencies Act, which we do not think is justifiable.

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I completely agree with what the member said about denouncing hate speech and unacceptable comments and continuing to fight this issue. That said, the government cannot claim that the Emergencies Act is required because the siege must be stopped.

I remind members that in the 1970s, Tommy Douglas's party was the only one that opposed the invocation of the War Measures Act. I urge the NDP to draw some inspiration from Tommy Douglas and the decision he made back then.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Joliette for his speech. I have a question for him, and I hope I will be able to express myself clearly.

I do not think the definition of what constitutes a threat to the security of Canada can be found in the Emergencies Act. Rather, it is found in the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act, which refers specifically to foreign influenced activities.

I find this deeply disturbing because I think that the misinformation about COVID-19 and the vaccines, as well as the bizarre ideas that some protesters have are coming from two sources. Some come from Republicans in the United States but mostly they come from Russia and Mr. Putin, who are spreading misinformation on sites like russiatoday.com. This site is accessible in Canada, which I find very surprising, since it spreads misinformation for the purpose of destroying democratic societies around the world.

We need to make a decision about the Emergencies Act, but beyond that, we must take action against sources of misinformation. I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on that.

• (1135)

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, I thank my esteemed colleague for his speech.

This is indeed very concerning. We must not let foreign powers influence domestic policy, that is for sure. That is why, in my speech, I referred to the five reasons given by the government to justify its decision to use the Emergencies Act. I also pointed out that these reasons were justifiable and worthy of debate.

However, in order to invoke the Emergencies Act, the government must demonstrate that the problem cannot be addressed by the ordinary laws and regulations already in place. It has not done so.

There are already regulations and laws in place, for example, those concerning funding platforms. The government has not even tried to demonstrate that there is a legal void. That is our position.

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Madam Speaker, something rather ironic is happening in the House right now: An NDP member is sitting on a Liberal back bench. I hope that he is at least negotiating a seat closer to the front.

Having said that, I hear members on the government side talking about a Maru poll that says all kinds of nonsense. According to this poll, 72% of Quebecers have a favourable opinion of the Emergencies Act. However, those same members overlook the fact that the same poll found that only 17% of people across Canada think that the Prime Minister is doing the right thing. Canadians have a very low opinion of his leadership.

If we look at the numbers, the only ones that matter are that 100% of the Quebec National Assembly voted against the Emergencies Act and that seven out of 10 provinces think that it is inappropriate.

I would therefore ask my colleague a very simple question: What does he think of the opinion about the Prime Minister, and how should he act responsibly now?

Mr. Gabriel Ste-Marie: Madam Speaker, clearly people watching the situation deteriorate in Parliament want it to stop. They want it dealt with.

If a polling firm asks questions about the Emergencies Act, most people are not going to take the time to dissect the act and understand why it was invoked and what has to be proven. Here, we study it, we analyze it, and we say the government needs to prove there is a legislative gap that needs to be filled. So far, the government has not even tried to do that. It makes no sense.

We agree with Canadians that the situation needs to be resolved, but this statutory nuclear option was not the right way to do that. I am sure we agree on that.

All parties in the National Assembly, including the Coalition Avenir Québec, the Quebec Liberal Party, the Parti Québécois and Québec Solidaire—I am not sure if the Conservative Party of Quebec's representative was in the legislature at the time, but I am told she was—unanimously said this made no sense. Why are the members from Quebec, including the Liberal Party members, not standing with their people?

• (1140)

[English]

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Madam Speaker, in the last few weeks I have received phone calls from constituents asking me why it came to this. How is it that Canada, the true north strong and free, has come to declare a national emergency to handle trucks parked in downtown Ottawa?

Let me be clear: It is time that the rule of law was restored in Ottawa, but what happened is a direct result of the fear and division created by the Prime Minister. I also want to tell people who are part of the convoy that my colleagues and I have heard their valid concerns on this side of the House. We will continue to push for an end to pandemic measures, as the science indicates should happen.

People who have reached out to my office in the last few weeks are exhausted and frustrated, and they are tired of this Liberal government not listening or even trying to understand their point of view. After three weeks, law enforcement acted to resolve the situation. However, there was no attempt by the government to speak to the organizers. Instead, the Prime Minister continued to throw around divisive rhetoric and still has not provided a plan forward to end the COVID-19 measures.

This past Monday, the Liberals had an opportunity to finally show some leadership and support the thoughtful and measured motion that we Conservatives brought forward. However, as usual, they partnered with the NDP and crushed the hopes of countless Canadians desperate for a pathway out of the pandemic. They crushed the hopes of many of my constituents in industries like tourism and transportation, constituents who were just looking for a path forward. Instead of working with members in the House and with provincial governments, the Prime Minister dug in with his name-calling. The people outside the West Block who were asking to be heard are just as Canadian as any member here. They should not be put down by someone who is supposed to be leading our country.

We have now reached the point where we need to ask ourselves seriously if the use of the Emergencies Act was really necessary. The City of Ottawa had a state of emergency in effect and the Ontario provincial government also declared an emergency. Under the current powers that existed in those declarations and existing federal and provincial laws, the police had the tools they needed to handle the situation in Ottawa.

The Emergencies Act clearly states that a declaration can only be made when it meets three conditions, including one that no other federal law or provincial power can deal with the alleged emergency. On top of that, Ontario has a plan to share law enforcement resources among municipalities without using the Emergencies Act. If the police already had the powers they needed and the Emergencies Act was not necessary to acquire manpower, why invoke the act for the first time in Canada's history?

The act was not used for the Oka crisis, nor for either of the Vancouver riots in 1994 and 2011. It was not used in 2010 when protesters at the G20 in Toronto started a riot. This act has not even been used to address recent terrorist threats to Canada or the 2020 pipeline blockades. This government is setting an extremely dangerous precedent by invoking this act.

The powers to deal with the situation here in Ottawa already existed. Despite what various ministers have said, the Governor in Council can direct the RCMP. It is all laid out in the RCMP Act under section 5. This government should know, because it used in 2017.

The Liberals also claimed that they needed the Emergencies Act to direct tow trucks in clearing rigs from downtown. Well, we know that this is false too, because section 129(b) of the Criminal Code gives police the option to require anyone “without reasonable excuse, to assist a public officer or peace officer in the execution of his duty in arresting a person or in preserving the peace”.

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What is clear now is that invoking this act is just another power grab and overreach by this Liberal government, and that is scary. What happens in the future when the government does not agree with the political position of protesters in Canada?

My constituents looked at the emergency declaration and asked, “Why?” How can this Prime Minister equate truckers parked in the middle of the road in downtown Ottawa to World War I, World War II and the October crisis, simply because he disagrees with the truckers' beliefs? He could have listened. He could have provided a plan forward out of the COVID measures. He could have handled the situation here in Ottawa without jeopardizing democracy. The RCMP and local law enforcement did it at B.C., Coutts, Emerson and the Ambassador Bridge.

The Emergencies Act is not something we can throw around lightly. It is the absolute last choice after all else has failed.

• (1145)

The future of our country is at stake. The Liberal government and Prime Minister still cannot explain what steps were taken before invoking this act. When a national emergency is so urgent and dangerous, the government needs extraordinary powers, but where is that emergency? No matter what one's political stripe, supporting these sweeping powers is one of the most serious decisions a member of this House can make. It is serious because the use of the Emergencies Act impacts the rights and freedoms of Canadians, regardless of what the government says.

This Prime Minister loves to throw around lines like “responsible leadership”. Leadership is standing up for the rights and freedoms of this country. Real leadership is protecting the fundamental principles of Canada and uniting Canadians. Despite someone having views different from the Prime Minister's, the government should not have the power to limit people's rights. Limiting rights should never happen without due process or an urgent national emergency.

If we do not have a critical national emergency, then the only way to limit Canadians' rights should be through due process, yet the government is now using the act to shut down people's bank accounts. The deputy director of intelligence for FINTRAC, Barry MacKillop, said that there is no evidence that this funding in Ottawa is tied to ideologically motivated extremism, so why are people's judicial rights being shut down? Is the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty just something the government would ignore? Bank accounts are tied to people's lives and livelihoods. A person's support of a political process should never be a reason to interfere with Canadians' rights.

Howard Anglin, former deputy chief of staff to Prime Minister Stephen Harper, wrote:

[T]he bottom line is that civil liberties in Canada are more vulnerable today than they were yesterday, and they will remain so as long as the declaration of emergency remains in place.

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The Canadian Civil Liberties Association has even taken legal action against the government, saying that the Prime Minister's action in invoking the act is "extraordinary" and "unconstitutional". The association has said that legal requirements put in place to safeguard democratic processes have not been met.

The Canadian Constitution Foundation has also said, "Emergency legislation should not be normalized. The threshold for using the Emergencies Act is extremely high and has not been met."

The World Sikh Organization of Canada is also opposed to this act; so is the British Columbia Civil Liberties Association. The provincial governments of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, P.E.I., Quebec, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta have also opposed the Prime Minister's overreach.

The situation here in Ottawa never met the level of crisis that is needed to use the Emergencies Act. Invoking this act sets a dangerous precedent. It sends a message to all Canadians, now and in the future, that they cannot have dissenting opinions or views. In this time of fear and division, people are crying out not to trample on the traditions and beliefs that make Canada great.

The Prime Minister has had many opportunities to de-escalate the situation and take a measured approach. Conservatives have been calling on the government to lay out a clear plan following science. Again, the Liberal government has completely shut out Canadians, even though two-thirds of Canadians want to see these mandates gone. This is all about mandates. It is a time for leadership in this country to unite Canadians, no matter what their views are.

As members in this place, our first duty is to listen to our constituents and protect their rights and freedoms. When the people in power overstep and overreact, we risk the rights, freedoms and democracy that this place represents. This is why I cannot, in good conscience, support the use of the Emergencies Act. Now is the time for us in this House to stand up and find a way to return to a government that is not divisive and find a way to unite Canadians. We need to work together to have a Canada that is united, strong and free.

• (1150)

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to compliment the member on his excellent speech in this difficult time.

I would like to ask him a question about the order in council that the government passed that led to the invocation of the act that we're debating today. One of the clauses in the act gives the government the power to impose "other temporary measures authorized under section 19 of the Emergencies Act that are not yet known". It is a pretty open-ended power that the government is asking for.

We know that the Prime Minister has limited respect for the House. He disregarded the request for the production of documents with regard to the Winnipeg lab. He tried to interfere in the legal system with the SNC-Lavalin scandal.

Why should we trust him? He has not called a meeting of the privy councillors sworn in in this House to brief them on any secu-

rity issues. Why should we trust that this power should be granted to the government, which is—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Calgary Forest Lawn.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Madam Speaker, trust has been completely broken by the Prime Minister, because he has not only repeatedly violated ethics but has also gone back on his word multiple times. Trust is the issue here. How can any Canadian continue to trust the Prime Minister?

In his last question, my hon. colleague from the Bloc pointed out that a recent poll shows that a small percentage of Canadians trust the Prime Minister now. This is the same prime minister who said that he would not call a pandemic election. He went against his word then. He said that he would uphold rights and freedoms in this country. We can clearly see that this is the last thing the Prime Minister is doing.

Trust has been broken. The Prime Minister needs to stand up and apologize to Canadians and prove that he is serious—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I have to ask for other questions.

The hon. deputy House leader.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague opposite for his speech.

We are hearing today that some members feel it is not necessary to invoke the Emergencies Act. I want to read a quote directly from Steve Bell, the interim chief of the Ottawa Police Service. He said:

All of those legislative pieces of legislation and supports we've got from different levels of government have directly and actively contributed to our ability to ultimately say we are in a position to move forward and look to end this demonstration.

A 31-year veteran of the police force, he has said clearly that this legislation has helped to stop what is happening outside.

Can the member comment?

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Madam Speaker, the member said, "directly and actively". The Prime Minister directly and actively forced this to happen in Ottawa, because he refused to listen to Canadians and he refused to sit down and listen to views that opposed his own.

We did not need to get to this point. All of this happened because Canadians were asking for a clear direction and a plan to get out of these COVID measures, but the Prime Minister sat on his hands, as he always does, for three weeks and made no plans to even listen to people.

That is why we are where are. This is all the Prime Minister's doing. We did not need to get here, so the Prime Minister needs to apologize for that. I wish the member would stand up and tell him the same.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague from Calgary Forest Lawn for his interventions today. I have worked very closely with him on getting supports for the people of Afghanistan.

He talked about this as if it is a trucker protest in Ottawa. It is an occupation in Ottawa, but as an Albertan, surely he recognizes that an armed militia was discovered in Alberta that threatened the RCMP and displayed images of white supremacy and racism. It is not just in Ottawa; it is a national issue.

If that is not a reason for the Emergencies Act, what is?

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Madam Speaker, what I will say is that all of the borders were already cleared. The provincial government stepped up and the local police stepped up. The federal government did not, and they had already cleared those borders.

What the federal government did is a complete overreach. I hope that my hon. colleague will find it in herself to do what the Hon. Tommy Douglas did at that time and not support this complete overreach by the Liberal government.

• (1155)

Mr. Bob Zimmer (Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies, CPC): Madam Speaker, I just wanted to say, first of all, I appreciate all Canadians' prayers right now. I have been getting messages that they are praying for us in this place to make good decisions. I covet them and we are thankful for them, especially at this very trying time for our country.

Today, we are debating the Prime Minister's Emergencies Act. We have already heard about the thresholds and whether they have been met. The Liberals will argue that they have been. However, across the board, across the country, we are hearing that they have not. Clearly, if I read them out to us today, we would see that they have not been met.

This statement is from the Canadian Civil Liberties Association:

The current emergency orders place significant limits on peaceful assembly across the entire country. They require financial institutions to turn over personal financial information to CSIS and the RCMP, and to freeze the bank accounts and cut off financial services provided to anyone who has attended, or who has provided assistance to those participating in, a prohibited assembly—all without judicial oversight.

It is in light of all these violations of civil liberties that we will be taking the government to court....

This becomes a great concern for that mother or grandmother who donated \$20 for the cause of freedom to the truckers convoy. What started off as a simple protest for truckers' mandates has developed into something much larger, into a defence of freedom in Canada. Is the grandmother that donated \$20 on some Liberal list now and cannot travel after this? We do not know. We do not know how far and how wide this act will go or what the Prime Minister is trying to do.

I figure it is important that, while we often refer to our freedoms, I will read them out. Section 2 of our fundamental freedoms reads:

Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms:

- (a) freedom of conscience and religion;
- (b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication;

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(c) freedom of peaceful assembly; and

(d) freedom of association.

Section 6 reads, "Every citizen of Canada has the right to enter, remain and leave Canada."

Section 7 reads, "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and the security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice."

Section 8 reads, "Everyone has the right to be secure against unreasonable search or seizure."

Section 9 reads, "Everyone has the right to not be arbitrarily detained or imprisoned."

The Emergencies Act really allows the Prime Minister to push those aside and do whatever he wants. Some ask me how we arrived here. That is the question I would ask all Canadians. How did we get here? This is the Prime Minister that has been leading up to this. This will be his crescendo.

Does everybody remember the Prime Minister's values test that was given to summer student jobs a number of years ago in 2017? In December of that year, the government introduced an attestation that if someone did not adhere to the Prime Minister's beliefs or his values, the funding was not going to come to them.

I remember many times fighting this in my MP office, fighting so that all members of our community would have access to those summer student jobs. Over 1,500 applications were denied because they did not meet this values test. On March 19, 2018, we tabled a motion. Former Liberal MP Scott Simms voted against the government. He was put on the back bench because of that. This is the Prime Minister four years ago. We have seen this developing for many years now.

I think what Canadians are becoming, sadly, aware of is that this is really who the Prime Minister is. I wrote a column a couple weeks ago and this is the quote from the actual Prime Minister's mouth. This is a man who is supposed to unite the country, not divide it. He said that they are extremists who don't believe in science, that they're often misogynists and also racist. He said that it is a small group that muscles in, and that we have to make a choice in terms of leaders, in terms of the country, "Do we tolerate these people?"

This quote is not from some far left-wing or far right-wing individual. This is from the Prime Minister's own mouth. This is the person invoking the same act we are debating today and it is shameful.

Some would ask why. It would seem to make more sense to unite the country than divide it. Here is an article from Lorrie Goldstein, who writes, "Trudeau can't unite us because his strategy is to divide us." This is what it is all about—

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• (1200)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons is rising on a point of order. I imagine it is about the use of names.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, it is not just the first time. It is the second time the member has made reference to it and he knows better, I am sure, than to cite specific names in the House.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I will remind the hon. member that we do not use members' names. We use their titles or constituencies.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: I will try not to do it again, Madam Speaker.

I will go back to the article entitled “Goldstein: [The Prime Minister] can't unite us because his strategy is to divide us”, which states, “This because [the Liberals] divided Canadians up into little slices of political support and opposition across the country, in order to extract the maximum number of seats from the minimum number of votes cast.” This is by design. The Prime Minister ran on sunny ways. Conservatives lost that election and hoped that he would at least be a positive Prime Minister, but what we have seen over the last four years is a Prime Minister bent on, shamefully, dividing the country.

I will continue to quote:

From riding into office on the promise of “sunny ways,” Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's embrace of identity politics has led to an incredible failure of governance, resulting in him becoming just the fourth prime minister to invoke the Emergencies Act (or its predecessor) and notably the first to do so outside an actual war or insurrection. It is a shocking fall, with a witches brew of wedge politics, incompetence and identity politics to blame.

It further states:

Then, imperceptibly at first, the great scourge of our political age began to make appearances within the Trudeau Liberals: identity politics. With—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I remind the hon. member not to say members' names, please.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Madam Speaker, I was reading the quote. I apologize once more.

With astonishing speed, opponents of government action could quickly be labelled racist, misogynist, homophobic or any other of a litany of insults intended to personally scar opponents and discredit them as the worst society has to offer, without addressing the substance of their argument.

We are debating the Emergencies Act today and it has come to this culmination by design of the Prime Minister. This is what he wants to happen. This is from the sunny ways Prime Minister whom all who voted for hoped would become the great unifier of our country. Are a bunch of truckers or peaceful, freedom-loving Canadians the problem today? They are not. The Prime Minister and his Emergencies Act is, and the act needs to be defeated.

I especially call on the NDP. We know the Bloc have shown opposition to it and Conservatives are in opposition to it. My hope is that Liberal members across the way will oppose it as well. There needs to be 20 more NDP members who vote against this for it to fail. For the sake of our democracy in this country, it needs to, and I call on New Democrats today to do that.

We hear Canadians across the country and appreciate their prayers, emails and communications of concern. We take our re-

sponsibilities in this place very seriously and that is why we are here this weekend to debate this act that threatens our very institution.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for quoting the Prime Minister when he made the comments about the types of people he was talking about. He was referring to a small group. I would ask the member why it is that, since the beginning of this debate, you have consistently, on the other side of the House—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I would remind the hon. member to direct her question through the Chair, please.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: I apologize, Madam Speaker.

I would ask the member opposite to please explain, if the quote he read says that the Prime Minister was referring to a small group within the organization, why the party opposite continuously says the Prime Minister was referring to all the protesters and truckers, whom we all support.

• (1205)

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Madam Speaker, I am shocked by what the member asked me. She is basically justifying the Prime Minister's comments. The reference was to people who had vaccine hesitancy, as we call it. She is saying that it is okay that the Prime Minister called them extremists who don't believe in science, often misogynists, also often racists, with a small group that muscles in, and that he said, “We have to make a choice as a leader, as a country: Do we tolerate these people?”

My goodness, I am surprised the member would defend that statement in the House. Maybe she could get a copy of the Constitution and study our fundamental freedoms to understand what our freedoms are. They are supposed to be for every Canadian in our country, not just the ones who do what the Prime Minister chooses to do.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Madam Speaker, I have a point of order. The member opposite is addressing me directly. He is also calling into question whether I have any knowledge of our Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Please direct the questions to the Chair.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Statutory Order

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by agreeing with my colleague from Prince George. It is always nice to find common ground. I was one of only three members of Parliament on the opposition benches who voted with his party, condemning the use of the specific phrase he mentioned in the summer grants program. I remember clearly that vote. I felt that it was a misuse of a grant program by appropriating into language that was elevated to charter language something that could be seen on either side as within the scope of the charter.

I am still undecided as to how to vote on this motion. I am looking to my friend, because he is my friend. I do wish that we could have ideas on how to lower the temperature in this place so that we do not descend into hurling insults across the way. Canadians do not want to see that.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member's comments. There is an old phrase from the Bible that says a calm answer turns away wrath. I think in this place we do need to bring the calmness, so we do not encourage things to get worse. I absolutely take that. I feel it is all of our responsibility to be that way. That is where I think this act is fanning the flames.

We need to do our very best to bring peace to our country again and unify our country again like it really wants to be. "God keep our land glorious and free." That is what we are all striving to do.

Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pro-vaccination, but I have friends and constituents who are not. They have made a different decision. We have had conversations about it and I cannot convince them. Many of them have reached out. Some of them who were working for the public service are not anymore as they lost their jobs. I talked to more than one person who had to give up their house because of it. They are coming to us asking what to do. On top of that devastation, they have a Prime Minister who referenced them as being misogynists and racist, as was mentioned.

I am sure the member has heard from people in that same devastating situation. What impact would it have if the Prime Minister would simply come back to say that he spoke too strongly, he got it wrong and he has heard people's concerns? What impact would that make to the de-escalation of what we have seen over the past—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member has 10 seconds to answer.

The hon. member for Prince George—Peace River—Northern Rockies.

Mr. Bob Zimmer: Madam Speaker, that was a great question. This place is often a place of contention, but it needs to be a place of forgiveness too. We have given the Prime Minister that opportunity. I even called on him to just apologize.

I think a lot of people feel like that. They would accept a simple apology, but we have not heard that yet. We are calling on him—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Trois-Rivières.

[Translation]

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles.

I am against invoking the Emergencies Act.

I commend the work of the police officers, who have shown remarkable composure and professionalism. I hope this illegal occupation will end without violence.

Many protesters have made the reasonable choice to leave. However, a fractious group is still refusing to go home. It is possible they are extremists. They are the ones who came to occupy, not to protest. It is to be expected that they will be difficult to remove, but none of this justifies using the Emergencies Act.

To invoke and enforce the act, two things must first be demonstrated. First, that there is a dangerous and urgent situation. Second, that it is impossible to deal with the situation under existing laws. I do not believe this to be the case.

Faced with such a situation, I think it is important to distinguish between an exception, in other words, something that only occurs once and will not reoccur, and a precedent, which is something that is expected to happen again. I do not think we should make a precedent out of an exceptional situation.

I personally believe that invoking the Emergencies Act is the direct result of a terrible lack of vision and leadership. With that in mind, the question that remains is this: How did we get to where we are today?

We all knew that the truckers were coming. We all knew that, once they were here, it would be difficult to remove them. Did all of us really know that? No. The Prime Minister said that the right to protest was important, and I agree. I also agree that everyone should be able to express themselves freely. That was before the protest became an occupation.

Throughout the first week of the occupation, the Prime Minister was quick to lecture us, saying that he could not direct the police, that the police had to submit their requests and that it was the police's job to control the situation. That is why the police chief asked for 1,800 additional officers, but he got only a few dozen. That is when the occupation became really entrenched. Was it a lack of vision on the part of the Prime Minister, carelessness, flippancy or a lack of leadership? Who knows?

To understand the situation—and I propose that we discuss it in order to explain it—it is worth noting that this ill-advised decision is a logical extension of previous decisions, which were all equally clumsy.

The current Liberal government was elected in 2015 on promises for a better future, one where transparency would be a priority and where Canada would reclaim its place on the international stage. That was in 2015, and the Liberals were saying that Canada was back.

Statutory Order

It was definitely a breath of fresh air and there was hope for better days. The Prime Minister met with world leaders and graced the front pages of celebrity magazines. The whole world admired his youthful good looks and colourful socks.

Hope appealed to Canadians, but all was not well. In January 2017, the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner began an investigation into the Trudeau family's vacation on the Aga Khan's private island, and that investigation resulted in a reprimand from the commissioner.

It was the first time a prime minister had been reprimanded by a Conflict of Interest and Ethics commissioner. The first Trudeau report, because there would be others, was shameful for a prime minister—

• (1210)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I remind the hon. member not to use colleagues' names.

Mr. René Villemure: You are absolutely right, Madam Speaker. That was the name of the report.

After this rebuke, the Prime Minister tried to justify the unjustifiable by responding that he was sorry, that he was responsible, that he would do better in the future and that he would make sure to have his vacations approved by the commissioner. In short, it was a cop-out we would hear many more times in the future.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I must interrupt the hon. member because we have a point of order.

The hon. member for Humber River—Black Creek.

[*English*]

Hon. Judy A. Sgro: Madam Speaker, I think this is out of order. We are talking about the Emergencies Act. We are not talking about an ethics report from some time ago.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): There is a certain measure of leeway to allow the member to make his point.

[*Translation*]

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I would like to finish my answer, please.

I wanted to say that the hon. member has an opportunity to find some context, but we are talking about the Emergencies Act.

Mr. René Villemure: Absolutely, Madam Speaker. I fully agree.

The context that I am bringing here allows me to draw a line, which for the moment is drawn as a solid line but where we can see the dots that are connected. I will shorten my remarks on the line in question.

A little later, the Prime Minister was still making headlines about ethics and the SNC-Lavalin affair. When we read the report, we learned that the commissioner had tried to meet with him a hundred times, but that did not happen. In my opinion, this is avoidance. There too, he was not responsible for anything.

That has continued; this line is continuous and that is what we need to see. In 2020, as we know, the federal cabinet chose WE Charity to administer the Canada student service grant. There were ties between that organization and the Prime Minister's family, namely his children, his wife, his brother, and so on. The Prime Minister did not shoulder the blame in that situation, but we know what happened next. I mention all of this to say that the Prime Minister has a troubled relationship with ethics, with the concepts of what is right and just, which brings us to the Emergencies Act.

In my opinion, in these situations that I briefly described, the Prime Minister demonstrated a complete lack of judgment, and that is not what we expect from a leader. Even recently, on the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, the Prime Minister chose to go surfing rather than to pay tribute to a people he personally chose to honour. Is that an ethical failure? Certainly not, but it shows a lack of judgment. Once again that is not what we expect from a leader. The most recent example of a lack of judgment is the invocation of the Emergencies Act.

I am listing these failures in order to draw attention to the Liberal mindset. In my opinion, repeated errors in judgment and contempt are part of their DNA. When we have contempt for an object or person, we believe they are unworthy of respect or esteem. I will give three examples of contempt relating to the office of Prime Minister, the institution of Parliament and the people.

At the beginning of his mandate, the Prime Minister showed contempt for his office with the costumes he wore. He should understand that he is not acting in a play.

As for contempt for the institution of Parliament, the ethics breaches that I mentioned and the audacity of calling an unnecessary vanity election come to mind.

As for contempt for the public, after actively doing nothing, the Prime Minister uselessly invoked the Emergencies Act, which is not something that the provinces wanted or found to be useful under the circumstances—as my colleagues have clearly shown—because most of the powers used so far by police officers already existed at the provincial and municipal levels.

It is a strong-handed measure that is actually an admission of weakness. In fact, it is a textbook case of hubris—my friends know my background in philosophy. Hubris is when somebody becomes too vain, cocky or intoxicated with power, and eventually loses control and risks making poor and potentially fatal decisions.

The Prime Minister has made an art out of adding insult to injury through his lack of substance, numerous ethics breaches, poor judgment, contempt, arrogance and hubris.

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The Prime Minister called an unnecessary snap election and invoked the Emergencies Act for no good reason, which did not help in Coutts, in Windsor, or even in Ottawa. That, to me, is unacceptable. How did we end up here? If we have been paying any attention at all, and add up the lack of judgment and leadership, it is hardly surprising that we are here today discussing this legislation.

When I look at everything that the Prime Minister has done, it seems to me that over time he has started to confuse public interest with political games, public interest with personal interest.

The Emergencies Act is the wrong response, a response lacking in leadership to a situation that required maximum leadership. The Emergencies Act, as I said, is a strong move, but it is an admission of weakness. Rather than bringing out the nuclear weapons, I think that he should have acted sooner. I wonder whether the Prime Minister should put the legislation in question to a free vote in order to see what all members of the House really think.

Before he racks up one too many lapses in judgment, I encourage the Prime Minister to ask himself whether he still feels like governing.

• (1215)

[English]

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Madam Speaker, no charter rights are being infringed upon here. It is very clear in the public order that that is the case. This is not the War Measures Act. It is a much more specific application of federal laws that are being made available to provincial and municipal authorities to be able to address the issue. Indeed, 72% of Quebecers actually support the government's measures on this.

On Monday, the spokesperson for the Bloc called for federal government leadership. Then the Government of Canada provides tools to the provinces and municipalities to help deal with the situation, and now the Bloc is of course against it. What I think the Bloc is missing is this: It is not just about Ottawa. It is about what comes next, because some of the key organizers of this protest have said they intend to set up shop elsewhere.

Does the Bloc not agree that having discretion for its police force, the SQ, to support Lacolle, Quebec and other key junctures in its province is a good thing? The Bloc normally loves discretion to the provinces, except now.

[Translation]

Mr. René Villemure: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his question.

Police discretion is important. The police must be able to act within the bounds that they find acceptable.

The current powers delegated to the municipalities and the provinces would have been able to cover most of the situations that have occurred. The problem is that they did not act soon enough.

I do not think that the issue is a lack of authority. I do not think that there has been a violation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms at all.

• (1220)

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his speech. I am on the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics with him, and I would like to say that he is a very honourable man.

I am very worried. The order issued by the government authorizes it to impose other temporary measures authorized under section 19 of the Emergencies Act, which are not yet known.

The Prime Minister is basically asking the House to grant him limited powers, but that, actually, is quite broad.

Is the member also worried?

Mr. René Villemure: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member.

The fact that we are unaware of certain parts or sections of the act is indeed worrisome.

If we are to support it on Monday, as planned, I demand that we be allowed to read the whole text.

[English]

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, the Bloc and the Conservatives keep saying things are fine at the Ambassador Bridge in the Windsor area, when they are not. If I could pick up my computer and walk two kilometres down the road, I could show the barriers that are now in the community.

Why is my friend from the Bloc abandoning the francophone population in my region? West of Montreal, this is the oldest francophone settlement. We have a number of different individuals who are now impacted, not just their businesses, but also going to medical appointments and going to their jobs. There is a whole series of things that are still there.

Why do they insist there is no problem? Why has the Bloc abandoned the francophone population, a settlement in the Windsor-Essex County area since the 1700s?

[Translation]

Mr. René Villemure: Madam Speaker, I cannot believe what I am hearing.

We are not abandoning anyone. Contrary to what the member is insinuating, we are not the ones talking about “anglophones”, “francophones”, “racialized” and “non-racialized” people. We are talking about everyone. We have to deal with this situation for everyone, as complete equals.

The member's comment is malicious. I do not agree.

*Statutory Order**[English]*

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Trois-Rivières for his speech and also commend him and his colleagues for their speeches, which have clearly indicated that the government has not shown any justification for why this should be coming forward and imposing this upon Canadians.

I am sure they have heard from their constituents, just as I have, about the non-confidence in the Prime Minister and the overstepping of boundaries he is doing with this move. He is picking and choosing what is going on. A concern that has been mentioned about the act is the fact that it is opening up doors for financial implications. The reality is that we see the Prime Minister making these choices.

Are there concerns in Quebec that this could be extrapolated to other groups and organizations within Quebec, just like with Coastal GasLink in—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I must give the hon. member for Trois-Rivières a few seconds to respond.

[Translation]

Mr. René Villemure: Madam Speaker, I could not agree more. We have to be very careful.

This kind of legislation can serve the public good, but it has to be more specific. This one does not meet the fundamental criteria.

Mr. Luc Desilets (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Bloc Québécois strongly condemns the occupation, the siege and the blockades. That is clear, and I hope nobody will ever doubt it.

I refuse to play the game the Liberals and the NDP MPs want to play. I think it is deplorable. Do not ask me to just go along with it. This order is utterly out of proportion. It could destroy our freedoms. The Liberals deployed it in the hope that we would not notice their incompetence and their sloppy, pathetic handling of the crisis.

This government, and particularly this Prime Minister, were asleep at the switch for three weeks. As my leader said, out of nowhere, they dropped a nuclear bomb, the Emergencies Act. Our role as BQ MPs is to protect our constituents from these bad federal government decisions. Taking coercive action without taking Quebec's opinion into account was a very bad decision.

The government had police forces at its disposal. They were capable of taking action; they had the tools to do so. Unfortunately, the government waited too long. As my leader said, it is obvious that a truck parked on the white lines of a public roadway, even if it is just for a minute and a half, is breaking several laws.

Let us talk about existing laws. Subsection 430(1) of the Criminal Code reads as follows:

430 (1) Every one commits mischief who wilfully

(c) obstructs, interrupts or interferes with the lawful use, enjoyment or operation of property; or

(d) obstructs, interrupts or interferes with any person in the lawful use, enjoyment or operation of property.

Note that property here can refer to a road, bridge, tunnel or port.

The right to protest is a recognized right. However, a protest can be declared illegal for several reasons. For instance, section 63(1) of the Criminal Code states, and I quote:

63 (1) An unlawful assembly is an assembly of three or more persons who, with intent to carry out any common purpose, assemble in such a manner or so conduct themselves when they are assembled as to cause persons in the neighbourhood of the assembly to fear, on reasonable grounds, that they

(a) will disturb the peace tumultuously; or

(b) will by that assembly needlessly and without reasonable cause provoke other persons to disturb the peace tumultuously.

Both types of mischief constitute offences that have been perpetrated continuously for 23 days. Individual freedom does have its limits. We were already at that point a few weeks ago. This is not a new problem. A free and democratic society forms the basis of our social contract.

The Prime Minister should clearly have woken up sooner. He knew that the Ottawa Police Service did not have the staff to manage this crisis, and he did nothing to help. On February 10, Ottawa asked for an additional 1,800 police officers. The federal government sent 275. That is not too bad. However, they were mainly assigned to the Prime Minister and Parliament. In reality, 20 police officers were added to the detail monitoring the protesters. That is embarrassing and shameful.

Suddenly, on day 16 of the occupation, the Prime Minister woke up and spoke about the nuclear option, the Emergencies Act. The government says it is justified in invoking this act, so let us talk about the justification or the lack thereof.

Since Monday, the government has used its order to financially punish and literally ruin the protesters and their associated entities. Did we then see the protesters run away with their tails between their legs? No. Everyone is talking about one case that was reported on the news two days ago, I believe, the only known case, the only recorded case.

• (1225)

The protesters have remained, more determined than ever, now convinced that they are living under a dictatorship. This government provoked them and continues to provoke them.

The Economist wrote that this act could make the situation worse. I think it hit the nail on the head. It was right on.

The second thing covered by this order in council is the much-talked-about towing logistics. Tow truck drivers in the area apparently did not want to use their equipment to tow the trucks. The government could have looked to bring in tow trucks from outside the national capital, which would have eliminated the need for this order in council.

When there is a big storm that causes massive damage in Sherbrooke, what happens? People from Saguenay will show up quickly to help. That is how it works in Quebec, at least. People come from far and away to help. All you have to do is ask.

Furthermore, the Bloc Québécois offered to form an all-party crisis task force in the early days of the occupation. We wanted to work together to address this effectively. The Prime Minister took his time agreeing. He wound up backed into a corner and said yes.

The Bloc Québécois wanted and still wants to help the country get out of this mess, this terrible crisis. The reality on the ground is that the police are now doing their job and they did not need this order to do it. They needed more people.

The Bloc Québécois is opposed to this legislation because it was and still is sufficient to allocate as many police officers and resources as necessary to each site, for example to the Ambassador Bridge and Coutts.

A moment ago, I was talking about solidarity. I would like to express my gratitude to the Sûreté du Québec officers who came to lend a hand to our Ontario neighbours. I would also like to express my deep admiration to the seven police forces that have been here in Ottawa since Friday and who are doing an extraordinary job of removing the occupiers. They are professional, methodical and effective. I have nothing but praise for them.

By the way, there are not many NDP members here today, so maybe the NDP is reconsidering its position. At least that is what we hope. After all, only fools do not change their minds.

• (1230)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Longueuil—Charles-LeMoine on a point of order.

Mrs. Sherry Romanado: Madam Speaker, the hon. member opposite knows full well that he is not allowed to mention the absence or presence of members.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Indeed. I thank the member for reminding me.

I would ask the hon. member to wait until his microphone is on before apologizing.

The hon. member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles.

Mr. Luc Desilets: Madam Speaker, I understand, and therefore I will not mention the absence of the NDP members.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I would remind the hon. member that he is doubling down on the comment for which the point of order was just raised. I would therefore ask him to withdraw his comments without saying anything further.

Mr. Luc Desilets: Madam Speaker, I was a bit unruly and I apologize.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The member for Windsor West, on a point of order.

[English]

Mr. Brian Masse: Madam Speaker, we all know that one cannot do inadvertently what one cannot do overtly. Members of the NDP are here online, just as other members are, so that is an irresponsible comment and a cheap parlour trick.

Statutory Order

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Indeed, that is what I said to the hon. member.

The hon. member for Rivière-des-Mille-Îles.

Mr. Luc Desilets: Madam Speaker, I withdraw my remarks.

The Canadian Civil Liberties Association announced that it would challenge the Emergencies Act in court.

The group stated that the government already had the tools to address the situation and that the order was unnecessary, unjustifiable and unconstitutional. We could not agree more.

Amnesty International has expressed concern about some aspects of the order that are vague and could result in rights abuses, especially relating to the geographic limitations. That is the message we have been driving home since Thursday.

This act is disproportionate and overly broad. It certainly should not include Quebec, nor should it include the other six provinces that disagree with the order.

However, I completely agree with my Liberal colleagues that the occupation must be cleared out as soon as possible. Unfortunately, as we have said over and over, and as I will now say again, this has to happen in stages. To summarize, this law of last resort does little to resolve the current situation, but it does a lot to discredit Quebec and Canada on the international stage. It does a lot to threaten one of our fundamental freedoms. The Bloc Québécois absolutely does not support the use of this act. It is unfortunate that we should have to spend three days debating it.

It is even sadder considering that we are witnessing the dismantling of the occupation outside as we speak.

• (1235)

[English]

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to acknowledge the Province of Quebec and thank it for intervening and helping us with the illegal blockade we have outside. This is a national problem, and what is happening in Ottawa is not the only issue we are dealing with. We are dealing with issues from one part of the country to another, and that is why we need the Emergencies Act.

I would like to know if my hon. colleague is supportive of having the SQ continue to help us. It is helping us very importantly outside right now.

[Translation]

Mr. Luc Desilets: Madam Speaker, it is absolutely extraordinary that the Sûreté du Québec is helping Ontario and British Columbia.

We stand together. The provinces will be excellent neighbours for us, and we will continue to stand together. That is clear.

According to most newspapers, there is not much going on outside of Ottawa. Basically all the protests and blockades have been cleared.

Statutory Order

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Minister of Justice revealed yesterday that the financial provisions of the Emergencies Act were aimed more at punishing political opponents than at actually fighting crime.

[*English*]

Can members imagine living in a country like Canada where a law or an act is designed to beat down political dissent on the part of opposition parties? That could include the Bloc Québécois, for example. I am interested in the member's comments on that.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Desilets: Madam Speaker, this is another great opportunity for me.

I asked that question this morning but did not get an answer. We are talking about finances. The order is meant to affect the personal finances of truckers, except it has unintended consequences. I think it is wrong.

People's bank accounts are being frozen. This morning I asked whether they would be frozen for a week or a month. How long will these accounts be frozen? Will it affect people's credit ratings?

This could destroy people.

[*English*]

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, I appreciate working with the member on the veterans committee and appreciate and respect his opinion. I also appreciate that while I sat through his speech, I was in the camera shot the majority of the time.

I am wondering if the member could answer a very important question.

I do agree with some parts of his intervention, like the fact that the government took too long to respond. We did not see action, and it should have had action. All levels of government failed, and here we are today having a debate on something that I wish we did not have to debate, because governments did not do their jobs. We also know the Canadian Civil Liberties Association is suing the government, which I support. I think it is absolutely important that we have systems in place to make sure everything that is done is done well and with accountability.

I am wondering if the member agrees this is a good step and that a committee to oversee this needs to be set immediately.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Luc Desilets: Madam Speaker, I am having a hard time understanding exactly what the question is, so let me take this opportunity to ask the NDP members to really think carefully about this.

New Democrats have extremely humanist values, more so than many people in the House. The NDP members are social democrats. Whether we like it or not, the legislation we are about to pass—or not—will hurt workers.

Workers are the New Democrats' target audience. That is all I wanted to add to my colleague's speech.

[*English*]

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to represent the constituents of Kelowna—Lake Country.

Friday, March 13, 2020, will be forever in my memory as the day we closed Parliament due to the coronavirus pandemic declaration, and we all made our way home. In response to the pandemic, the Liberals brought forth legislation in which, at the eleventh hour, they added in clauses which would have given the finance minister unchecked power to tax, spend and incur debt, with no budget, no debate and no parliamentary oversight for 21 months.

After weeks of not sitting, the Liberals finally introduced a dramatically reduced Parliament for the next several months where MPs could ask questions, but other parliamentary abilities such as opposition day motions, emergency debates and many other daily functions did not occur. This was a crossroad in history for our democratic institutions and how it was going to operate during this world crisis at that time.

Conservatives strongly pushed back on giving the government ultimate financial power, and in May 2020, I flew back to Ottawa and was standing in the House of Commons debating these issues. My speech garnered national media attention as a rookie MP who was passionately standing up for democracy. I feel like we are in a similar situation with the Liberals going directly to the most extreme power. It is not stated enough that Canada is a great country. We have democratic government, equality, rule of law, some of the strongest human rights and environmental laws, a safe and civil society, job opportunities, social networks, civil liberties and freedoms.

It is important that we protect these. They are the reason why so many people want to visit and move to Canada. People have fought for the freedoms and the country we call home. We need to ensure that we have laws to protect all these and the governing structures that uphold our laws.

Prime Minister Mulroney saw the armed standoff in Oka. Gunfire was exchanged, and individuals tragically lost their lives. Prime Minister Chrétien saw the skies of the world close with 9/11 and the threat of terrorist violence at levels higher than any other time in our history. Prime Minister Harper saw the financial markets of the world collapse, and we saw the terror attack on Parliament Hill with a life lost.

In January 2020, protesters blockaded the rail lines and highways that bring trade and provide rail passenger service in Canada from coast to coast. They were at a standstill for a month. They also shut down ferries off the coast of British Columbia. In 2020 and 2021, the coronavirus pandemic brought our health care system and our economy to their knees. Also in 2021, my province of British Columbia was devastated by floods, mudslides and wildfires, affecting tens of thousands of people.

None of these crises brought any federal government of the day to invoke the federal Emergencies Act. To be clear, Conservatives have no issue with dialogue with Canadians seeking to protest peacefully, but that right to protest cannot include blockading infrastructure such as rail lines or border crossings. Free-flowing critical infrastructure is the law of this country and we must uphold it.

The government has falsely insinuated that Conservatives have been inconsistent on this. The party that has been truly inconsistent has been the Liberal Party. During the extensive rail blockades of 2020, due to protests, the government sent delegations to talk to those involved. Law enforcement from many jurisdictions used the various tools and laws available to them to end the rail blockades.

Just a few days ago, on February 17, reports of substantial damage surfaced on the Coastal GasLink Pipeline in B.C., an area that has seen protesters. There were attempts to set a vehicle on fire with workers in it; attackers wielding axes; flare guns fired at workers; cut hydraulic and fuel lines, which caused dangerous leaks; extensive damage to equipment and property; and people throwing smoke bombs at police.

Where are the Liberals on this situation? The Prime Minister appointed a law-breaking professional protester as environment minister. Their hypocrisy could not be clearer. When the Prime Minister agrees with the message of a protest, he opens up dialogue and maybe even perhaps attends. When he does not, he name-calls, scolds and demands his government be allowed the same powers as if we were at war.

The words of the Liberal member for Louis-Hébert continue to ring true. When it comes to the Prime Minister's government, wedging, dividing and stigmatizing is the way the Liberals choose to act. The Prime Minister's recent false accusation that members of the House stood with a swastika is only the most recent example of callousness. His refusal to apologize shows how he continues to be committed to that path of division. It is so disappointing to see this from the Prime Minister.

● (1240)

There are many people who came here to Ottawa from across the country who are law-abiding and who are peacefully protesting, wanting to be heard, including from Kelowna—Lake Country. Canadians know that when it comes to hateful imagery, language, intimidation, injury or damage that those individuals need to be held accountable. Every member of the House denounces these situations, and there are laws to address it.

The good news for Canadians is that our laws work and seem to be working, and protests have been peaceful. The border crossing at Coutts has been cleared, the Ambassador Bridge has been reopened, among others. Provincial governments and local police forces have been able to act with the laws of this Parliament, and those of the provincial and municipal governments across the country. Seven out of 10 provinces have come out against using the Emergencies Act.

The order in council released by the government authorizes itself to impose “other temporary measures authorized under section 19 of the Emergencies Act that are not yet known.” What does that mean? Just trust the Prime Minister and give him ultimate authority

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with no oversight? It also states that the “emergency exists throughout Canada”. That is not true.

The order in council also requires institutions to cease dealing with a designated person, defined as anyone associated with the protest. What does that mean? It is extremely vague. What if a person shared a tweet? It is being recorded that financial institutions are unclear what this entails. There appears to be broad discretion for the government.

They are invoking the Emergencies Act, but, as a national emergency, this does not meet the threshold for its justification. The choice of this government to seek to use the powers of the Emergencies Act is not for lack of options. It is the result of a lack of leadership from this Prime Minister. His government has been left embarrassed and now seeks to break glass on the most severe law.

Canadians are frustrated, and they are seeking hope. Conservatives tried to offer this government, just a week ago, the olive branch to do that. We put forth a motion calling on the government to light the way for the end of COVID-19 restrictions and mandates. We wanted the government to tell Canadians, 90% of whom are already vaccinated, and millions more boosted, the plan for when this will be over. Provinces are doing it, and other countries are doing it. We asked for a plan in our motion, and the Liberals and NDP refused to give one. They voted it down.

My constituency office has never received so many emails and phone calls over the last two weeks. These are not form letters. Thousands of people from Kelowna—Lake Country, many who had never reached out to their member of Parliament before, are supporting the Conservative motion to have a plan to end the mandates, and they are not supporting the Emergencies Act invocation. Here is just a brief sample of their comments.

“I used to be so proud to be Canadian...now I am not.”

“I am an RCMP member, 13 years, and it saddens me to see what is happening in this country.”

“I notice the Liberals are wanting to follow the money with the truckers blockage. I’m wondering if they are now willing to open up the WE contravene and follow the money in it?”

“Three weeks of peaceful protest & zero willingness from the liberal gov't to listen to those upset & sick & tired of mandates.”

“Under the Emergencies Act, Canada's financial institutions would be granted the power to freeze anyone's accounts without a court order. This IS most assuredly a brazen attack on our freedom of expression and cannot be tolerated. Enough is enough.”

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"If it's ONLY a fringe minority, then why invoke the Emergencies Act?"

"I'm a veteran of 20 years and right now I'm very disgusted to what is going on."

"This not the Canada I know."

The Liberals across the way are chirping at me, and they are laughing at the comments from my constituents in Kelowna—Lake Country. For people to consider for the next election, here is a quote from Prime Minister Harper, as retweeted by our current Prime Minister almost a decade ago. It says, "When a government starts trying to cancel dissent or avoid dissent is when it's rapidly losing its moral authority to govern".

I have looked at this motion, done my research, listened to people and heard from my Kelowna—Lake Country constituents. I absolutely cannot support confirming the Emergencies Act.

• (1245)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I take great exception to the terminology that this member uses when she says phrases like "these Liberals" and "those Liberals". I can assure her that "these Conservatives" are nothing like "those Conservatives" of the past, like my predecessor Flora MacDonald, who actually introduced this bill into this House.

The member referenced a lot of quotes, and I have a quote for her from Police Chief Steve Bell. He said, "Without the authorities that have been provided...through these pieces of legislation, we wouldn't be able to...work [together] today".

Can the member explain to us why she, coming from the party of law and order, somehow encourages the activity out there and will not take the word of the police chief running this?

• (1250)

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Madam Speaker, the reason we are here today is the failure in leadership of the Prime Minister and the government. We continually asked what the steps were that they took to bring us to this point. Continually, we had no answers.

What was the first step that they took? What was the second step? What was the third step? What was the fourth step?

This is an extraordinary situation. We have been given no information about all of the steps that were taken by the federal government to bring us to this point. The first step could be to talk to and listen to people.

There has been nothing done to bring us to this point today.

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech.

First, if I may, I would like to recognize the presence, courage, bravery and judgment of members of the various security forces who are on the ground in front of Parliament right now. My husband is a retired police officer and I can assure the House that it takes a lot of judgment and—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member.

[English]

Can I have order so we can hear the questions? Order.

Mr. John Brassard: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands used an unparliamentary term, referring to another member as an "idiot".

I would like him to apologize.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I did not hear that.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands may respond.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, I am happy to apologize for that comment. It is true that I said that, and I apologize for it.

However, I will recognize the fact that the member for Barrie—Innisfil said the same thing—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We are not going to enter debate on this.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix may continue her question.

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens: Madam Speaker, I commend the presence of the seven teams that are on the ground at this time.

I would add that no one in Parliament deserves to be called an idiot.

I have the following question for my colleague. The Prime Minister himself has said a number of times that the act would not apply where it is not needed. Since there are seven provinces, including Quebec, who do not need this legislation and do not want it applied, why does he want to apply it everywhere? What does the member think is the reason for this?

[English]

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Madam Speaker, in reference to what just occurred, it is obvious that it is not only the Prime Minister who likes to call people names. It is a Liberal tactic.

My answer the member's question is absolutely. Part of this act is that provinces have to be spoken to and have to be consulted, and they were. Clearly, they are overwhelmingly not in support of the Emergencies Act, with seven out of 10 provinces against it. That says something in itself. These are governments that have said that they do not believe this is needed at this time.

What the Prime Minister has done is completely ignore that. He has gone his own way and has still moved forward with this.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Qujannamiik, Uqaqtittiji.* The Conservative messaging has been fuelling misinformation and has minimized clearly over-violent acts. The fact that they used the terrible examples of history, such as victims of the Holocaust, as a sword is deplorable.

Misinformation of this magnitude leads to growing hatred and violence toward our communities, and it is wreaking havoc without consequence. Can the member answer why they continue to minimize the violence invoked by these extremists, whom they have posed with?

Mrs. Tracy Gray: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question and her intervention.

On this side of the House, I am not familiar with anyone who has taken pictures with people waving swastikas and other things like that. That simply has not happened.

We have to realize that, as I mentioned in my speech, there are people who have views and who have said and done things that are absolutely deplorable. We denounce them. That is not everyone who is involved.

I have walked the streets here, talking to people who are teachers and who have had enough with children having such mental health problems that they cannot handle them anymore. There are people who have lost their jobs. They are everyday people—

• (1255)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We have to resume debate.

The hon. member for Miramichi—Grand Lake.

Mr. Jake Stewart (Miramichi—Grand Lake, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is certainly a privilege today to speak on behalf of the people of Miramichi—Grand Lake.

After 14 years of life in politics, this speech kept me up at night. It caused me to consider so many different angles of what is truly happening. It took me back to some travelling I did as a young adult. I travelled extensively in Italy and France, I lived in South Korea for a time, and I stayed in Rome for one month.

While in Rome, I studied ancient history. We learned about the Emperor Nero. We learned about how, when Rome was burning in the year 64, he let the city go up in a blaze. Historians often pondered whether he played the fiddle while it was burning because he wanted to create a new palace amid the ashes. He blamed it on a small fringe minority of people called Christians. I learned that in ancient history.

In the afternoon on that study trip, we studied modern Italy. I learned about how the Italians were so thankful to Canadians for being liberated during World War II. I attended a ceremony in Thierville, Normandy in 2011, and spoke on behalf of the Province of New Brunswick. I witnessed the tears in real time of the people who lived in Juno, of the first houses liberated, and the respect they have for Canadians to this very day.

When I lived in South Korea, I was walking down the street late one night. I believe there was a 12-hour difference, and I was calling home. In the street, a drunken old man cursed me out because he did not like the sound of my voice. I was speaking English. What I realized later is that he thought I was American.

Some friends of mine who are Korean walked up to the man. They told him to be kind to me and that I was Canadian. I did not understand the language they were speaking. The old fellow, who

could barely walk as he was intoxicated, walked up to me and kissed me on the cheek. He called me a *oegug-in*, which is a Canadian to a South Korean, and thanked me in his language for what our ancestors and veterans did in the Korean conflict. It is not lost on me, the respect our country has around the world and how we achieved it.

The question here today is an important one. We all believe in freedom. We all know how we achieved it. We have to ascertain what it means to each and every one of us. If people are listening in Miramichi—Grand Lake and watching today, I want to tell them that there is a difference between an emergency and an invocation of the Emergencies Act.

The act used to be called the War Measures Act. It was brought in during World War I and World War II. It was also brought in by then prime minister Trudeau in 1970, in what then leader of the NDP, Tommy Douglas, called basically a gargantuan oversight by an inept government.

This is the fourth time in our history. Now it is under the new name of the Emergencies Act. I need members to realize this act was not brought in for 9/11 under Prime Minister Chrétien. It was not brought in when Allan Legere, a serial killer, terrorized and horrified Miramichiers on a murdering rampage nobody in my community will ever forget. It was not brought in for the natural shale gas demonstrations on Route 11, which saw millions of dollars of seismic equipment destroyed and eight police cruisers bombed with molotov cocktails, while the people who managed the protest stood there with machine guns. When the RCMP was called to make it end, it ended abruptly. It did not end with what we used to call the War Measures Act. It did not end with what we now call the Emergencies Act.

The fact is that I am vaccinated, as are my wife and kids. Many people I know are vaccinated, and many people I know are not vaccinated. I believe it is a personal choice to be vaccinated, and I do not believe the leader of the nation should vilify those who have made the personal choice not to be. I do not believe in that. I could never believe in that.

For those following at home, today's speech is not about vaccinations. It is not even about mandates anymore. It is about whether we bring the Emergencies Act in to move protesters: dissenters of the Canadian public. I wonder about my own security. I walked through that every night for 14 days, in the dark and alone in temperatures of 20° to 30° below zero, without anyone escorting me. If this was a national crisis, who was protecting me?

The only way to find a cab was through those unlawful people, as mainstream media would have us believe. They asked me if I wanted a cheeseburger. One of them asked me if I wanted to dance. I cannot make this stuff up. One does not have to agree with the protest. One does not have to agree with why they are doing it, but one needs to see that when bridges and rail routes and trade routes were blocked, the blockages were removed almost instantly.

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• (1300)

How did that happen? How did all of these other issues that happened in our jurisdiction get solved? They got solved by decency. They got solved by prime ministers who did not run and hide inside their own houses while their country was in turmoil because of a crisis started by the Prime Minister himself.

If my constituents are wondering about this, I did not run home to hide. I was one of the first members of Parliament to walk up to a transport and talk to some truck drivers. They were from Alberta. It was Saturday, January 29, before the convoy even hit Parliament Hill. Most of them were vaccinated. They were protesting for freedom. They believed their freedoms were being taken away.

How did sitting on the back of a flatbed with a few truck drivers make me a racist, misogynist member of Parliament? How did the member for Thornhill, whose family experienced the Holocaust, get called a racist and a sympathizer?

The Government of Canada has been labelling Canadians for many, many months. The Prime Minister has traumatized Canadians by using divisive language, using constant wedge issues, resulting in the outright stigmatization of the Canadian identity, and the Prime Minister will not apologize for the labelling that he has done. He has hurled insults at everybody who disagrees with him.

The Prime Minister has used the following language and expressions to further traumatize Canadian citizens: These people. Unacceptable people. People who hold unacceptable views. Racists. Bigots. Terrorists. Misogynists, and people that take up space. People that take up space? I would like to think that all of us are allowed to take up a little bit of space in this country that we call Canada. The Prime Minister must wear the blame.

I want to leave colleagues with something. We must value and uphold freedom of speech and the diversity of opinions. We all have a relative in our past who fought for the freedom we share today. They sacrificed for the right to have different opinions from government and to live free in that perspective. Dissenting voices are part of our democracy.

I leave colleagues with the following. I am against the Emergencies Act because it is an overreach. Freezing bank accounts is something they do in communist states. This is a verse from the Bible, Philippians 2, verse 3-4:

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

This is the Canadian way. To the world, Canada has always been a nation of peace and justice. It is time we witnessed that again while we are here at home.

• (1305)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I see the member is following the lead of the interim leader by saying that this is all about encouraging the protest and the illegal blockades. It is about putting it on the shoulders of the Prime Minister. Character assassination is what we have been hearing today coming from the opposition benches. While Canadians are concerned about the economic costs, the costs to our communities, the

shutdown in Ottawa and what is happening in blockades, the Conservatives continue to use character assassination inside the chamber to pass blame on an individual.

My question to the member is this. Will he not recognize that the sense of urgency is there? Even the interim chief in Ottawa is using the legislation that we are debating today. An emergency has been declared by the City of Ottawa and the Province of Ontario. The opposition needs to get on the right page.

Mr. Jake Stewart: Madam Speaker, I want to remind the member opposite that when this issue started, the Prime Minister did not act in a reasonable, measurable, responsible manner, as the Prime Minister of our country. Think of Chrétien, Harper and Mulroney. Think of the people from our past who would have reached out to those dissenting voices. They might have broken bread. They may have shared a coffee and they may have had a disagreement, but they would have put in an effort to reach common ground. I believe this would have been over at least two and a half weeks ago.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, the hon. member spoke about being in South Korea. He told a personal story about meeting someone who was happy he was Canadian and not American.

I cannot help but reflect on the fact that we are seeing misinformation and disinformation happening all around the world, much of it generated by Russian bots. People cannot be online for two minutes without being attacked by Russian bots. We have also seen misinformation being spread from places like Fox News and being amplified by Republicans like Ted Cruz.

Would the member not agree that when Conservatives spread that misinformation and when Conservatives stand and get their photos taken with extremists, they are in fact raising the level of misinformation and disinformation in our country and bringing us more into the divisive politics that we see in America?

Mr. Jake Stewart: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the question from the hon. member opposite. For full disclosure, the Americans are my friends too. That was part of my story.

What I will say today is that I never met with extremists. The government is trying to make this question into an issue a liberal agenda versus a far-right-wing agenda. It is not. This is about whether or not Canada wants to be similar to a communist state. This is not about liberalism anymore. I went to a liberal arts university. These are communist, socialist agendas.

I met with a transport truck driver who provides for his family. The member may have trouble with Fox News, but she is voting for the censorship bill that is trying to censor what Canadians can see online and what they can write online.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Madam Speaker, in his speech in this excellent debate on this act, the member talked about the need to reach out to people and hear what people have to say.

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One of the documents that the government tabled with the proclamation is called “Report to the Houses of Parliament: Emergencies Act Consultations”. It is actually a list of all the meetings the government had prior to invoking the Emergencies Act, as required under the act, to try to establish whether or not it did steps one and two before going to the “last resort”, as the Prime Minister said the Emergencies Act is. When I look through it, I cannot see steps one or two, other than meeting with themselves in cabinet meetings. The government never met with a Canadian outside of the government.

Could the hon. member tell us his position with regard to consultation and hearing people before resorting to such a draconian act?

Mr. Jake Stewart: Madam Speaker, what we are seeing here is what I was trying to say earlier, and it goes to the very question I am being asked right now. A prime minister who is reasonable would reach out to the organizers and attempt to have a conversation so that common ground could potentially be found. Other jurisdictions were already loosening mandates. We would not have been different from any of those jurisdictions in the free world. The difference here was that the Prime Minister, as he did in the WE scandal, hid in the cottage; as he did in the SNC-Lavalin scandal, hid in the cottage; as he did in the blackface scandal, hid in—

• (1310)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam.

Mr. Ron McKinnon (Coquitlam—Port Coquitlam, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to advise you that I will be splitting my time with the member for Willowdale.

I am addressing the House today in support of our government's invocation this past week of the Emergencies Act of 1988. I would normally say I am pleased to address this House, but today I am not pleased.

Today I am not pleased with the siege against Ottawa's residents, who have borne the brunt of the illegal occupation of their neighbourhoods. They have been living in fear, in fear that their apartment building may be torched by arson, in fear of being harassed, taunted or ridiculed on their walk to work or the grocery store.

I am not pleased for workers in Ottawa's downtown core, including the Rideau Centre, who have not been able to earn an income for three weeks now. I am not pleased for the business owners who had hoped to reopen after Ontario lifted its restrictions at the start of the occupation, only to have to shutter their businesses once again because of threats, intimidation and abuse by the occupiers.

I am not pleased for my staff, who are prevented from going to work out of fear and intimidation. The parliamentary precinct should be a safe place. Now it is not.

These are everyday Canadians who have been impacted by this illegal occupation. I am not happy for them. I am not pleased that these illegal occupiers are preventing our day-to-day interactions. I am not pleased that these innocent bystanders are experiencing hardships because of this illegal activity. I am sad for those who have had to undertake abuse, harassment and ridicule for following public health measures, the measures put in place to help protect

our citizens and our health care system. Our doctors, nurses and health care workers are exhausted; I thank them.

I am sad for the hits to our economy, first hit hard by the pandemic itself and then again by the illegal whack-a-mole blockades spurred on by this siege in Ottawa. However, it is not only Ottawa that has been hurt. Ontario has been hurt, for example, by the blockade of the Ambassador Bridge, forcing auto plant shutdowns among others. These illegal blockades are a blow to the economies of Alberta, where I was born and raised, as well as Manitoba and my present home province of British Columbia.

I know people are tired of public health restrictions. So am I, and so is pretty much everyone I know. I know that this pandemic is exhausting. It is challenging for all Canadians. It has been and will continue to be difficult for everyone. That frustration extends to the 90% of British Columbians who have rolled up their sleeves to receive the vaccine, yet such measures continue to be essential to reduce risk to our seniors and those who are immunocompromised, as well as to bring this pandemic eventually to heel.

I support B.C.'s measured approach to removing restrictions when and where possible, based on the state of the pandemic in the region. These actions are founded on good public health advice by highly qualified and experienced medical and public health practitioners. We must continue to listen to our public health officials so that we can continue to protect Canadians against this insidious disease, and that means protecting our health care systems and following public health guidelines.

Nobody likes the so-called vaccine passports, most certainly not me, but rather than seeing them as a divisive instrument, as many have chosen to do, we should see them as an opportunity that allows businesses, the economy and indeed travel to open up and carry on in a limited way, instead of having to completely shut down from time to time, as we had to do before we had such an abundance of tested, effective and safe vaccines. Nonetheless, they are the artifacts of the pandemic and they, as for the other pandemic-related measures, will abate in due course when the pandemic itself abates, not by merely wishing them away or demanding that the pandemic be ignored.

These are trying and emotional times, and it is in these most trying and emotional times that lawful, legitimate protests and sincere concern have been overtaken and overwhelmed. It is in these most trying and emotional times, with frustrations and tempers running high, that we have seen this unfortunate siege of Ottawa unfold, as well as many sympathetic whack-a-mole protests and blockades across the land.

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● (1315)

In these most trying and dangerous times, the Ottawa Police Service, the Ontario Provincial Police and others elsewhere in the nation were unable to take the kinds of actions that are now under way. Now we can bring this siege to a peaceful conclusion through the Emergencies Act, with resources made available and authorities clarified.

Our government took this bold step this week to ensure that law enforcement is adequately resourced to end the illegal occupation peacefully and safely. Yesterday we finally started to see happen what most Canadians wanted to see happen for the last several weeks: removal of those involved in these illegal occupations, peace restored, and a return to having a safe city in which to live and work.

It is paramount that Canadians understand what this act does and does not do. It is critical to understand that the measures derived from the Emergencies Act are specific, focused and proportional. Crucially, they are time-limited and include adequate democratic checks and balances. A key to this is a built-in 30-day sunset clause, whereby the measures are subject to ongoing oversight by a parliamentary committee, with Parliament maintaining its right to revoke the declaration of an emergency as it sees fit. Furthermore, a public inquiry to determine the circumstances leading to and measures taken during this unprecedented emergency must ensue afterward.

Most significantly, the Emergencies Act does not involve the military, nor does it in any way suspend the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and this is explicit in the act. These rights particularly include peaceful assembly, freedom of expression and the right to life, liberty and security. The preamble of the Emergencies Act is crystal clear on this. It 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...

As a long-time active member of the Tri-Cities Chapter of Amnesty International, I fully respect and celebrate the Canadian reality that all Canadians have a right to protest, to speak their minds and to hold their elected representatives accountable. Even so, when we talk about rights, it must be clear that we do not have a right to block critical infrastructure like highways and hospitals. We do not have the right to intimidate, threaten or bully our fellow citizens, nor to deprive them of the safe enjoyment of their homes or disrupt their work or businesses.

Let me just mention that attempting to intimidate us with a manifesto demanding the removal of Canada's elected government is patently absurd, has no basis in any law anywhere and is not democratic. This is foolish anarchy, if not bluntly seditious, and it is a far cry from anything resembling the freedom that the siege purports to proclaim.

I know that most of those who support the protest themselves, whether that includes the blockades or not, are not anarchists or extremists. Most are sincere, everyday Canadians who are frustrated with restrictions. I get that, and I sympathize. Unfortunately, ha-

rassment and threats continue, and it is also clear that these linked events right across the country have been infiltrated by groups of white supremacists, Nazi sympathizers, people who are Islamophobic, anti-Semites and other garden variety racists, bigots or extremists. They leave an ugly and indelible taint wherever they are involved.

An excellent example is the seizure in Coutts in recent days of a significant cache of weapons held by individuals tied to extremist organizations. We also see dangerous behaviours, such as the man who drove a lifted pickup truck through a police barricade at Peace Arch crossing, and there are more examples. These and other threats underscore the embedded presence of small, systematized and perilous groups willing to intimidate and commit violence to achieve their own objectives, which typically do not reflect respect for our people, rights and institutions but do require our heightened vigilance.

However, even with the Emergencies Act in effect, I must emphasize that people can still protest and can certainly still disagree with the government, but they cannot join—

● (1320)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member will have to complete his thoughts during questions and comments.

Questions and comments; the hon. member for Oshawa.

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am extremely disappointed. I saw a tweet by a former NDP MP, Svend Robinson, who stated, "The NDP Caucus in 1970 under Tommy Douglas took a courageous and principled stand against the War Measures Act. Today's NDP under [their leader] betrays that legacy and supports Liberals on the Emergencies Act. Shame. A very dangerous precedent is being set."

Could the member please state, unequivocally, if he agrees that the new powers given to the government to seize and freeze bank accounts should be made permanent for people who have different political views from the government?

Mr. Ron McKinnon: Madam Speaker, what we are facing today is a threat to our democracy, to our economy and to peace, order and good government in Canada, and this is unacceptable. The measures that have been put in place in recent days are time-limited and subject to ratification by Parliament. They will also be brought before the courts in due course.

We cannot make a blanket statement of the kind that the hon. member is proposing.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

To justify using the Emergencies Act, he mentioned the fact that several Ottawans, including some of his employees, were bullied.

This past December, we passed Bill C-3 to criminalize intimidating a health professional and people wanting to obtain health services.

I would like to know what justifies the use of the Emergencies Act now, when it was not justified when we were passing Bill C-3.

[English]

Mr. Ron McKinnon: Madam Speaker, the Emergencies Act was brought into force at this time to deal with a very specific, focused and narrow problem, one that has come to the fore in the last several weeks and that law enforcement officials have been unable, because of conflicting jurisdictions and lack of resources, to deal with appropriately. We have seen already during the course of the last day and continuing today the ability of these law enforcement officials, who are now enabled with the appropriate resources and co-operation among forces across the country, to bring to the situation the necessary assets to put it back in the box and get us once again—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Windsor West.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, two kilometres from here is the Ambassador Bridge. The Conservatives and the Bloc like to say that things are fine. They are not. The bridge is open but now there are jersey barriers and the blockade is in city streets and other areas. The flow of traffic amounts to hundreds of millions of dollars and around 40,000 vehicles per day.

What has happened is that trucks are lined up from the bridge and are slowed down all the way to the corridor, including to the member of Essex's riding. Members opposite do not seem to care or appreciate the fragility with regard to how the just-in-time delivery system works or how many jobs are lost.

Will the hon. member's government at least support municipal supports, to be paid back by the federal and provincial governments, to pay for these policing costs and to assist with the logistics of the organizations, companies and groups that will have a series of delays and problems, not just for now but for weeks to come, to make up for the lost time?

• (1325)

Mr. Ron McKinnon: Madam Speaker, unfortunately, they do not let me write the cheques. However, I certainly would support the ongoing assistance of all levels of government that need help during this time, as we have been able to do during the course of the pandemic itself, to deal with emergent situations and with emergencies as they arise so that we can all get through this in good order and safely as Canadians.

Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am thankful for the opportunity to take part in today's significant debate.

After what we all witnessed on the streets of our capital yesterday, I feel compelled to say we each have a solemn obligation and responsibility to steer clear of excessive partisanship and rhetoric today. What we saw in our national capital should serve as a sober

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reminder of our solemn obligation to prove resolute in exercising our responsibilities and vigilant in safeguarding the interests of all Canadians. I firmly believe we must each endeavour to steer clear of division and resort to the principles that guide us in our decision with respect to the specific motion at hand. After all, at times such as this, Canadians are entitled to nothing less from their elected officials.

The facts before us are not in dispute. Today marks the 23rd day of the blockade and occupation in Ottawa. Apart from entrenched encampments in Ottawa, we have witnessed weeks of protests at the Ambassador Bridge in Windsor and at the border crossing in Coutts, Alberta. Each of these developments has represented a deliberate and concerted effort to stifle our commercial lifelines or to impede the flow of civic life.

Our democratic right to protest or freely express our views is one thing. A blockade, an entrenched occupation and a permanent gridlock are quite another. Let me say firmly and unequivocally that it does not matter what an occupation is about. That is not what the motion before us is about. A protest is generally understood to be time-limited and should never be allowed to devolve into an indeterminate occupation that completely ignores the rights of others. Our government has listened and should always listen to the concerns of all Canadians.

Allow me to talk about the significance of the rule of law. We are blessed as a country and have served as a beacon to people around the world because of our unconditional adherence to the rule of law. That is exactly why I arrived here as a teenager with my family. We were fleeing hateful ideology and extremism of a revolutionary government that had no regard for individual rights or the rule of law. The rule of law is at the core and the very foundation of who we are. The rule of law stands for the proposition that every person is subject to the law and must be held accountable for their actions. That is why none of us should turn a blind eye to what has been unfolding across our country or in our nation's capital in the last several weeks.

Surely, members know that residents of Ottawa have been subjected to sonic assaults for weeks. We cannot overlook that many felt compelled to form citizen brigades against what was occurring here. We cannot remain indifferent to what we are hearing from the residents of Ottawa. Members of the House are also surely aware that hundreds of small businesses, many of which were frequented by members of the House, have felt compelled to remain closed for the past three weeks. Surely we are better than that. We know that some of the protesters were jamming 911 lines in the last several days.

Canadians rightly expect our government to demonstrate resolve in the face of what we have experienced across our country. The only responsible course of action was to invoke the Emergencies Act. We have been in contact with all levels of government and have consistently heard, whether from the chief of police of Ottawa, the mayor of Ottawa or the Premier of Ontario, that the city of Ottawa is under siege, entirely overwhelmed and lacking the resources and tools to deal with the situation at hand. Let me remind every member of the House that a state of emergency was declared by the City of Ottawa on February 6, by the Province of Ontario on February 11 and by the federal government on February 14.

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● (1330)

The Emergencies Act spells out a clear process. Despite much of what we have heard today, the act is time-limited and targeted, and must at all times be applied in a reasonable and proportionate fashion. That does not limit anyone's freedom of expression, neither does it limit the freedom of peaceful assembly. The act is replete with specific checks and balances. The legislation, as adopted in 1988, is circumscribed with layers of built-in protection to ensure that our charter rights are fully safeguarded at all times.

The Progressive Conservative government that introduced the Emergencies Act in 1988 ensured that the invocation of the act be done in a charter-compliant fashion. We have heard a lot from members opposite that the facts do not justify the invocation of the Emergencies Act. If the backdrop of developments in Windsor, Coutts and Ottawa has not persuaded the hon. members, nor what we have heard from residents, the police chief, the mayor of Ottawa and the Premier of Ontario, they should consider the following: Let me assure them that the act requires not only a sober assessment of what has happened, but a consideration of possible threats on the horizon.

When Perrin Beatty, a minister of the Conservative government, was asked in committee what justification was required to invoke the Emergencies Act, back in 1988 this is what Mr. Beatty, a Conservative minister, had to say: "It depends not only on an assessment of the current facts of the situation, but even more on judgments about the direction events are in danger of moving and about how quickly the situation could deteriorate." Mr. Beatty further added, "Judgments have to be made not just about what has happened, or is happening, but also what might happen."

When the measures were invoked by our government, it was clearly stated that the situation across our country was concerning, volatile and unpredictable. I dare say not a single person in this chamber could possibly take issue with that assessment, so I would ask members of the House not only to refuse to turn a blind eye to what we have seen, but to not prove deaf to the assessment of the Ottawa chief of police, the mayor of Ottawa and the Premier of Ontario. As passionate as we can each be, we do not have licence to allow our judgments to substitute for what we have overwhelmingly heard from public safety officials and national security experts over the course of the last several days. It is imperative that we actually consider this thing and that we look beyond this chamber to determine whether this has been justified.

Mr. Marc Dalton (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge, CPC): Madam Speaker, those were interesting comments. I would like to compare and contrast for a second. New Zealand just announced, per today's Ottawa Citizen, that it "ruled out forcefully clearing vehicles blocking roads outside parliament in a protest against coronavirus vaccine mandates, saying that would risk 'wider harm'". Representatives said, "negotiations and de-escalation were the only safe ways to resolve the protest and [they] would continue to talk to the protesters". Compare this with the current Liberal government. It had 58 consultations, and the member mentioned a few. However, not one of them was with the protesters.

Did the Liberals purposely allow this to continue so they could clamp down on Canadians they do not agree with?

● (1335)

Mr. Ali Ehsassi: Madam Speaker, I really think it is imperative that, rather than look at developments in New Zealand, we look at developments in our own country, we listen to what experts are saying and we listen to what all three levels of government in this city and in this province are saying. It is imperative that we continue to communicate, assess the situation and do everything that is necessary.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, the debate is very passionate today, and I understand that. Personally, I prefer to examine the issues in a rational manner.

Let us look at this rationally. What is happening today is that we are using the Emergencies Act, which applies to all of Canada and therefore Quebec as well.

My hon. colleague, whom I thank for his speech, told us that we should listen to certain Ontario politicians.

I would say that he should listen to certain Quebec politicians, actually to all Quebec politicians, because the National Assembly is demanding that Quebec be excluded from the application of this act. Unfortunately, that is not currently the case.

In a rational manner, I would like to pose the following question to my colleague. Ten years from now, if a right-wing party was in power as the Government of Canada and a leftist movement wanted to protest and block pipelines that had been built, that party could base its actions on the decision made today, in 2022, by the current government. That party would point out that it had already been done by the Liberal government in 2022, and it could then—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order. I must let the member for Willowdale reply.

The member for Willowdale.

[English]

Mr. Ali Ehsassi: Madam Speaker, I appreciate my colleague's considered question.

On this particular note, it is imperative that as Canadians we thank the detachments that arrived in the city of Ottawa yesterday. They did a splendid job, several different detachments, so we are grateful for what the Province of Quebec has done.

Insofar as your question is concerned—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I remind the member that I am not asking questions.

Mr. Ali Ehsassi: My apologies, Madam Speaker.

Allow me to assure the member that I truly believe that we are not supposed to look at the substance of what is going on when there is an occupation or a lengthy protest. It is imperative that we continue to stand up for all Canadians.

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Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague mentioned turning a blind eye, and I would agree. As a result of the current government's turning a blind eye, as well as the mayor of Ottawa and the police service, now we find ourselves in a crisis. We saw this coming. We had all sorts of signs. I feel quite hesitant to have to support this, and I absolutely support the Canadian Civil Liberties Association for wanting oversight. The fact that we are using this emergency measure absolutely requires oversight.

However, there is a reason why we arrived here, and I wonder if the member agrees with me that we need a public inquiry in terms of governance issues that led us down this security hole. Does the hon. member agree that we need a public inquiry into policing and governance issues that led us to where we are right now?

Mr. Ali Ehsassi: Absolutely, Madam Speaker, I agree wholeheartedly. The member can take comfort in the fact that the legislation, as it is currently drafted and as it was envisioned in 1988, requires that we do that review. In addition, the City of Ottawa has decided to do a review.

• (1340)

Mr. Jamie Schmale (Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a privilege to rise in this place and speak. Today, I am going to lay out my case as to why I am voting against continuing the Emergencies Act.

In the past 34 years, since the inception of the Emergencies Act, there have been four times when a national crisis was faced by a prime minister, and they each refused to implement the act. Brian Mulroney did not do it during the two-month Oka standoff outside of Montreal in 1990. Jean Chrétien did not need to invoke it after the terrorist attack of 9/11. Stephen Harper did not during the 2008 banking crisis. The Prime Minister did not use it during the first two years of the COVID-19 pandemic, which saw 35,000 deaths and the worst economic contraction since the Great Depression.

For the first time in Canadian history, a prime minister will use the Emergencies Act when authorities already have every legal tool at their disposal to deal with the situation before us today. For me, there are many concerning parts of the act now being used, including instructing financial institutions to seize assets and freeze bank accounts without due process. As of this moment, the Minister of Public Safety has said that 76 bank accounts, worth a combined \$3.2 million, have been frozen.

There are serious consequences of invoking this act, and ones that all parliamentarians need to reconcile with themselves before the vote on Monday. After 21 days of refusing to deal with the protest through a more civil and peaceful process, the government chose an act, the most heavy-handed, using the Emergencies Act.

Make no mistake, Madam Speaker. I do not support hate, nor do I find any legitimate rationale for the existence of groups that perpetuate discrimination, violence or hatred. I once again call on these blockades to end peacefully and quickly.

My constituency staff, who with unparalleled dedication and commitment have acted professionally and admirably during these trying times, have fielded hundreds of calls and emails from concerned and sometimes angry citizens.

For example, Kenneth and Lois from Bobcaygeon write, “There is no reason for this act to be used except fear from the Prime Minister. This could have all been avoided if the PM would have been willing to listen.”

Another Kawartha Lakes constituent writes, “I implore you not to support the Prime Minister in his attempt to enact the Emergencies Act. Not only is this a complete overreaction to the situation, one which in my opinion was brought about by the Prime Minister's refusal to listen to the convoy and also serves no one's best interests.” That was from Vanessa.

“We believe the government has overstepped their authority and are taking away our rights and freedoms”, write Peter and Lois.

This is just a small sample and cross-section of hundreds of similar messages that I am sure all of us in the House are receiving. These are the words of ordinary Canadians who fear the government has overreacted because of the failed leadership of the Prime Minister. The act is clear on when it should be implemented. It should 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.”

The first question before us is whether the blockades seriously threaten Canada's sovereignty or territorial integrity, and whether there were no laws to deal with the protesters. The onus is on the federal government to demonstrate that the act was the only option left on the table.

National security experts have been expressing their concerns. For example, Leah West, a professor and national security expert at Carleton University, told the CBC that Canada was not facing the kind of public emergency that the act was designed to respond to, stating, “I'm kind of shocked, to be honest, that the government of Canada still actually believes that this meets the definition to even invoke the act”, adding, “I have real concerns about fudging the legal thresholds to invoke the most powerful federal law that we have.”

Surely, if there were a serious threat to our nation, provinces would be clamouring to the government for help, yet provinces have told the Prime Minister that they do not need the act and that they have already dealt with their protesters through listening and talking. It is here that I believe the entire debate hinges: Does the perceived threat that the government felt needed to be addressed, now that the provinces have their own capacity resolved, still exist and therefore justify the invoking of this act?

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• (1345)

Furthermore, the second condition, that the situation “cannot be effectively dealt with under any other law of Canada”, has been disproven by the leadership displayed by many of Canada's premiers right across this country. The provinces and their police services did not need the extraordinary powers granted by the Emergencies Act, because they already had the authority to deal with this. It is unfortunate that the Prime Minister refused to follow the good governance practised by those premiers.

It is no wonder that Canadians who have been writing and calling, not just me but every member in the House, view the implementation of this act not under the auspices of protecting Canada, but rather of protecting the Prime Minister's political failure.

We have heard that part of the justification for invoking the act was deliberate foreign extremist interference in our democracy, yet I have not seen any evidence from the government to indicate foreign powers or organizations behind the protests here in Canada. In fact, in committee last week, the deputy director of the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada, the national financial intelligence agency, said that there was no “spike in suspicious transaction[s]” and no sign of extremist groups issuing transactions to the protesters.

Part of the government's intention with the use of this act is also to track and reveal information regarding private individual financial transactions. This information is going to go to the RCMP, CSIS and FINTRAC, and will suspend accounts without judicial process. I led off my speech talking about that.

It is quite concerning that the government will not tell Parliament whether it consulted with the Privacy Commissioner regarding the use of this information. Kim Manchester, managing director of the financial intelligence training company ManchesterCF, warned in an interview with CTV that flagging accounts could financially ruin those targeted and make it difficult for them to get any financial services in the future. He said, “It's very tough on people when the activities of the Canadian government can lead to the financial meltdown of individuals associated with the protests who are guilty by association, by directive, and not by judicial process.”

In the same interview, Vanessa Iafolla, a crime consultant, said that use of the measure was a “serious [deviation] from the normal democratic processes that we generally expect to see in Canadian society.”

This legislation was created to deal with terrorist organizations and transnational organized crime syndicates, not Canadian truckers.

The Canadian Civil Liberties Association's Noa Mendelsohn Aviv is concerned that “the act allows the government to...create new laws, bypassing democracy under what they have called a national emergency [and] they haven't presented any evidence that satisfies us that is in fact a national emergency as required”. The CCLA is suing the government for seriously infringing upon the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Paul Wells, in Maclean's on February 14, surmised:

I think the real explanation for today's announcement came from [the deputy prime minister], who said it's basically about the blocked Ambassador Bridge at Windsor. Inconveniently no longer blocked.... “We fought tooth and nail to protect Canada's privileged relationship with the United States during the NAFTA negotiations,” the deputy prime minister said, “and we stood up to the 232 tariffs that were illegal and unjustified. We won't let these hard-won victories be tarnished. The world is watching us. Our jobs, prosperity and livelihoods are at stake. That's why the government is acting.”

The Emergencies Act is there to address extreme threats to Canada, not to protect the economy.

In 1978, approximately 30 countries were in some form of state of emergency. It had risen to 70 by 1986. By 1996, 147 countries had mechanisms to declare a state of emergency, a disturbing global trend that Canada now has the dubious honour of joining.

It is probably no coincidence that this historic announcement came only an hour after the government narrowly defeated the Conservative motion proposing that the government present a plan by the end of the month to lift federal mandates. The Prime Minister could see the writing on the wall, as his own caucus had started to revolt against him.

Rather than taking the diplomatic route, talking with the protesters, using the same media methods that he used to call them names, lowering the temperature, letting those with concerns know that they have been heard and laying out a plan to end the mandates and restrictions, like many provinces across the country and many countries around the world, he dug in his heels and brought out the sledgehammer. He is imposing the powers of the Emergencies Act, and it sets a dangerous precedent.

Most concerning of all is that young Canadians who have no direct connection to the historic struggles against fascism, socialism and communism are losing faith and interest in freedom and democracy. Those noble ideals have been tarnished, and this is contributing to what we are seeing today.

I will leave members with a quote: “there will be time later to reflect on all the lessons that can be learned from this situation.” This is what the Prime Minister told reporters last Monday afternoon.

I would argue that these lessons already exist. We do not have to go that far in history to look back and find them.

• (1350)

Mr. Marcus Powlowski (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member says the Emergencies Act is not necessary and that there are other legal options that we could have used.

I would like to ask what options. How, without the Emergencies Act, are you going to get tow trucks to help the police pull away trucks? How, without the Emergencies Act, are you going to legally prevent people from going downtown and joining the mob?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): As a slight reminder to the hon. member, I was not going to do anything, even with the Emergencies Act. Please redirect the questions through the chair.

Mr. Marcus Powlowski: Madam Speaker, through you, I ask the member opposite this: Without invoking the Emergencies Act, how is the government going to deal with these things? As powerful as the rhetoric coming from the opposition is, I would submit that it is not powerful enough to pull a truck.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Speaker, I am actually saddened by the tone of that question. I get along with that member. We serve on the same committee and have done so for the second Parliament in a row.

I thought I laid out a pretty logical argument as to why I am voting against it. I am sorry that he felt that way. I would also send it back to the member and ask, what powers do the police have, at this exact moment, that they could not have used before? This could have been dealt with weeks ago. It did not have to get to this point.

As I laid out in my speech, there could have been a whole bunch of avenues we could have taken here, including the Prime Minister being a bit more sympathetic and saying, “We have heard you. We are listening. We have a plan.” Instead, he just—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Questions and comments. The hon. member for Edmonton Strathcona.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to read a quote.

Freedom of expression and the right to peacefully protest do not give any Canadian the licence to break the law. I call on [the Prime Minister] to enforce the law and direct the RCMP to shut down these illegal blockades.

Members may think this was a quote having to do with the illegal blockade in Ottawa, but this is actually from a member of the Conservative Party, the member for St. Albert—Edmonton, who has called for the stoppage of the blockades.

I wonder why the member feels like when it is blockades of one type, his party is very much against it, but when it is blockades of another type, they are very much for it and happy to stand in front of it, taking credit and selfies.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Speaker, again, I am very disappointed at the tone of these questions. I thought I had laid out a pretty solid argument here.

As I said in my speech and repeated in my answer just now, the police already had tools at their disposal that they could have used to end this situation a lot sooner. Again, it could have been diluted a lot had the Prime Minister not decided to go with creating stronger division.

There are lots of people, just normal people, who feel excluded from society based on what is going on, whether it is true or not.

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Just a little acknowledgement, a little sympathy, a little compassion probably could have diluted the situation to the point where we would not have needed to invoke the Emergencies Act.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, in the course of this debate, I have heard a few people mention that the measure we are debating is one that we would use in wartime.

I just want to put on the record for Canadians who might be watching that the Emergencies Act is a remarkably well-crafted piece of legislation. I am not sure I am going to vote for this declaration, but it impresses me that in the 1980s, a group of MPs could think about different emergencies: public welfare emergencies, like a public health emergency, a pandemic; public order emergencies, like the one we are asked about now; international emergencies; and lastly, a war.

This is not what we would use in case of a war.

Mr. Jamie Schmale: Madam Speaker, as I mentioned in the justification, there were a number of tools already at the disposal of local and provincial police. Those tools should have been used first. The fact that we have gotten to this point is disappointing and a failure in leadership.

A lot of this could have been avoided, but instead the Prime Minister chose to divide rather than unite.

• (1355)

Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today to address my fellow Canadians about the current state of events unfolding in our country. I want to express my concerns about the lack of leadership by this government.

In a shocking display of defeat, the Prime Minister and his government have taken the unprecedented step to enact the Emergencies Act, which is the successor of the War Measures Act. Since the inception of the Emergencies Act in 1988, it has never been invoked. Let me repeat, in 34 years, there has never been a single crisis in which a federal administration felt it essential to use such measures. Neither 9/11, nor the Oka crisis in 1990, nor even the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic itself was a sufficient national threat to warrant the authority currently being debated. The last time any federal government gave itself such sweeping, unchecked power was during the October crisis in 1970, after 200 bombs had been detonated in civilian areas. Furthermore, several nationwide protests have blocked critical infrastructure since the inception of the Emergencies Act, but none has met the threshold for enacting these sweeping powers, despite similar tangible threats to our country's security.

I trust we can all agree that violence, threats and blockades are never appropriate and should never be permitted, especially when they infringe upon our civil freedoms. All levels of government have choices for dealing with the current crisis that do not necessitate one of the country's most sweeping increases in government authority.

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The blockades at the Ambassador Bridge in Windsor posed an immediate threat to thousands of jobs and billions of dollars in international trade. However, it was clear that in one day, with a court order injunction and a strong police presence, notably, the situation was resolved without enacting exceptional measures, legislative discussion or government powers that had never been used before. The same was true for other blockades in Alberta and Manitoba.

As my hon. colleagues reminded us in the House recently, the Prime Minister assured Canadians that using this act was the last measure to respond, and he said that it is not the first thing you turn to, nor the second, nor the third. When asked what exactly the first and second actions taken by the government were, the Minister of Emergency Preparedness responded by saying that his government “worked with municipal and provincial partners...to ensure that they had the resources and the support they needed”, as if that was not already an everyday expectation of the federal government.

It is clear that the Liberals cannot explain why they believe going beyond traditional legal options is necessary. Rather than considering the same laws that have already cleared blockades across the country, this government believes we should use military-style measures. Perhaps they have finally realized that their incompetency, inaction and drive to divide have left Canadians frustrated, and that the Liberals now making a big show will reflect positively.

Let me tell members that history will not look back fondly on this moment. The charter liberties that we all cherish are being threatened by actions the government cannot justify. What kind of precedent does it set for a government to so lazily use this heavy-handed legislation against its citizens? What will this mean for future demonstrations? Should Canadians not fear donating to movements and organizations, given that the current government believes it can declare such things illegal retroactively?

● (1400)

If, heaven forbid, we find ourselves in another global conflict in the future, would a government consider enacting the same measures put in place over a few weeks of disruptive protest? The international media is in shock over this action of our Prime Minister. It is no wonder, as he does not even have the slightest bit of regret about accusing Jewish members of standing with swastikas. Everyone can see that he is someone who prefers to slander and divide rather than unite and lead. This act may have never seen the light of day if not for the Prime Minister and his government.

Fortunately, the Liberals can consistently count on having the New Democrats as dance partners to help them shed accountability. The NDP used to be a party that stood with civil liberties. The last time such dramatic measures were used, in the October crisis, then NDP leader Tommy Douglas opposed the use of the War Measures Act for being overkill. Now, the modern NDP is doing its best to imitate the Liberals' disdain for dissent and opposition by preferring to point fingers rather than take responsibility for the instigation. The Liberal-NDP coalition is strong. Unfortunately for Canadians, it is strong enough to give the Prime Minister and his cabinet all the power they want.

It is a tragedy that we have arrived at this point. Canadians want the blockades to end. At the very least, the Conservatives want to return to normal. There are several critical issues on which Cana-

ans deserve a thoughtful federal response. Inflation is surging to record highs. House prices have doubled since 2015 and people's mental health across the country requires serious attention. Despite these genuine concerns, though, the Prime Minister and his government are too preoccupied with covering up their failures, avoiding responsibility and blaming everyone else. Conservatives want to see an end to the confining mandates and a return to everyday life. We want a national leader who will act in the best interests of Canadian people.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, never in my wildest dreams would I have ever imagined a place where the NDP is the party standing up for law and order while the Conservatives capitulate to protesters outside who are breaking—

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I will take all kinds of slings and arrows, but I really do not ever want to hear the member for Kingston and the Islands pointing at us and saying anything nice about us. Please, could he—

The Deputy Speaker: That sounded like debate.

The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, I am just finding it wildly bizarre to be in the House of Commons, where the NDP is standing up for law and order while the Conservatives capitulate to what is going on outside. Even Jason Kenney, the premier of Alberta, is saying that we should never negotiate with people like this.

Can the member explain why she suddenly does not believe that law and order must be upheld?

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Mr. Speaker, I believe in law and order, but I also believe in Canada. I was raised to believe that Canadian people sit down, negotiate, talk to each other, listen to their constituents and try to resolve issues peacefully, not with the Emergencies Act.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, the Conservatives have been spreading their rhetoric that this is a protest of unity, peace and freedom over fear, incited by foreign extremists. They did so while standing with people who bore Confederate flags and swastikas and terrorized women and indigenous people.

This is not unity; this is not peace; this is not freedom. This is violence, violence that threatens the safety and democracy of Canada. The ignorance they have shown to the security threats that continue to be defended on the Hill as we speak is unacceptable.

What are the Conservatives gaining from spreading this hate?

• (1405)

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Mr. Speaker, I do not know where the hon. member is getting this information, because it is absolutely false. The Conservatives stand for law and order. We respect our constituents, but one thing we do is we listen to try to understand. Whether we agree or disagree, we listen to them to try to work out and resolve the issue.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for her very passionate speech.

Earlier today I was asked a question by my Liberal colleague from Hull—Aylmer. He said that he was not 100% certain that the use of the act was the best course of action, but that there were more pros than cons for confirming the order.

My question is simple. Should we not be absolutely certain of the best course of action before enforcing an act of this magnitude?

[*English*]

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Mr. Speaker, I believe the only way to resolve issues is to sit down, listen, discuss and come to a peaceful and respectful resolution. This Emergencies Act is not needed. It is creating a divide between all Canadians. Canada was built on peace, not disruption.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I know my hon. colleague was a banker prior to being elected in 2021, so I want to ask her a question about the Emergencies Act regulations, which tells financial institutions to cease dealing with designated persons.

In my riding on Friday, two bank branches ran out of money because Canadians, who were afraid the government was going to take their assets under this legislation, came into the banks and took out their money. Therefore, I would like you to comment, as a former branch manager and banker, on how you would deal with that?

The Deputy Speaker: As I was not in banking, I would remind the member to make sure he asks his questions through the Chair. I am sure all members understand that.

The hon. member for King—Vaughan.

Mrs. Anna Roberts: Mr. Speaker, I will tell the hon. colleague that, from my experience of over three decades in banking, this type of act will create havoc. Branches will run out of money. Criminals will be there waiting for people to come out of the branches with their funds. It creates disruption. This cannot happen because it is putting the fear of God into every Canadian citizen in this country.

Hon. Judy A. Sgro (Humber River—Black Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my hon. colleague from Etobicoke Centre.

I stand with great sadness today to talk about the Emergencies Act because it is not something that any of us in this House, especially the Prime Minister, wanted to bring forward. We would not have if it were not absolutely necessary to do so. We need to look at the blockades that were going on last weekend at the Ambassador Bridge, in Coutts, Alberta, and Emerson and what was happening with trade. As chair of the international trade committee, I know

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these things are very important to all of us. The blockades were preventing goods, services and people from being able to cross those borders.

We know it cost \$400 million a day at the Ambassador Bridge, aside from all of the personal issues that my colleague from Windsor West mentioned earlier, such as people being prevented from getting to doctor appointments and nurses prevented from crossing the border to help us with the pandemic. That is a huge economic hit on all four fronts. That is aside from what we are dealing with here in Ottawa.

I would ask my Conservative colleagues that, if their communities were besieged for almost four weeks, would they have said they would like to go through another process of deputizing a whole lot of emergency police officers, which would take another five to six days? They would not have been happy to do that, and we were not able to allow this to go any further. The economic impact of this has been enormous, so it was critical that we move forward to ensure we have law and order.

The concern with what is going on is not just here, it is around the world. I guess the new thing for people do to try to disrupt governments is to bring in transport trucks, trailers and tractors, by some of these people on the extreme right, who then convince a whole lot of other people that this is about mandates. This has nothing to do with mandates or vaccines. This is all about trying to bring down a government and disrupt democracy. When we do not have democracy or law and order, what we are left with? What is happening today outside Parliament, in particular, is that law and order is being put into effect. People have been asked to please go home. The illegal blockade was not a regular protest, it was much more serious than that.

Interim chief of police Steve Bell, three other former chiefs of police in Ottawa and the former chief of police in London all said that the Emergencies Act, unfortunate as it is, absolutely had to be brought in before there was more violence than what we had seen so far. Without that act, it would be much more difficult. I know what last weekend and previous weekends were like. I can only imagine what this weekend would have been like with hundreds more people coming here every weekend to create more mayhem and disruption.

Let us talk about the children. At the foot of the steps of the gate into West Block, there is a bouncy castle and children skipping rope to try to show this as a pleasant little uprising of a protest. This was an illegal blockade that was using children as shields. I would tell anybody participating that it is not democracy when we are talking about children.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Statutory Order

● (1410)

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the member. She is close to me, and I want to be able to hear her full comments. I want to make sure members respect each other's right to speak in the House of Commons.

There is lots of time to ask questions and make comments during that part of the debate. I want to make sure that, when a member is presenting a speech, I can hear them as well. Let us try to keep it down.

Mr. Charlie Angus: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. With all due respect, you have done an excellent job keeping everyone calm and focused. You deserve a lot of congratulations for your work today.

The Deputy Speaker: While it is not a point of order, I do appreciate the comment, and I want to make sure we keep things flowing.

The hon. member for Humber River—Black Creek.

Hon. Judy A. Sgro: Mr. Speaker, we have talked about trying to get through this pandemic and the difficulties many businesses are facing, so we cannot stand back and allow things to continue this way.

Michael Kempa, a law professor and criminologist in Ottawa, was asked a few minutes ago if the Emergencies Act was really necessary. He said that it absolutely was, because without the Emergencies Measures Act being brought into play, it would have taken a minimum of five or six more days to get other police services here and deputized. We would have continued to see this kind of illegal activity going on outside Parliament Hill and the disruption to neighbourhoods for another five or six days.

I ask members to think about the impacts this is having on the economy. Nate's Deli, which is located at Sparks and O'Connor, is a little delicatessen many of us go to on our lunch hour. Its workers told me that they were just hanging on at the end of the lockdown restrictions. That delicatessen has now been locked down for four more weeks. Will it be able to open and survive this?

I think of Goodfood, which is a company close to the riding owned by a young family. President Dan Simile phoned me last week to tell me that he could not get a truck to deliver boxes across the border. He was having to lay off all his staff.

Those kinds of things are big disruptions to our economy. They are also disruptions to the people living in the Ottawa area in particular. Many employees were unable to get to their places of employment, even to work on Parliament Hill, without being called names and facing abuses. My own staff was subject to some abuse from some of the protesters out there.

We have a responsibility to move forward. Businesses, such as the grocery stores in downtown, are suffering. One had to close up because protesters without masks would come into the store with no respect for anybody else. This upset everybody, so ultimately it had to close.

This has gone on for far too long. Yes, I know this is not easy. I have received lots of calls from people in my constituency who do not quite fully understand this, but they are not here. They are not

seeing it every day, and they do not realize the full impact of what is going on. It is imperative we do the right thing. We need to protect our country, and we need to protect its citizens. Very importantly, we also need to protect the economy.

To have a banker in the U.S. refer to Canada as a banana republic is unacceptable to all of us. It is a real insult. I am proud of my country, and I am proud of what we do. We are taking the necessary steps to move forward.

We try to not get into political rhetoric. If folks on the other side choose to join us in a united front to support this, it will only be in effect for a very short period of time. There will be a parliamentary committee that will be reviewing it, and there will be a full investigation afterward. This came off the rails right from the beginning, and once these protesters became entrenched, it was very difficult to move them out.

I ask that we stay as united a front as we possibly can and not confuse people by talking about the War Measures Act, because that frightens the very people we represent. Let us try to be more united and provide accurate information regardless of what side anyone is on.

● (1415)

Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend talked about this going off the rails right from the very beginning. If one talks to many of the folks who have been expressing their concern about vaccine mandates, this went off the rails for them when the Prime Minister said that many of them were misogynists and racists.

There has never been a retraction of that and there has never been an apology. I am going to give my hon. friend the opportunity to maybe extend an olive branch to them and weigh in on whether she believes many of them are misogynist and racist.

Hon. Judy A. Sgro: Mr. Speaker, I think there are a ton of nice people outside who are protesting because this illegal protest brought out two years of frustrations. I could have been out there in the protest just as well as they could have. We are all fed up with this. We have all been through a difficult time, but we have to do what we have to do, and that is to respect each other.

There are some extremists out there who are here to cause nothing but trouble, and when we look at the signs saying, "Down with our Prime Minister," and hear the kinds of threats he has been receiving from many folks across the country, that is very unfair. I would not want any prime minister of any party to have to experience what he and his family are going through.

● (1420)

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in her speech my colleague spoke a lot about how serious the situation was to justify the enforcement of the Emergencies Act.

She described a lot of situations that are indeed very serious. That said, I will not get into certain issues, such as the fact that a business was not able to deliver biscuits.

My question is the following: What would my colleague say is a necessary condition for the act to be enforced, the severity of the situation or the fact that all other options have been exhausted?

[English]

Hon. Judy A. Sgro: Mr. Speaker, if we had to wait another five or six days before we could start to remove the illegal protest and illegal blockage that is there, what kind of damage would that continue to do to Canada's reputation?

Many of our small businesses deliver biscuits or other things. They are valuable businesses and they have anywhere from five or six to a dozen employees. They were feeling the strain. I do not want to see those businesses go out of business.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, like many people in the House, I am deeply concerned about enacting the Emergencies Act. It is why we are here. It is the debate we are participating in.

I, like many others in this room, wonder how we got to this place and about the failures, at all levels of government, that got us to this place. I would like a guarantee from the government, and this member, for a fully transparent, public and independent inquiry into what went wrong over the past three weeks.

Will she guarantee that will be a step the government will take as soon as possible?

Hon. Judy A. Sgro: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her support and for her important question. This matters to all of us. It does not matter what party. This is an important piece of legislation that we are standing for and supporting. We all want to make sure that due process happens, which means that there will be a full investigation of what did happen and what went wrong.

Clearly, we can see that right from the very beginning, these folks were allowed to get entrenched the way they did. It just built up. They could have been there for another six months. We could not allow that to happen. I can guarantee her my support and my government's support that we will follow the due process that is required under this legislation.

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for Humber River—Black Creek for her speech. I know she has been a big champion for many things throughout Parliament and her career, particularly the Canada-Taiwan organization, and I applaud her for that. She is now championing the issue of the Emergencies Act. The reality is, as she indicated, that this is throughout all of Canada and it is being put in place on everything.

Would the member champion the seizure of vehicles and the freezing of bank accounts of foreign-funded eco-terrorists responsible for the violence and destruction, and the millions of dollars in damage, to the Coastal GasLink? I hope she would champion that cause as well with her government, with the Emergencies Act.

Hon. Judy A. Sgro: Mr. Speaker, one of the things that I continue to be concerned about is the amount of violence that is happening throughout our country on different fronts for different reasons. Maybe some of it is the result of the pandemic and the stress on people. That is what I would like to think it is. Once we can get a bit further along with this pandemic, people will feel better. They

will be calmer and they will find a more rational way of dealing with problems.

Statutory Order

Mr. Yvan Baker (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to start by sharing a story. One of the earliest photos I remember of myself and my grandparents is from the mid- to late eighties. For background, my grandparents immigrated to Canada after World War II from Ukraine, and my grandmother survived the Holodomor, the famine genocide in 1932-33 when Joseph Stalin closed Ukraine's borders and confiscated all food to destroy millions of Ukrainians for opposing his rule. My grandfather risked his life on many occasions, because he was peacefully advocating for a free and democratic Ukraine.

In that photo I was mentioning, I am about nine or 10 years old and I am standing in front of the Ontario legislature, known as Queen's Park, along with my grandparents. At the time, we were asking that Canada and the international community stand up for the people of Ukraine and other countries that had been conquered by the Soviet Union, because their freedoms were being violated. People could be arrested for not speaking Russian, for holding a different political view or for suggesting that Ukraine should be a democracy or free.

That day, with my grandparents in front of Queen's Park, we were protesting for the freedom of millions of people. We actually did so on many occasions after that, and I have done so many times in my life. Despite the horrors my grandmother lived through, despite the horrors my grandfather's family was still living through back home, and despite the hurt, trauma and anger, on that day, and many other days afterward, my grandparents protested for freedom, but they always did so while respecting the freedoms of other Canadians.

I am sick of COVID restrictions, and so are many of my constituents. They have voiced that in many ways. They have sent me letters, they have sent emails, they have called me and I have spoken with them. Some of them have protested. I have always taken the time to listen and try to understand their perspectives. Often, constituents help me understand issues better. They offer solutions and they point out better ways for government to proceed, and I welcome that. That is what makes me a better representative, and that is how we make our country better, but those constituents I am talking about, just like my grandparents, have voiced their concerns while respecting the freedom of others.

Peaceful protest is the right of every Canadian. We have the right to be heard, to communicate our views and to say anything we want, as long as we abide by the law, because the law protects the freedoms of others. These blockades are not respecting the rights and freedoms of others. They are violating the law and doing harm to so many Canadians in many ways.

Statutory Order

They have threatened the safety of Canadians and the welfare of our communities. We have heard stories throughout this debate about what this has done to the people of Ottawa. They have done great harm to our economy and the livelihoods of so many Canadians, especially with the blockades at the border crossings. They risk impacting our economy in the years to come by undermining the confidence of our trading partners, who we are trying to convince that Canada is a good place to invest. Canada is a great place to trade with, yet our borders are being blockaded and trade is being prevented from happening. They have undermined the rule of law and they risk undermining confidence in our laws and institutions, which are designed to protect our rights and freedoms.

These blockades and occupations are having tremendous consequences for our economy and for our democracy, and that is why these blockades have to end.

I believe the Emergencies Act powers are needed to stop the blockades, and I want to share why. It is abundantly clear that we do not have to be law enforcement experts to know that local law enforcement has been unable to enforce the law and clear the blockades, especially here in Ottawa. That is very clear.

Let us talk about what the Emergencies Act does, and then why I believe it is necessary. What does the Emergencies Act actually do? This is not the War Measures Act. This is not calling in the military. To suggest those things is not to be truthful with Canadians. What the Emergencies Act actually does is allow the RCMP to enforce local and municipal laws, which it previously could not. It allows the federal government to mobilize essential services such as tow trucks. That is what my colleagues have spoken about. It provides new authorities to law enforcement to prohibit blockades and keep essential infrastructure open, such as border crossings. It provides powers to stop the flow of money that is supporting illegal activity such as the blockades.

Under these powers, the government is doing a few things. It is providing direction so accounts that are supporting blockades can be frozen, and vehicle insurance is revoked.

• (1425)

It is broadening Canada's anti-money-laundering and terrorist financing rules so that they can cover crowdfunding platforms such as cryptocurrency. Originally, the blockades were being funded through conventional means, and then they went to cryptocurrency. Why? Because that is harder to track. The government wants to make sure it can track that and stop that. It provides the ability to authorize banks to cease providing financial services when a person is using their account to fund illegal activity.

These are the kinds of things that the Emergencies Act is doing.

Experts have said that it is critical to clear the blockades. It is critical that we have the RCMP able to enforce local law, because the act provides the ability for multiple law enforcement agencies to come together really quickly, as we are seeing right now in Ottawa on the street.

The act provides the ability to compel tow truck drivers to tow vehicles. We need to be able to do that to clear these blockades, and we were not able to before.

It provides the ability to ensure that certain infrastructure can remain open, such as border crossings, and to ensure that the people who are blockading know that they will face penalties. If they know that their accounts will be frozen, they know they will face a penalty and that there is a consequence to their illegal behaviour. That is important.

It is an important measure to enforce the law, to ensure that we stop the blockades, and to ensure that money supporting the blockades ceases to flow.

These are all things that are under the Emergencies Act. This is what the Emergencies Act is doing. These are the specific steps.

There is no doubt that these measures I have just mentioned have helped to clear the blockades at the borders and in Ottawa. We do not have to take my word for it. Chief Bell in Ottawa, and multiple police chiefs and security experts, have repeatedly said today and in recent days that we would not be able to clear the blockades if it were not for the measures in the Emergencies Act. The Emergencies Act powers are clearly needed to enforce the law, to stop the blockades and to protect Canadians' freedoms.

Some have said that this is overreach: that this is the War Measures Act. Let us be clear. This does not involve the military. In fact, the military cannot be called in under this act. It is a completely separate act called the National Defence Act, which is required if we want to call in the military. That is the first point.

The second point is that the declaration is for a limited time. It is for 30 days, and I know the government would really like to be able to remove its invocation even sooner than that if it can. The scope of these measures is geographically targeted. It is about specific infrastructure. It is about specific locations we are trying to protect, and the act is always subject to the Charter of Rights. We cannot argue that this is a violation of people's rights or freedoms if the Charter of Rights is supreme to the act. Everything that happens under the act must be subservient to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which is where our freedoms and rights are enshrined and protected. It conforms with that. It protects our rights.

We are having this debate in Parliament because it is required in the act, so there is that accountability mechanism. There will be a parliamentary committee struck to provide oversight. When the measures expire, the act requires a public inquiry to examine its invocation. There is a lot of transparency and a lot of accountability, so that Canadians and MPs can assess the implementation of the act and make sure it was done for the right reasons and in the right way.

I started my remarks by talking about my grandparents and how they taught me to advocate for freedom but always to respect the freedom of others, to respect the freedoms of Canadians, while doing so. These blockades have not done that. They have threatened the safety of Canadians and the welfare of communities. They have done massive harm to our economy, hundreds of millions of dollars every day, and harm to the livelihoods of Canadians. People have lost their jobs. They have lost their businesses. These blockades risk impacting our economy in the years to come by undermining the confidence of our trading partners, especially the U.S. They have undermined the rule of law. They risk undermining confidence in our laws and institutions, which are here to protect our freedoms and our rights. These blockades, and these occupations, are not respecting the freedoms of Canadians.

I support the invocation of the Emergencies Act in this case. We cannot allow these illegal and dangerous blockades to continue. I believe it is necessary to keep Canadians safe, to protect our economy in the short and long term and to restore public order.

It is limited in time, its scope is proportionate and it is subject to oversight and accountability by MPs of all parties.

Just as my grandfather or grandmother would have said if they were here, it is what is necessary to protect our economy, our democracy and our freedom.

• (1430)

Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the point here comes down to one fundamental issue, which is that the test, or the threshold, for invoking the Emergencies Act requires that situations such as this cannot be effectively dealt with under any other law in Canada.

I heard the member comment a little about that. He said that the Ottawa police could not deal with the situation, but from all accounts and reports, that really came down to a matter of resourcing and not the actual law.

Experts have said that the Criminal Code of Canada specifically provides the powers that the police need to deal with the situation.

In light of that, why does the hon. member think that the threshold to invoke the Emergencies Act has been met?

• (1435)

Mr. Yvan Baker: Mr. Speaker, the Emergencies Act has been critical in supporting what is happening in Ottawa today and, frankly, in clearing blockades at the border crossings over the last number of days. I say that because there are a number of measures in the Emergencies Act that give the police powers they did not have before, such as cutting off funding for the blockades, ensuring that people who are blockading a border crossing or in Ottawa know that their accounts can be frozen, and making sure that the RCMP can enforce local laws. We could not have otherwise provided the resources the member is talking about in the time needed and the amounts needed to clear these blockades. The Emergencies Act is helping in Ottawa and it has helped at the border crossings.

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his wonderful

and heartfelt speech. He shared some rather personal stories and I thank him for that.

However, there is a police operation that has been happening right before our eyes on Wellington since yesterday morning. We can watch what is going on on television, and it reminds me a lot of the images I was seeing last weekend at the Ambassador Bridge. Police officers there were able to control the situation without the Emergencies Act.

We are very reluctant to support the use of this act because we fear that it sets a dangerous precedent. The government could have used some other tools in its tool box before opting for the measure of last resort.

Does my colleague worry that this creates a dangerous precedent?

Mr. Yvan Baker: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

First, I would say that I am not worried about setting a precedent because the act, as written, ensures that MPs and Canadians can scrutinize how the act was used. There are protections in the act to ensure it is not used if it is not necessary.

Second, Windsor was an exception. With other border crossing blockades, the act helped the police put an end to them, partly by cutting off funding.

[English]

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, before I begin, I want to thank everybody working in the House who is allowing us to do our jobs as members of Parliament.

I appreciate my hon. colleague's intervention. I know it is really difficult to share, especially traumatic histories about family, so I want to honour that.

I want to talk about extremism. We know that people were struggling before the pandemic. We also know that since the pandemic, people have been struggling even more, feeling despair and alienation. When people are not looked after, it is fuel for the fire in the rise of extremist and anti-democratic movements.

I wonder if the hon. member agrees with me that more support needs to be provided to people in Canada to avoid these extremist movements from rising.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her words.

We have done a tremendous amount of work, but we have a lot more work to do. There are members on duty today who have led a lot of that work. Many members have worked very hard to address extremism in this country, and I look forward to working with them and others on all sides of the House to make sure that we do so.

Statutory Order

Mr. Pat Kelly (Calgary Rocky Ridge, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I do not think I have ever felt more compelled to add my voice to a debate in the chamber than I do in this debate about the invocation of the Emergencies Act. I am going to start by making a number of things very clear to the people listening, including my constituents. They might want to know where I stand on a number of issues that cannot be separated from this debate.

I am proud to belong to a party that has always stood for both law and order. At no point have I condoned, encouraged or made excuses or apologies for unlawful conduct. I was appalled by the border blockades that immediately harmed the economy and brought into question Canada's core competence as a sovereign country able to control and secure its own borders. I was horrified by the violent attack on workers at the Coastal GasLink pipeline two days ago that resulted in injured police, terrorized workers, millions in property damage and barely a peep out of the federal government, or the press gallery, for that matter.

I was elected on a platform that would make it an offence to block critical infrastructure like highways, railways, ports, pipelines and border facilities. I stand by that. I believe in prudent and reasonable public health measures, especially during a pandemic, but not inflexible mandates. I stand today in the House of Commons opposed to the invocation of the Emergencies Act and the order that the government has made pursuant to the act. I oppose the invocation because it fails the tests set out in the law, because it sets a terrible precedent for future governments and because the current government in particular cannot be trusted with the powers that it would grant itself.

The first reason is simple. The present situation clearly does not meet the tests set out in the act. The government has declared a public order emergency. The act itself defines a public order emergency as follows:

an emergency that arises from threats to the security of Canada and that is so serious as to be a national emergency

This definition was always understood to mean war, widespread deadly violence, insurrection or threats to Canada's sovereignty.

What was the situation when this order was invoked last Monday? It is certainly true that there had been blockades at border crossings and partially blocked streets in and around the parliamentary precinct here in Ottawa. However, by the time the order was made, conventional policing was prevailing at the border crossings. Arrests with serious charges had been laid in Coutts, and others left peacefully of their own accord. The Ambassador Bridge was also cleared peacefully. Let me pause and commend the police, who successfully ended these blockades with no injuries, no damage to property and no violence with existing powers and solid police professionalism.

Given that the border blockades were resolved without additional powers granted under this act, and the downtown Ottawa situation was all that remained, did the situation in Ottawa really meet the test of a national emergency? Make no mistake. Laws were broken, and people who live and work in the Ottawa core were harmed by traffic disruptions, noise and reported incidents of harassment. However, was this a national emergency, a threat to the security of

Canada and one that could not be solved using existing laws and conventional policing methods?

I arrived in Ottawa the day the convoy arrived. I have been here for all but one day since. I have walked through and among the trucks and the demonstrators every day to and from my apartment, this chamber and my office across the street. There was clearly and obviously a breakdown of law enforcement. That is clear and obvious to all, but I did not see a national emergency. There was a downtown Ottawa emergency, perhaps, but a national emergency is an emergency that threatens 38 million Canadians. This emergency did not even prevent MPs from working right in the middle of it. A former member of Parliament, Erin Weir, perhaps summed it quite nicely when he said, "The only element of the protest that may have been a national emergency was the blockade in Windsor". However, the police reopened that bridge on Sunday night without the federal Emergencies Act.

• (1440)

The second reason I oppose the invocation of the Emergencies Act is for the terrible precedent that it would set, or has set, really. This law has been on the books since 1988 and has never been invoked until now. There have been many threats to public safety and security during that time, yet no government has ever reached for the powers under this act: not during the Oka crisis, not after September 11, 2001, not during the dangerous and paralyzing highway and railway blockades two years ago and not during the COVID crisis. However, this invocation is going to be the bar set for future governments.

We now know how the Prime Minister feels about those who disagree with his federal policy of mandatory vaccinations. We know how he lumped together all those with whom he disagreed and called them racists, misogynists, anti-science and a fringe element; talked about how they should not be tolerated; and complained about how they take up space. He did this during an election, when he cynically did everything he could to divide Canadians and weaponize the pandemic and vaccines. However, now he has invoked the Emergencies Act in response to a protest, and hardly the first protest that has taken place since this law came into effect in 1988, or even since 2015 when this government came to power or even since 2020. However, this protest is being conducted by those whose views are abhorrent to the Prime Minister. These protesters are people the Prime Minister has systematically demonized, vilified, stigmatized and scapegoated since he made the cynical self-serving decision to do so during the last election. Now this is going to be the bar set for future use of this act. Every future Prime Minister will have this precedent for using the act as a tool against citizens who hold opposing views.

This brings me to the third reason why I will oppose this motion. The tools contained in this order are so ill-defined and draconian and so utterly out of proportion to the situation at hand that they simply cannot be supported. This order, among other things, immediately orders banks to seize the accounts of anyone affiliated with the blockade and to do so without a court order. Thousands of Canadians who disagree with the government have given financial support to this protest, and many likely did so before any laws were broken. These Canadians are now left to wonder exactly what constitutes the phrase “being used to further the illegal blockades”

Is this really to be the new way that governments in Canada deal with protesters? Are we to become a country where governments say the legal system is really inconvenient and time consuming so let's just keep it simple? That is not Canada. No government present or future should deal with a breakdown of law enforcement at a local level with suspension of legal process, and certainly not over something as politically charged as dealing with a group of people who have been deliberately alienated not just from their government but by their government itself.

Before we take any comfort from the government's assurance that its members will not misuse the powers they are granting themselves, let us remember what kind of government we are dealing with. We are dealing with a government whose members have been repeatedly sanctioned by the Ethics Commissioner for conflicts of interest, and with a Prime Minister who tried to interfere in a criminal prosecution by creating a new law to get a corrupt company off the hook and who then fired his attorney general, who refused to be complicit. This is a government that tried to give itself unlimited taxing and spending power at the beginning of the pandemic, a government that has tried to control, through regulation, what Canadians post online and a government that has defied court orders of this chamber. We are talking about a government that wanted to receive private banking information and is now seeking a partner from which to track mobility data. I would not want to give the government the extraordinary power that it seeks. Its appetite for power and control and its failure to comply with the law are simply too well established.

To conclude, there is no justification for this act. The emergency is local and does not require additional powers.

• (1445)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I heard the member reference some quotes from parliamentarians, so I will reference quotes from a couple of parliamentarians too. The member might remember Peter MacKay, a Conservative minister, and Vernon White, a senator. They said, “But 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.” Vernon White later went on to say on CBC, “I support [the Emergencies Act]. I felt we were at a point of no return.”

Why does the member disagree with these Conservatives? Is it because what we have across the way is really the Reform Party?

Statutory Order

• (1450)

Mr. Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, I was watching the debate earlier in the day, and I must say the level and quality of debate we had in the chamber was much better before the member for Kingston and the Islands came—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, notwithstanding the fact that I take exception to his comment and I think it is inappropriate to say in the House, the member would know he should not be referencing my presence in the House at any time, whether I was here or not here.

The Deputy Speaker: The member cannot say if another member is or is not in the House, according to the rules.

The hon. member for Calgary Rocky Ridge.

Mr. Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, I certainly would not refer to the presence or absence of a member in the House, but from the time that the member began to rise and engage in debate, the civility and the quality of the debate certainly took a turn for the worse. Carrying on—

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. That should finish that point of order for the moment.

We are still on the answer to the original question put to the member for Calgary Rocky Ridge.

Mr. Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, I will answer his question by saying that I agree with the premise but not the conclusion of some of the remarks that he quoted.

I would agree that there is a very serious situation of unlawful acts that required a response. I disagree that it required this response.

[Translation]

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I completely agree with what my colleague from Calgary Rocky Ridge said. I understand why he rejects this law.

If this act was not the answer, what was? Was it leadership? Was it vision? Was it a law?

[English]

Mr. Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, we have had an absence of leadership in Canada under the Prime Minister all the way around.

I recall the remarks from the member for Louis-Hébert, who pointed out the extent to which this government made a deliberate choice to pit Canadians against each other long before this current crisis. One really must connect these two events. There is tremendous responsibility with the Prime Minister for the discord throughout our country.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I represent the Ambassador Bridge area, with 40% of Canada's daily trade with the United States.

Statutory Order

I can assure the member that the Conservative Party's talking points are not correct. The Ambassador Bridge is open to a degree of normalcy, but at the same time, the barriers, like they are in Ottawa, are now throughout the community, blocking us from businesses, blocking children from getting to appointments, including medical appointments, and causing a series of different problems.

Right now city of Windsor residents are on the hook for over \$10 million. We will continue to pay for that because the OPP, the RCMP and the City of Windsor are still protecting 14 kilometres of the 401 system. What is the Conservative Party's position? Will it support, provincially and federally, paying this bill and continuing to pay this bill?

What is it going to do in regard to convoys? A couple more convoys coming into the area have already been intercepted, and the threat there continues to exist—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Calgary Rocky Ridge.

Mr. Pat Kelly: Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree. As I said right at the very beginning of my speech, I was appalled by what happened in his riding. I did note that it was de-escalating, and the crossing, as the member pointed out, had reopened using conventional police methods and without having to resort to extraordinary powers.

I would agree with the member that it is a terrible problem and a terrible imposition on his community, but I do not believe that anything in this motion will change that. It is not a justification for the extraordinary powers the government is granting itself.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Mr. Speaker, for my constituents in Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, today we are debating the Emergencies Act and the motion for confirmation of a declaration of an emergency, pursuant to section 58 of the act. There is a lot to be said and I cannot cover everything in 10 minutes.

Under section 58, the government is required to provide a motion for confirmation of the declaration of an emergency and an explanation of the reasons for issuing the declaration, and to report on any consultation with the provinces and territories it is undertaking. Indeed, thousands of people have reached out to me in the last week regarding the temporary measures under the public order emergency, including the points on public assembly, fines and imprisonment, compelling to work on behalf of the Government of Canada and other measures, such as the freezing of one's financial assets.

The powers of Parliament in this unique situation are to protect against government overreach and bad decisions and to support the necessity of ensuring effective checks and balances are in place when a declaration of a public order emergency has been made under section 17 of the act. Upon review of the explanation pursuant to the Emergencies Act, I cannot support the reasons provided by the Governor in Council for the continued use of this act. My reasons relate to the following.

Under point two of the reasons for public emergency, “adverse effects on the Canadian economy”, numerous citations were made regarding protests at points of entry across Canada. It is my understanding that as of February 14, no major blockade was inhibiting

the flow of goods between Canada and the United States to warrant this unprecedented action. The ability of law enforcement to deal with the protests was demonstrated last weekend when the protesters at points of entry were removed before the invocation of the Emergencies Act.

It goes on to explain that threats were made to block railways, which could result in significant economic disruptions. The report outlines that railways in Canada have operating revenues of more than \$16 billion a year. A threat can be dealt with under existing laws and Parliament requires more information than the flimsy explanation provided regarding the economic significance of railways in Canada. The Railway Safety Act is a strong piece of legislation. I am sure it could be used if there was a legitimate threat.

I would say the same for point four, “the breakdown in the distribution chain and availability of essential goods”. Again the reasons provided by the government are without any evidence. Parliamentarians require more than general trade statistics to confirm the application of the most severe measure the government can possibly take. I just cannot support this.

Again the same could be said for point five, “the potential for an increase in the level of unrest”. The government has not provided the House with adequate justification that the situation in which we find ourselves today could not be effectively dealt with under any other law of Canada. Neither rhetoric nor emotion justifies such actions.

The report to the Houses of Parliament on the consultations regarding the Emergencies Act lack sufficient justification as well. Words like “spoke”, “met”, “regular engagement” and “discussed” are numerous throughout the document. Real and concrete steps, however, taken by the government in the context of consultations are void. For such a time as this, a government simply indicating that it spoke with the provinces and territories is not sufficient. What Parliament needs to know is what was discussed, what the government said to the provinces and territories and the actions it took to prevent national disruptions, and I would say vice versa in the context of the provinces and territories as well.

Let me quote the Prime Minister, who said, “Invoking the Emergencies Act is not something we do lightly. This is not the first, second or third option. It is the last resort.” Nothing the Prime Minister has provided the House demonstrates what the first, second or third actions actually were.

During the debate on Thursday, the member for Ottawa Centre asked, while pointing to members of the official opposition, that if this kind of occupation was happening in their neighbourhoods in their ridings for four weeks in a row, how would members be acting?

Arguably, many of the justifications provided relate more to the disasters, floods, wildfires and landslides British Columbians experienced last year. Lytton burned to the ground last summer and this fall every major roadway in the province of B.C. was flooded or washed away. The CP and CN rail lines were not operational. The port of metro Vancouver was cut off from Canada.

● (1455)

In my riding, there was danger to life, lives lost, real property damage for thousands, complete social disruption through the destruction of critical infrastructure and a loss of essential goods and services. People are still without permanent shelter and critical roadways are not fully operational, including the Trans-Canada Highway and Highway 8.

Under section 58 of the bill, there is nothing in these documents that shows the government is meeting the threshold of this legislation. I can argue more concretely that the disasters that B.C. faced last year are a much better example of when this act could have been used under part I, "Public Welfare Emergency".

Friday morning, I was also devastated, as has been mentioned in this House, to read of the horrific acts of violence that occurred in the northern community of Houston, British Columbia. Will this fall under the radar of our Prime Minister and his Emergencies Act? There was real violence there.

I am also reminded of other historical instances in Canada, such as the G20 summit, where the former Toronto chief of police and current Minister of Emergency Preparedness had hundreds of protesters arrested as police cars were burned in the streets and the Emergencies Act was not applied. The eyes of the world were on Canada at that time as well. Our reputation was also at stake in that moment.

In the annex of the motion tabled in Parliament, the Prime Minister included his letter to the premiers. He mentioned that he is concerned about the undermining of the confidence in our institutions. I believe Canadians are concerned the Prime Minister allowed the situation to escalate to where it is today. That is on him. That is on cabinet. I believe his actions are what is actually undermining the confidence in our institutions.

In preparation for today's debate I looked back at the Debates of 1988 when the Emergencies Act was before Parliament as a bill. I learned that parliamentarians of all political stripes were concerned about the future application of the bill and its relationship to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

NDP MP Derek Blackburn, on April 25, 1988, referred to the horrific experiences of Canadians of Japanese descent who suffered internment under the War Measures Act, the preceding legislation. Although in support of the bill, he was concerned that the Emergencies Act could still infringe on Canadian rights and freedoms beyond what is reasonable and proportionate to the circumstances. I share his concern. Mr. Blackburn suggested that the Supreme Court review the bill to be more confident that we would strike the right balance and Canadians would be protected. No review ever took place and look at where we find ourselves today.

Statutory Order

In closing, I want to remind all members of the House of the thoughtful reflections of the Hon. Bob Kaplan, former MP for York Centre and Liberal member of the House of Commons, from July 11, 1988, who at the time was in the official opposition. He stated:

The legislation we are passing today [the Emergencies Act] still gives the government very broad powers, and there will always be a role for the lawmakers to play, that of watching to ensure that the four...categories of emergencies provided for under this legislation are not used by the Government as an excuse to seize the power to rule by regulation.

We always have to be vigilant in this place, in the media and across the country, with whatever emergency legislation the Government has, to be certain that it is not...abused. If there is anything that has been learned in the course of this debate and in...the committee hearings, it is that Government, given any power, needs to be watched.

The Prime Minister needs to be watched. The government needs to be watched. It needs to be accountable. I stand here on behalf of my constituents, who expect me to hold the current government to account. I am asking all members of the House to carefully consider how they will vote on this unprecedented and unnecessary measure. Confidence in our institutions depends on it. The trust Canadians have in us collectively as parliamentarians depends on it. Our nation depends on it.

I encourage all members to vote in opposition of this motion out of respect for a concern of government overreach.

● (1500)

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, as a preamble I would like to say I am not sure I agree with taking events from the past and comparing them directly, because every one is different and each context is different. I would not compare a natural disaster to a conscious, coordinated movement, which is what we have seen. There has been coordination between what happened in Coutts and what has happened here.

I enjoyed the member's speech. It was rigorous and analytical. My question for him is this. Abstracting from the so-called reason for the "freedom convoy", which was trucker mandates and not really the reason, is he not concerned that there is a longer-term movement in parts of the country? For example, the same organizers were involved in the United We Roll convoy. Also, I read somewhere that the Facebook page for Canada Unity was registered in 2019.

● (1505)

Mr. Brad Vis: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member opposite raised a valid point about extremism, having confidence in our institutions and what Canadians see and read online and how that applies to our jobs as parliamentarians, but I think he missed the points raised by the Government of Canada, which largely focused on infrastructure, on the economy and on protecting our supply chains. There is no justification for using the Emergencies Act under the points raised by the government in the official documents tabled in this Parliament. That threshold simply is not met.

Statutory Order

[Translation]

Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

It is not often that we agree with the Conservatives, but I have to admit that, this time, we feel essentially the same way about the use of the Emergencies Act.

Does my colleague agree that the use of the act right now is an attempt to make up for the government's inaction and indifference over the past 20 days? Does he agree that the government is trying to portray itself as a saviour to restore its reputation, when the real saviours are the ones on the ground right now, tactfully ensuring public safety?

Mr. Brad Vis: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix for her question.

The government decided to use the act for several reasons. I agree with the hon. member that one reason is that the government wanted to change public opinion about its actions and about the bad decisions it has made over the last four weeks.

[English]

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I know the hon. member as somebody who has worked very hard for his constituents. I just want to tell him that I have been thinking very much about the deep pain his constituents are going through as they recover from the floods.

He quoted previous members of Parliament. I wanted to quote one back to him, if I could, from former Conservative MP Peter MacKay and Senator Vern White:

What we have seen in the occupation of Ottawa and the blockages of 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.

If a national security and economic threat to Canada is not an opportunity to use the Emergencies Act, I would ask the member, what on earth could be?

Mr. Brad Vis: Mr. Speaker, I think she missed the quote of Peter MacKay saying that the Emergencies Act might be a push too far.

The quotes I gave from previous members of Parliament related to the actual debate taking place in here. There was all-party consensus in this chamber when we decided to pass the Emergencies Act: Members of Parliament from all political parties were concerned about government overreach. They were concerned. In the legislation, it is clearly enshrined that no other law could apply. Only in specific situations did they believe that this was possible. Across our history as a great nation, there are numerous precedents indicating that this law was not required at this moment in time.

Mr. Darren Fisher (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Seniors, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before I start, I will say that I am sharing my time with the hon. member for Scarborough—Guildwood.

Canada has a beautiful democracy, but let me be clear: Although beauty is not always perfect or without flaws, it is beautiful

nonetheless, and our democracy is under attack by those who seek to destabilize it and to harm it.

The foundation for what is happening, from the illegal border blockades to the occupation of Ottawa, has been building for some time and is grounded in misinformation and hate. Back in May, at the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, we heard from Timothy Hahlweg at CSIS that ideologically motivated violent extremist groups were working together, united by the pandemic, to push their dangerous agendas and their hate. He said that “with COVID-19, we have seen various groups that previously weren't aligned, or individuals who perhaps were not sharing the same ideology or the same motivation, come together under a common cause, whether that is anti-government activity or anti-vaccination activities.” The rise in the misinformation from these hateful groups continues to incite hate and fear, and it appears to be at least partly fuelling the blockades at the border and the occupation of Ottawa.

We know certain ringleaders of this occupation are firmly grounded in white nationalism. Swastikas, Confederate and far-right-style flags, along with signs stating misinformation about everything from the safety of wearing a mask to taking a vaccine, have been seen all over the occupied area of Ottawa. I know not everyone who has taken part in this occupation holds this in their hearts, but this is the company they are keeping, and seeing members from across the aisle go out and help fuel and support this occupation has been eye-opening for many Canadians.

To be clear, the leaders of this illegal occupation posted their MOU online, specifically calling for the destruction of our democracy. It has never been hidden.

In Canada, we have an important charter right to freedom of peaceful assembly. When I was first elected as a member of Parliament, one of the first things I noticed was how many people from across Canada would come to Parliament to protest and to advocate for the causes they deeply believe in. Whether they were a small group walking right up on the lawn of Centre Block or thousands of people, they would peacefully state their causes while respecting the rights and freedoms of the residents of Ottawa to live freely in their own city. We do not see this level of accessibility in many other countries, and it is so special and so worth protecting.

Peaceful protests can make us uncomfortable, and in Canada that is okay. I will not state the cause, but each year there is a rally that brings thousands of people to Ottawa's Parliament Hill, and believe me, it makes me uncomfortable. I do not support the cause, but I respect the right to freedom of peaceful assembly. They come and they hold their rally; there is usually a robust counterprotest, and they leave.

To be very clear, what is going on in Ottawa has not been a peaceful protest. What we have seen in Ottawa and at the borders is a threat to Canada's sovereignty and democracy under the guise of freedom. These occupiers have stolen the freedom of the people of Ottawa. They have kept citizens held hostage in their homes, while terrorizing them with high-decibel noise, hate and harassment. People have not been able to leave their homes or wear masks without fear of being ridiculed, harassed and made to feel unsafe in their own city. This occupation has stolen the economic livelihood of many. Due to harassment and other terrible acts, the mall and businesses in the area have not been able to stay open safely.

Many people, especially those on minimum wage, are going without, while the occupiers remained for three weeks, and despite the City of Ottawa declaring a state of emergency and then the Province declaring a state of emergency, blockades and the occupation of Ottawa continued. When other orders of government call upon us, the Government of Canada, we answer that call, and we have been there to provide support for Ottawa and for the situations at our border every step of the way. We continued to work within the confines of existing measures and laws to provide resources.

• (1510)

We know the damage caused by the illegal border blockades has harmed Canada's economy profoundly. The Ambassador Bridge alone supports 30% of all trade by road between Canada and our most important trading partner, the United States. That is around \$390 million per day. My heart goes out to the hard-working truckers who were harmed by the illegal blockades. They were stuck at the border and stuck on highways for hours and hours while they were simply doing their job to keep Canada's supply chains moving. The same goes for what happened in Coutts, where we know that around \$48 million in daily trade was affected by the illegal blockade.

A peaceful demonstration should never harm others. A peaceful demonstration should never breach the rights of others. The impacts of these illegal border blockades will be long-lasting. We know that they have threatened businesses here in Canada and the livelihood of workers. In fact, it is shameful.

I have heard from so many folks from across Dartmouth—Cole Harbour who have been watching the struggles and hearing from loved ones in Ottawa about what is going on. They have been demanding stronger action from the start. Everyone from veterans to teachers and from seniors to young people has been speaking out in my riding, self-identifying as supporters from various political parties. Some say that they have never before felt so moved to reach out to their MP as now. They are frightened by the hate and the lawlessness that they were seeing at the borders and in Ottawa. They wanted to make sure that all orders of government were working together and doing everything possible to take control of the situation, preserve democracy and restore order.

It has been crystal clear that there were many challenges to local law enforcement's ability to enforce the law in Ottawa. We have invoked the Emergencies Act to provide more support for the provincial and territorial authorities to address both the blockades and the occupation to keep Canadians safe, restore confidence in our insti-

tutions and protect people's jobs. There is simply no other law in Canada that would provide this level of coordination and support.

My colleagues, many of whom are lawyers, have already, clearly and concisely, provided the legal case for invoking this act. It is met, and there is no question that this Emergencies Act is far from being the antiquated War Measures Act of the past. This act will not send in the military. The Emergencies Act preserves the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, ensuring that the individual rights of Canadians are protected, as they must be.

All parliamentarians must work together for Canadians. That means working together to restore order in Canada, and it means working together to protect Canada's democracy by standing up against hate, even when it is difficult to do so. I encourage all members of this House to join us in standing up for families, for workers and for democracy.

• (1515)

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. My hon. colleague, the hon. parliamentary secretary, spoke about many lawyers in this House who have scrutinized this bill and have felt that the threshold is met. Well, I can tell him that after scrutinizing the bill, this lawyer does not feel that the threshold has been met.

The member spoke about the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. That was interesting, because part of the rule of law is that the law must be predictable and it must be transparent. In this case, when it comes to freezing assets, we do not have any predictability or any transparency about how that is going on, especially if it is delegated to a third party, such as banks. How can this hon. member say that the charter is being respected when the rule of law cannot be upheld through a third party?

Mr. Darren Fisher: Mr. Speaker, I want to take a moment to thank the member from the opposition party for doing everything in his power to take care of the people in his constituency. I know that we are all in this for the right reasons, even though, most often, we disagree in basic ideologies in this House. I want to thank him for that work.

This act protects the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. As I said in my comments, there is no peaceful protest that can get in the way of the rights and freedoms of other Canadians. This was an occupation and an illegal protest.

[Translation]

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I can only agree, for the most part, with the member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour.

People have the right to protest, but not to occupy. Harassment, economic loss and tragedy are unacceptable. As we agree on the end goal, I have a question for him.

Is this the best way we could find—

Statutory Order

• (1520)

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

There was a problem with the interpretation, but it is now resolved.

I would ask the hon. member for Trois-Rivières to repeat his question.

Mr. René Villemure: Mr. Speaker, I was saying that I agree with my colleague, the hon. member for Dartmouth—Cole Harbour. The end goal is to restore order. We share that goal and agree entirely. We fully agree that the harassment, the tragedies, the disruption of people's lives and the economic losses are unacceptable.

Now, if we want to restore order, is this the best way, or is it the only avenue left after so much inaction?

[English]

Mr. Darren Fisher: Mr. Speaker, I am so glad the hon. member agrees with this side of the House that this is an unacceptable situation. I heard the interim police chief in Ottawa almost breathe a sigh of relief that finally the resources the police felt they needed for stepping in to solve this issue have been provided to them. It was wonderful to hear the interim chief speak to how the resources that come from the Emergencies Act have allowed them to move forward.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Qujannamiik, Uqaqtittiji.* As an Inuk and indigenous person, I have inherent mistrust in law enforcement. I have seen all too often how law enforcement treats my community, indigenous people and people of colour. All too often we have been at the wrong end of the law. Law enforcement arbitrarily targets my communities.

My NDP colleagues and I have weighed very heavily the measures allowed in the Emergencies Act. We are deeply aware of the risk to Canada's democracy, and without the drastic measures, we are aware of the security threats to our national security posed by foreign extremists. I have received threats from as far as New Brunswick because of the debate on the Emergencies Act.

Could the member explain to Canadians why this is a national issue requiring urgent action?

Mr. Darren Fisher: Mr. Speaker, I have spent the day listening to this debate, and I want to thank the member for her very wise interventions all day. She has been on the mike several times and I want to thank her for that.

Our national security and the threat to our economy have made this act, unfortunately, necessary.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I could not agree more with my hon. friend from Dartmouth—Cole Harbour about the interventions from the member for Nunavut.

I am still deciding how I am going to vote, but I want to ask the hon. member how much, in addition to the economic threats, using the Emergencies Act is motivated by recognizing that this is not a single threat but a vast network that seeks to undermine democracies. The member's last word in his speech was "democracy", and as informed by Vladimir Putin and forces of the right in the U.S.,

we are suffering from a foreign-influenced effort to undermine our democracy.

Mr. Darren Fisher: Mr. Speaker, the member is absolutely right. I sat on the national defence committee and the public security committee, and we heard from experts all over the world that there is a planned misinformation campaign aimed directly at countries by our adversaries and enemies. The member is absolutely right that this is affecting and impacting democracy in Canada.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I usually start by saying that I am thankful for the opportunity to speak here. However, it is the first time in 24 years that I needed a police escort to enter this chamber, and it is likely that all of us will need police escorts to exit this chamber. That is the state of emergency affairs in Ottawa as we speak.

Sedition, by definition, is "conduct or speech inciting people to rebel against the authority of a state". Emergency, by definition, is "a serious, unexpected, and often dangerous situation requiring immediate action." There is a further definition in the Emergencies Act that largely supports this notion:

threatens the ability of the Government of Canada to preserve...sovereignty [and] security

Over the last three weeks, we have seen a ragtag convoy of truckers, apparently here to protest mandates, morph into an anarchistic challenge to legitimate authority, seriously impairing the life, economic well-being and safety of Canadians from coast to coast: from Ottawa to the Ambassador Bridge, to the Ambassador Bridge times two and times three, to Toronto protests, to Quebec protests, to the Blue Water Bridge, to the Emerson, Manitoba, closures, to the Coutts, Alberta, closure and to closures in British Columbia. There have been billions of dollars' worth of economic disruptions and broken supply chains. Citizens have been rendered hopeless and fearful. Citizens have been threatening each other and threatening to take the law into their own hands in the face of police impotence or their refusal to act.

I do not know what else we could possibly want before declaring a state of national emergency, with the possible exception of violence in the streets. Some seem to think that should be part of the debate and is a necessary precondition. It is also equally clear some insurrectionists would be pleased if that happened, if anarchy and lawlessness prevailed and legitimate authority were undermined. All the while, these "brave anarchists" are hiding behind children in bouncy castles and waving Canadian flags, sometimes right side up and sometimes not.

The protest has migrated from misguided complaints about mandates to sedition. Most of the mandates are from provincial authorities and are being cautiously lifted with the guidance of public health authorities. The blockade, if it was ever about mandates in the first place, should be in provincial capitals. The sole mandate within the federal jurisdiction is at the border and can only be lifted in conjunction with the American government. They should take their protest to Washington, assuming they can get across the border.

What is this seditious blockade really about? I am sure members have heard about campaigns of misinformation and disinformation. As my hon. friend mentioned in his speech, at the public safety committee and the defence committee we heard a lot of testimony about misinformation and disinformation campaigns by state and non-state actors. I do not have any personal or direct evidence of the attempted destabilization of a G7 NATO country in opposition to Russia on the verge of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, but I have to think that works to the advantage of President Putin. Any destabilization effort that erodes national consensus works to the advantage of our two major adversaries, China and Russia.

Russian TV has been promoting alternative theories of the utility of vaccines and paranoid theories about implanting chips. It also questions the effectiveness of mandates, sowing doubts in the minds of those looking to express their frustration and anger. At this point, it is directed at Parliament, the government and the Prime Minister.

The evidence of non-state actors is a bit more clear. Funding from the U.S. is blatantly obvious and is from sources in the U.S. associated with the most odious elements of American society. The Conservatives have been saying for weeks that all we need to do is talk to these people, so I started returning telephone calls and responding to emails. I cannot help but observe that I have become quite popular in Alberta, British Columbia and Quebec. All of these non-constituents want to help me vote for my constituents. Just today, we received 1,300 emails, and we had 600 the day before.

• (1525)

To these non-constituents, I offer an insincere apology for ignoring them. My constituents, on the other hand, I do not ignore, and have not for nine elections and 24 years. There is more of a mix among those who want me to vote against the legislation, and they are more vociferous this week. However, last week others wanted me to end it. The conversations with those who want me to vote against the bill exhibit a belligerence, coupled with a substantial amount of misinformation and disinformation, that makes one despair.

When the conversation starts with, "I have never voted for you and I never will", we know we are off to a bad start. For nine elections and 24 years, there must have been a great deal of frustration for this individual caller. When the conversation is peppered with the Prime Minister's last name in conjunction with what the Speaker would rule to be unparliamentary language, all seemingly starting with the same letter, we know the conversation is not going to go well. Also, trying to carry on a conversation with a blowing horn from an 18-wheeler in the background is indeed an impediment to civilized discourse.

Statutory Order

What is so discouraging when we get through all of this is the dissonance of fact. Minimal understanding of civics and science must be the basis for civilized discourse, but the "alternative facts" narrative, perpetrated by that notorious Trump acolyte, has taken hold here. That is ultimately what is so discouraging. By one means or another, this insurrection will end, but the damage to political discourse will linger. It is difficult to have conversations with horns blaring, engines revving, diesel fumes in the air, a commitment to alternative facts and certain politicians giving aid and comfort to sedition.

I therefore support, wholeheartedly, this initiative as a measured, scaled, charter-consistent response to the blatant disregard for the rule of law. If revocation of licences, revocation of insurance and freezing of bank accounts will not do it, I support the police cordoning off areas and arresting those who refuse to leave, which they are doing as we speak. I have been very impressed by the measured and careful response of the police in the last couple of days.

I condemn the lawless thugs hiding behind children. I condemn violence. This legislation should serve as a warning to lawless brigands, especially to the organizers, both foreign and domestic. We are a nation where the rule of law prevails in all matters. This misinformation and disinformation campaign, whether from foreign or domestic sources, is deeply settled in the minds of these insurrectionists, who see conspiracies everywhere and seem to be incapable of adjusting deeply held preconceptions of certain basic facts. It takes us, as a nation, into a very dark place.

• (1530)

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Mr. Speaker, we are talking about peaceful protests, and I want to commend the law enforcement we have had over the last number of weeks here in Ottawa. They have been keeping the peace and doing a wonderful job of ending the blockade here this week. Conservatives have been calling for an end to it for a while.

Ottawa knew for days that this protest, the "freedom convoy", was coming into Ottawa. The mayor knew, the police chief knew and security here in Ottawa knew. They knew for days before they even arrived. We have seen hundreds of thousands of people here for weeks on end without so much as a broken window.

What are the first, second and third things the government could have done before dropping the sledgehammer by invoking this legislation? We are still waiting to hear the answer, so I would like to hear the member's answer on that.

Statutory Order

Hon. John McKay: Mr. Speaker, the first thing is provision of intelligence. We had open-source intelligence that this convoy was coming and that this was their intention. The second was the application of resources. Resources were made freely available to police services in Ottawa. The third thing was the immense resources of the Government of Canada, all of which were made available to this municipality. For whatever reason, that did not seem to be sufficient to deal with this seditious enterprise by these lawless brigands.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I really enjoyed my hon. colleague's speech. I appreciate my colleague in general, because I know he is sincere, honest and passionate.

However, we have different opinions on the issue at hand today.

Does he believe that all the legislative tools available to the various levels of government were used before the Emergencies Act was invoked today? If so, can he tell me which ones were used?

• (1535)

[English]

Hon. John McKay: Mr. Speaker, I, too, am quite fond of my hon. friend, even when he is wrong.

The Criminal Code of Canada should have been sufficient for the purpose. However, it is clear that, over the course of the two or three weeks of insurrection across the country, for whatever reason, it was not. As I said earlier, if stopping insurance, revoking licences, freezing bank accounts, cordoning off areas or requisitioning tow trucks will do it, then that is what has to happen.

I also want to applaud the work of the Sûreté du Québec, which has fortunately ignored the Government of Quebec and has provided aid and assistance to the policing effort here in Ottawa.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his intervention today. I always find his interventions witty, as well as informative.

When we think about what is happening here, and we look at what is happening on the streets of Ottawa, across the country and in Alberta, what I am thinking about is how we come out of this. How do we go forward?

I have called for an independent, transparent, public investigation and inquiry. Will his government be prepared to also do a review of policing across the country, and to bring forward legislation on online hate? There is a need for increased online hate legislation. Will his government look at ways in which we can better protect our media in this country?

Hon. John McKay: Mr. Speaker, usually, when my children talk about my wittiness, they put a prefix in front of that word, but we will ignore my children for the time being.

The legislation, by definition, has to have an inquiry, so there will be one. As to the member's suggestion about a general inquiry into policing, the public safety committee conducted one last year. It had a narrow focus on, if you will, racism in policing. However,

it is a commendable suggestion and possibly should be taken up by the public safety committee, if the government does not do it.

Mr. Anthony Housefather (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the member for not insulting any other party or any other member of the House. Today, we have been talking a lot about division in Canada, yet the people complaining about division are making speeches that are equally divisive.

I have been very concerned that in Canada, we are starting to live in two different realities. I would like the member to talk, if he can, about whether he is concerned about that.

Hon. John McKay: Mr. Speaker, it must be a good day for me, because he is equally one of my favourite members in the House. You are, too, Mr. Speaker. You are all my favourites.

My hon. colleague has spotted the irony of our debate, which is that those who call for calm and civilized discourse are, in many instances, the ones who are divisive and who are aiding and abetting sedition and lawlessness.

The Deputy Speaker: I want to say that compliments will get you everywhere.

Returning to debate, the hon. member for Davenport has the floor.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz (Davenport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Don Valley West.

It is an absolute honour for me to stand in the House of Commons today on behalf of the residents of my riding of Davenport to speak to the invocation of the Emergencies Act. Before I continue, I would like to acknowledge that I am speaking from the traditional territory of the Algonquin nation.

Earlier this week, on February 14, our federal government declared a public order emergency and invoked the Emergencies Act. This was the first time this act had been used since it was created in 1988. There were clear conditions set out in the Emergencies Act in order for the public order emergency to be declared. The act was invoked only after exhausting other options.

The act is time-limited to 30 days. It is geographically targeted. It proposes measures that are reasonable and proportional to the threats it is meant to address, and it does not displace or replace provincial or territorial authorities. The act was invoked after discussions with the cabinet and caucus, after consultations with the premiers from all provinces and territories, and after speaking with opposition leaders. I support this decision.

For almost three weeks now, blockades have been illegally disrupting the lives of Canadians. They have been harming our economy and endangering public safety. The “freedom convoy 2022” has created a critical, urgent, temporary situation that is national in scope and cannot effectively be dealt with under any other law of Canada.

The blockades at the ports of entry have disrupted the transportation of crucial medicine, goods, fuel and food to Canadians. They are causing significant adverse effects on Canada's economy, on its relationship with trading partners and on supply chains. These trade disruptions, the increase in criminal activity, the occupation of downtown Ottawa, the lawlessness and the threats of violence, as well as the presence of firearms, constitute a public order emergency. It is an emergency that arises from threats to the security of Canada that are so serious as to be a national emergency.

What may have started as a protest by truck drivers against border mandates quickly morphed into a rallying point for anti-vaccination, anti-government, anti-authority and white supremacist groups with demands ranging from an end to all public health restrictions to the overthrow of an elected government.

At occupations and blockades across the country, we have seen harmful racist and violent behaviour, and attempts to minimize or discount the harm done to Canadians. It was also clear that there were serious challenges to, and gaps in, local law enforcement's ability to effectively enforce the law.

It is clear that extraordinary measures had to be taken to keep Canadians safe, protect people's jobs and restore confidence in our institutions. Canada, at the very core of its existence, is a country that fundamentally believes in, and is governed by, the rule of law. In our blood and in our souls, we believe in peace, order and good government.

Over the last three weeks, we did not see peace and order in specific parts of our nation, and especially here in Ottawa. There was a complete shutdown of key parts of Centretown due to the occupation. It stopped people from going to work, stopped businesses from reopening and stopped people from carrying on with their normal lives.

The first week of the occupation had an unprecedented amount of noise, which caused great distress to all those living in or near the occupied area. It seriously impacted the mental health of nearby Ottawa residents. The mental health of many was already fragile due to the unprecedented pandemic we have all had to live through over the past couple of years.

At the Ambassador Bridge in Windsor, Ontario, trucker convoys blocked the crossing and stopped trade from moving between the United States and Canada. This is a border point that sees over \$400 million in trade per day. Many Canadians were temporarily laid off, and the economies of both countries were impacted. What is worse is that our reputation as a place to do business with ease across our two borders was greatly impacted.

Our Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance said that the disruptions had shaken Canada's reputation as a place in which to invest and do business. She further said the world was watching us and that our jobs, our prosperity and our livelihoods were endangered, and we would not allow Canada's privileged trading relationship with the United States to be compromised.

Windsor was not the only border crossing that was impacted. We saw trucker blockades in Coutts, Alberta, and in Emerson, Manitoba. The impact economically was \$48 million and \$73 million in

trade each day, respectively. The threat exists for other border crossings across our country.

● (1540)

There were guns found in Coutts, Alberta. Protesters have been charged with conspiracy to commit the murder of police officers, and a large cache of guns and ammunition was seized by the RCMP. All of these actions and threats demanded that our federal government take extraordinary action.

It is important to note that this act does not suspend the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. In fact, the act was created to flow from and uphold the charter. The act's preamble explicitly states that any measures taken under the act must be compliant with charter rights. The invocation of the act does not limit freedom of speech. It does not limit peaceful assembly, and it does not prevent people from exercising their right to protest legally. We are reinforcing the principles, values and institutions that keep all Canadians free.

The Emergencies Act also provides additional powers to stop the flow of money that has been funding these trucker blockades and occupations. Leaked data has shown that the majority of the donations, over 50%, have been coming from outside of the country, primarily the United States. When police notified GoFundMe that the funds it was collecting were being used for unlawful purposes, the campaign was shut down. Protesters then turned to the Christian crowdfunding site GiveSendGo, which raised almost \$11 million.

In order to stop the flow of funds for these illegal blockades and occupations, the Emergencies Act includes four key financial measures. From a press release and announcement that our Deputy Prime Minister made earlier this week, we learned a lot about the details.

The first of those measures is that the act extends the scope of Canada's anti-money laundering and anti-terrorism financing rules to cover crowdfunding platforms and the payment processors they use. This change covers all forms of transactions, including digital assets such as cryptocurrencies.

Second, the order directs Canadian banks, insurance companies and other financial service providers to temporarily cease providing financial services when the institution suspects that an account, either personal or corporate, is being used to further the blockades.

Third, the act also enables and directs Canadian financial institutions to review their relationship with anyone involved in the illegal blockades, and to report the assets and related transactions of those involved to the RCMP or to CSIS.

Statutory Order

The fourth measure provides federal, provincial and territorial government institutions with new authority to share relevant information with banks and other financial service providers if the information will help put a stop to the funding of illegal blockades and illegal activities. Canadian financial service providers will be able to immediately freeze or suspend the account of an individual or business affiliated with the blockades without a court order.

All of these new requirements and authorities will help mitigate the risks for Canadian financial institutions and crowdfunding platforms to transact illicit funds, increasing the quality and quantity of the intelligence received by FINTRAC in allowing us to stop the flow of funding to these illegal blockades.

It is important to highlight the safeguards, and the parliamentary oversight and accountability measures, that are contained within the act. As was required, the government tabled the declaration of emergency so that the House could debate and decide upon the declaration. The government also tabled the orders, as required, before the House. The oversight this legislation gives us as parliamentarians is important to ensure that it is acting with the law, and I take that responsibility incredibly seriously.

We have seen support from a number of provinces for this action, including from British Columbia, Newfoundland and Labrador and Ontario. Our federal government is conscious of the need for transparency and parliamentary oversight as we undertake this action. In the coming days, a parliamentary committee will be struck to provide oversight while the emergency measure is in effect. As well, an inquiry into the measures used during the emergency must be initiated once the state of emergency is over.

To conclude, I thank the residents in my riding of Davenport who have called and written to me all this week. I appreciated hearing their thoughts and having them reach out. It is an extraordinary moment in the history of our nation, and this is an extraordinary piece of legislation. It is absolutely the responsibility of our government and myself as a parliamentarian to make sure that we explain why we need to invoke this public order emergency, and why this Emergencies Act needed to be introduced.

• (1545)

Mr. Robert Kitchen (Souris—Moose Mountain, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the member talked a lot about how FINTRAC was going to be able to try to categorize the money coming from foreign countries, yet this is the same government that cannot figure out how \$12 million of CERB payments were given to Canadians outside this country. I digress.

The member mentioned, “after other options”. What other options were used before the act was implemented? Was it alternate dispute resolution? Was it mediation? Was it consultation? Can you please give us at least one or two steps of what was implemented?

The Deputy Speaker: I would remind all members to address their questions through the Chair.

The hon. member for Davenport.

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. It is an important one for me to respond to.

Our government, on numerous occasions, offered additional resources, every step of the way, not once, not twice, not three times. We also helped to enable a table of all three levels of policing and found as we moved forward that there were a number of gaps in the ability of the police to be able to act. That is why we introduced the Emergencies Act.

• (1550)

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the speech by my colleague from Davenport, whom I like very much.

From what I understand, she agrees with the principle of using the Emergencies Act, because she agrees with how it is being applied and the rules for enforcing it. However, this is special legislation that is supposed to protect us from arbitrary government. It is to be used only in emergency situations when nothing else can be done.

Does she not think it sets a precedent if she focuses only on the use of the act and not on the criteria for invoking it?

[English]

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Speaker, there are two parts to the question. The first is if I am satisfied with how it is being used. The truth is that I probably do not know all the ways it is being used right now, but I have a lot of confidence there is going to be an inquiry into the measures used during the emergency. That inquiry has to be initiated once the state of emergency is over.

With respect to setting a precedent, for me what is important is that I really appreciated the thoughtfulness of how we declared this Emergencies Act. I appreciated that it is time and geographically limited, as well as proportional and reasonable to—

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments, the hon. member for Lac-Saint-Louis.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, many members have said we already had the legislative tools, yet I noticed that the Province of Ontario enacted some emergency legislation. Would the member not agree that the reason exceptional legislation was not sufficient was that it did not engage FINTRAC and could not deputize police forces from outside Ontario?

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz: Mr. Speaker, I would agree with the hon. member. We realized, and the police forces across the country made us realize, that there were some gaps in their ability to be able to act. Tracking and stopping the money was one of the key elements that was missing, as was designating spaces to be able to enforce protection and enabling tow trucks to take action. To address the use of trucks as instruments in the blockades was also a gap in our ability to use existing laws.

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have been reflecting all day on the very momentous occasion this is and the kind of debate that is lengthy, engaged and important. I have been listening all day and have actually found the contributions of all the members, which I have agreed with or not agreed with, to be quite helpful for me in engaging with this conversation. We do not do that often in this House. We do not have dozens of hours of debate on an issue, and we are doing that because of the singular importance of invoking this act.

Even as we engage in our debate today, Ottawa police officers, supported by local police, Sûreté du Québec, the Ontario Provincial Police and the RCMP, are continuing to calmly, peacefully and effectively work to free our capital city, even as it remains under siege in an illegal occupation. I thank them.

With the invocation of the Emergencies Act, police forces and other authorities are able to engage co-operatively to restore peace, order and good government in this city. In fact, the act itself can trace its roots right back to that part of the Constitution Act of 1867. It is important that we do that to have police forces co-operating with the tools they need to act in an emergency situation, but what may be less apparent, and has been mentioned today but is equally important, is that this act allows us to put the squeeze on foreign and non-transparent domestic funding of the extremist groups at work behind this occupation, to bring it to an end. As I speak, I am hopeful that the end is now in sight and the end comes without incident, without injury and certainly without loss of life.

Let me be perfectly clear. All Canadians value freedom of expression and the right to demonstrate. That is a fundamental part of what it means to be Canadian. I, as a United Church minister, have been part of many demonstrations aimed at drawing attention to important issues of social justice, and I am sure I will do that again in the future. What has transpired in Ottawa, at border crossings and at a bridge over the last few weeks has not been that.

Over these past three weeks, I have walked through the crowds gathered near Parliament. I have seen their signs. I have heard their comments. I have also been learning from them. I have learned that there are many people on the streets here who are angry. They feel left out. They feel unheard for a variety of reasons. For some, this pandemic has exacerbated other problems, such as economic problems, social problems and health problems. Our job is fundamentally to listen to them, to find ways to help them and to respect them. I am committed to doing that, but their anger and frustration have been both manipulated and exploited by extremists who are fuelled by nothing more than malevolence and a complete disrespect for the values and institutions Canadians have built and depend on.

What is—

Statutory Order

• (1555)

The Deputy Speaker: Can I interrupt the hon. member for just one moment? I really apologize.

Can the member take his phone and maybe move it away from the microphone? It is impeding the microphone.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Hon. Robert Oliphant: Mr. Speaker, the anger and frustration of the people on the streets, I believe, have been manipulated and exploited by extremists who are fuelled by nothing more than malevolence and a complete disrespect for the values and institutions that Canadians have built and depend on.

What has transpired in Ottawa over the past three weeks is a massive disruption that is meant to do more than disrupt traffic and make a point about vaccines or pandemic mandates. It is a manifestation led by a small group of people, fuelled by anger, even hatred, aimed at subverting democracy and the rule of law. Democracy and the rule of law go hand in hand with freedom. They protect our freedom. It is time for this illegal occupation to end. The vast majority of Canadians, I believe, understand this and agree with our government's approach. While I respect and value the opinions of all, this is a time when, I believe, we need to hold up democracy, democratic institutions and the rule of law, so that freedom can be maintained.

Mr. Speaker, speaking through you directly to the residents of Don Valley West, I want to thank them for taking the time to write to me and to call me, including expressing concerns for my personal safety over these last few weeks. While I note the minority of people who disagree with me, I have reached the opinion that the federal government is taking the right measured careful action in invoking this law. They have exhausted all other options and have had to act, and they are doing so by intelligently and judiciously invoking this act.

We are all tired of COVID-19. We want this pandemic to end and we all wish that there was a final firm timeline to set that end, but this is a virus. It is persistent. It is evolving. No one is able to give an exact timetable for the return to normal life. I hear the Conservatives call for the government to set a deadline for our return to normal, a so-called plan. Frankly, what is required is that we have many plans for all the contingencies that could happen with this unpredictable virus, and we do. Both at the federal level and at the level of the provinces and territories we have such plans, plans to open public spaces, plans to travel more easily, plans to combat new and yet undiscovered variants and plans to ensure every person in the world, not just Canadians, are fully vaccinated. These plans are developed constantly by public servants who are following the science and advising the governments across this country.

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Right now what we really need is patience, persistence, co-operation, care for our neighbours, support for frontline workers, especially in health care, and a following of the rule of law in this country. The virus will be beaten. The pandemic will end, but it will end through vaccinations and public health advances and protocols, not by occupying our nation's capital, not by blockading bridges, by stopping commerce and by stopping the freedom of other Canadians to go about their daily business.

More than 5.8 million people have died from COVID-19 around the world. It is a pandemic. It is the enemy. The enemies are not the scientists. The enemies are not politicians. The enemies are not medical professionals. They are not public health officials. The enemy is an unpredictable, mutating, persistent virus that needs to be beaten. The virus, however, is not the only enemy that needs to be countered. The disinformation and misinformation of this pandemic has become endemic.

It saddens me that otherwise intelligent people are falling prey to that misinformation and do not see the far-right agenda that is at work in this situation. They are an opportunistic infection, if there ever was one. Fuelled by paranoia, conspiracy theories and ignorance, it has culminated in the demonstration that we are seeing in our city streets, which we have been listening to and walking through.

We are hearing the hurt. We are hearing the disaffection. We are hearing the anger, but we also want them to know they are heard and should not be manipulated by extremists who have no other goal but to disrupt our freedom and democracy and the rule of law in this country. Therefore, we have the Emergencies Act to end the blockades at this time.

● (1600)

Our Prime Minister waited as long as he could, working hard to defuse the situation. Over the past weeks, illegal road, border and bridge closures, and their significant negative impact on the economy, convinced the Prime Minister to invoke the Emergencies Act.

There will be discussion about that. There will be a parliamentary committee overseeing it. There will be hearings after it is over, and there will be public discourse. However, right now in this House, we should be united to ensure that we remain a country of democracy, the rule of law and ensuring that our fundamental freedoms are enshrined.

We have the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. That was a Liberal bill. We also have the Bill of Rights, which was a Conservative bill. Both of them are protected in the Emergencies Act. As the interim Ottawa police chief, Steve Bell, noted, right now this act is helpful, necessary and effective. We see it working as our streets are slowly being cleared. This morning, I walked into this place somewhat afraid of the day ahead. I believe tonight I will go back home just a bit more sure that Canada will remain a place where all of us are safe, all of us will have our rights and freedoms protected, and all of us will be able to engage.

We will continue to do this. We will work together. I encourage all members of this House, all parties, to engage in this, as it is important to their constituents, to ending this pandemic and to making sure Canada remains Canada.

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, I did notice a term in my colleague's speech when he talked about far right and far left. These are divisive terms. In here, we have to look at people as they are people, and make sure that we are actually listening to Canadian voices, wherever on the spectrum they may be, and make sure that everybody gets heard in this country. Stigmatizing some of those voices is not the right approach to this. I know the member usually does not undertake that kind of behaviour.

I will ask him a question around Canada's financial system. I would pose, for the member, that Canada already has adequate laws under FINTRAC to address foreign funding coming into Canada and looking at it. Would the member reconsider the notion of stigmatizing the bank accounts of people who donated a small amount to people they supported in these protests as they came to Ottawa, when they were protests, who now have the prospect of having their bank accounts frozen as a result? Would the member reconsider that at this time?

Hon. Robert Oliphant: Madam Speaker, I want to be very clear. The government has absolutely no intention of stigmatizing anybody in this process. However, we are going to follow the money. Now, we have the tools to follow the money and find out exactly where influence is being spread.

For two years, I was chair of the public safety committee, and I often listened to Conservatives saying that Liberals were naive, not following the threats and not following the information from intelligence agencies. We have listened. We are not naive on this side of the House. We are not playing politics. We are engaging in the most important systems that we need to engage in, to ensure that this country is protected. I believe the Conservatives know that, and they should get on board with it.

● (1605)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for his speech.

When it comes to using special legislation like the Emergencies Act, I think we need to be 100% sure that it is the right decision, unlike what my colleague from Hull—Aylmer believes. Earlier today, he told us that he was not 100% sure that this is the right decision, but he wanted to make it anyway.

What does the act itself say? It says that all the other regular legislative tools have to be used before the Emergencies Act can be invoked.

Does my hon. colleague believe that is the case? Does he believe that we have already used all the legislative tools at our disposal? If so, can he name those tools?

[English]

Hon. Robert Oliphant: Madam Speaker, nothing in life is 100% certain. I could not live if I were waiting for everything to be 100% certain. However, I believe the burden of proof has been met. We have listened to police forces. We are giving them the tools. We are working with them to ensure our rights and freedoms are protected, but also that the authorities have the tools that they need to act.

We will engage. We will have a public inquiry after this event. We have a parliamentary committee that will oversee it. Everything will be transparent. Everything will be acted upon. This is a courageous act. The legislation is there. The Prime Minister and the cabinet are using it, and frankly, I am proud of them.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Qujannamiik, Uqaqtittiji.* I want to thank the member for Don Valley West. I also want to thank the parliamentary staff, who have been doing an extraordinary job.

I have described the leaders of the so-called “freedom convoy” as extremists. I am being asked by my constituents in Nunavut what extremists I am talking about. Could the member describe those who have led the illegal blockades and tell us exactly what danger they pose to the rest of Canada?

Hon. Robert Oliphant: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for Nunavut for her leadership on this issue. I have been profoundly moved by her questions, both about inclusion and about rights, and now this one.

Arrests have been made. A significant number of arrests have been made yesterday and today. These folks are now before the courts, so I am not going to comment on them directly. The court processes will take place, and we will understand what happens later.

It is my instinct, however, and having followed the news on this and having followed intelligence over the last number of years about who is moving and where our biggest threats to Canada are, I believe those threats are from extremist far-right groups. I think that right now is a time when it has come to a head. We will have a clearer and better picture once our courts have acted.

* * *

[Translation]

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (C), 2021-22

A message from Her Excellency the Governor General transmitting supplementary estimates (C) for the financial year ending March 31, 2022, was presented by the President of the Treasury Board and read by the Speaker to the House.

Hon. Mona Fortier (President of the Treasury Board, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the supplementary estimates (C), 2021-22.

* * *

• (1610)

[English]

EMERGENCIES ACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion.

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Mr. Marty Morantz (Charleswood—St. James—Assiniboia—Headingley, CPC): Madam Speaker, regarding the invocation of the Emergencies Act, I must ask how someone so irresponsible can be entrusted with such great responsibility.

Our country is more divided than ever before. Over the past two years, we have seen the government divide Canadians for political gain over and over again by pitting one region against the other, pitting east against west, pitting Canadians against each other, eroding trust in our institutions and flouting the rule of law.

The primary responsibility of the Prime Minister is to maintain peace, order and good government. What grade should the Prime Minister get? He gets an F in my book. We do not have peace. We do not have order, and I think all Canadians know the answer to the third question. That is right. It is an F.

The Prime Minister has decided to invoke the Emergencies Act for the first time since its inception 34 years ago. This legislation gives the government unprecedented power and control over the lives of Canadians, and it should only be used in the most exceptional of circumstances. It should not be used where existing laws are sufficient.

The threshold to invoke the Emergencies Act has simply not been met. It is not even close. This is a clear case of government overreach. So far, the Prime Minister and his ministers cannot even articulate a coherent reason.

The Emergencies Act can only be invoked when a situation is such that it:

(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

and that cannot be effectively dealt with under any other law of Canada.

The Emergencies Act is there to address certain types of extreme threats to Canada only when all other existing options will just not work. The act is not there to allow the Prime Minister to arbitrarily, and without reason, curtail the rights of all citizens.

The Prime Minister says that the issues that have arisen over the past three weeks cannot be dealt with under existing legislation. Experts disagree, saying that existing Criminal Code provisions are sufficient, and extraordinary powers are an overreach.

Here is an example. The justice minister is justifying the Emergencies Act as needed to compel tow truck drivers to remove illegally parked vehicles, but there is a problem with that. Paragraph 129(b) of the Criminal Code already gives the police this power. It applies to anyone who:

Statutory Order

omits, without reasonable excuse, to assist a public officer or peace officer in the execution of his duty in arresting a person or in preserving the peace,

The Criminal Code also already contains other sections that address unlawful assembly, harassment, intimidation and mischief.

Our country has experienced many crises in the last 30 years that were resolved without the need for Emergencies Act overrides. It was not invoked during the 2008 financial crisis. It was not invoked during the Oka crisis in 1990. It was not invoked in the aftermath of the Ottawa shootings that tragically ended the life of Corporal Nathan Cirillo in 2014. It was not invoked during 9/11. It was not invoked in 2020, when rail crossings were being blocked across the country for weeks on end, disrupting supply chains, the delivery of goods and livelihoods.

It has not been invoked to deal with the opioid crisis. Most recently, it was not used during the greatest crisis that this country has faced since the Second World War, which is the COVID pandemic. In fact, it was not even used last week to clear the Ambassador Bridge, the Emerson border crossing or, for that matter, any other crossing. The crossings were clearly cleared peacefully, without violence and under existing laws.

Why invoke the Emergencies Act? Why suspend the rights of all Canadians? Sadly, we do not know why. The Prime Minister will not tell us his reason for this historic and unfettered power grab.

It is clear that the Prime Minister has lost control of this situation and is desperate to save his political skin. Yes, the sunny ways of 2015 have given way to the dark, cloudy haze of 2022. He has lost control, and we should not be surprised in the slightest.

• (1615)

Here is why. When a government reduces sentences for serious offences, as this government has, when a prime minister tries to cut his friends at SNC-Lavalin a special deal to avoid criminal prosecution, when a government abandons the fundamental adherence to the rule of law, when certain politicians call to defund the police and the Prime Minister does not even immediately and strongly repudiate that terrible idea, what happens? What happens is lawlessness, and that is what has happened here. That is right: lawlessness.

Parliament has been surrounded by trucks that have blockaded the streets of Ottawa, cut off the free flow of traffic, made downtown residents' lives miserable, subjected them to honking noises 24-7, shut down businesses and cost people their livelihoods, all because of the weak policies of the Prime Minister.

As we have seen in Coutts, Windsor, Surrey and even in my home province of Manitoba, law enforcement has been able to peacefully clear border protests through negotiations without resorting to any Emergencies Act provisions. In fact, Manitoba and many other provinces are telling the Prime Minister that this step simply is not necessary and may even inflame the situation.

However, the government is insisting on triggering this draconian legislation that dramatically expands the ability of the state to interfere in the private lives of Canadians, a law that includes requiring banks to freeze an individual's bank account without due process.

The fact of the matter is that the governments in the different provinces already have the powers they need to deal with blockades and street protests. This was confirmed last week when the Minister of Emergency Preparedness actually said that police already had all the tools and resources they needed. Why then, a few days later, invoke the Emergencies Act?

This is a prime minister who thought it was a good idea to take an all-expenses-paid trip to the Aga Khan's island, a prime minister who embarrassed Canada by dancing through India with a known terrorist, a prime minister who paid \$10 million to Omar Khadr and who gave his friends at WE Charity a \$500-million contract in exchange for \$500,000 in speaking fees for his family.

This is a prime minister who has been cited, not once but twice, by the Ethics Commissioner for ethics violations; who tried to pressure the first indigenous Attorney General in our history to cut a special deal for his friends at SNC-Lavalin, to go easy on them because of criminal charges they faced; who pretends to be a feminist while removing strong women of colour from his caucus for simply disagreeing with him; who flew to Tofino for a vacation on the very first National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, after spending years pretending to care about reconciliation; who personally mocked indigenous protesters for simply wanting clean drinking water; and who spent years dressing up in blackface, so many times he cannot recall how many times he did it.

Now, just last week, in response to a reasonable question, he shamefully said to the hon. member for Thornhill, who is Jewish, that Conservative Party members can stand with people who wave swastikas and people who wave Confederate flags. What an insult to the member, to the Jewish community, to the memory of those who perished in the Holocaust, and to the brave Canadians who served in World War II and helped defeat the Nazis.

To make matters worse, he has refused to apologize. Such comments and actions are far, far beneath the office of the Prime Minister.

Conservatives are the party of law and order. We believe any illegal blockades must end quickly and peacefully. However, the actions of the Prime Minister, of invoking the Emergencies Act, could have the exact opposite effect.

The great American poet Maya Angelou wrote, "When someone shows you who they are, believe them the first time." Canadians should heed this advice.

I ask again, how can someone so irresponsible be entrusted with such great responsibility as the invocation of the Emergencies Act? The answer is simple: They cannot.

• (1620)

Hon. Dan Vandal (Minister of Northern Affairs, Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada and Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will note that the member from Winnipeg described his party as the party of law and order and, earlier in his speech, described how lawlessness was occurring in downtown Ottawa.

He is right. Lawlessness has occurred over the last three weeks. The Rideau Centre mall, for example, has been closed for approximately three weeks. It is a shame, because, had we all worked together, we could have avoided that.

The hon. member's interim leader advocated, in internal discussions, refusing to ask the demonstrators to go home. I quote from an email she sent: "I don't think we should be asking them to go home. I understand the mood may shift soon. So we need to turn this into the PM's problem."

Can the member comment on that?

Mr. Marty Morantz: Madam Speaker, one of the important things about debate is that we need to stay on point. The real point of debate today is whether or not the threshold has been met for the invocation of the Emergencies Act. That threshold is that these matters "cannot be...dealt with under any other law of Canada." That threshold simply has not been met. In fact, international affairs professor Leah West at Carleton University said that she does not think the act applies. She said, "I have serious doubts that this definition is met." When the leader of the NDP speaks about this, it sounds like he would rather go to the dentist than vote for this legislation.

I really think we need to stay on point, and I do not believe the threshold has been met.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Liberal member who just spoke criticized the opposition by saying that if everyone had worked together, we would not find ourselves in this position today. I am astonished.

I would like my colleague to tell us how many proposals and suggestions have been made in the past three weeks by the opposition parties, including the Bloc Québécois, so we would not find ourselves in this position today.

Does he think it appropriate for the government to criticize the opposition for a lack of governance?

[English]

Mr. Marty Morantz: Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister said as justification for triggering this draconian legislation that it is not "the first, second or third" thing he would do, but when asked what the first, second and third things were that he actually did, he is unable to answer, as are his ministers. It is a very valid question. I do not know how we got from A to Z without reading the rest of the alphabet in between.

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Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Madam Speaker, two kilometres from me is the Ambassador Bridge in my riding. Things are not normal. Trucks are lined up and going slower than before. There is now a section of the city where the barriers on Huron Church Road are stopping citizens from getting to businesses, some of which are still closed; children cannot get to doctor appointments, and there are a series of other problems.

We have asked the Province of Ontario and the federal government to financially compensate the city. We just had another convoy turned back the other day. What intelligence can the member provide that will secure the border of 14 kilometres between the bridge and Highway 401? How does the Conservative Party know that there is no imminent threat, when there was one just a couple of days ago?

Mr. Marty Morantz: Madam Speaker, I can only reiterate that the point we are debating today is really a binary one: Has the threshold been met or has it not? We cannot just invoke draconian legislation like the Emergencies Act without that test being met. It is clear that the government has not been able to make the case that the threshold to invoke that legislation has been met. The reality is that existing laws were used to clear the Ambassador Bridge and other checkpoints across the country.

Mr. Greg McLean (Calgary Centre, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today sombrely in the House of Commons to raise my voice against the government's invocation of the Emergencies Act. The first issue to address is the rule of law that we live under in this democracy. Outside, police are corralling the remainder of the protesters who have set up a blockade on Ottawa's streets.

Last week, blockades at Canada's borders were disassembled by police forces in five provinces. These all have serious implications for Canada regarding our economy and the jobs upon which Canadians depend; our dependability as a trading partner; our supply chain, and we have heard much about how that supply chain has been strained; our grocery shelves, as over 70% of the produce Canadians consume during the winter arrives from southern supply; and, of course, inflation, as shipments have been delayed, rerouted or cancelled.

In so many ways, Canadians will be paying the price for these illegal blockades. These short-term interruptions have long-term consequences. I need to illustrate clearly that every blockade at our international borders was addressed within Canada's existing laws. No extraordinary powers were required. Our police, in each province, rose to the challenge and dealt with the illegal blockades.

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The notion that extraordinary powers were required to deal with the situation is a ruse, and the Attorney General of Canada's justification that these powers were required to compel tow truck drivers to assist them has been clearly debunked by references to Canada's Criminal Code, where those powers already reside.

There is no doubt that we are living in extraordinary times and this is testing all our democratic institutions. Canada is quickly becoming viewed in the eyes of the world as no longer a nation of laws. We rank much worse on Transparency International's corruption index. We have moved from the seventh most important economy in the world to the 10th. Our international security partners are largely ignoring us and making decisions without our input. We are on the wrong path.

How did we get here? Our Prime Minister invoked the Emergencies Act, for the fourth time in our nation's history. Two world wars and the FLQ crisis are the only other instances. Close examination shows that this invocation is a gross overreach and is unnecessary.

I have spoken of the blockades. Individuals will face charges for actions that occurred during these illegal blockades. The beginning of the convoy formed to bring a message of hope to Canadians and gained so much support as those trucks crossed our country to arrive in Ottawa to protest against the government's sudden vaccine mandate imposed on transborder truckers. This was unnecessary and unwarranted, and has no scientific basis: a gross overstep against a group of hard-working Canadians who had kept this country supplied for two years of a pandemic. How the Prime Minister relegated these Canadian heroes to zeros overnight is a turnaround of a most divisive nature.

There is no data linking our trucking industry to the spread of the coronavirus. There is only a divisive government looking to exploit differences among Canadians. These truckers were standing up for their rights, and yes, those rights are covered in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and should not be trampled upon because the government says that the situation warrants it. They took to their trucks, drove to Ottawa and protested to uphold their rights. That is also their right.

Along the way, they gathered support from so many Canadians who are tired of the government's overreach that has occurred during the pandemic. Canadians are tired of expensive government programs that show no sense and are only designed to frustrate Canadians at great cost. I am referring to the requirement for multiple tests and potential quarantines when Canadians return home from elsewhere. Government is making life more complex and expensive, with no tangible outcome to its protocols.

At the same time, Canadians are seeing the other side of the outcomes, the ones the government is not measuring, and one cannot manage what one does not measure: suicides, drug overdoses, mental health breakdowns, business failures, children falling behind in their educational and social development, our senior citizens spending their final years alone, lonely and inactive. It is little wonder these protesters gathered such a following across Canada in their challenge to a clear government overreach.

Rather than having anyone in government meet with these protesters, the Prime Minister, the divider-in-chief, ignored them

and, to fuel the flame, described them as undesirables. Working Canadians, who had been our heroes shortly before, were now undesirables. This is hardly a step in resolving a dispute that arose through a gross government overreach.

• (1625)

Unfortunately, legal protests led to illegal blockades, and we cannot abide blockades, any blockades. The Prime Minister thinks he can decide to whom the law applies, but the rule of law needs to be clear. The blockades had to end, and the fact that they lasted as long as they did is another black eye for Canada's standing in the world.

It could have been so easily averted, but the Prime Minister never took one step toward a constructive outcome. Such is his way. The effects of the last month will have lasting impacts on Canada.

One matter that needs to be addressed is the limits of peaceful protest in this country. If this latest blockade is an example of the escalation of acceptable protest in this country, then I think we are becoming largely ungovernable. How quickly we have fallen. I often wonder if it is the aim of the Prime Minister and the cabal around him to make this country less democratic, more divided and less law-abiding or if it is just incompetence of the highest order.

Let us recall the slide away from the rule of law regarding protests. Over the past six and a half years, the government sat on its hands while protests largely shut down huge swaths of the Canadian economy. Indeed, the government has delivered funding to organizations whose only intent was to protest and hold back Canadian economic development. Foreign funding blockades have been a part of Canada's protest industry since this government arrived. It is this government's motto and this government's agenda to have its policies bolstered by opaque foreign funding.

Here are the results: People have been hurt, property has been destroyed, projects have been delayed and cancelled, indigenous economic reconciliation has stalled, foreign investment capital has fled Canada and Canadian investment capital looks for opportunities elsewhere.

Let me take this moment to offer my gratitude to Canada's law enforcement officials who intervened in the latest illegal action on Thursday night at the site where the Coastal GasLink pipeline is under construction. I understand that one officer was injured and that workers were threatened with serious harm. This cannot continue, and I hope the assailants are pursued to the full extent of the law.

Do we now understand why Canadians are unclear about the laws around protests? The government has made them intentionally unclear in order to ensure that those supporting its post-nation-state agenda are able to thrive with public money and foreign funding.

This brings me to the most egregious portion of the orders associated with the Emergencies Act, which is to require any financial service provider to determine whether it has in its possession or control property that belongs to a person who participated in the blockade. I do not think the Minister of Finance has any notion of the financial implications of what this is proposing. She is asking Canadian banks to freeze, without judicial order, accounts of Canadians who have committed no crime.

As an example, a retiree who may have donated \$50 to help her son's appeal to support his right to protest will have her account frozen. She will have no way to pay for food or her retirement residence. There are human implications, but there are also huge implications for Canada's financial system. When Canadians lose trust in Canadian banks, when our retirement savings are no longer considered safe for withdrawal and government can unilaterally freeze our bank accounts, Canada's financial system will encounter a crisis. I ask the government to look ahead and consider these implications.

I also presented a motion at the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance that would address this matter, and the committee will start meeting urgently to address this motion beginning Tuesday. I thank my colleagues in the other parties who helped this motion to pass on Thursday.

These implications cannot be addressed through the rear-view mirror, as has been the government's practices. I take heart that there is at least one Liberal, the member for Louis-Hébert, who voted for our motion to get the government on a path to lessening mandates in this country. There is hope.

• (1630)

[Translation]

The motion we put forward last week was defeated in Parliament, but I was very pleased that the Bloc Québécois supported the motion.

[English]

I recall the member for Louis-Hébert clearly enunciating that the Prime Minister and his team had chosen to divide and stigmatize Canadians around the pandemic. This is not leadership. It is divisiveness and it is no way to govern.

I say to the Prime Minister that you reap what you sow. There is much division in this country, largely due to your choice to divide Canadians.

The world is watching Canada like never before, and not in a good way. I implore my colleagues and friends in both the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party to defy your party leadership. There is more at stake here than politics. Canadian democracy is at risk. Vote against this bill, I implore you.

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• (1635)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I remind the member that he went directly to speaking to the government as opposed to speaking through the Chair.

Questions and comments; the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development.

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Calgary Centre for his remarks. By way of a brief rebuttal, I would simply say that the powers used under the Emergencies Act declaration were used most recently as February 16 in Windsor to thwart an attempted resurrection of a blockade. If the member's concern is with investment in this country, I would say the blockades actually threaten the investment climate in this country.

My point is in response to something he raised to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. He said we should not be stigmatizing, and I agree with him. However, when far-right elements, including a group called Diagon, are actively involved with arming themselves and carrying ammunition and body armour to blockade the border at Coutts, and when that results in four arrests for conspiracy to commit murder and ongoing investigations as to whether that group has links to groups raising swastikas and Confederate flags here in Ottawa and the blockade in Ottawa continues, I think we do have an ongoing threat that needs to be resolved.

Can the member comment on that response?

Mr. Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, yes, I am very thankful that the peace officers at the Coutts border crossing in Alberta were able to intercept what was obviously very destructive elements that embedded themselves within the actual protest organization. Once that was discovered, the whole blockade disbanded because they did not want to be associated with that.

This is a problem wherever we are in the world, and it is not right or left. There are going to be elements that break the law no matter what. We have said all along that these blockades were illegal on their own, but when we throw in a mix of violence that is going to potentially injure our peace officers, they have raised the bar, and it has to be addressed very quickly. It does not matter what side of the spectrum it comes from. Any type of illegal activity that leads to violence will be detrimental to all of us.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

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Earlier today, I was taken aback by certain comments. I almost fell off my chair, even though it is very sturdy. Two members of the Liberal caucus, the members for Hull—Aylmer and Don Valley West, told us that they were not 100% certain that invoking the Emergencies Act was the right thing to do. The blues will show that those were their very words.

My question for my hon. colleague is very simple: Does he believe, as I do, that before invoking the Emergencies Act, it is vital to be 100% certain that it is the right thing to do?

Mr. Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, I thank my Bloc Québécois colleague for his question.

I completely agree with him. The government has not demonstrated to the House of Commons that such legislation needed to be implemented.

[English]

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, we have heard about the Coutts blockade many times in the House. The member speaking before me asked about the legal implications, the people who have been charged with attempted murder, the violence and the white racism there, but in addition to those, there is an economic impact. Those 18 days the blockade was in place cost \$864 million to the Alberta economy.

What do we do when the government in place, the Alberta government, that has the legislation in Bill 1 to actually stop these blockades, does not do it? When the provincial government fails to protect the people and economy of Alberta, does the federal government not have an obligation to step in?

• (1640)

Mr. Greg McLean: Madam Speaker, I should point out that the Coutts blockade was somewhat disbanded and there was one lane open shortly thereafter. Nevertheless, there was an element there that actually was a problem. We know that. We know it was slowed down. I had not heard the number she referred to, the \$864 million of commerce that was interrupted, but I did note in my speech how important it was to make sure those borders were open in Canada all the way across the country.

I will also point out to her that the Government of Alberta has not asked the Canadian government to intervene. I do not know how the Canadian government does intervene. Alberta already has a police force. Is it going to request police forces from across the country? The Government of Alberta has all kinds of police forces, and it acted, and it acted in the benefit of the people of Alberta to make sure that the flow of goods was coming across that border.

Are they asking for—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I believe the time is up. I am sorry. I am trying to stay on time so that nobody gets cut off in their speeches.

[Translation]

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Saint-Jean.

Ms. Christine Normandin (Saint-Jean, BQ): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my esteemed colleague from Mirabel.

First of all, I would like to say that I will be doing something that I normally do not do. Rather than ad lib my speech, which is something I tend to strongly favour for parliamentary debates, since it makes them much livelier, I will be reading it from beginning to end.

That is my way of trying to help out the support staff in the House who are working very hard right now so that we can do our jobs. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them very much.

Today we are debating something exceptional. I am not talking about the situation, but about the Emergencies Act itself. The act is exceptional. The act is an *ex post facto* law. That means that it applies after the fact. This is a complete departure from the basic principle of natural justice that a person should not be subject to arbitrary laws imposed by a government that can decide that an action is illegal after the fact, especially retroactively.

When it proclaimed this act into law in 1988, Parliament defined very clear criteria for invoking it, specifically to justify deviating from this basic principle and to avoid undermining the foundations of democracy, which state that citizens should be protected from unreasonable search and seizure by the government. Those criteria are precisely what members should be looking at today.

The only question that matters is this: Keeping in mind that these criteria were rigorously set out to protect the bulwarks of justice and democracy, are we satisfied that the invocation criteria have been met?

The government's backgrounder is quite enlightening on these invocation criteria:

The Act contains a specific definition of “national emergency” that makes clear how serious a situation needs to be before the Act can be relied upon. A national emergency is an urgent, temporary and critical situation that seriously endangers the health and safety of Canadians or that seriously threatens the ability of the Government of Canada to preserve the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of Canada. It must be a situation that cannot be effectively dealt with by the provinces and territories, or by any other law of Canada.

Basically, not only does it have to be proven that the act is useful, but it also has to be proven that it is necessary. It is not enough that the situation be serious; the conclusion must be that the only possible response to the emergency is to invoke the Emergencies Act.

The problem is that I have listened to the speeches given so far by the members who support the use of the act. I have listened to them in good faith, in case I hear an argument that makes me doubt my own position. I have heard nothing persuasive so far. I feel like listing off the greatest hits of some of the arguments that I have heard since the beginning of debate and offering my thoughts in response.

Unfortunately, we have heard a lot of speeches where members have tried to justify using the act because, for example, the situation has prevented the public from enjoying the beauty of Ottawa, or because people have not been able to go to museums, or because businesses have not been able to open.

It may seem a bit ridiculous to bring up these arguments that have been used in this debate. I am only doing so because these arguments have not just been raised a couple of times.

Several members have tried to justify their choice using arguments that are not, by any stretch of the imagination, even remotely in the same league as a national emergency situation. To me, that exposes just how flimsy the arguments in support of invoking the act are.

Another argument we have heard is that 72% of the population agrees with invoking the act. I actually find it frightening that anyone is justifying the use of this exceptional measure on the basis of a survey. Obviously, nowhere in the criteria I listed earlier does it say anything about how, if a certain percentage of the population likes the idea, then invoking the Emergencies Act is justified. Thank goodness for that.

That said, here are my thoughts on the survey results. I am absolutely certain that the 72% support is not specifically for the act. I think it is actually indicative of people's desire to see the situation resolved one way or another. It reflects people's reaction to the appalling lack of government leadership in managing this crisis. Ultimately, the government's use of the Emergencies Act is merely a pathetic attempt to cover up its incompetence.

Nevertheless, we have heard some arguments that seem convincing, and they deserve some more attention.

● (1645)

In his questions and comments today, the member for Windsor West emphasized several times that the situation at the Ambassador Bridge has not been completely resolved. He pointed out that although some traffic has resumed, there are still obstacles and barriers. He mentioned that families were prevented from accessing health care, for example.

He asked my Bloc colleagues what we had to say to those families. He asked whether we should not support the Emergencies Act for them. Obviously, I have all the compassion in the world for those families, but I still believe that invoking the act is not the solution.

As evidence, the authorities have been able to use the emergency measures since Monday, and yet, according to the member himself, the situation has not been resolved. Moreover, the blockades were shut down for the most part using the legal means already available before the emergency order was invoked.

It is not the use of the act that is the issue here, but rather the misuse or incomplete use of the resources that were already available, and those families should not be led to believe that invoking the Emergencies Act will solve their situation.

The leader of the NDP and many of his colleagues have also argued that the situation is urgent, particularly because many of the

occupiers have started calling for the current government to be overthrown, which would be outright sedition.

I did most of my studies at the Université du Québec à Montréal. There was a protest almost every week calling for the government to be overthrown. Luckily, no one asked to invoke the Emergencies Act. If they had, Montreal would have been in a constant state of emergency.

Seriously, though, I doubt that the criterion of a serious and real threat to the sovereignty of Canada applies here. If we hold to Max Weber's definition, the government is not about to lose its monopoly on legitimate violence, and we are not facing an insurrection.

As for territorial integrity, I realize that Ottawa residents are patriotic, but, even though Ottawa is the nation's capital, I doubt that taking over an area of a mere three square kilometres constitutes undermining the territorial integrity of a country that covers 10 million square kilometres.

We have also heard the argument that the police officers have said that they would not have been able to do everything they have done without the Emergencies Act. I have heard police officers say that the act was useful, but I have not heard them say why it was necessary.

My colleagues in the Bloc have brilliantly explained how existing legislation would have allowed meaningful action to be taken without the use of the Emergencies Act. Before Monday, there was nothing stopping the different police forces from working together to achieve the results we have seen in the past 24 hours.

What is more, it is not the role of the police to justify the use of the act. It is the role of parliamentarians. I think simply citing the police without tangibly and clearly establishing what legal vacuum the Emergencies Act is filling is a weak argument. I even see it as an abdication of the parliamentary role.

The member who primarily used the opinion of police officers to justify his support for the act said in response to one of my colleagues that he was not 100% sure that using the Emergencies Act was the best thing to do. The Emergencies Act is the type of legislation that calls for us to be more certain than that when the time comes to apply it and to have at least tried to resolve the situation some other way first.

Another argument made by a colleague this morning was that the Emergencies Act has probably discouraged protesters from joining the occupiers who are already here. I find the slippery slope of even considering the Emergencies Act as a deterrent, and a preventive one at that, particularly dangerous.

In fact, from Monday to Friday morning, while the act was in force, nothing discouraged protesters from partying, barbecuing, or getting into a hot tub in the middle of the street. What served as a deterrent was not the act, but rather a start of a coordinated police response at long last.

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I would like to quote Jim Watson, who said this morning that this police operation should have happened on day two. The point is not just that it should have happened, but that it could have happened even without the Emergencies Act.

Lastly, it was argued that we should support the Emergencies Act because it was requested by the City of Ottawa and the Government of Ontario, which have also enacted their own emergency legislation.

Provincial approval is a safeguard governing the application of the act, not simply a justification for invoking it. Again, the criteria for invoking the act are well defined, and the mere fact that a province requests it is not one of them. If it were, there would be the unfortunate risk of unwarranted use of the act when a province loses control of a situation without first demonstrating that all possible solutions have been tried and that the province is genuinely out of options.

Basically, I am not convinced. I am still waiting to hear an argument that will change my mind by Monday, but I must admit that I have my doubts. The government has not met its burden of persuading us that we have no choice but to use the act, as the act itself requires, so I find it hard to see how I could support it.

• (1650)

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member raised a very interesting point. She said that as of Monday there was nothing that stopped different police forces from working together. As a matter of fact, that is not entirely true. Unless they are sworn officers in Ontario, they cannot enforce the law in Ontario. I am sure Ottawa is extremely grateful for the resources that came from the SQ in Quebec, but until the Emergencies Act was put into place so that they could enforce the law in Ontario, those police officers would not have been allowed to do that. I wonder if the member can comment on that.

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Madam Speaker, I remind members that the Emergencies Act states that the government must have done everything possible. However, before invoking the act, the government made no attempt to coordinate the various police services. That is proof that the nuclear option, as some members are calling it, was used without justification. The work was not done.

The only measure not permitted under existing legislation is the requisitioning of tow truck services. My colleagues demonstrated that. The invocation of the Emergencies Act is smoke and mirrors and an attempt to remedy the government's poor management of the crisis.

[English]

Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Madam Speaker, today and throughout the day, at different times we have seen the self-congratulatory attitude of the Liberals as they talk about the measures being effective. This might be partly because effectiveness is a new concept to them and they are not used to that in their caucus. I would argue that effectiveness is not the measure

by which we should be looking at the situation today, but rather whether the actions are justified.

With the precedent we are setting today, in what other situations might she be concerned this act may be used?

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Madam Speaker, the War Measures Act was created with several scenarios in mind, but nothing specific. One of the tenets of a law is that it must not apply to a specific situation. It must be devised for general application to prevent it from being abusive.

That is why there are criteria for determining whether the Emergencies Act may be invoked. I do not see how it is useful to think of a very specific situation where the act could apply because it was designed to be broad and there are safeguards to ensure that the principles of natural justice and democracy are respected. There is no need to even consider potential applications, because the act is already designed to address that.

[English]

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to come back to the failure of local and provincial police to address the situation. I have heard it said several times that the police had the tools and resources they needed to address the situation. However, what we heard from law enforcement was that, due to errors that were made early on in the crisis, they did not feel they had the tools and resources necessary to restore social order. It was only when the federal government stepped in that we started to see social order restored.

I agree that it is up to local police to enforce the law and up to the provincial police to have their backs. When those two levels fail and cry out for help, should not the buck stop somewhere? Should not someone step in and say to the people of Ottawa and across the country who are asking for protection that we will be there for them?

• (1655)

[Translation]

Ms. Christine Normandin: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the interesting question. I answered that question directly in my speech.

I said that I am very worried that a request from a province or city that had failed to respond to a national crisis could become a justification to use the act. Failure is not one of the criteria set out in the act. All available resources must have been exhausted first.

Unfortunately, there were some problems and complacency on the part of police. A police chief resigned. However, that should not be a reason to justify such a strong legislative measure that has such potential to arbitrarily violate fundamental rights.

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, the Bloc Québécois has never sanctioned what has been happening in the streets of Ottawa. These are reprehensible acts. On behalf of the Bloc Québécois, I want to commend the law enforcement officers who have done excellent work and who finally got the resources they needed today to respond adequately.

The problem is that this should have been done a long time ago. The problem is that the government and the Prime Minister were insouciant. This government cannot make decisions.

Chantal Hébert, who has covered many governments over many years, said on the radio yesterday that each successive government in Canada has become increasingly centralist and that the current government has reached the height of centralism. This government is incapable of acting or making a decision.

We understand that the Prime Minister was required to isolate, but based on his lack of decision-making, you would think he has long COVID.

What happened with the Emergencies Act is a publicity stunt, as only this Prime Minister knows how to do. The problem is that we are setting a dangerous precedent. The seal has been broken. I fear and we fear that in future another government will be able to justify their decision based on what is happening in the streets of Ottawa to invoke the Emergencies Act when the issue is local and partisan and when it suits the government. By using it under the current circumstances, we are tarnishing Canada's reputation even more.

The precedents speak for themselves, but the Bloc Québécois is lending them its voice. I would like to give an example and talk about the Summit of the Americas in Quebec City in April 2001, where three-metre-high security fencing was erected for four kilometres in a densely populated residential sector, where security forces were provided by the Sûreté du Québec, the Quebec City police, the RCMP, CSIS, the Canadian Armed Forces, where protesters were organized, financed, motivated and questioned the authority of the state. They derailed a proposed free trade agreement. No state of emergency was declared at the time because the governments, including the federal government, were prepared. That is what happens.

Here we have a government that does not govern, that is unable to make decisions, unable to appoint an ambassador to Paris, unable to issue calls for tenders on time for the rail transportation projects that Quebecers are waiting for. It is a government that has not issued a decision on Huawei when all of its trading partners have already done so. One sometimes wonders whether this is a government that is capable of doing anything at all.

What happened in the streets shows us that our assumptions may have been right. Yes, the Bloc Québécois has asked questions. The Bloc Québécois asked for a crisis task force. The Bloc Québécois took action. We have been accused of asking politicians to control the police. On February 7, the Ottawa police chief requested an additional 1,800 officers. The government's response was to send 275 officers, and only 20 of them were assigned to the protests. As a percentage, this means that 1% of the Ottawa Police's request for more officers was met. That is a 99% failure. That is measurable

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relative to what the Ottawa police themselves asked for while there was still time to act.

Yes, we can collaborate. Yes, we can use existing laws. Yes, we can punish these reprehensible acts. That is why the motion adopted by Quebec's National Assembly, which asked the government not to apply the Emergencies Act to Quebec, also insisted on the need for the federal government to collaborate with the provinces.

If one thing proves a lack of collaboration, it is this: the CAQ, the Liberal Party of Quebec, Québec Solidaire, the Parti Québécois and even the Conservative Party of Quebec MNA unanimously supported the motion. The "new liberal democratic party of Canada" coalition, however, will take no notice.

They say we need this law. We need it to freeze bank accounts and apply economic pressure.

● (1700)

I hope it is understandable that I am worried about a government feeling obliged to invoke emergency measures so it can block truckers' funding. Much worse things can happen; I hope they will not, but I am extremely worried.

The Basel Institute on Governance has already indicated that FINTRAC, Canada's financial crime intelligence and monitoring system, does not have enough people, enough money or enough resources and that it cannot do enough to prevent financial crimes. Moreover, Canada is known internationally to lack the ability, or perhaps the will, to crack down on the people who commit these crimes. This is the 21st century, yet the government says it does not have 21st-century tools to deal with 21st-century threats, so when it comes to truckers, bring on the emergency measures.

What else is there? The government needed the Emergencies Act to requisition tow trucks. What kind of leadership is it when even tow truck operators do not want to fall in line? That is really bad.

Obviously, the legislation exists for a number of reasons. There are circumstances in which it must be used. The crisis must be national in scope. It has to be a last resort, and right now this is not a last resort situation. There were other remedies that should have been used, but they were not. I am convinced that more could have been done. The facts speak for themselves.

Some will argue that the Ottawa police chief, who yes, of course, has a tough job to do, said that the extraordinary measures brought in by the legislation have been useful. What the Ottawa police chief said was that the municipal, provincial and federal states of emergency were useful. Other levels of government started doing their job before the federal government did its job.

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I look forward to questions from the government side, which will argue that this was useful and that the police were given additional tools. First of all, the operations that are taking place could have been carried out with more personnel as reinforcements. Second, Parliament exists, we as legislators are here, and legislation that covers emergency measures is already in place precisely because police should not always be given all the tools they want. That is what democracy is all about: the exercise of legislative power over the executive and the police.

I could name a whole range of powers that the police once had, but no longer have, that might have been useful for them today, powers that they no longer have precisely because, in a democracy, these powers are not given unless the situation is desperate.

Throughout this crisis, I have been waiting for this government to show some leadership. I have been trying to understand how the decisions were made. I have been trying to understand where the government's head was at. After quite a bit of searching, I just gave up.

• (1705)

[English]

Mr. Arif Virani: Madam Speaker, I would point out a logical inconsistency of the member's suggestions. He is saying that we are incapable of taking decisions on the government benches—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Excuse me, but we are having the same problem we had a while ago, where there is no interpretation.

What I am going to do is go to the next party and then come back to the hon. parliamentary secretary.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the people of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

I would like to ask my hon. colleague something that really builds on the question that was asked of the member for Kingston and the Islands. The member for Kingston and the Islands asked this hon. colleague's colleague about the Emergencies Act. I really hope that this gets through. That is this. The member for Kingston and the Islands said that the Emergencies Act was necessary to use to bring in other police officers.

If we look at the Ontario Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act, which I was able to research in about 45 seconds, it says under section 21(1):

In an emergency, the Minister may make an agreement with the Crown in right of Canada, or of another province, or with any of its agencies for the provision of policing.

This would seem to fly directly in the face of the statement from the member for Kingston and the Islands. Could this hon. member please comment on that?

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Speaker, I had the honour of having the member for Kingston and the Islands as my municipal

councillor and mayor when I was doing my Ph.D. at Queen's University.

Every year, Kingston's Homecoming event attracts thousands of people who overturn police cars, commit crimes and turn the city upside down. Police from Toronto, Brockville, Kingston and Cornwall and mounted police are on duty.

From what I can remember of my five great years in the city represented by the member for Kingston and the Islands, he never called for a state of emergency.

[English]

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will just point out the logical inconsistencies the member was attempting to make vis-à-vis the Liberals being a government incapable of taking decisions, when we have taken a decision that no government has ever taken in Canadian history.

Let us find some common ground. The Bloc is against the blockades. The Bloc has said the blockades are illegal. We all agree with that. We also agree with listening to the police and cutting off the funding that is supplying those blockades. One of the tools to do so is by tracking that money to things such as credit unions, banks, cryptocurrency sites or online sites.

When no sites or donations are being made from the province of Quebec that would necessitate the application of these emergency measures in the province of Quebec, does the member opposite agree with that aspect of this law applying in his province?

• (1710)

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Speaker, I hope you will allow me to forgo my colleague's little lesson on logic.

Security experts are telling us that communication is the most important tool in such operations.

For two to three weeks, we asked that a crisis task force be set up and that the minister conduct briefings. The Liberals did not make a decision about that. They do not make decisions.

The Ottawa police chief told us yesterday that the more officers are available early in a crisis, the less violence there is later. The Liberals made no decisions and this is the result.

I see that my colleague is working at home. Perhaps he forgot his logic in the lobby.

[English]

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, my question to the member for Mirabel has to do with the discussion he opened his speech with, about precedent. I wonder this. Does he really believe that letting groups protest that want to use violence, intimidation and hate to try to overturn elected governments' decisions is a precedent we could have allowed to go on much longer, without that in itself becoming the dangerous precedent here?

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Speaker, we were just talking about logic. According to the convoluted logic of the member's question, when there is a protest or when someone does not like the government, regardless of the threat level, the organization involved or the government's inaction, the solution is the worst, most radical option, the very last resort.

We never supported the things that went on in the street. We never downplayed the threat or the importance of all this. That is why, for the last three weeks, we have been putting forward proposals.

I am happy to see that the member has just woken up.

[English]

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to split my time with my colleague, the MP for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke.

[Translation]

What happened in the last few days in Canada is without precedent. It was an organized attack on democracy, coming from the far right and financed from abroad. Our citizens were intimidated. Parliament was forced to cancel a sitting because its safety was at risk.

[English]

This is unprecedented in Canada, but not in North America or around the world. It is why this debate is so important. The fact is that we have a choice, as a country, to avoid the path of a far right-driven agenda that uses destabilization, provocation and intimidation as its tactics, aims to roll back so much of the social and economic progress we have made in Canada and aims to undermine our very democracy itself.

Let us start with what this debate is not about. It is not about truckers or the trucking industry. Yes, some truckers have been involved, but the vast majority of truckers are going about their business and doing their job, providing essential services to Canadians during the pandemic. This also goes far beyond the pandemic. There are many people across the country who have not been vaccinated, who do not agree with vaccine mandates and who do not agree with mask mandates, but they are not threatening or intimidating anyone. Not everyone who is part of what is happening is a right-wing extremist, but far too many are.

Let us be clear: What is happening is being driven by the same far-right agenda that led to the attack on the Capitol building in the U.S. that was fomented by Donald Trump. The same far-right agenda has been raising its ugly head in Europe, Brazil and many other countries. It is the same agenda that we have seen here in Canada.

I am a descendant of those who fought against fascism in Europe and a descendant of those who know what dictatorships are really all about and were part of the struggle to bring back democracy in their home countries. I know that we as Canadians cannot be complacent about the threat of this far-right agenda to Canada. Let us also be clear that when people ignore or even condone what we have seen, they are part of the problem.

How did we get here? It starts with the fact that governments and police have, for far too long, had a view of what is legitimate

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protest and what is not. As someone who is influenced by Gandhian principles of non-violence, the principles practised by Martin Luther King and the spirit of reconciliation of Nelson Mandela, and as someone who has been inspired by the non-violent actions of indigenous peoples defending their rights and lands, I believe in the right of citizens to engage in non-violent protest. These actions and this occupation have been fundamentally different. They have targeted not only our institutions but our citizens with racist, misogynist, homophobic and transphobic abuse and abuse aimed at people following health orders for wearing masks.

What was the response? Does anyone believe that we would be dealing with what we are seeing today if the protesters were indigenous, Black, racialized, climate-justice activists or students, like those at the G20 or in Quebec, or workers on strike? What we are seeing is a failure of governments and the police, driven by the view of what is a legitimate protest. This is not accidental. It is a part of the strategy. It is like Donald Trump, a billionaire, talking about being a friend of workers.

How do we deal with what is happening and the bigger threat to our values and democracy? The response from the police has been deeply flawed here in Ottawa and across the country. This is an occupation led by white supremacists. We saw swastikas, Confederate flags and other symbols of hate and the far right. This occupation has had the aim of abusing and harassing citizens for days; engaging in racist, homophobic, transphobic and misogynistic attacks on residents; making people afraid to leave their homes; shutting down businesses and workplaces; making people lose their jobs; clogging up 911 phone lines so that legitimate calls cannot get through; and endangering residents and residential neighbourhoods.

This occupation has also had as its target our democracy. Occupation leaders have called for the overthrow of our democratic institutions. They have assaulted members of the press. They have threatened violence and unleashed hate against leaders and elected representatives. Yesterday, the occupiers' actions led to the shutting down of Parliament, a shocking and unprecedented move. However, governments and the police refused to take this situation seriously until the last minute. It should never have come to this point.

• (1715)

We saw failed local leadership that refused to take action. I want to acknowledge the heroic work of Councillor Catherine McKenney and Councillor Shawn Menard, who, along with other leaders, residents and labour activists, pushed back against fascism in their community by organizing the battle of Billings Bridge. We have seen right wing provincial governments in Ontario and elsewhere legitimize these occupations and refuse to take action otherwise. We have seen a federal government lead us to a place where we should never have been.

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The Liberal government failed to see this occupation for what it was early on. The Prime Minister focused far more on the rhetoric than the reality. He called out the symbols of the far right, which was the right thing to do, but waited far too long to call out the reality of the agenda itself. However, what is really disturbing, as we have this debate, are the actions and incendiary rhetoric of the Conservatives. Speaker after speaker has exposed the true face of the Conservative Party. This is not the party of peace, order and good government, nor of law and order, and it is definitely not Progressive Conservative.

What we have seen is Trump-style, far-right rhetoric that is condoning, even supporting, what is happening. There are disturbing references reminiscent of Trump's "good people on both sides" rhetoric, incendiary rhetoric aimed at the Liberals and the Conservatives and even some good old red-baiting rhetoric thrown in for good measure. However, what do we expect from an acting Leader of the Opposition who saw no problem with wearing a MAGA hat, something that has been seen as—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. Just because someone is participating virtually does not mean the mikes are not picking up what is going on here in the House. Again, I would ask members, instead of chatting back and forth or thinking aloud, to write their questions or thoughts down and deal with them during questions and comments.

The hon. member for Churchill—Keewatinook Aski has three minutes and 10 seconds left.

Ms. Niki Ashton: Madam Speaker, what do we expect from an acting Leader of the Opposition who saw no problem wearing a MAGA hat, which has been seen as a symbol of white supremacy and Trump's far-right rhetoric, and from a party whose heir apparent to the leadership openly supports what is happening? What is really appalling is how the Conservatives are ignoring what is happening just outside Parliament: the racist, homophobic, transphobic and misogynist abuse we have all heard about. When I stay in Ottawa, I am in the downtown, and many people I know have been deeply affected.

Conservative MPs have gone out of their way to encourage this occupation. A Conservative MP did an interview in front of a flag with swastikas on it. They have taken pictures, shaken hands and put thumbs up, and in the House they have gaslighted the country by telling us these are peaceful gatherings. Conservative MPs who have fuelled this occupation rooted in white supremacy, which is targeting citizens and the press and is pursuing the overthrow of our institutions, must be held to account. There must be an inquiry into how we arrived at this place: how this occupation came to pass, who funded it, who fomented it, who failed to act, who passed the buck and what the role of the police was. We cannot ignore this internationally funded, politically organized, far-right attack on our democracy. We cannot allow this to happen again.

It comes down to privilege. This protest is being driven by an agenda, by an ideology and by supporters who believe they are entitled to target our population and our democratic system. The abuse is no accident. The agenda is racist, homophobic and misogynist to begin with.

Freedom is rooted in our democracy. It starts with respect. It is not about the freedom to be racist, homophobic and misogynist. The very idea of freedom has been hijacked and distorted. It has been used by many to support privilege, particularly white privilege. It is the privilege to endanger and harass others and the privilege to impose an alt-right, foreign-funded attack on our democracy.

This cannot be a moment in time when we sit idly by as the far right becomes emboldened. This cannot be a moment when we sit idly by and allow fascism to be normalized and legitimized. This cannot be a moment when we sit idly by and allow for the police and other institutions to belatedly respond and then carry on to crack down on people peacefully defending their rights, including workers on strike, indigenous peoples defending their lands, Black and racialized communities rising up and climate activists fighting for our survival. This cannot be a moment when we sit idly by and allow for the status quo to carry on. This is not the Canada we can be. We can be and we must be a country that practises respect, denounces bigotry, strengthens our democracy and acts on the racial, social, economic and environmental justice we all deserve.

• (1720)

Hon. Dan Vandal (Minister of Northern Affairs, Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada and Minister responsible for the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the Conservative Party generally, and the interim leader of the Conservative Party very specifically, have compared the faux trucker occupation over the last three weeks with indigenous protests across Canada, particularly in Manitoba and British Columbia. I am wondering if the member could offer her comments on that analysis.

Ms. Niki Ashton: Madam Speaker, yes, absolutely. Those of us from Manitoba know well the kinds of politics unfortunately practised by many Conservatives, including the interim leader from Manitoba, and there is no comparison to be made. Once again we are seeing Conservatives gaslight the country, saying that this foreign-funded, far-right occupation in Ottawa is the same as the kinds of non-violent demonstrations we have seen by indigenous peoples defending their rights and their land and standing up for what they believe in. It is not just deeply insulting, but downright wrong to compare these two things.

We must be very clear that the interim leader has been open, both by wearing a MAGA hat and through her statements, that she and her colleagues are fine with coddling white supremacy and actions that very much support it.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Madam Speaker, I listened to the member and many times we may not agree. One thing she talked about is respect. I listened as she sat there and said the party I belong to is misogynist, white supremacist and all of these great names. We are in a place where we are not supposed to gaslight because we know it is happening outside. I listened to the member talk about the party I belong to and degrade each and every one of us. We have the right to a difference in thought. I do not agree with the occupation, but, like her, I do agree with the right to protest.

Is the member going to hold the Prime Minister responsible, or is she going to continue blaming the Conservatives when it is the Liberals who are in government?

• (1725)

Ms. Niki Ashton: Madam Speaker, in this parliamentary debate, we are talking about who is at fault. As I clearly indicated, the Liberals very much are. We should never have been in this position. However, let us be clear on who has encouraged this occupation. The Conservative interim leader, the heir apparent and numerous Conservative MPs have legitimized, encouraged and supported this occupation. It is clearly documented in social media through pictures they have shared and in coverage by the mainstream media.

Canadians see through much of this. What we need is principled leadership. We do not need leaders in our Parliament supporting foreign-funded, alt-right movements that seek to overthrow our democracy and target citizens. I hope the member and all of her colleagues change course, condemn that kind of activity and take appropriate action.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, the act we are discussing cannot be invoked as a preventive measure. It is right there. We already know that.

This week, the hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie told the media in Quebec that if protesters were to leave and the blockades were removed by Monday, the NDP might reconsider its decision to support the government. Well, it is over. The protesters have left. They are no longer in front of Parliament.

Does my colleague think that the NDP might decide not to support the government on this?

Ms. Niki Ashton: Madam Speaker, first of all, I want to point out that the people who led and supported this occupation are unfortunately still active.

As I clearly said in my speech, we must be serious about this operation, which was funded and organized by the far right in an attempt to attack our democracy and to intimidate and harass Canadian citizens. This is a problem we are facing and that we must now take seriously.

[English]

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am, not surprisingly, both happy and sad to have the chance to speak in the debate on the confirmation of the use of the Emergencies Act to break the border blockades and lift the siege of the capital.

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I am happy to speak, because I think that the situation had reached a crisis point, and the use of the Emergencies Act was necessary to counter a real threat to democracy and the rule of law in Canada. However, I am sad that it has come to this. I am sad, because the Liberals let the situation go on for so long that we reached this crisis point.

It is important to consider how we got to this point. There is enough blame to go around when it comes to the widespread failure to understand that the blockades and the siege of downtown Ottawa and the parliamentary precinct are not protests or exercises in free speech. Instead, the self-described freedom fighters who organized this came prepared to use intimidation, harassment and coercion to get the policy changes that they want. That is not how democracy works; it is not how peaceful protests work, and these tactics have nothing to do with the right to free speech.

We have a rich history of protest in this country, and at times, many of us have been participants in those protests. However, the goal of those protests has always been to change minds and thus bring about change in policy by political means. Their goals have always been to convince governments to change course by making it clear that the political price of failing to do so would be too high.

Blockades and occupations are another thing altogether. None of what has been going on outside of Parliament for three weeks is part of any rich tradition of civil disobedience. Those engaging in civil disobedience do so with a clear understanding that they are taking on any harm to themselves. They accept that it is they themselves who will face harm from the arrests and penalties that result from their law-breaking. They accept that harm to themselves in order to make a strong, moral argument. Instead, those involved in the blockades and the siege seek to inflict harm on others until we all give in to their demands.

Legitimate protests never aim to extort change by intimidation or by deliberately causing harm to others. As the judge in the case resulting in an injunction against around-the-clock sounding of high decibel air horns in Ottawa said, he was not aware that honking was an expression of any great ideas.

I am critical of the Liberals for failing to recognize the nature of the threat that these blockades in Windsor and Coutts and the siege of downtown Ottawa represented. It is hard to understand how this could have been missed, when the organizers clearly stated their intention to force change and even to replace the elected government, when they set up base camps outside downtown Ottawa to ferry supplies to the occupiers downtown or when they organized an attack on 911 services in Ottawa to deny emergency services to residents. This is intimidation. This is extortion.

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It is hard to understand how it could go on so long when the evidence of harassment and intimidation of residents and local businesses went on right on the steps of Parliament. We ended up with a situation where, according to most reports, over 50% of businesses downtown were forced to close altogether, and more than 85% had to curtail their activities in order to keep their workers safe. It is bitterly ironic for those businesses that the result of the tactics adopted by those who were arguing that we should open up actually resulted in further closures and heavy losses for local businesses and local workers.

It is hard to understand how the fact was missed that blockades at border crossings in Coutts and Windsor were designed to inflict economic damage severe enough to force change. Workers in factories, including those at GM plants, at a time when we are fighting hard to keep the auto industry alive in Canada, lost shifts as the border blockade interrupted the supply chain.

The ultimate irony is that the Coutts and Ambassador Bridge blockades cost thousands of truckers, for whom the organizers falsely claim to speak, hours and even days stuck in the resulting jams. Once removed, those organizers tried to block the bridge in Windsor once again.

While I do hold the government responsible for letting the situation get out of hand, at the same time I reject the idea that somehow the government or vaccine mandates created division and that division explains the blockades and siege. Yes, there are some truckers involved in these disruptions, but never forget that over 90% of truckers are vaccinated. Never forget how they continued to work through the pandemic before vaccinations were available, at considerable risk to themselves and the health of their families, to protect the rest of us and our economy.

They know, like the overwhelming majority of Canadians, that masks, vaccinations and social distancing are what have brought us as close to escaping this pandemic as we have come so far. They know that social solidarity and standing united behind our health workers saved literally thousands of lives and gave a death rate from COVID less than half that of the United States. They know that only continuing to pull together as a society will get us to the other side.

● (1730)

Yes, people are free to reject science and the unequivocal advice of medical experts. They can choose to do so, but freedom means accepting the consequences for the choices we make. It does not mean we have the right to inflict the consequences of our choices on others. Those who reject the mandates should not be surprised to find restrictions on what they can do due to the risk they pose to others and to our ability as a nation to survive the pandemic.

No doubt as the pandemic drags on we all want to see restrictions lifted, but for the vast majority of Canadians, this should happen only when it is safe to do so. Five new deaths from COVID were recorded yesterday in British Columbia, including yet another on Vancouver Island, where we are still continuing to lose an average of more than one person per day to COVID. Those are families that lose a loved one each and every day. As of yesterday, the number in critical care in B.C. dropped below 1,000, a number that is still far too high, although thankfully it is down considerably. However,

even with numbers dropping, our hospitals and health care workers are near the breaking point.

It is this tension resulting from the ongoing pandemic that the organizers of the blockades and siege have exploited for their own ends. Members should make no mistake that the organizers are extremists and anti-democratic in their goals. It is their clear intention to use force, intimidation and for some, as we have seen at the Coutts border crossing, violence to achieve their ends.

In downtown Ottawa we have seen the open display of hate symbols, racism and homophobia. We have seen the intimidation of residents demanding they remove their masks. This happened to me personally more than once, but it has been most often directed at those the occupiers perceive to be weak and vulnerable to such pressure: women, racialized Canadians and members of the 2SLGBTQI community.

Before some say that every protest has its bad apples or that it is only an extremist minority among the protesters, let me point out that the organizers never once condemned things like the display of Nazi flags, nor did they condemn intimidating local residents by demanding they remove their masks, and supporters have argued that there were only a few swastikas flying in the Ottawa occupation, although I personally counted six in three blocks in a single day. Let me repeat the obvious question: How many swastikas are okay? The obvious answer is none.

People say Confederate flags are just symbols of rebellion, and those who argue that may want to stop and think for just a moment about making that argument in this current context. Confederate flags are clearly symbols of racism and the violence associated with anti-Black racism. That is why I support my colleague the member for New Westminster—Burnaby's private member's bill to ban the public display of these ugly symbols of hate, which discourage full participation in Canadian society by some of our citizens.

We have seen invasions of businesses who are enforcing mandates to keep their employees and all of us safe, and now, with more than half the businesses in downtown Ottawa forced to close, there are literally thousands out of work because of those closures. More than 1,500 people who work at the Rideau Centre mall alone have been out of work for three weeks now.

We have seen the physical intimidation of journalists and the use of children as shields. There have been open threats of violence against the Prime Minister, cabinet and us as members of Parliament both on the streets and online. Perhaps most relevant to our debate here about the invocation of emergency powers, we have seen repeated statements from the organizers that they would not leave until the mandates are lifted.

This is why New Democrats are supporting using emergency powers to put an end to what are, in fact, organized attacks on democracy. As we have done for the past three weeks now, New Democrats continue to reject the narrative that Canadians are more divided than ever. The evidence is, frankly, just the opposite.

When I stand to vote on this motion to affirm the invocation of the Emergencies Act, I will be standing with health care workers, with first responders, with grocery workers, all frontline workers and yes, the vast majority of truckers, but I will also be standing to pledge vigilance to ensure these necessary but extraordinary powers are used only to remove these serious threats to democracy and never to infringe on our rights to protest and dissent.

Again, let me say I am sad it has come to this, but I am proud to stand firmly against the use of intimidation, hatred and violence to overturn our democracy.

• (1735)

Mr. Lloyd Longfield (Guelph, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke for all the work he has done over many years on human rights. His speech today really highlighted some of the things around human rights.

The hon. member mentioned using children as human shields. Frankly, that is one of the aspects of this protest that has offended me more than almost anything else that has been going on. They are putting children in harm's way, children who sometimes are not able to get vaccinated. One of the reasons for us to get vaccinated is to protect our children, and now we are seeing children being put in situations of danger.

Could the hon. member expand on how that is an affront to the human rights of some of our most vulnerable Canadians?

Mr. Randall Garrison: Madam Speaker, while I do not want to focus extensively on the use of children as shields, I did see it personally as I walked on the streets in Ottawa and I was horrified to see parents putting their kids in danger for some distorted view of what freedom means. It shows that the organizers have little respect for basic rights and freedoms, little respect for what it actually means to be Canadian.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague spoke about the consequences of the blockades.

In the world I live in, the real word, we have the Criminal Code, municipal bylaws, the highway safety code and the ability to call in other police forces. There are provisions in the Criminal Code to combat hate crimes.

Is my colleague aware that all of these laws applied before the emergency declaration was made? I would also like to ask my colleague whether he thinks that a member of the House of Commons who votes against the emergency measures is against democracy and for violence.

• (1740)

[English]

Mr. Randall Garrison: Madam Speaker, I am not sure I can actually thank the member for that question, but I will say what is

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very clear here is that some people, and I am not accusing members in the chamber, but some people who helped organize these demonstrations intended to use force and intimidation to change public policy. That is not what democracy is about. That is not what Canada is about. That is not what I am about here as a member of Parliament.

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member referred to being in favour of peaceful protests, but under these regulations, the Emergencies Act order requires financial institutions to cease dealing with designated persons. Designated persons is defined as anyone associated with a protest.

Keeping in mind that we both support peaceful protests, could the member explain what a designated person means in the act? Is it a protest organizer? Is it a protest attendee? Is it a donor? Is it someone who tweets in support? How far does the act go?

Mr. Randall Garrison: Madam Speaker, I want to go back to the Emergencies Act, which builds in parliamentary oversight to this process and which allows at any time for 20 members of Parliament to request a vote to revoke these provisions. As the previous member asked what about laws that were already in effect, what I think is really true here is that the Emergencies Act gives us the power as a government, as a society to enforce existing laws and regulations to prevent those who would use force, violence and intimidation to get around those laws. If anyone is using their resources to prolong these demonstrations, blockades and occupations, they will fall under the provisions of the Emergencies Act.

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill.

I rise today with a very heavy heart to speak in support of the invocation of the Emergencies Act by our government and the motion in this House to affirm the government's decision. I want to acknowledge that I am speaking from the traditional unceded lands of the Algonquin people. I want to thank the many truckers in my riding of Scarborough—Rouge Park, and the hundreds of thousands of truckers around the world, who have helped us throughout the pandemic.

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Ever since I can remember, I have gone to protests. We have been protesting the rights of Tamils on the island of Sri Lanka from the time I was maybe four or five. After the anti-Tamil pogrom in 1983, I demonstrated for weeks on end at the India consulate in Dublin, Ireland. Later in Canada in the 1980s, I protested apartheid of South Africa. In the 1990s, I protested the cuts to education in Ontario under their then premier Bob Rae. In 1995, I organized a vigil and protest right here on Parliament Hill as Tamils were being displaced in the north and east of the island.

In the 2000s, I extended legal supports to protesters at Queen's Park. I did a number of them throughout the decade. In 2009, I was right here in Ottawa and provided legal support to those who were protesting against the Tamil genocide in Sri Lanka. This has been referred to, in the last several days, as the Tamil protest. It started in early February and ended in May of 2009. This included similar protests on University Avenue in front of the U.S. consulate, and I worked with the then chief of police for the City of Toronto, now the Minister of Emergency Preparedness, to ensure those protests were peaceful.

I can recall my nephew, who was 10 years old at that time, going to many of these protests with my late father-in-law. My partner and I took our four-month-old in frigid temperatures to protest on Dundas Square in the winter of 2009. During this time, I also attended protests in Washington, New York and Geneva. I am therefore an ardent believer in the right to protest as a tool of dissent and political advocacy. I believe in the right to protest, and I also believe that children should be part of protests, but not used as shields in an illegal occupation.

Since January 29, 2022, Canada has been gripped by what started off with protesting, and has turned into illegal blockades and occupiers. Many colleagues across the aisle have talked about their interactions with the illegal blockaders. I have a great deal of respect for many of my colleagues across the aisle. They have spoken about their interactions with some truckers and other protesters, and their ability to walk through the illegal blockades and understand and empathize.

Sadly, I do not have that privilege. Many in this House do not have that privilege. Even though, as parliamentarians, we are supposed to enjoy the same level of privilege, I do not share that privilege.

They have called for the overthrow of a government and, de facto, all of us serving in this House. They brought symbols of hate, like the Confederate flag, Nazi symbols and others, to the protest. They have destroyed the pride flag. They have threatened media. They have taken food from a homeless shelter. I ask my colleagues opposite to please forgive me if I do not feel the same level of confidence engaging with these so-called protesters.

I would never cast dispersions over a group based on the acts of a few, but after 23 days, many who may feel strongly about the type of hate and vitriol we see on the streets should distance themselves and condemn them, including the Conservative Party of Canada.

The impacts of these illegal blockades on Ottawa, Coutts, Emerson, Surrey and Windsor are profound. These illegal blockades are different in form and substance to the hundreds of protests we see

here in Ottawa annually. That is why, after considerable consultation and engagement, our government invoked the Emergencies Act on February 14, 2022. We did so after the City of Ottawa, Windsor and others invoked emergencies in their municipalities, and after the Province of Ontario did so as well.

• (1745)

Ultimately, Canada is a rule of law country. In declaring a public order emergency under the Emergencies Act, we followed the law and 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.

I want to highlight the preamble of the Emergencies Act, which reads:

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 action our government takes will be subject to the charter, and it is the solemn responsibility of the Attorney General to ensure this. 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 of authority of a province to deal with it, or that seriously threatens the ability of the Government of Canada to preserve the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of Canada.

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

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

As members have seen, our government 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 those places affected by blockades and illegal occupations will see any change at all.

We introduced the following six temporary measures to bring the situation under control. One, regulation and prohibition of public assemblies that lead to a breach of peace and go beyond lawful protests. Two, designating and securing places where blockades are to be prohibited. Three, directing persons to render essential services to relieve impacts of blockades on Canada's economy. Four, authorizing direct financial institutions to render essential services to relieve impact of blockades. Five, enabling the RCMP to enforce municipal laws and provincial offences. Finally, imposition of fines or imprisonment for contravention of any order or regulation made under section 19 of the Emergencies Act.

There are a number of safeguards built into this act. As required by the act, the Prime Minister met with the cabinet, as well as premiers, prior to invoking the act. After having declared the act, we tabled the declaration within two days, and Parliament has been able to debate it within seven days. In the coming days, the parliamentary committee will be struck and an inquiry will be called. The declaration lasts for 30 days and can be revoked at any time at the will of Parliament.

The situation is urgent. As interim chief of the Ottawa Police Steve Bell said yesterday that the police would not have been able to undertake the enormous operation currently taking in place in Ottawa without the temporary measures extended to it by the Emergencies Act.

We are invoking the Emergencies Act to end illegal blockades and occupations. We are invoking it to restore the rights of those who cannot safely walk the streets of downtown Ottawa and other places.

• (1750)

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for talking about his personal experiences throughout his life. First and foremost, we are all human, and we have lived through certain situations. I appreciate the fact that he raised those issues.

My question is quite simple. During 17 days, nothing was done by the government. Even on February 11, the Prime Minister said that laws could be applied to solve this problem. Three days later, he tabled that bill. What happened in those three days to have him table that bill?

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Speaker, this gives me an opportunity to respond to this question, which has come up a number of times. I want to specifically direct the hon. member to the Report to the Houses of Parliament: Emergencies Act Consultations. It outlines all of the measures taken by the government in respect to addressing the situation we have seen.

First and foremost, I think that starting on January 31, there were direct conversations with the mayor of Ottawa. There were numerous conversations with the premiers, including Premier Ford in Ontario. There were consultations with the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

I can go on. This is an eight-page document that I hope the hon. member can go through to look at the work we did prior to invoking the Emergencies Act.

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[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ): Madam Speaker, since Friday, apart from a small hiccup yesterday, I have been listening to what has been said about the protest.

I have a question about what members have been saying since this morning. Are we to understand that, from now on, every time law enforcement agencies need to join forces, coordinate and collaborate, the federal government can invoke the Emergencies Act?

That is what is happening; after three weeks, law enforcement agencies are finally coordinating their efforts.

[English]

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Speaker, no, that is not what this entails. We have a specific set of situations right now in a number of different areas, including Ottawa, Windsor, Coutts, Emerson and Surrey, that do pose a national emergency. This is in direct response to the situation at hand and it does mean that this should be invoked.

I hope the government never has to invoke this again, but we are in a situation where it does have to be, and that is what we have done right now.

• (1755)

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, I know my hon. colleague is a trained lawyer, as am I. We have all heard some concerns raised by the general public that the invocation of the Emergencies Act may set a precedent, so I am curious about his thoughts on that.

I would particularly be interested in his views on the converse of that, which is if we did not act in these circumstances, what kind of precedent does he think might be set by people using economic hostage taking to try to force a change in policy of a democratically elected government. Is he concerned about that also setting a bad precedent in this nation?

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the question posed by my friend opposite. This certainly does set a precedent in terms of protest. We cannot have blockades of this nature, which literally bring our economy to a halt.

We have gone through the pandemic. We have serious challenges with transport across Canada right now, and we need to make sure that all of our systems are working properly. If the government were to not get involved in a situation where there are such economic losses and job losses, then we would be responsible. I believe we are doing the right thing right now.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to be here today representing the constituents of Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill and to speak in this historic debate on the motion to confirm the government's declaration of emergency.

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I thank everyone participating in and listening to this important debate. It is critical for our country that we, as a Parliament, work together to ensure that this debate is robust and to address the motion at hand.

In the spirit of unity, I would like to begin by talking about those things that I believe we can all agree on.

First, I believe we are all grateful to Canadians for their efforts over the past two years: for stepping up and following public health measures to protect the health and welfare of themselves and their fellow Canadians, and for working hard on our front lines and our essential services to keep our economy moving and Canadians safe and cared for. We are also grateful to the truckers who have provided these services and, especially today, to our men and women in uniform from across our province and country, for professionally and peacefully working to end this illegal occupation.

Additionally, I believe we agree on our basic rights and responsibilities: the right of all Canadians to free speech and the right to lawfully and peacefully protest, and the responsibility of our government to maintain peace, order and good government in Canada. On a more personal level, there is the responsibility of all of us as members of Parliament to listen to our constituents and to weigh carefully the measures we are enacting.

Likewise, the responsibility of Canadians is to refrain from hate speech and other violent and harassing behaviour toward their fellow citizens, but especially at this time toward our police officers, our frontline public servants, our medical officers and even our own staff as members of Parliament.

I think we can also agree on some facts that were established during the disruptions to public order over the past several weeks. There has been an illegal occupation of the downtown core of Ottawa for over three weeks now. It is an occupation that has not only impeded the operation of businesses and the lives and livelihoods of many thousands of Canadians, but also, and perhaps more importantly in terms of the invocation of the Emergencies Act, it has threatened to disrupt the operation of all three branches of our government, impeding their proper functioning.

The inability of the municipal, regional and provincial governments to disperse this illegal occupation of our nation's capital has further added to the situation.

Let us look at some other facts, such as the publication of a memorandum of understanding by the organizers of these blockades calling for the overthrow of the government if the demands they set out were not met. We should be outraged by the involvement of extremist, white nationalist organizations in the operation of this self-titled "freedom convoy" movement, some even demonstrating with swastikas and Confederate flags. In fact, during CBC coverage of the protest only a few hours ago, a flag of one of the far-right organizations was clearly being waved.

We should be outraged by the discovery of lethal and illegal weapons and the arrest of individuals associated with the organizing groups at the Coutts border blockade in Alberta. We should be outraged by the threats to the life of the Prime Minister, and to the men and women in uniform who are on the front lines trying to peacefully contain and quell these illegal blockades.

We should be outraged by the significant economic damage that these blockades have done at border crossings critical to vital trade between Canada and the United States. What Canadians are not outraged by the inflow of foreign money funding this political movement? It is money from the U.S. and the Cayman Islands, including money identified as coming from over a thousand donors who also donated to the illegal attempt to overthrow the government of the United States on January 6. How can the Conservatives not be equally outraged by these acts?

The question before us right now is whether the situation we are currently facing warrants the invocation of the Emergencies Act. This act has been invoked under Part II: a public order emergency. A public order emergency is described as resulting from serious threats to the Government of Canada. When defining threats to the security of Canada, the act references the definition provided in the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act. This definition includes espionage, sabotage, detrimental foreign influences, activities that support the threat or use of violence for a political, religious or ideological objective, or those activities that threaten to undermine or otherwise destroy or overthrow the Government of Canada.

● (1800)

I hope that after hearing the facts I have just enumerated, and given the definition of when we are facing a public order emergency under the act, members will agree that the motion before us should be supported.

Let us remember that we are debating the declaration of an emergency under an act that was introduced, debated and amended in 1987 and 1988 by the then Conservative government under Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. It was a Progressive Conservative government, very unlike the leadership of the Conservative Party opposite.

This is a well-written and thoughtful act that was introduced to address concerns that many Canadians had with the only act available to our government at that time: the War Measures Act. As former Prime Minister Mulroney pointed out, one of the major things that the Emergencies Act did was to require the concurrence of Parliament in the declaration of an emergency. This is an important feature of the act and the reason we are here today.

Perrin Beatty, CEO of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, who was the minister of defence at the time that this act was introduced, said that the government's use of this act is an indication of how serious a threat the blockades are to public safety and the economy.

To quote a primary source, Mr. Beatty's Twitter account, he said, "When I brought in the Emergencies Act 35 years ago, I wished that it would never need to be used, but I knew there would inevitably be future crises and that it was essential to protect the basic rights of Canadians even in an emergency."

This is what the act does. Let me once again review the measures in this act that ensure the protection of our basic rights. The act ensures that the government's actions are subject to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Canadian Bill of Rights. The act is time limited and targeted, and measures introduced will be reasonable and proportional. The act lapses after 30 days and may be ended prior to that.

There are many checks and balances. We are here today, and I have been here since 7 a.m., to fully debate the invocation of this act, as is required by it. A committee must be established to monitor the measures implemented, and the implementation of the act will be reviewed by the courts.

I trust that, given the many current threats to the safety and security of our country that I outlined earlier, in combination with the safeguards that were so wisely incorporated into this legislation, members will concur that this is a judicious and warranted declaration of emergency by our Prime Minister, and will support this motion.

This is a time for action. Canadians are counting on us. The world is watching us. Let us not be afraid to enact tough, bold measures to protect our country, our border, our economy and our civil society.

• (1805)

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, before I begin, I just want to say that yesterday night, because of the police presence here, I missed a very important dinner with two very dear Kurdish friends of mine: Jowana and her husband Shaheen. I just wanted to mention that at the start.

I listened to the member's speech and I want to put a couple of actual facts on the table. In the lead-up to the declaration of this emergency order and the information the government provided to our opposition benches, it did not provide evidence of how the act should be used. It did not provide briefing material to our caucus before our caucus meeting. In fact, our opposition House leader, and I am his deputy, said to the media that we did not receive any of this information.

If this was a public emergency and the government actually wanted our support and meant to get it, it would have provided this information up front: the evidence that extremist groups were involved, the evidence of which donors were involved, and the actual public safety concerns involved. The government provided no documentation.

I do not have a question. That is just to put it on the record.

[Translation]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Mirabel.

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon: Madam Speaker, this is the first time this act has been used since 1988, since it came into force.

Despite this, in response to the friend from the NDP—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I must interrupt the hon. member for Mirabel.

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The hon. member for Calgary Shepard is rising on a point of order.

[English]

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Madam Speaker, I am rising on a point of order.

With all due respect to my colleague from the Bloc, I believe this is the time for questions and comments; therefore, the member opposite has an opportunity to respond if she wishes to.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member is correct.

The hon. member for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill.

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Madam Speaker, as there was no question, I did not feel a need to reply, but I appreciate the opportunity.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, I will give her a chance to respond. This is the first time that this legislation has been used since it came into force in 1988. In answer to his NDP buddies earlier, the parliamentary secretary to the minister said that this did not set a precedent.

My question for the member is this: How is it possible not to set a precedent when this is the first time that such draconian legislation is being used?

If the government comes up with an answer, Quebeckers and Canadians should be worried, because it is impossible for this not to be a precedent.

[English]

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Madam Speaker, I am not a lawyer, but I do believe there will be a precedent set by enacting this legislation, and I think it is an appropriate precedent. Just because the act has not been enacted since its inception in 1988 does not mean that it should not be enacted now. We have clearly made the case for why this legislation is needed, and I am quite confident that the precedent set will ensure that it will only be used judiciously in the future.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, a number of constituents have contacted me to note the contrast between the way local police responded to the occupation of Ottawa, which they saw as a kid-glove approach, and the way in which so many indigenous people in our country are policed.

Is my hon. colleague also concerned by that contrast, and would she support an independent public inquiry into the way that police have handled this situation and the way in which policing in our country is carried out?

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Yes, Madam Speaker, I am concerned. The inability of the police to bring this under control earlier was part of the reason why it was necessary to enact this legislation. There is a marked difference between the way these different protests are being treated, so I would fully support an inquiry.

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Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I was impressed that my colleague for Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill followed the line of the legislation from the Emergencies Act over to the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act for the definition of “threat to the security of Canada”.

In these debates, we have not identified what it is that required the public order emergency, if it was required. I am very drawn to the fact that what we are looking at here is foreign influence that is affecting Canadian democracy in a negative way. Under “threats to the security of Canada”, subsection (b) states these are:

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.

It specifically does not include normal legal protest. I would ask the member to expand on that.

Are we actually bringing in a public order emergency because of the specific protest in Ottawa, or are we wanting to look at a network that is across Canada, and even global, that chooses to rely on disinformation and fearmongering to create divisions and undermine democracy?

• (1810)

Ms. Leah Taylor Roy: Madam Speaker, my answer would be both. We need to look at what has happened here in Ottawa, why it happened and what threats are here. The larger question of foreign influence and how it is affecting political movements in Canada should be looked at in a broader context.

Ms. Leslyn Lewis (Haldimand—Norfolk, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise today in the House asking the same question that so many of my fellow Canadians are asking: How did we end up here? Across the world, our allies are in shock. I have had friends call me from all over the world asking me, “What is going in your country?” They know that we Canadians are a quiet and polite people. Something must be very wrong for a peace-loving people to rise up, take to the streets and fight for freedom from government mandates and restrictions.

We are here because the Liberal government slowly encroached upon the freedoms of Canadians and because the Prime Minister chose to use hate, fear and division as a part of his COVID strategy. The Liberals want to create a false narrative. They want to convince you that the protesters are terrorists. They need you to believe this so that they can justify the heavy-handed approach that they have taken by invoking the emergency measures act.

Hard-working Canadians are seeking empathy and understanding and listening from the elected officials whose salaries they pay, and yet this Prime Minister clearly refuses to listen to any opinion that is not exactly like his. He has said that those who disagree with him have wrong opinions. That is not leadership. This failed leadership is responsible for the situation with which we are now faced. This protest could have been over at least a week ago without the police intervention that we see now if the Liberals had accepted our motion for them to provide a timetable outlining when Canadians could have their lives back. Even leaders around the world are condemning this Prime Minister's authoritarian move, from British MPs to U.S. senators to Brazilian lawmakers to international authors and journalists. The free world is looking at Canada in shock

and using words such as “authoritarian” and “totalitarian dictatorship” to describe our government.

Let me remind the House that it was less than two years ago when the Prime Minister celebrated our truckers as heroes and mobilized a social media campaign to thank them, “Thank a Trucker”. I repeat again that this is not about who is right or who is wrong; it is about who gets to be a part of this conversation, and the only acceptable answer to that question is everybody, every Canadian.

The Emergencies Act is a declaration of a state of national emergency, a blunt-force tool that should only be used when there is a national crisis at hand, when all the legislative and legal powers have been exhausted. Canadians know very well that this Prime Minister did not exhaust all of the options before he implemented this act. Our criminal laws have provisions that will allow for the seizure of crime proceeds, the towing of vehicles, the freezing of bank accounts, and these measures should have been used first.

Conservatives do believe in the rule of law. We believe in peaceful protests and do not support protests that interfere with critical infrastructure, so when the Ambassador Bridge in Windsor, the Coutts border in Alberta, the Emerson border in Manitoba were blocked, protesters were asked to leave. The authorities attended and asked them to leave, and they did. The RCMP dealt with those issues efficiently, without a declaration of a national emergency. All critical infrastructures were cleared, and what was left was a protest in front of Parliament in downtown Ottawa. To halt further protests, the Prime Minister threatened to take away driver's licences, seize trucks, freeze bank accounts and outright intimidate lawful protesters. These are the actions of a dictator, and this is exactly what happens in totalitarian regimes.

• (1815)

I have received thousands of emails from terrified people all over the country. One lady who bought a simple T-shirt is afraid her bank account is going to be frozen.

Invoking the Emergencies Act when conditions have not been met undermines confidence in our democracy. This is not the first large protest in this country. We have resolved many other protests without invoking the Emergencies Act, such as Oka, pipeline protests, and in my riding of Haldimand—Norfolk, the Caledonia protests. The Canadian legal system has laws sufficient for dealing with protests. Our FINTRAC system allows for the tracing of funds and the freezing of accounts.

The continuation of the Emergencies Act without clear evidence of a national emergency is a threat to our democracy. I remind this House that when the War Measures Act, the predecessor to this act, was first enacted, many innocent people's lives were implicated, and lives were destroyed as a result. Even defence minister Perrin Beatty, in introducing the act, expressed the generally held view that the War Measures Act was an extremely effective tool as a political device, but as a criminal device was extremely ineffective.

I am a trained lawyer and I have practised law for over 20 years. I have taught law at law school, and as such, I believe in the rule of law. Its application is very important to me. I am now a legislator, so it is also imperative that I be convinced that the laws are properly applied. If we examine the appropriate section of the Emergencies Act, we will see that the reasons for invoking this act are lacking.

The Liberals cite three reasons. We were told, first, that it is necessary to deal with continuing blockades. This is factually incorrect, since all blockades at the border crossings were removed peacefully with the existing laws in place. There is nothing in the Emergencies Act that gives law enforcement powers that they did not have when they removed the blockades at the Ambassador Bridge, at Coutts and at the Manitoba border. With all bridges cleared and the protest been relegated to downtown Ottawa, primarily on Wellington Street in front of Parliament, that situation certainly does not constitute a national emergency.

Second, Liberals used the act to prevent the protests from having adverse effects on the Canadian economy. Again, this is factually incorrect. Canada was experiencing economic insecurity as a result of the adverse effects of the lockdowns and mandates. This occurred long before the protests and the blockades.

The third reason was to reduce the impacts of blockades on Canada's relationship with trading partners. It is unbelievable and not credible that this Prime Minister needed to invoke the Emergencies Act to secure our relationship with our trading partners. Frankly, the United States is our biggest trading partner, and many U.S. governors as well as countries around the world have condemned the Prime Minister's heavy-handed approach.

It is very likely that his actions alone will negatively affect our relationship with our trading partners. It is clear that the Prime Minister is using the Emergencies Act as a political tool to terrorize and punish dissenters by ruining the lives of people who disagree with him. The preponderance of the evidence clearly does not support invoking the Emergencies Act.

Canadians are desperate for hope and are calling for unity. People on all sides of the debate need compassion and understanding. Like it or not, the Prime Minister needs to take responsibility for his failed leadership. Guarding our freedoms and upholding our democracy means that we need to have compassionate hearts and listening ears.

The Prime Minister's actions likely will bring the government and our democracy into disrepute. Thankfully, there is a simple solution to this problem. Let us entertain a non-partisan resolution to end mandates, just like many countries around the world, including

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Ireland, Sweden, Norway, Tanzania, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic. Together, we could begin to restore our democracy—

• (1820)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We have come to the end of the time allowed.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Scarborough—Guildwood.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I was caught by some surprise to hear that if the House had only passed the Conservative resolution from last week, this would all be finished. I suppose we can believe in fairies, but that is one of the more preposterous statements made by any member here.

Is the hon. member prepared to substitute her views and decision-making for Chief Bell's view that the resources provided by this legislation for the regulation and prohibition of public assembly are welcome, that the designation and securing of places where blockades are prohibited is welcome, that directing persons to render essential services to relieve impacts on Canada's economy is welcome, that authorizing and directing financial institutions to render essential services is welcome, that measures enabling the RCMP to enforce municipal laws is welcome? Is she prepared to substitute her judgment for Chief Bell's?

Ms. Leslyn Lewis: Madam Speaker, my response to that question is that we have legal provisions and mechanisms and laws sufficient to enable law enforcement officers to deal with all aspects of criminality, all aspects of law enforcement in this country, without the imposition of such a heavy-handed act, which should only be used for national emergencies. This situation is not a national emergency.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, my question to the hon. member is this: Does she not see a problem when millions and millions of dollars of foreign funds are flowing in to support organizers who openly call for the overthrow of the democratically elected government in Canada? Does she not see this foreign inflow of dollars to those who do not respect our democratic processes as a problem that actually is a national crisis?

Ms. Leslyn Lewis: Madam Speaker, again I say that I have full confidence in the law enforcement system that we have in place. If there is a problem, as the hon. member has outlined, our law enforcement mechanism is sufficient to deal with it. What should have been done is that all laws should have been exhausted. Our Criminal Code has sections in it to address these issues, and it was not used in this case.

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[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleagues just talked about foreign financing and made many references to the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada, or FINTRAC.

There are two scenarios being advanced. The first is that FINTRAC can get the job done and that there was no need to declare a state of emergency. The second is that FINTRAC is underfunded and understaffed and that this government has not taken cases of financial crime seriously, such as those we are seeing today.

Could the member tell us if the government negligently failed to prepare for such crimes?

• (1825)

[English]

Ms. Leslyn Lewis: Madam Speaker, essentially the director of public prosecutions has sections that he could tap into to address these issues. Section 10 of the Director of Public Prosecutions Act allows the power to be directed and for these types of investigations to be done. We have the FINTRAC system, and there are other mechanisms that were not utilized before the Emergencies Act was negligently invoked.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, a lot of laws could have been used but were not used. We ended up with an occupation that went on for three weeks. What laws could have been invoked to get tow truck drivers to pull trucks away when they were refusing?

Ms. Leslyn Lewis: Madam Speaker, I believe section 129 of the Criminal Code could have been utilized to get tow truck drivers to remove vehicles from the streets, so we did have sufficient mechanisms in our criminal laws to deal with that issue. Therefore, the Emergencies Act was unnecessarily invoked.

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am always grateful to have the opportunity to address the House of Commons, especially in this seminal moment in Canadian history. I did not want to do it this way, but I did come back to my riding. I thought it important to understand very clearly what the national emergency was, and I will come to that more in the rest of my intervention.

There are many difficulties with the invocation of the Emergencies Act, and to be debating something that has already happened is somewhat counterproductive. However, that will be an important part of the mandatory review of the entire process as we go forward. The two main issues, as I see them, really boil down to how we got here and what the justification is for the Emergencies Act.

There are those here who wish to muddy the waters as to the legal justification for using the Emergencies Act, and I do believe that there are people out there who have that very important skill set. That will form part of the review as well. The question we need to start with is how we got here, and this, in my mind, has been the most dismal display of leadership I have ever seen.

As many in the House have been, I have been a part of sporting teams, committees and leadership positions in the medical community, and I have served in the Royal Canadian Air Force. One thing

that is very crystal clear is that when we encounter those who do not fully agree with our position or support what we think is important, then that moment in time represents a significant opportunity for dialogue. Also, as a physician, I think the opportunity to discuss options and negotiate with patients presented itself to me on a daily basis, and I will be so crass as to say that this is communications 101.

Since the beginning of this pandemic, I have been shocked and appalled with respect to the language used by the Prime Minister when commenting upon those who have been vaccine-hesitant. I have been concerned about vaccine hesitancy since the beginning of the pandemic, and certainly I took the opportunity to review the scientific literature on the topic of vaccine hesitancy. There are innumerable papers, and I have had the opportunity to review them, and there was absolutely no mention of division, stigmatization or name-calling. The language used in these scientific papers would be more along the lines of building relationships, building trust and understanding the other person's position.

Chris Voss, who is a famous FBI negotiator, during one particularly difficult case, spoke through an apartment door for six hours with no response. In the end, the fugitives and the hostages emerged suddenly. The fugitives commented, "you calmed us down.... We finally believed you wouldn't go away, so we just came out."

I think it is important people know I have been in Ottawa for the last three weeks, since the protests began, and every day I walked to work. I realize, as has been brought forward by others, I am a white man. I understand that. I have never been accosted, accused or threatened. I wear a mask, but sadly, Canadians who do not agree with the Prime Minister have been vilified, stigmatized and called names. Let us keep that in mind.

Even on Wednesday evening just past, I left my office at the corner of Bank and Wellington, and I walked all the way up to the ByWard Market during the protest. Indeed, I did not feel unsafe. Nobody even spoke to me. Was this a public order emergency? Certainly, I do believe there are other avenues to deal with this situation, and certainly, as I have mentioned previously, I returned here to Nova Scotia and there is absolutely no public order emergency here. Life is going on as normal, and I think parliamentarians portraying what is going on in Ottawa as a public order emergency are a little misguided.

This isolated issue here in Ottawa does not a national emergency make. I have heard many Liberal colleagues talking about how dangerous or scary—

• (1830)

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Speaker, I have a point of order. I did not realize this was a meeting room. They are having a meeting and talking so loud we cannot hear—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member is calling a point of order on noise. I was speaking with the clerk and I did not hear any noise.

I do invite the members, if they want to have conversations, to go into the lobbies or behind the curtains.

The hon. parliamentary secretary to the government House leader.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, all I did was say to my colleague that the members of the official opposition feel that all they have to do is click their heels and wave a wand and, poof, the protesters will disappear. I said that in a very low voice. I did not even think anyone could hear it. It was more of a whisper. However, if I offended people with respect to their—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): It seems that it was loud enough to bother the members who were trying to listen to the speech, so I request that members keep as quiet as possible and respect when other people are speaking.

The hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester.

Mr. Stephen Ellis: Madam Speaker, lots of words come to mind about that negative interruption. The way the member put the words of his interruption into the record is disturbing.

It is interesting how the Liberal colleagues often talk about how dangerous or scary the protest is, yet I do not think any of them even walked into the protest. When I was at the health committee one day, it ended early because my colleagues were scared to go out in the dark.

Further failures of leadership are clear. Documents have been made available to us in which the Prime Minister convened a first ministers' meeting. Its proposed agenda was to consult premiers on whether to declare this a public order emergency under the Emergencies Act. The documents reveal that the opinions of the premiers were given in confidence. However, since then their positions have been made clear. The Premier of Quebec did not think it was beneficial. Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island were opposed. I could find no comments for the Yukon, Northwest Territories or Nunavut. If in that consultation the opinions of seven of the 10 premiers were ignored, why bother having it?

As has been pointed out repeatedly, there never has been nor will there be any consultation by the Prime Minister or any of his government officials with the protesters. I will repeat that for the House and all Canadians. The Prime Minister has never spoken to any of the protesters who were there previously and now he has decided to employ and access the Emergencies Act.

Besides the Prime Minister's dismal approval rating, what is the emergency? What steps could have been taken before the government enacted the Emergencies Act that would have made this right, so that Canadians could believe that some suspension of their rights and freedoms would be appropriate?

A public order emergency is described as a "threat" to Canada's security, including acts of espionage and sabotage; "foreign influenced activities" that are detrimental to Canadian interests; terrorist activities; and efforts to covertly or by violence overthrow the constitutional structure of the country. Lawful advocacy, protests, demonstrations and similar activities are not included.

I think I made it clear that walking through the protests I did not feel unsafe.

Statutory Order

This public order emergency has given the federal government significant overreach with respect to potentially accessing the bank accounts of not only those involved in the civil disobedience but of those who may have donated to the cause. As we have heard before, does that mean if one were to donate \$5 or \$10, that person's assets would be frozen? If relatives of a leader of a party in this House had donated to the cause would their assets be frozen? I wonder.

Bloomberg News described it that "banks would be required to report relationships with people involved in blockades and would be given the authority to freeze accounts without a court order, among other measures." I spoke to Daniel the other day, who is now afraid to donate to any charity and he is now afraid his bank account may be frozen and he will not be able to pay his mortgage. He wonders if these new powers will continue to be used for other causes that raise funds if the government does not agree with their values. He is a proud Canadian with three Canadian flags in his yard.

From the current government we have seen travel restricted, cell-phone data collected, military propaganda used domestically, bank accounts frozen and now the Emergencies Act invoked. If those are not multiple infringements upon the civil liberties and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms of Canadians, what is? Canada is now at a crossroads with its democracy. We have a Prime Minister who chooses to vilify, stigmatize and traumatize Canadians with different opinions.

The government has declared a public order emergency with the disagreement of seven of 10 premiers and indeed the vast majority of our country outside of Ottawa has no evidence of a public order emergency. We have seen law enforcement agencies successfully deal with the frustrations that have boiled over at the Ambassador Bridge and a multitude of other border crossings without the Emergencies Act. We also heard about the massive disruptions these blockades at border crossings have caused and the damage that has done to our economy.

However, I cannot fathom that the finance minister tells us how great the economy is at the current time, despite our 5.1% inflation rate and Canadians being priced out of their own lives, all of which was in existence before the last three weeks.

There is absolutely no reason the Emergencies Act cannot be rescinded post-haste and the madness stopped. It is sad that an ideological coalition has the potential to allow the act to continue for up to another 30 days. The left wing thinks that its position is perfectly fine, and there is no issue with that.

● (1835)

These people, who wanted to protest, were ignored. That is the sad reality of how we ended up here.

Statutory Order

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I find it interesting. All day long, I have been hearing Conservatives talk about the need for the Prime Minister to engage in dialogue and discussion with the occupiers outside, yet I find it interesting that Jason Kenney, the premier of Alberta, did not engage with the protesters at Coutts. Premier Doug Ford did not engage with the protesters or those who were blocking the bridge in Windsor. Premier Stefanson of Manitoba did not engage with those who were blocking in Manitoba.

Does the hon. member think that all leadership should engage with the protesters or that just Liberal leadership should engage with protesters?

Mr. Stephen Ellis: Madam Speaker, I think it is fascinating that even the Liberals recognize that the Prime Minister has not spoken or created any dialogue with the protesters. I have to say I think that is shameful and it is quite honestly ridiculous. How can that member opposite possibly say that because someone else does something wrong, they can continue to do wrong things and that makes it right?

Wow, my mom taught me that when I was a kid.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, I listened to my colleague's speech. He has demonstrated that the government did absolutely nothing, or very little, before declaring an emergency.

This leaves the impression that this emergency declaration is basically an attempt to save face for the government and the Prime Minister, who did absolutely nothing for some 20 days.

I would like to know what my colleague thinks about that.

[English]

Mr. Stephen Ellis: Madam Speaker, I thank the Bloc for understanding the untenable situation we are in and the ridiculous nature of using this act. It is very clear that the Prime Minister is attempting to save his approval ratings, which are dismal at the current time and will continue to fall as Canadians realize that he does not represent the true nature of what it is to be a Canadian.

• (1840)

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have said it before and I will reiterate it again: It should have never come down to this. The occupiers that have held downtown Ottawa hostage for weeks made it clear that this was their intention from the onset, yet the government did nothing. The member opposite may agree that, instead of showing clear and strong leadership on a path forward, the Prime Minister was missing in action. Now here we are. We have rolled out a red carpet for those who feel it reasonable to overthrow our democratic system. This is an occupation fuelled by hate, disguised as a peaceful protest.

Does the member agree now is the time for action?

Mr. Stephen Ellis: Madam Speaker, I agree with everything up to the point where she talked about how the Prime Minister has done absolutely nothing. That is obviously, patently true. That point

is really important. The difficulty here, as I pointed out in my speech, is the question of how we got here. We got here because of this terrible, unbelievably poor leadership and if we did not have that, we would not have had to come here.

I guess I am concerned that perhaps this pathway was as planned out by the Prime Minister as the protest was.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Madam Speaker, given that the Deputy Prime Minister, the prime minister-in-waiting, has opined that she would like to make aspects of the Emergencies Act permanent, such as the expansion of FINTRAC over more control of people's bank accounts and transactions, and given that the thresholds were not met to invoke the Emergencies Act, does the hon. member think, perhaps, the reason for invoking the act was to acquire some expanded, broadened powers permanently and that was the true goal of casting the country into this situation?

Mr. Stephen Ellis: Madam Speaker, certainly, as I just mentioned previously, that is a concern that I would have as a concerned Canadian citizen. If one is a leader and does nothing and ends up with a ham-fisted approach, was that perhaps the whole raison d'être from the very beginning?

I think that is very possible. I think that Canadians not only want the Liberals off of our backs but we also want them out of our pocketbooks as well.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. parliamentary secretary is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Arif Virani: Madam Speaker, I have been very patient and I rarely raise points of order, but something that the member for Cumberland—Colchester said really offends me as a parliamentarian and I am going to give him an opportunity to retract his statement.

He belittled members and fellow parliamentarians who are members of the health committee for their reluctance to exit a committee in the dark during the midst of this protest. Although he has gone on at length to explain how he has been unaffected by these protests and feels quite comfortable with them, clearly residents of Ottawa and other parliamentarians do not.

I am going to give him an opportunity to retract that statement and clarify, for the record, that he would not want to belittle the subjective feelings of fellow parliamentarians and members of this House, how they perceive this protest and what it represents to them.

Mr. Sean Casey: Madam Speaker, on that same point of order, I am the chair of the health committee. Not only did the member belittle members of the committee, but what he said was not true. He knows full well that in order to adjourn a meeting, it requires the consent of the committee or a vote. There was an early adjournment of the meeting. There was absolutely no reference to anyone being afraid of the dark, and what he did was highly inappropriate.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Cumberland—Colchester.

Mr. Stephen Ellis: Madam Speaker, perhaps the experience of the chair of the committee was different from mine. That did, in fact, happen, so saying that my comments are misleading is inappropriate, because it did happen. Those are the facts, and I think that trying to be factual is a very important thing here. I do not think that is belittling people. That is portraying the facts. People who have not even been out in this protest continue to report what other people have experienced, when I have been out there and colleagues of mine have been out there and experienced it.

● (1845)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I wish to inform you that I will be splitting my time with the member for Shefford.

I must confess something: I am exhausted. I am completely exhausted. I am intellectually, physically and mentally exhausted.

It is 6:45 p.m. on a Saturday night. I should be having supper with my wife and children at home, but I am here, in Parliament, discussing legislation regarding a national emergency, when there is no national emergency. It is over. There are no more people in the streets in front of Parliament. The trucks are gone, the people are gone. The crisis is over.

I have no problem with spending hours and nights talking about housing, seniors, health, climate change or any manner of important topics. I would spend my weekends here. I would camp here, with my sleeping bag. I would sleep in Parliament for all those worthwhile issues that are so important to people.

I am searching for the national crisis. Where is it?

We are still looking. We are looking for the national crisis. We keep looking for it, but we cannot find it. The outrageous truth is that there is no crisis.

I would like to commend the police outside. For 24 hours, they have been doing truly incredible work. I am not sure if members have seen them, but step by step, they have been slowly advancing. They had a strategy. That is the crux of the Bloc Québécois' argument. What tools do they have, now that the act has been in effect for the past few days? What more do they have now?

If they were able to do that now, then the government needs to explain to us how the police managed to carry out this strategy that they were unable to implement before.

I was there in 2001 at the Summit of the Americas. The police did roughly the same thing as they did today. They used pepper spray a bit, not too much. They advanced slowly. They managed to get the protesters under control. It went very well. There was no special legislation.

Commending the police is one thing, but I would also like to commend the interpreters, who will have to work for three or four days because of this totally pointless debate. They are doing an outstanding job. They will be spending the weekend here, and it is very important to salute them.

I would also like to commend the journalists who are outside in the middle of the crowd with their microphones. They are being in-

sulted and shoved around. It is not easy for them. They have done a terrific job.

To begin my speech, even though I have been speaking for five minutes already, I would like to quote British writer Ernest Benn, who said something rather interesting that applies to the crisis we are in right now. He said: "Politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding it everywhere, diagnosing it wrongly and applying unsuitable remedies." I suspect that Ernest Benn did not like politicians very much.

If we apply that to the current crisis, if we say that politics is the art of looking for trouble, we might say that the government started it by allowing the truckers to come here in the first place.

Take Quebec City. They knew the truckers were coming, so they took necessary steps, such as setting up barricades around the National Assembly and telling the truckers where they could park. The mayor of Quebec City even told them he wanted to hear what they had to say and they had the right to be there because their actions were legitimate in a democracy. They were told they had the right to speak, but they were asked to do so without paralyzing the assembly and keeping people from sleeping.

Did Quebec have an emergency measures act at the time? The answer is no. Quebec handled the situation very well.

Again, it is the art of looking for trouble and finding it. How did the Prime Minister manage to find trouble? By letting them set up shop. If Ottawa had done like Quebec City from the start, it would never have come to this.

I also said it is the art of diagnosing trouble wrongly. The Prime Minister's strategy for the last three weeks has been to stay at the cottage and hope things will sort themselves out and the truckers will eventually leave. Well, they did not leave.

Lastly, politics is the art of applying unsuitable remedies, which in this case is the nuclear option of the Emergencies Act. I believe that Mr. Benn was right about that, because national emergency measures were not needed at the Ambassador Bridge. They were not needed in Coutts. They were not needed in Sarnia. They were not needed in Fort Erie, Vancouver, or Emerson, to name them all.

If I park my car in the middle of the road in Longueuil and leave the engine running for an hour or two, eventually a police officer is going to come along and tell me I am violating a bylaw. If I tell the officer that I feel like staying there anyway, another officer will surely show up to issue a fine three or four hours later. If I still say that I am going to stay there, they will tow my car two days later. There are laws for that. National emergency measures are not needed to move some trucks. That is what we saw here.

I listened carefully to Prime Minister Trudeau when he gave his speech to present this legislation—

● (1850)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order.

I would remind the hon. member that we do not use members' names in the House.

Statutory Order

Mr. Denis Trudel: Madam Speaker, I apologize.

The Prime Minister said, “Invoking the Emergencies Act is not something we do lightly.” Obviously. He added, “This is not the first, second or third option.” What are the three options that were supposedly considered? We do not know.

During a national crisis, the important thing is to show leadership. When a crisis occurs, a leader acknowledges that it is something difficult, that it is not easy for society, but that they think they should do this or that and that this is the way to go. That is what leadership is. Leadership is making decisions and telling us which way we will go.

As for the decision before us, seven Canadian provinces are against invoking this act. Is this what leadership looks like?

Thinking about that this week reminded me of the film *12 Angry Men*. Has anyone seen that movie? It was an international hit adapted from a play by Reginald Rose. *12 Angry Men* is a courtroom drama about a man on trial for murder. There are 12 jurors. The film begins as the jurors are meeting. Everyone thinks the defendant is guilty. The evidence is overwhelming. Everyone is anxious to go home, since it has been a long trial. Eleven people say he should be convicted, but one juror raises a doubt. He says no and questions the truth. He says the truth lies in another direction. Over the course of two hours, he slowly convinces everyone of his point of view, of what the truth is. He thinks the defendant is innocent. Now that is a leader.

Seven provinces oppose this legislation. The Prime Minister could have stood up and said that he thinks it is important and that it should be done for such and such a reason. That never happened. At no time did we see the Prime Minister show any leadership. That is what is missing.

I do not have time to talk about the October crisis, but I think members have understood what I am trying to say. This is a useless, totally disproportionate law that is not supported by a large part of the population. I have received thousands of emails from people who oppose it, thousands of emails from people who want us to vote against this legislation—

• (1855)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Unfortunately, we must go to questions and comments.

The hon. member for Lac-Saint-Louis.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I feel like I just attended an excellent bit of theatre. It was a very passionate performance.

My colleague gave the example of parking his car in a no-parking zone in Longueuil. The police comes along, he refuses to leave, and the police give him a fine. He claims that the police would call the towing company to have his vehicle towed. Is he aware that towing companies in Ottawa did not want to touch the convoy trucks for fear of reprisal and that this legislation was needed to encourage them to come tow the trucks away once the police gained control of the situation? It seems fairly obvious to me—

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

Mr. Denis Trudel: Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague, whom I am very fond of, is incorrect. All it would take is a court order. Just order the companies to go tow the trucks, and it is done. There is no need for a sledgehammer or a big club like the emergency legislation before us today.

[English]

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Madam Speaker, I too was at the Summit of the Americas, but it was quite a different situation. There were thousands of people storming the perimeter fence, the crowd was launching projectiles into the fence and there were imported black balaclava-clad professional protesters on hand. We saw none of that here. It was very peaceful. People were welcoming everyone. I certainly felt no potential violence when I was walking back and forth.

The member also agrees that the thresholds were not met to invoke this act. Why does the member think the Emergencies Act was invoked, given that there was no rationale?

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question. I am going to go in a different direction because I think it is important. There is one thing we have heard very little about in relation to this crisis.

We have heard a lot about extremist groups that infiltrated the protests. This is true and has been documented. These extremist groups exist, and we must combat them. However, there are other ways to do so. We did not need the Emergencies Act.

We have heard a lot about children being used as human shields. The media has really sensationalized this.

There are people outside who simply wanted to express their frustrations over what they have been living with for the past two years. I share that frustration. Everyone is fed up and tired. The health restrictions have been hard on people.

We, as members of Parliament, are relatively privileged. We probably have homes that are big enough to live in. Many of the people who are outside right now live with eight people in a one-bedroom apartment, and it is not easy going through this pandemic with all of these restrictions.

If, instead of tarring everyone with the same brush—this is Canadians we are talking about after all—the Prime Minister had listened to people all along, we might have been able to resolve this crisis in another way.

Ms. Niki Ashton (Churchill—Keewatinook Aski, NDP): Madam Speaker, the question I would like to ask my colleague is the following: Should the attack organized against our democracy by the extreme right, and financed from beyond our borders, be taken seriously?

This attack is intended to intimidate our fellow Canadians and force Parliament to close because of security threats. Should it be taken seriously? Should we take serious measures at all levels?

● (1900)

Mr. Denis Trudel: Madam Speaker, of course we should. However, there are provisions in the Criminal Code that can help us do it. We do not need an act like the one we are discussing tonight.

We are aware of the situation. In the United States, Donald Trump sends funding across the globe. His influence extends to many countries, and it is considerable. We absolutely must fight back against that.

However, we already have the tools to do that. We do not need the Emergencies Act to fight this. We have done it before, perhaps we have to fight a little harder now, and we will do so in the future as well.

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to start by commending my colleague from Longueuil—Saint-Hubert for his passionate speech and, more importantly, for finally agreeing to share his time with me.

It is with great concern that I rise today to participate in this historic debate. I would like to begin with a quick question. How do my colleagues feel when they see the images of the charging horses and the confrontations that have been playing on a loop on television for hours now?

Personally, I am wondering how we got to this point. I know that I am not the first one to say it, and that many of my colleagues have already talked about this, but I want to reiterate that we are still against applying the Emergencies Act across Canada.

First of all, I want to remind members that I have a degree in applied policy studies from the Université de Sherbrooke, which has helped make me a staunch democrat. I cannot help but wonder and worry about the message that the government is sending with the use of this measure, which undermines our democratic system.

Second, I will address the risk of radicalization, and third, I will talk about respect for jurisdictions and the demands of Quebec and the provinces and territories. One thing is certain, I will not be standing on a soap box, like some others have tried to do.

From the standpoint of democracy, we must ask ourselves whether this act really should have been invoked. In order to invoke the Emergencies Act, the government must demonstrate two things. First, it must demonstrate that a dangerous and urgent situation exists. Second, it must demonstrate that ordinary laws cannot adequately address the situation.

As to the first condition, yes, there is indeed a dangerous and urgent situation. That situation is limited to Ontario, however, and specifically to Ottawa. The Bloc Québécois is not against applying the act, but it should be applied only where there is an occupation, which did not happen in Quebec. I know other members have already made this point in the debate, but it is worth repeating: This use of this act is not to be taken lightly. Its application must therefore be measured and balanced.

Another thing that worries me is that a broader application of this law than necessary could set a dangerous precedent. At this point, I have a few more questions. For example, why is the Prime Minister determined to apply this law everywhere, especially when he him-

Statutory Order

self has said many times that it will not be used where it is not necessary?

The Prime Minister also stated, here in the House and in the supplementary documents pertinent to the motion, that he was concerned that other blockades would be set up elsewhere in Canada, particularly given the galvanizing effect of social media. As I will argue later, I believe that this legislation is actually one of the things fuelling support for protesters on social media.

No matter how hard I try to look at this issue from every angle, I simply do not see the real and imminent danger of the current situation in Ottawa happening elsewhere. Such historic legislation should never be invoked “just in case”.

I can only assume that the debate would be quite different if the motion had been limited to the province of Ontario. The government could have easily obtained a majority of votes in Parliament. The only reason we are here debating this now is that the government dragged its feet, as it has too often done since the beginning of its mandate.

This could have been addressed using ordinary legislation, with proper coordination and effective collaboration among police forces, as we have seen in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada. Why did the government not emulate what was done elsewhere in Canada and in Quebec before invoking the Emergencies Act?

Furthermore, if we look back a bit to try and see what we could have done, we will see that the Emergencies Act was not needed to settle the rail blockades of 2020, the Oka crisis, the crisis at Caledonia, the events of September 11, the COVID-19 pandemic or any other dispute in Canadian history.

Using the act too liberally or too broadly, or applying it needlessly, poses a real risk of sending the wrong message to the political class, and above all to Canadians.

The government has been aware of the facts for a long time now, since some protesters turned into occupiers who were here to stay. It simply continued to say that the responsibility of managing this crisis fell to the Ottawa police. On February 6, the City of Ottawa declared a state of emergency and, the very next day, the Ottawa police asked the province and the federal government for reinforcements. That was more than 12 days ago.

● (1905)

The Bloc Québécois wanted constructive action from the start. If the government had listened even just a little bit, if it had truly wanted to show political leadership, and if it had sat down at the table with representatives, if it had established a plan to intervene or simply helped come up with a plan, we probably would not be here.

I was listening to a constitutional expert this morning. He explained quite clearly that we already had the means to intervene. The highway safety code, the City of Ottawa bylaws, the Criminal Code and a tripartite collaboration would have allowed the different police services to coordinate in order to reinforce existing laws.

Statutory Order

The declaration of the state of emergency in Ontario by the Ford government on February 11 had already given significant powers to the Ottawa police and the provincial police. Again, the federal government should have realized that, but instead it decided to bury its head in the sand and hide when the situation was serious.

At this time it seems that the blockades might be over before the Emergencies Act is implemented. We therefore cannot really link the act to the end of the blockades.

What is more, each crisis includes a risk of radicalization. Obviously, we hope that everything will end without violence, but we are also aware that as the number of protesters decreases, the closer we get to the hard core, even extremist, group. These are very likely people who have nothing to do with the spirit of the January 29 protest. The remaining participants in the crowd are increasingly unstable and unpredictable. We are right to wonder what ideas the occupiers will leave with, because they currently feel emboldened by their supporters and have financial backing. We have seen how well organized they are.

This summer, I was reading a book about the new age of violent extremism and radicalization in western democracies entitled *Le nouvel âge des extrêmes? Les démocraties occidentales, la radicalisation et l'extrémisme violent*, edited by David Morin and Sami Aoun in collaboration with Sylvana Al Baba Douaihy. I am interested in this issue, especially since it was studied last spring at the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, of which I am the vice-chair, and the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security, where I have participated as a substitute. The tone is set from the first paragraph of the introduction, and it has informed my arguments on the effects of the Emergencies Act, which runs the risk of throwing fuel on the fire. In his book entitled *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth History 1914-1991*, published in 1994, Eric John Hobsbawm wrote that the century was not ending well. You do not need to be a prophet of doom to recognize that the 21st century is not off to a much better start.

In the last two decades we have seen a wave of Islamist terrorists, several civil and international conflicts, millions of victims and displaced people, a major migrant crisis, the rise of violent far-right populism and the acceleration of climate change. To this bleak portrait we must now add the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused a global health crisis.

Furthermore, Quebec said that it wanted nothing to do with this act. The protest held in Quebec's capital showed that problems can be prevented when there is strong political will. I want to commend law enforcement for their professionalism and for their exemplary responses. The question here is not so much about the Emergencies Act itself as it is about the reasons why the situation got to this point. The question answers itself.

I have one last thing to say. When I think of the Liberal government, the image that keeps coming to mind is of a firefighter arsonist. The Prime Minister has favoured the wait-and-see approach. He let the situation drag on and deteriorate but did nothing. True to form, he stood by and watched it all happen. He also insulted and dismissed the protesters by tarring them all with the same brush. Now, he has invoked the Emergencies Act to make it seem that he

is putting out the fire he himself started, but instead he is adding fuel to the fire, stoking the flames of hate and division.

● (1910)

[English]

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, but I am going to take strong disagreement with one point that she and her party have made repeatedly in today's debate, which is that there is no crisis.

I think we are in agreement that the blockades still exist outside the chamber, so in Ottawa there clearly is a problem. We know that on February 14, the declaration was put into force. On February 16, we know that in Windsor, there was an attempted resurrection of the blockade, which was thwarted successfully, which was great, but reports are showing that even today the Surrey border is again being closed on account of blockades. Clearly, the protest continues and the problem has not been resolved.

Does the member opposite agree that indeed these tools are required in order to address what is clearly a national problem that must be regulated in order to ensure that the economic security, territorial integrity and the sovereignty of our borders are not compromised by unlawful and illegal blockades?

[Translation]

Ms. Andr  anne Larouche: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

I think I have demonstrated in my speech that this is not a national crisis, but one that is limited to Ottawa.

Elsewhere, such as in Quebec City, the crises that occurred were resolved, because there was co-operation. Right now, both the police and the governments have all the tools that they need to act. In Quebec City, there was coordination between the Quebec department of public security and the mayor, who had the political will, who showed leadership, and who warned protesters that unruly behaviour would not be tolerated. There was none, because there was coordination with the Quebec City police. This was also the case elsewhere, in different places, and in different positions.

The necessary tools were available, and the Emergencies Act was not. All it does is add fuel to the fire and feed hatred and division.

[English]

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member for Shefford spoke thoughtfully about how we got here. She alluded to comments the Prime Minister made, casting a broad brush to all of the folks who came to Ottawa and the millions of Canadians who supported them.

Would she agree that the Prime Minister, had he tried to extend an olive branch, listen and engage in dialogue, it could have at least turned down the temperature, but instead, the Prime Minister escalated the situation?

[Translation]

Ms. Andr  anne Larouche: Madam Speaker, indeed, I addressed this issue.

The Prime Minister should not have been acting like a political commentator, making inappropriate comments. He should have acted like a political leader, led an all-party committee to get everyone around the same table, and come up with a peaceful solution.

All he accomplished by doing that, as I said, was to make the situation worse. That is typical of him. We saw it with the Wet'suwet'en crisis. The Prime Minister has this tendency to let things drag on and let crises escalate, hoping that everything will magically resolve itself.

That is not how things work. We need a leader who can bring people together to find solutions in a crisis.

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague just mentioned this, but I wanted to give her a chance to elaborate.

When there is a crisis, everyone needs to do some soul-searching to make sure that it is not too late to do the right thing.

I have to wonder whether the protesters became entrenched because they were egged on by certain politicians and also by the words of the Prime Minister, which made people feel abandoned, unimportant and shunned from society.

I would like my colleague to talk about that, but also about how everyone, on both sides of the House, has some soul-searching to do.

Ms. Andr  anne Larouche: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Beauport—Limoilou for her important question.

As politicians, we definitely needed to listen to the different voices that were heard loud and clear during the protest. This was not about commenting, taking sides or taking a stand. Our goal was to bring the various parties together.

My colleague talked about the lessons we can learn from all of this. What we need to remember is that we need to listen, but more importantly, that we need to bring everyone together, for example, through the all-party committee we talked a lot about.

We could have brought many people together, held—

• (1915)

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mend  s): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Banff—Airdrie.

Mr. Blake Richards (Banff—Airdrie, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thought that we lived in a democracy in Canada, but in a democracy, the government cannot suspend people's rights, freeze people's assets or seize their bank accounts just because they disagree with them. That is what we are seeing today. That is what we are seeing with the application of the Emergencies Act.

That is why, when we vote on this on Monday night, I will be opposing this completely unwarranted infringement on the rights and freedoms of Canadians, and I will do so for three reasons.

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The first is the government failed to understand why this is happening. The second is the government failed to know what to do about it. The third is, most importantly, the government has absolutely failed to provide any legitimate justification for this unprecedented overreach.

I will start with the last reason, because we need to talk about what is required to justify the use of the Emergencies Act. Using the Emergencies Act demands a true threat to national security, such as the threat of violence for the purpose of achieving a political, religious or ideological objective, or the overthrow of the constitutionally established system of government in Canada.

We have the government arguing to invoke legislation that is designed for things like a foreign invasion, a civil war or a terrorist attack. I ask, is this a civil war? Is it a terrorist attack? Is it a foreign invasion? It would be very difficult for anyone to argue that it is any of those things.

It is also required under the act that something needs to seriously threaten the ability of the Government of Canada to preserve the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of Canada. Notice the importance of the word "and". It would require that all of those things, the sovereignty of this country, its security and its territorial integrity, to be threatened, and the Government of Canada to feel that its ability to preserve those things would be impossible without its use.

Can it really be argued that our territorial integrity and sovereignty as a country are at risk here? Again, we are not talking about a foreign invasion or a terrorist attack. We are talking about illegal acts that are happening. People are blocking streets and roadways, and that is clearly illegal. It needs to end, but it does not constitute the need for the use of the Emergencies Act.

One of the things we can do to look at the reasons why this is not justified is to look at some of the other examples of situations where this act has not been warranted and has not been applied. I have heard lots of talk about disruption of daily life in Ottawa. I have heard lots of talk about potential threats of violence. That has been littered throughout a lot of the speeches that we have from Liberal and NDP members to try to justify their voting for the use of this act.

If we use that as the barometer, think about the 2010 G20 summit in Toronto. In that instance, we had 10,000 protesters. We had police cars that were flipped over and set on fire. We had millions of dollars of damage to local businesses and we 97 police officers were injured. Despite all of that, the use of the Emergencies Act was not warranted. I am not arguing that it should have been. There are other ways to deal with situations like that. The Emergencies Act was not used in that situation, so the arguments that we are hearing about these disruptions of daily life and things like that are pretty flimsy.

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Think about 9/11, in 2001. That is the very definition of terrorism. Airspace was restricted. All flights in and out were cancelled. There was fear. I remember people saying things to me like, “Is this the beginning of the third world war?” and “Is this the end of the world as we know it?” Those were the kinds of feelings that people had at the time. I hear lots of people talking about being afraid of this situation, but it certainly does not compare with the fear that many felt then. I am not suggesting that the Emergencies Act was needed at that time either, but it tells us that it is probably not required in the situation that we are in today.

• (1920)

I have heard lots of arguments on the effects on the economy and critical infrastructure being blocked, things like rail lines, highways, border crossings and so on. I think the best comparison, looking at that kind of a situation, is when there were very similar types of blockades going on two years ago, pipelines and railway blockades that were going on across the country. Those went on for a few weeks at that time as well. All of those same arguments that are being made now, to justify the use of this act, could have been made had the decision been to use the Emergencies Act then. Again, I am not suggesting that it should have been used.

At that time, the Prime Minister said that we are a country that recognizes the right to protest, and we will ensure that everything is done to resolve this through dialogue and constructive outcomes. His aboriginal affairs minister at the time said we needed to ensure that we get to a peaceful solution that involved dialogue. I do not hear any discussion of trying to find a way to do that, to have a peaceful solution, to find dialogue. I actually believe that in this case, had there been some sort of dialogue with the folks who came with concerns to Ottawa, had there been some way to address those concerns, we probably would have seen this come to a very quick resolution. If I have time, I hope to speak to that in a moment or two.

I want to also raise an issue. There are many speeches I heard today and otherwise that claimed there is some threat to Parliament and, therefore, to our democracy. Yes, there is proximity to the Parliament. I have not seen anyone try to storm into the Parliament buildings. I have not seen any of those kinds of actions take place. They are here to make a point and, yes, there is an illegal nature to what has been going on. I absolutely make it very clear that I do not condone illegal acts, whatever the point that someone is trying to make.

It was in 2014 when Corporal Nathan Cirillo was killed at our National War Memorial by an armed attacker who then stormed our Parliament. Nobody suggested using the Emergencies Act at that time either. I am not suggesting that should have done at that time, but that was a far bigger threat to our Parliament and to our democracy than what we are seeing today.

We have a government that really fails to understand why this is all happening. It has its reasons as to why it is happening. Why it is happening is because people are sick and tired. They are frustrated. They do not see the justification for some of the things that the government is doing. We can debate all we want whether it is appropriate to engage in illegal acts. It clearly is not, in order to make that point.

There are many people in this country. Many people supported the convoys and the blockades, and they may have given \$50. They are tired of lockdowns, mandates and restrictions. Is it really fair to argue that someone who had no idea that there would be any kind of illegal activity taking place should have their bank account seized or their assets frozen because they gave 50 bucks, mostly because they are just tired of COVID restrictions?

The government does not have a right to make decisions like this just because it disagrees with someone's point of view. The government failed to act on it when it could have. We gave it the opportunity to end mandates or, at least, bring forward a plan to end all the federal mandates and restrictions. Had it done that, it would have been following in the footsteps of many provinces and many other countries. It would have been following the science and evidence, and what it shows.

The government chose not to do that. Instead, it has caused more fear and more division in this country. People are afraid. I have heard from many people who are scared because they gave maybe \$50 or \$100 to some of these efforts. The government is refusing to tell those people whether their bank accounts will be seized. That causes fear. That causes division, and that causes disunity. The government should be ashamed of itself for taking this step. I will be opposing it all the way.

• (1925)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member said that all the Prime Minister needed to do was to engage in dialogue and we could have come to a peaceful resolution with the occupiers outside while his premier, Jason Kenney, did not engage in dialogue at the Coutts crossing. The premier of Ontario, Doug Ford, did not engage in dialogue. The premier of Manitoba did not engage in dialogue at the blockade there.

I am curious. Can the member comment on whether it is just Liberal leaders who need to engage in dialogue, or does the member not see the hypocrisy in his statements?

Mr. Blake Richards: Madam Speaker, let us talk about hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is the Prime Minister's statements in 2020 compared with his statements now. They are very similar types of situations. Blockades were happening that were going on for weeks. They were across the country and were blocking critical infrastructure. These are all the arguments we are hearing today for why this act is required. The Prime Minister, at that time, said that we should “resolve this through dialogue and constructive outcomes”.

We offered an opportunity to the government. We could have had a constructive outcome by ending the federal mandates and restrictions in order to make sure that the many other Canadians who feel the same concerns but are not part of any kind of illegal protest could see the end of them as well. That would have been the opportunity to have a constructive outcome. This is hypocrisy. The Prime Minister is full of it.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to pick up on the idea of doing some collective soul-searching. Far be it from me to be preachy here, given that I too can be something of a character at times.

Knowing that certain protesters said dangerous things that were downplayed by some people and blown out of proportion by others, I would urge everyone to beware of extremes and find a way to avoid going there as we do that soul-searching.

[English]

Mr. Blake Richards: Madam Speaker, that is a very fair statement. We all want to see extremes avoided. Certainly, I want to make it very clear that nobody condones illegal activity when it is taking place. With regard to the folks who are engaged in it, action needs to be taken to ensure that it is not being allowed to happen.

At the same time, the invocation of the Emergencies Act does not have a justification. Talk about an extreme. Invoking the Emergencies Act is a very extreme measure to take, and I have not seen a shred of anything that would show me a justification for invoking it. For the government to give itself the ability to seize bank accounts—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Vancouver Kingsway.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague says he has difficulty seeing what basis there might be for the Emergencies Act, so I want to put some of the facts to him: a serious border closure at the Ambassador Bridge, jeopardizing \$330 million in trade a day and a threat to Canada-U.S. trade; interruptions to Canada's auto industry and our manufacturing sector in the Golden Horseshoe; a cache of weapons and murder conspiracy charges in Coutts, Alberta; a blockade of streets in Ottawa for three weeks, shutting down many businesses in our nation's capital; harassed and threatened citizens; undercover intelligence revealing plans to expand the blockade to ports and airports; an openly published manifesto calling for government change; foreign interference and funding in our domestic affairs; far-right involvement; threats to towing companies and drivers; and the use of trucks and tractors as blockade weapons.

Does my hon. colleague really think none of those facts are relevant to an honest assessment of whether the Emergencies Act is triggered? Does he think there are no facts present in Canada that might warrant such an examination?

Mr. Blake Richards: Madam Speaker, a lot of things the hon. member listed are of concern. They are of great concern and they need to be dealt with. However, there is a very high bar for using the Emergencies Act and it certainly has not been met. We are not talking about threats to the sovereignty of the country and we are not talking about foreign invasions, things that would ordinarily be requirements for this.

The hon. member mentioned one thing that I want to touch on briefly: foreign funding. There has been a lot of talk about foreign funding, and I have raised this many times in Parliament and in committees. The fact is that many times it is used to try to block critical infrastructure in this country, like pipelines. Where was—

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● (1930)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Beauce.

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Lehoux (Beauce, CPC): Madam Speaker, as I rise in the House today, I feel sad and disappointed. This week, for the first time since it was enacted, the Emergencies Act was invoked by the Prime Minister. This is a historic event.

Over the past three weeks, the Prime Minister has taken no significant steps to de-escalate the protests across the country or to use every other tool available to him. Instead, he went straight to extreme measures.

For more than three weeks, the government just sat there while blockades shut our borders and other important infrastructure down. The government remained silent, demonizing peaceful protesters by tarring them all with the same brush, while Canadians came out in droves just to make themselves heard. The Prime Minister lacks the compassion to even listen to people he disagrees with. Such conduct is not befitting the leader of a country.

Many of these people are our neighbours, our fellow citizens, Canadians who want to be heard and be granted a modicum of respect from their Prime Minister. The Prime Minister decided that, because he did not agree with them and did not like their opinions, he would not listen to them. At every opportunity, the Prime Minister stigmatized, marginalized and divided Canadians.

Why did the government jump straight to this extreme measure without first doing something to take the pressure off? No government should resort to the kinds of extreme measures set out in the Emergencies Act without exhausting all other options.

We asked the government to publicly commit to a clear plan and timetable for lifting federal government mandates and restrictions. The Liberals and NDP refused to support our motion, and instead, the Prime Minister sought to gain even more power.

This comes at a time when nearly all provincial governments have announced plans to lift COVID-19 restrictions. Many provinces have expressed their frustration with the Prime Minister's actions. They do not want the federal government to impose the Emergencies Act in their areas of responsibility.

Just as the trucking industry made it clear that it was never consulted about the government-imposed mandates, the provinces and territories do not appear to have been consulted in this case either.

Our country seems to be turning more and more into a dictatorship. Unfortunately, to no one's great surprise, the NDP is once again supporting the current government by forming a coalition that is dividing our country.

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My office has been inundated with messages from citizens who are very worried about the government's ongoing extreme policies. My staff is having a great deal of difficulty responding to the huge volume of calls and emails about this issue.

The fact is that Canadians simply want to see a light at the end of the tunnel. We are all tired, as several colleagues mentioned earlier, yet this government and its NDP ally do not seem to want to set goals for reopening, which I think is deplorable.

As we know, the Conservative Party is the party of law and order. We believe that the illegal blockades must end quickly and peacefully.

● (1935)

However, the Prime Minister's actions could have the opposite effect. Almost all the protesters have been dispersed, but the Prime Minister believes that this is the time to fan the flames and further divide this country.

We must come together, despite our differences, for the good of our country. I would like the Prime Minister to recognize this.

The measure we are debating today is an excellent example of this Prime Minister's lack of leadership. It is his way of covering up his mistakes and those of his ministers. Rest assured that Canadians and the rest of the world are watching us.

I spent many years working as a representative in my community. I have served the people of Beauce for more than 20 years. The greatest skill I have learned over the years, and the most important quality for a politician, is the ability to listen. I have always taken the time to listen to people's concerns and to have meaningful debates over coffee at a restaurant or at the corner store.

This Prime Minister is so out of touch with reality that he does not take the time to speak with ordinary Canadians. He is not interested if there are no cameras around.

Our country must reassess its true values and question whether this Prime Minister is the right person to lead it. After calling an unnecessary election to get more power, this government formed another minority government. The Prime Minister keeps saying that Canadians made a clear choice by re-electing him. However, he seems to forget that for the second consecutive election, it was the Conservatives who won the popular vote.

Of course, the Prime Minister will never acknowledge the fact that he received fewer votes than the official opposition. The reality is that the Liberals have the NDP in the palm of their hand. I think it is shameful that the NDP continues to add fuel to the fire along with the Prime Minister.

As I rise to speak today, I wonder why we cannot allow the police and the powers already in place to do their job, while we do ours in the House by passing and debating bills to improve the lives of Canadians. People in my riding cannot even get adequate cellular coverage. They cannot reach Service Canada by phone when their employment insurance or guaranteed income supplement is cut, or when they are victims of fraud. They cannot bring the temporary foreign workers into Canada they so desperately need to fill important jobs and run their businesses.

While we in the House debate the failures of this Prime Minister and his cabinet, my constituents continue to pay the price for this incompetence.

In conclusion, I will vote against this motion, as will all of my Conservative Party colleagues, since I do not think that what our country is experiencing right now warrants the use of such powerful measures. We have been through more than two years of a global pandemic and many protests have subsided. Now is not the time to lose our country's trust by taking such drastic measures against our own people.

I urge all of my colleagues here to think long and hard about how they will vote on this motion. I remind them that their constituents are watching.

I would be happy to take questions from my colleagues.

● (1940)

[*English*]

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased that my constituents will be watching how I vote. I am quite looking forward to that.

The hon. member referenced the notion that we should let the police do their job. I take note that since this legislation was tabled on Monday, the police have been enabled to do their job. When I walked here this afternoon, I needed a police escort to get across Wellington Street. Since that time, the police have cleared Wellington Street and are on the way to clearing the rest of the side streets, so the legislation has enabled the police to do their job.

I would be interested in the hon. member's reasons for resistance to the legislation, which actually enables the police to do their job.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Lehoux: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

I did say that the police have done their job here and all across Canada. We have said that many times today.

In Quebec, law enforcement intervened two weeks ago. They managed to take control of the situation without the Emergencies Act. Today was no different.

The question we should be asking ourselves is the following.

Did we use all available means, such as police forces or the powers granted to them, to do what was needed, as was done in many other provinces?

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his very enlightening speech.

Earlier, my Liberal colleague referenced the theatre in response to my colleague's unsuccessful attempt to find the crisis here. Personally, I think the Prime Minister is the one who is hard to find.

In my opinion, the real theatre we are seeing here is the government's decision to invoke the Emergencies Act in an attempt to hide its own incompetence.

What does my colleague think about that?

Mr. Richard Lehoux: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent question.

It certainly does feel like we are in a play, simply because the Prime Minister and the government have never made use of all the resources available to Canada's police forces. Perhaps this is a way for him to hide his incompetence.

I listed many problems that Canadians would rather we dealt with, instead of debating a bill that is of no use to us at present.

[English]

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, Ottawa police have expressed concerns around the significant amount of foreign funding supporting this occupation. This is foreign funding that is being funnelled into Canada, often anonymously, supporting a movement that clearly states the goal of overturning government. These funds have been used to push forward an agenda of hate disguised as a peaceful protest, with many joining this cause being unaware of or perhaps ignoring the actual intentions of the organizers. Could the member agree that the lack of government leadership has led us here and that the Emergencies Act will provide us with what is required to finally help people?

[Translation]

Mr. Richard Lehoux: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her question.

In Canada, we already have rules that allow us to monitor these things. Nobody has convinced me that passing special legislation would toughen any of the existing rules.

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, we are told that some demonstrators were planning to overthrow the government. I just had a look around outside and was able to see the state of things.

I would like the member to tell me one thing: Of the zero trucks parked outside, how many are planning to overthrow the government?

• (1945)

Mr. Richard Lehoux: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his excellent question.

I took the time to look out the window. Like my colleague, I see that there is nothing much left to do any overthrowing. We are here to debate the situation, and we will be debating it until early Monday evening. I wonder why we are doing this, because most of the work to dismantle the protests that have taken place across Canada was done before the act—

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Resuming debate, the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I wish I could say I am thankful to be debating this important legislation. However, many of us in this place have spoken about the fact that this is not necessarily a day of

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legislation that we are particularly happy about. In fact, I am disappointed that we are in a situation in this country where we are actually [*Technical difficulty—Editor*]

That said, it is incredibly important to be debating something we are seeing right outside the doors of our House of Commons. Previous members who raised questions and comments talked about how the trucks have cleared and that there is no need to be invoking the Emergencies Act. It is almost as if the members do not realize that it is because the Emergencies Act was invoked that those trucks have cleared.

The member said that when he looked out the window, he did not see those trucks. In fact, the police and the measures to clear those very streets came forward because of the legislation we are debating now.

Normally when we debate legislation in this place, we all make assumptions and discuss the intentions, or the opposition raises concerns of what might happen or what might come as a result of the legislation. We are in a unique situation today, because right outside the doors of the House of Commons we are seeing the implementation of this act in real time. There will be lots of dialogue and lots of looking into what happened and what went wrong to bring us to this place. However, anyone who suggests that the government and the Prime Minister woke up one day and just invoked this act that was never needed clearly has not been in Ottawa for the last three weeks. They must not have been watching the news for the last two days, seeing the impact of this act being implemented on the streets.

I am grateful to the police forces that have come and are moving these people back and out of this community, out of this city, because it has not been a safe place for many of our staff and for many of the business owners around Parliament in the downtown core and in the surrounding neighbourhoods. The people of Ottawa have been terrorized for three weeks. They have felt unsafe living in their own homes, in their own communities. I have seen reports and interviews with persons with disabilities who had food insecurity because they were unable to go to a grocery store or have food delivered because they lived in an area where the so-called protesters had occupied the streets. They could not access transit.

Somehow, the Conservatives were saying that there was nothing to see here. The Conservatives were too busy trying to court the votes of those very people in the streets who were wreaking havoc not just on Parliament but on Canadians who live in this city.

It is incredibly naive for the Conservatives to say that these people were just peaceful protesters. I have no doubt in my mind that there were some individuals who came here thinking it was really just about vaccine mandates or who were upset with what was happening with COVID. However, the organizers themselves had been stating their intentions for weeks prior to coming to Ottawa. Anyone suggesting that they did not know was simply not paying attention or trying to rewrite history.

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● (1950)

The organizers who came to Ottawa, who wanted this convoy to take over the streets of Ottawa, made it very clear that they were coming to Ottawa to overthrow the democratically elected government and instead put in its place a committee of their choosing. I did not know in what world I would ever see the Conservative Party sit around and defend a group of people who planned to overturn the entire Parliament. By the way, that also meant the seats of those Conservatives who now stand up and defend these individuals, and who could discount the very votes of Canadian citizens who elected all of us to this place.

Just six months ago, there was a democratically held election, one that the Conservatives said was unnecessary. They were happy to continue with the Prime Minister in place. However, our government felt that an election was needed for the very reason of talking to Canadians to put forward a platform about how to move forward next when it comes to COVID and post-COVID. The vast majority of Canadians supported political parties that put in place strong mandates around vaccination. They did so because we all knew that the only way out of this pandemic was through vaccination.

Every step of the way, the Conservatives flip-flopped on issues pertaining to COVID. I will give some examples.

At the beginning of the pandemic, the Conservatives complained and screamed and said that we would never have vaccines in this country until 2030. Obviously that was not true. Then the Conservatives screamed and demanded that we close the borders. When borders closed and there were restrictions placed on travel, the Conservatives said to open those borders.

As we loosened restrictions and the pandemic changed, Conservative premiers such as Doug Ford produced graphics. Do members remember the blood map of the pandemic and the spread of the disease? Then Conservatives at the federal level did not know what to do because a Conservative premier was saying to close the borders while they were screaming to open the borders, so they got really confused on borders at that time.

As vaccines became more and more available to all Canadians, and we were encouraging everyone to get vaccinated, Conservatives realized that their base might not want to get vaccinated. All of a sudden, the party of limiting a woman's right to choose was now the party of "my body, my choice". The irony was not lost on me, as a member who stood in the last session to defend the rights of women to those Conservatives who felt that legislators should determine the health care of women.

Then, Conservatives were no longer advocating for vaccinations, saying that we do not need vaccinations, that we just need rapid tests. Well then, last week, we all heard in the House the Conservatives say there was no point to tests, that we were good, and that COVID is over in their eyes. Therefore, they voted against rapid tests. I also want to point out that even the former leader and member for Durham put in vaccine mandates during his campaign for anyone travelling and in his vicinity, but felt that the rest of Canadians did not need that same level of protection.

When it comes to Conservatives and this pandemic, the last thing they have done is follow the evidence and the science. Every step

of the way, they have followed the politics that they have felt would be most advantageous to themselves.

● (1955)

I am frustrated with COVID. I cannot imagine a Canadian or probably anyone around the world who is not frustrated with this pandemic. However, the answer to the pandemic is not to take the Conservative approach of flailing in the wind and doing whatever felt good in the moment. If that was the case, we would see significantly more people sick, significantly more people mourning the death of a family member and we would see our hospitals overrun with stress. Our health care workers who have been true heroes in this pandemic would have been stretched even further to the limits.

I want to get back to the Emergencies Act and why we are here. There is something I find most appalling as I have listened to this debate. There are very real debates that we should have about COVID policies, and where to move next. That is healthy in any democracy and I welcome those conversations.

However, we are seeing in the streets of Ottawa and in border communities across this country that somehow this debate about COVID policies has turned into whoever can yell the loudest, whoever can use the biggest trucks to block roads and whoever can intimidate and harass should dictate the policy of this government or any government. In what world does that represent democracy?

In a democracy, we can have a debate. In a democracy, members are duly elected and represent the government. We have votes. Throughout the course of this debate and last week as we were discussing the various things happening across this country, I heard multiple times, including this evening, the Prime Minister being referred to as a dictator. People are saying that we are living under a tyrannical government, an authoritarian government. It has sickened me to hear this type of language.

The irony has not been lost on me that while members sitting in this place have screamed out that the Prime Minister is a dictator, they do so from their seat in the House of Commons, which they were duly elected to hold. In what other dictatorship do we have democratically free elections? People are suggesting that they are not free, that they do not live in a democracy, and that there is not a variety of viewpoints and debate taking place.

It was also not lost on me that as members screamed and cried about dictatorship in this country, later in the evening we held votes on legislation. For example, we held one vote on measures for seniors, which my friend the Minister of Seniors brought forward. It passed unanimously. In what dictatorship do we hold debates and free votes?

The rhetoric coming from the Conservative Party is damaging. Frankly, I think there are some members who say it to get a rise out of the protesters and to get good clips because they think it will make for better fundraising or make their base happy. Other members, probably even on the Conservative side, are uncomfortable with that. I am sure they have seen the impacts of true dictatorships and authoritarian governments, and I am sure they are not thrilled by some of the rhetoric coming from their own members.

What I saw last week during question period was members of the Conservative Party rip off their masks in anger and scream at the Prime Minister that he was a dictator. Again, it is not lost on me, but they did so inside the House of Commons, which they were elected to in a democratic election. It really makes me wonder if they even understand the irony in the words they are using, if they truly understand their meaning or if they come from such a place of privilege that they have lost all sense of reality.

• (2000)

Many members, particularly on the Conservative side, have said that this is a peaceful protest, that these are just regular Canadians getting together and demonstrating because they disagree with the government. I fully support the right to protest in this country and the right to dissent in this country. They are a fundamental part of our democracy. If everyone agreed, that would not be a healthy democracy.

However, what I find so interesting is some of the actions by these so-called peaceful freedom fighters that the Conservatives love to defend. They have assaulted people in Ottawa for wearing masks. They have harassed employees of local businesses, so much so that businesses have had to close for three weeks. There was an attempted arson and the doors were handcuffed shut so that if a fire started, people would be burned alive inside the building. I have watched journalists being assaulted and harassed live on TV. There were 911 call centres flooded to disrupt emergency services. A bike was thrown at a police horse yesterday in an attempt to injure it. Protesters tried to take police weapons yesterday. Today protesters lit and threw gas canisters at the police. There were bomb threats at the Ottawa Hospital.

I am sure I have missed some of the acts, but the federal government has to uphold law and order anywhere across this country after acts like that and after three weeks of law enforcement telling people that they have been heard, that they have made their point and to go home because what they are doing is illegal. They ignored that and continued the violence. It is unacceptable and it is time for action. I do not think the Emergencies Act should ever be used lightly. The very debate we are having today is crucial to it. The committee oversight that will come from it is also crucial. I hope we as a country are never in this position again.

However, we are here and I will go back to the point of our democracy being threatened. It has been made very clear that foreign money has been influencing the actions of this convoy.

What really stood out for me through some earlier debates is when the member for Cumberland—Colchester said that he had been among the protesters, felt perfectly safe and did not really understand what the issue was. I am the duly elected member for the people of Pickering—Uxbridge. I will read a quote from a voice mail that I received at my Hill office the other day, which is, “Listen, you fucking cunt, you fucking bitch, we’re—”

• (2005)

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I know the hon. member is quoting, but that is unparliamentary language. I do not know how the member wants to deal with it. Maybe she could retract it and try again.

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The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Mr. Speaker, I recognize that was unparliamentary language and I apologize to those who had to hear it. I thought about editing those words, but that is a message that was left on my parliamentary office phone in an attempt to intimidate me in this vote, silence my voice and harass me. As uncomfortable as it is for some members to hear that language, that is the language and intimidation that these so-called freedom protesters have been using. It is unacceptable for any member to stand in this place and suggest that I, as a duly elected member, should have to feel that intimidation just because some members feel comfortable walking through the protesters. That I, doing my job to represent the people of Pickering—Uxbridge, am harassed and intimidated as a member of Parliament is outrageous and it is time for this to end.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I wonder. The parliamentary secretary said that these people in the streets were violent, but she has not walked through these streets herself. She quoted a very vulgar phone message using her vulgar language and said that it was one of those protesters.

If she has not walked through the crowd to see the demeanour of the people there, how does she know it was one of them who left a message on her phone?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Mr. Speaker, I have walked through the crowds. I have been sitting in the House for the last two weeks. I have heard the vulgar language. I have seen the behaviour.

By the way, to correct the member, it was not my vulgar language. It was the vulgar language that was being used to harass and intimidate duly elected members to try and scare us into voting for and allowing the bullying tactics of this loud group to somehow change the discourse on how policy is made. In a democracy, policy is not made through intimidation and harassment.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the parliamentary secretary asked whether anybody had realized that the trucks had been cleared since the emergency measures were invoked.

Did she realize that the Ambassador Bridge was cleared without the emergency measures? Did she not notice that the border in Alberta was cleared without the emergency measures and that weapons were actually seized there? Did she not realize that this means that the emergency measures are not needed to clear this up?

Finally, as the parliamentary secretary for intergovernmental affairs, did she realize that Quebec and seven out of ten provinces did not want this legislation?

*Statutory Order**[English]*

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that the Emergencies Act was not needed in other jurisdictions in this country, but it is very clear that it is needed here in Ottawa. The chief of police and the mayor of Ottawa have both said that the actions that have been taken in the past few days are as a direct result of the powers given by the Emergencies Act.

It will not be used in jurisdictions that do not need it, and I hope no other community, no other province or anywhere across this country has to be in a situation in which, for three weeks, its citizens feel unsafe to go to a grocery store, or that any other member of Parliament should be bullied and harassed, or that any citizen should be assaulted and have a mask ripped off their face. I hope that this measure does not need to be used elsewhere, but it is needed here, and I hope that member will reconsider his vote.

● (2010)

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for speaking the truth to her experience as an MP, as a woman among the 30% of women elected here, and also for sharing the experiences of constituents in her riding and the harassment that people have experienced here in Ottawa.

I am frustrated, as are many others, with being here today. However, I can tell the member that I am not frustrated that we are here debating the Emergencies Act. I am frustrated that occupiers have taken over the downtown core, which has resulted in us having to be here this evening to decide how best to move forward in response to these behaviours and this harassment in the downtown core. Many in my riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith are struggling to get by, and I can tell members that I would much prefer to be doing the work of supporting those constituents right now.

Can the member please share if she would agree that now is the time for action and to move forward to truly help those who have been left behind in this pandemic?

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Mr. Speaker, I agree. I am known to fight and to fiercely debate the issues. I would much rather be debating measures to get through COVID. I would much rather talk about the economy, and talk about our communities and what they need. We might not always agree, but the job of all of us is to be in this place and to push forward those issues.

I, too, am disappointed that this is what we are discussing here tonight, but at the same time, as my hon. colleague has pointed out, it actually shows the strength of our democracy. This has not been lost on me since I have been in Ottawa, and in the constituency as well. While those outside say they want to violently remove every single one of us and put us in jail for doing our jobs as elected representatives, the debate continues. We are not afraid. We have voted on important legislation, and our democracy is stronger than these threats.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I liked almost all of the member's speech. She sits on the defence committee with me, and I want her to comment on the violence of language. She and I have heard testimony recently about campaigns of misinformation and disinformation perpetrated by state actors and non-state actors. In my judgment, there is a direct correlation between the violence of language and that element of

intimidation. I would be interested in her thoughts connecting those two ideas.

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Mr. Speaker, I have thought a lot about this as a member of the defence committee, where we have heard about authoritarian governments around the world and the tactics being used by them. In the last session, I sat on the human rights subcommittee, and I heard from parliamentarians from truly authoritarian governments where there was exactly that. Language, intimidation and threats of personal harm and of being thrown in jail were used very specifically to create fear and to get rid of democratic institutions.

This is something we should be very mindful of. Foreign investment and funds to promote this should be something that all Canadians take very seriously—

The Deputy Speaker: There is time for a few more questions and comments.

The hon. member for Brantford—Brant has the floor.

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, far be it from me to offer any free legal advice to anyone in the House, particularly a colleague. However, given what she has experienced by way of the message of vitriol on her answering machine, I want to remind my colleague that this is what the Criminal Code of Canada is for. What she describes is intimidation. What she describes is uttering threats. There is no limitation period for those matters. She is free to contact the police and have an investigation commence.

However, the primary focus of my question is about what she and the Liberal government, particularly the Prime Minister, have indicated. Since it was common knowledge that the manifesto called for an overthrow of the Canadian government, why did the Prime Minister wait three weeks to act, instead of consulting with the RCMP and having the organizers charged with treason?

● (2015)

Ms. Jennifer O'Connell: Mr. Speaker, the confused messaging coming from the member is unbelievable. He sits here to deny support for the Prime Minister's use of the Emergencies Act to enforce the law and to have broader powers to ensure those who commit a criminal offence are held accountable. He somehow wants to rewrite the history of what has happened.

The government is acting with restraint within the charter, and the member should stand up for law and order. People in this country who disagree with the government do not get to then violently attempt to harass and intimidate to get change in that government. If they want a change in the government, they can vote. That is how we make change in democracies, not through harassment and violence.

The Deputy Speaker: I want to remind folks to keep their questions and answers shorter so that more people can get in. The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade wanted to ask a question, but we ran out of time.

I also want to make a quick comment about unparliamentary language. We need to try our best to not bring it forward.

There is a point of order from the parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Arif Virani: Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, there are rules about language in this chamber and those rules are appropriate when we are talking among ourselves through you. However, when we are making a citation that refers to the type of invective and vitriol being volleyed in people's direction in the context of this convoy—

The Deputy Speaker: No, I am looking at the Table just to make sure on this one. To use that kind of vulgarity is not parliamentary in this context. I can bring it up another time and we can talk about it, but in this particular case, I think it was one step a little too far.

Mr. Arif Virani: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order—

The Deputy Speaker: We are getting into debate. If the member wants to talk to me later on, we can do that as well.

Let us get back to the debate. The hon. member for Louis-Saint-Laurent.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Deltell (Louis-Saint-Laurent, CPC): Mr. Speaker, as we all know, Canada is grappling with a major crisis that is affecting all Canadian families.

This is the first time in over 30 years that inflation has hit 5.1%. This affects all Canadian families but, unfortunately, we are not here this evening to talk about something that is having a direct impact on all Canadian families. We are here to talk about an act this government wants to invoke. This act is unnecessary, the circumstances do not meet its criteria and it sets precedents that could end up hurting us in the future. Seven of the 10 provincial governments and seven of the 10 provincial premiers have rejected it. It is therefore not appropriate. The act I am talking about is the Emergencies Act.

This act was made almost 35 years ago and has never been invoked. I will explain why it has never been invoked, why it should not be invoked now and why the government has chosen to invoke it anyway. I will explain why, unfortunately, it has the Prime Minister's petty partisan fingerprints all over it.

Before getting to the matter at hand, I want to say two things. First, I want to thank the police forces who are keeping people safe here in Parliament, in Ottawa, and across the country with honour and dignity. I want to thank them. In the same breath, and I will immediately admit to my conflict of interest as a former journalist, I can only harshly condemn those who are attacking or intimidating journalists who are currently working in difficult circumstances. I am thinking of the miscreant who assaulted the TVA reporter last night. Like a coward he attacked her from behind. This situation is completely unacceptable and intolerable in our democratic life. Let us hope that the police forces can find this individual who acted in such an unacceptable manner.

Let us now talk about the Emergencies Act. The leader of the official opposition, our Conservative leader, was very clear when she said that we are the party of law and order and that we believe that

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the trucks must leave. That is the position of the Conservative Party concerning what is currently going on in Ottawa. Illegal blockades are not acceptable.

We have to remember that three weeks ago, when this all started, the first rally that took place was much less serious than people were saying. I am not the one saying this. I would like to quote a tweet from Radio-Canada, which is hardly a conservative organization. On January 30, the French CBC tweeted:

Slogans, dancing and fireworks: far from an insurrection, the thousands of people gathered in Ottawa protested in good spirits.

That is how Radio-Canada described the beginning of the protest that took place in Ottawa. Unfortunately, three weeks later, the protest has become an occupation and is no longer unacceptable. An illegal situation has no place in our system of law and order. There is no such thing as somewhat or partially illegal. Something is either legal or illegal. There are thousands of ways to express opposition to something. It is important not to deliberately choose the wrong way.

The Emergencies Act has existed since 1988. It has never been invoked or implemented by any government. As the Prime Minister of Canada says, it is not a law to be taken lightly. It is not the first, second or third option, but rather something to be used when the situation is extremely serious and important. That is what the Prime Minister said. Perhaps he should have reflected on his own words before he invoked the Emergencies Act. The Prime Minister has been asked the following every day: What were the first, second and third things he tried before invoking the Emergencies Act?

He is incapable of saying anything that even slightly resembles an answer to the question. That is the attitude of the Prime Minister.

The Emergencies Act does not even meet his own criteria. This act must be invoked only when there is a serious threat that keeps the government from functioning. Apart from yesterday, the House has always been able to sit. The Prime Minister—although I am not permitted to say it—was in the House and stood on this very floor to answer questions. The government continued to function. This act must be invoked only if we feel that our territorial sovereignty and integrity have been undermined. This has not been the case. Yes, there have been some problematic situations, which I will speak about later, but they have been dealt with using the ordinary laws we already have, without having to invoke the Emergencies Act.

The Prime Minister told the House that he had consulted with the premiers.

• (2020)

He did not actually consult the premiers. He informed them of his decision. That is why seven premiers, seven provincial governments, are opposed to this act.

The truth is that the current situation and what has been happening across Canada over the past few weeks can be dealt with under the existing laws, without the use of the Emergencies Act.

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The actions that the government is proposing to take under the act include freezing accounts and assets and directly interfering in people's bank accounts, which could be used for illegal purposes.

Immediate action can be taken under the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) and Terrorist Financing Act. We do not need the Emergencies Act. As for threats to Canada's sovereignty, direct action can be taken under section 83.01 of the Criminal Code without any need for the Emergencies Act.

Subsection 129(b) of the Criminal Code covers the much-talked-about situation with the tow trucks. It gives the police the right to ask anyone who does not have a reasonable excuse "to assist a public officer or peace officer in the execution of his duty in arresting a person or in preserving the peace".

The Emergencies Act, which includes such extreme measures, need not be invoked since subsection 129(b) of the Criminal Codes does the same thing. There is no need to use the act given that existing laws are already been applied.

In fact, the situation in Ottawa is unfortunately not unlike what has happened elsewhere in the country. We saw the same problems with blockades at the border in Coutts, Alberta; Emerson, Manitoba; Surrey, B.C.; and at the Ambassador Bridge in Windsor, Ontario. Those four crises were resolved using existing laws.

How were they resolved? In those areas, we saw real leadership, police forces helping one another to act directly, and a coordinated effort supported by politicians that led to action being taken.

Yes, in Coutts, weapons were discovered that that could worry everyone. When I myself saw this cache of weapons, I wondered what was going on, because it was dangerous. However, the weapons were discovered, and the people will be punished under existing laws without there being the need to resort to the Emergencies Act. We must be vigilant in that regard.

Members will recall that the War Measures Act was used for the last time in 1970. The now-repealed War Measures Act looked nothing like the act we are debating today. The new Emergencies Act was drafted by the Conservative government under the Right Hon. Brian Mulroney and introduced by the Hon. Perrin Beatty in 1988.

The Emergencies Act has never been invoked, even during major demonstrations at events like the G7; the G20; the Summit of the Americas, which I attended as a journalist; the Oka crisis; the COVID-19 crisis; and September 11. These extraordinary events could have been used as reasons to invoke the Emergencies Act, but it was not invoked.

The Liberal government, however, invoked this law over what has been happening in Ottawa. It did so because this government is unfortunately led by a Prime Minister who is, above all, guided by partisanship. This is nothing new.

I remind members that during the SNC-Lavalin scandal, the Prime Minister let partisanship take over when he stuck his nose into a legal matter. That is appalling.

The same thing happened with the National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg, when he did everything he could to prevent the truth from coming out and being available to everyone.

Remember that an election was called to bring in a vaccine mandate for public servants when there was no scientific advice on such a thing. The same thing happened with the truckers. There was no public health advice or scientific analysis to justify the vaccine mandate.

The government did nothing for 17 days before deciding to act. Curiously, on February 11, it said that everything was in place to act without invoking special legislation, but then on February 14, it decided to invoke the special legislation.

This is a Prime Minister who stigmatizes, divides and insults Canadians. These are not my words, but those of the Liberal member for Louis-Hébert. What Canadians need is real leadership and a prime minister who brings people together and unites them, not someone who stigmatizes people who do not think like him.

• (2025)

[English]

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments of the member opposite and his contributions to the chamber at all times. I politely point out to him that in terms of the crisis being ongoing, even today the blockade at the Surrey border in B.C. has been resurrected, so tools are still required by law enforcement around the country. That is the first point of clarification.

I am going to put something to the hon. member that I think is very significant, because we have heard this from other Conservatives, including the member for Haldimand—Norfolk, who said that "everyone" has the right to be heard.

What I would say to him is that I have a specific view that not everyone has a right to be heard in this context. People who are waving swastikas or Confederate flags, people who are leaving vitriol in the voice mail of other members of Parliament, people who are openly intimidating and threatening violence or people who are arming themselves at the border do not have a right to be heard.

Would the member opposite agree that in fact there is and should be limited appetite for engaging in dialogue with individuals who are part of the blockade seizing this nation?

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe that again a member from the government, from the Liberal Party, raises the famous story about the swastika. I will never accept any comment of that style from anybody in the House of Commons because everybody knows that all parliamentarians here, whatever they defend as a party, will never defend that.

The problem is that the Prime Minister—my Prime Minister, our Prime Minister—decided to politicize it. Shame on him and shame on this member.

• (2030)

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister had promised that the law would be applied in a limited way, and then he changed his mind and said that it was not possible. However, section 17(2)(c) of part II of the Emergencies Act says exactly the opposite.

If the Prime Minister had kept his word and followed the act, what would my colleague from Louis-Saint-Laurent and his party have thought about the invocation of the act?

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, I am wondering whether my hon. colleague, my neighbour from the Quebec City area, is a lawyer. I believe that many people have read the Criminal Code, the Civil Code and all of the laws that apply in Canada so as to be able to point out the following facts and reality: There is currently no need to use this act, which was passed in 1988 and has never been used.

As my Bloc Québécois colleague so eloquently put it a moment ago, the existing laws contain measures to deal with the problems that have been arising, whether it be here in Ottawa, at our borders, at the Ambassador Bridge or elsewhere. That is what they are there for. The law that the government is trying to impose on us today is not needed to deal with what is happening in Canada right now.

[English]

Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are kind members of Parliament on all sides of the House. The House is full of kind individuals, and there is none more kind than the member who has just spoken here, so I think it is absolutely regrettable that the Liberal and NDP strategy today has been to label every Conservative member of Parliament with the acts of a few individuals that we all unequivocally agree are unacceptable.

I will draw a parallel. Would it be fair to tag every single Liberal or Green or NDP member who cares about the environment with the actions that happened in Houston a couple of days ago, where 20 individuals wore masks, wielded axes and burned a vehicle with people in it? Would it be fair to tag everybody who cares about the environment in the House with the actions of those 20 individuals?

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, I know my hon. colleague is very passionate when we talk about fairness in politics. This is what we ought to do right now. When there is a crisis, I know it is not very easy, especially for me, to put aside any partisanship. However, folks, what we have to address today right now is a health crisis. If we want to work together, we need to put aside our partisanship and especially not make any *amalgames*, as we say in French.

Please work all together for all Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when indigenous people blocked the railways in 2020, my colleagues opposite demanded strong action from the government to put an end to the blockades, which they were quick to call illegal.

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However, now they think it is a good idea to take selfies with the protesters who are occupying Parliament Hill and who have been paralyzing the nation's capital for three weeks.

The member has one position when the protesters are indigenous and another when they are supported by white supremacist groups. Can he explain that discrepancy?

Mr. Gérard Deltell: Mr. Speaker, unlike the Liberal government, we never considered invoking the extreme measures act. The thought never even crossed our minds.

I would like to once again remind the member that this kind of dubious association is inappropriate, especially in such a delicate situation with security implications. Let us do our best to set partisanship aside, even though we may sometimes be tempted to go there.

I would remind the House that, during the crisis the member referred to, nobody on this side of the House suggested using the extreme measures act as the government is doing now.

• (2035)

[English]

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to be a member of Parliament here in Canada. It is an honour to represent the people of the riding of Prince Albert. I am going to do the best I can to do that here tonight as I talk about this emergency debate and the emergency measures that the government is calling for.

One thing that has been missing from this Parliament and from this debate is respect, respect all the way around for people, whether they are vaccinated or not. I think if we go back through time and look chronologically at what has happened and ask ourselves how we got to this point, lack of respect is the true factor.

I have talked to constituents, some vaccinated, some unvaccinated. The unvaccinated would come to me and tell me they were doctors who had been working 80 or 90 hours a week all through COVID, doing whatever they could, and then one day all of a sudden the government comes in and tells them they are no longer safe enough to be doctors. Not only that, the Minister of Employment comes in and tells them that they will not get employment insurance unless they get vaccinated. That is a problem. It could be a nurse and it is the same scenario. It could be someone working with elderly people and it is the same scenario. It could be a police officer and it is the same scenario. These people feel they have been forced or pushed into a corner where nobody would listen and nobody would show them respect. They were there for us in times of need, but now we as politicians need to listen to them and see how we can help them in their time of need.

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We actually approached the Liberal Party, the Minister of Transport, before the vaccine mandate for border crossing came into effect. We told them not to do it. The science does not prove it is a problem. We know it is not an issue. These guys are sitting in their trucks. They have been running across the border for the last two years and they are not bringing the virus in and out of Canada. It actually could create problems for supply chains, so why do it? The science does not say we need to do it, unless we want to force our will on somebody, which is what the current government was doing when it said we had to do it. There is no respect.

When people are pushed into a corner, when the lives of their families are at stake and they do not know what to do, what do members think will happen? How did we get to the stage we are at today? Do members think these people wanted to drive across this country to come to Ottawa? Did they want to spend thousands of dollars on diesel? Did they want to sit there and stare face to face with police officers, whom they showed the utmost respect for? Did they want to risk their reputation, knowing there would be undesirables who may join the group and they would have to self-regulate it and kick them out? Did they want to be here? They did not.

There were so many examples down the trail of this where, if the Prime Minister had shown some leadership and respect, this could have been stopped and prevented. It is really frustrating and maddening to see these protesters come here to Ottawa, a lot of whom we might see at a Riders' game, at a baseball game, at a hockey game. They are average Canadians who are at their wit's end, asking and screaming and crying for help. They do not know where to turn. That is 90% of the people who were in that crowd.

They were sitting there waiting to speak with the Prime Minister, but he would not speak to them, because he saw a swastika on the stage, which did not belong to them and they had asked that person to leave. However, he still refused to speak with them, calling them chauvinistic white supremacists, which inflamed the situation. Instead of sitting down with them to talk about their concerns and acknowledge that they are a good chunk of the population, he dug in his heels and showed more disrespect.

That is what created the problem. That is why they stayed for three weeks. That is why they did not leave a week later. If he had shown some respect and goodwill, taken the olive branch we gave him and put out a plan that would show that the mandates would end, a plan that would show that their families would have a future, based on science, we would not have what is going on today. There would be no need for the Emergencies Act. There would be absolutely no reason to use it. Even now there is not.

This morning, when I flew back home, I was at the Toronto airport and everybody is fleeing Canada. They are not fleeing because they are scared; they are going on a holiday, getting on with their lives, doing things, being active and out and about. There were families with children at the airport waiting to fly to their vacation destinations or across Canada to visit more family and friends, something they have not been able to do for two years. I came back to Saskatoon. There must be a serious crisis because these are emergency measures that have to apply right across Canada, yet there are kids snowmobiling in the ditch. Life is going on. Home Depot is busier than ever.

We look at that and ask ourselves where this crisis is. I turned on CBC News to see what happened today in Ottawa, and I saw law enforcement removing the protesters. Yes, they are pushing them back and everything, but everything they are doing is done using existing legislation. They did not need anything new to do what they are doing today.

• (2040)

One thing that is interesting, and something we need to draw attention to, is the finance minister and Deputy Prime Minister and her comments about how we are going to go after the money. I think a lot of people were really amazed that this group could raise so much money so quickly. One could say there was U.S. influence on it. There is no question about it. We could say that about any environmental protest, too.

The reality is they raised a whole pile of money in a short period of time. We all know money talks, and when we see that kind of money being raised, we know there are a lot of people supporting them in the background. We could say half of it came from the U.S., but still, if it is \$10 million raised in Canada in two weeks, which political party could ever do that? They would all dream about it. How did a group of truckers, nurses, doctors and farmers all of a sudden put together a fundraising mechanism to raise that kind of money? If this is not grassroots, I do not know what is.

Are there bad influences among that money? There probably are, no question about it. Are there people we should be worried about? Yes, there is no question about that. We should basically call these people out and make sure they are held accountable for their actions, no question about that, too.

However, does it require the Emergencies Act to do what we need to do? The answer is no, not unless we really want to scare people from donating money to any type of cause, not unless we want to make sure that we have shown the country that we have been gone for three weeks, but now we are actually here and we are going to do something: talk about overcompensation for lack of results and lack of effort.

This is another example of the Liberal government not reacting until something becomes a crisis. We have seen it in other situations. On the Canada-U.S. trade deal, the Liberals would not react until it became a crisis, and also on the U.K. trade deal. I know trade because that is the committee I sit on. The deal is expiring, and the Liberals are just saying maybe we should bring it in to be looked at.

The government is not proactive. If we did something beforehand, it could prevent a lot of problems, but no, they wait until it is a crisis and then they want to jump in and be the hero. It is dangerous. As we see right now, it is very dangerous. It produces zero results and there are no winners at the end of the day.

How do we get out of this? The police are doing their job, and I commend them for doing it. They would be doing it whether or not they had the Emergencies Act. If we had told the police to clear them out two weeks ago, they would have done it two weeks ago without the Emergencies Act.

Case in evidence is at the border crossings in Coutts and Windsor. They did not need the Emergencies Act to move those people out. They just sat down and talked to them, and negotiated a way to get them out and get them to move on. There are ways to move forward on this that would actually present the results we want to see.

I also want to highlight the fact that the government does not have the support of the provinces; seven out of 10 provinces do not agree with the government. The Liberals could say they consulted with the provinces and that is good enough. No, it is not good enough. When we hear Quebec saying not to implement it in that province, or in Saskatchewan or Alberta, why would we not listen to them? If they are saying to the Prime Minister that he has not met the threshold for that, why not take that advice? These are smart people who are elected by their populations also. They have a stronger mandate, I would say, because they have majority governments in their provinces, not a minority government.

When we look at that scenario, why would the Prime Minister not take a step back and say maybe we should not do this? It is because of his ego. He has been caught not doing anything and now he feels he has to do something. He is now overreaching and overcompensating, and Canadians are going to pay for it.

What he is doing is setting a very dangerous precedent. He is making it so that with any type of protest or action, any government today or in the future can look at Ottawa and say there were 170 people arrested there, so we can bring in the Emergencies Act and clamp down on everybody because of one protest. It does not meet the threshold.

Looking at my NDP colleagues, Tommy Douglas would never stand for this. Members can go back and read some of his comments when the War Measures Act was implemented in Quebec. If they are truly New Democrats, Tommy Douglas New Democrats, they would not be standing with their leader right now and voting in favour of this. They would actually say they cannot do this because it is not right.

If we are looking down the road at different union protests or strikes going on, what is going to prevent them from doing this at those protests or strikes? What are they really fighting for?

• (2045)

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I hope the hon. member finds this question entertaining.

There are places in Canada that did not need the Emergencies Act. Coutts, Alberta, was one, because after the police found some pretty awful elements with huge stashes of weapons, charging some of them with conspiracy to commit murder, what did the blockade do? Those good people in the blockade said, “This does not represent us. Let us go home,” and they did.

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Would the hon. member put the same advice to the people who overstayed their welcome by at least two weeks on Wellington Street in downtown Ottawa?

Mr. Randy Hoback: Mr. Speaker, we have to ask ourselves why they overstayed their welcome. Why did they stay there? When we have a Prime Minister who refuses to acknowledge they exist, who shows no respect, who has been basically thumbing them every time they turn around, and who is basically looking down his nose at them, why do we think they are mad? Why do we think they are angry?

I agree with the member's analogy of Coutts. He is right. When the people realized there were some undesirables infiltrating their group, they said they wanted nothing to do with it and they got out of there. Fair enough. I would say that is probably 90% of the people who are sitting there in Ottawa, too. The reality is that if we showed them respect, they would have worked their way out of it, but the Prime Minister refused to do that, and these are the results of it.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Mr. Speaker, we do not see eye to eye with the Conservative Party on a lot of things, but the Bloc Québécois believes that the fundamental role of the opposition is to monitor what the government does. Slips of the tongue can be quite revealing. Earlier today, the NDP member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke said something like, this act “gives us the power as a government” to take action.

I would like to know if, while I was away having dinner, the NDP merged with the Liberal Party. If not, I would like to know whether my hon. colleague feels that, by voting in favour of this act, the NDP is signalling that, come Monday when the convoy is gone, it will abdicate its fundamental role, which is to exercise oversight over government action.

[*English*]

Mr. Randy Hoback: Mr. Speaker, that is an interesting question in regard to the NDP. I am not in the NDP camp. I am not sure what is going on in the backs of their minds. Maybe we have to talk to a member of the NDP. I will say that the former NDP member for Regina—Lewvan said he could never support this type of act, and this is somebody who had been very heavily involved in the union world before his career as a member of Parliament. I think it comes back to the NDP having some soul-searching to do and having to wonder what the long-term ramifications are, and how the precedent-setting nature of this will have an impact on them in the future.

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Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague paints a picture of the blockade participants in Ottawa as 90% of the people we would see at our local arena or Costco. In 24 hours, there have been over 100 arrests, described as intense clashes with the police, of those who refused to leave the area. Ottawa police are accusing protesters of assaulting officers and attempting to remove officers' weapons. Blockade organizer Pat King asked demonstrators to walk to Parliament Hill, even though they were being asked to leave by police, and for trucks to jackknife in front of tow trucks. He also threatened to find out which companies drivers belonged to, accusing drivers of career suicide. Finally, interim Ottawa police chief Bell said today that the municipal, provincial and federal levels are all being used to conduct arrests, and that "without the authorities being provided to us by these various pieces of legislation, we would not be able to do the work we are doing today."

My hon. colleague has questioned the NDP's history. The Conservatives used to claim they were the party of law and order. They are now joining with the separatists and appear not to care about police who are being assaulted by protesters. How could he justify that?

Mr. Randy Hoback: Mr. Speaker, that is a pretty rich question, when we look at the member from the NDP. I am not getting in bed with the separatists at all. I agree on one issue with them: that this is reaching far and beyond. However, we are the party of law and order, and we have been very clear that we thought these protesters should have left earlier. In fact, if the member was in question period he would have heard our leader say that on more than one occasion. The reality is that the NDP is becoming a de facto Liberal Party, and they are just doing whatever their Liberal leader wants them to do. We are going to see that again in this vote.

• (2050)

Ms. Yvonne Jones (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Northern Affairs, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it makes me sad to rise to speak to the Emergencies Act that is before Parliament tonight because I wish that it was not needed in this country.

I want COVID to be over, and yes, we are getting to the end. I do not want to see mandates and masks any more than anyone else. However, we know that we are in a pandemic, and we have to make our way through that pandemic. I think all Canadians know that we are getting near the end.

I am very sad that in a country like Canada, which prides itself on its ability to uphold the rule of law, Parliament is being forced to bring forward such legislation, but we have all seen, in recent weeks, the ongoing occupation of border crossings and of cities and towns, businesses being forced to close, people living in fear in their own homes, our economy being interrupted, and people's lives being interrupted. The occupation in downtown Ottawa, the capital city of this country, over the past three weeks has been felt by Canadians right across the country. Many people expressed to me their concern for their families, for the people of Ottawa and for all Canadians.

I have heard many stories of people having to leave their homes in downtown Ottawa in order to have some peace, to feel safe, and

many others endured because they had no other option. I have heard so many stories from individuals and families who felt insecure in their own homes. They did not feel safe to go to work or to walk the streets. This is not a simple protest, as some of my colleagues on the opposite side like to indicate, this is a cruel, unreasonable and arbitrary use of power and control in a democracy. This is tyranny. It is intentional. It is an attempt at anarchy, and I am sorry, but there is no level of frustration that can justify these actions.

We see what is happening and we know that those who call it a "peaceful protest" are turning their heads in the other direction and ignoring the fact that these so-called protesters have alleged ties to extremist groups who have now been charged with conspiracy to commit murder, the murder of police officers. It is so disturbing. My brother and sister-in-law are police officers in this country. They are just two among thousands like them who get up every day to go to work to uphold the laws of our country, to keep peace, to protect citizens, yet they were targeted by a group as part of this whole protest.

A large cache of guns and ammunition was seized by the RCMP from occupied blockades in this country, which is extremely alarming. We continue to see harmful displays of violent behaviour, and attempts to minimize and discount the harm that is being done to others. It is completely negligent, in my opinion, of people who think this is actually peaceful. We cannot discount these actions, and anyone of civility cannot uphold these actions.

We are a country that prides itself on open democracy, peaceful protest, one's ability to be heard, our ability to speak freely and openly and to express ourselves in ways that do not bring harm to others in our country. No, this is not a peaceful protest. There is no civility when others fear for their safety—

The Deputy Speaker: I hate to interrupt the hon. member, but I was wondering if she will be sharing her time with another member.

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Mr. Speaker, I thought I had indicated that at the beginning, but if not, my apologies. I am sharing my time with the member for Vancouver Centre.

I want to highlight what has been happening with so many small businesses. They have seen illegal obstructions right in their own neighbourhoods. They have had patrons who have had to endure harassment. Many of them have had to shut down their businesses. So many Canadians have had to endure radical comments, rhetoric that has been very toxic, hateful, dangerous. This really has no place in our society, in any town or city in this country. It has no place in Canada. I cannot stress that enough.

My heart sank in the early days of this protest when I saw swastikas and other deplorable signs of white supremacy and anti-Semitism displayed in this country, in front of Canada's Parliament, the freest country in the world. It was a blatant disregard of civil liberties of our country's neighbours.

On Monday when the federal government declared a public emergency order, it was simply because the situation in Ottawa and elsewhere in the country had exceeded beyond the breaking point. My own riding of Labrador and many other communities like it across Canada are so far removed from downtown Ottawa, but MPs were receiving many messages. I received so many messages from people across my riding because they were worried and scared. They were scared for our country and they wrote to me.

One person said, "As a Canadian citizen, I hate the way our country looks right now, how we are made to feel unsafe by radical protesters. Please, please, can government do something to end this protest that is going on?"

This is just one of many messages that I received from Labradorians. It was obvious not only in my riding, but in many other ridings that they were concerned as well. They were concerned about border crossings. They were concerned about what was happening to so many other residents in downtown Ottawa. It was clear that there were serious concerns being expressed, but it was also very clear to our government that there were serious challenges in law enforcement's ability to effectively enforce the law.

They were not moving with the urgency that Canadians reasonably expected and there was, and remains, a serious threat to the security of Canada and all Canadians. It is for these reasons the federal government has stepped in and has used the tools at its disposal to address this very unique and unprecedented situation in the country. When we deal with unprecedented situations that risk the safety and security of the country, it requires unprecedented measures and unprecedented action. The resources are now available to bring a safe conclusion to this illegal occupation.

As the Minister of Justice said a few days ago, Canada is a rule of law country, so by declaring a public order of emergency under the Emergencies Act, our government is following the law and is acting within it. Many of my colleagues already spoke to this part of the legislation, but under this act the federal government is now able to temporarily regulate and prohibit public assemblies that lead to a breach of the peace and go beyond lawful protests, because these are not lawful protests.

It allows the government to temporarily designate and secure places where blockades are to be prohibited, which includes borders and other critical infrastructure to the country. It allows temporarily for government to direct persons to render essential services to relieve the impact of blockades on Canada's economy, which we have seen already being the case. It includes allowing them to access tow trucks and drivers to ensure the job can be done safely and strategically. It also allows government to temporarily authorize or direct financial institutions to render essential services to relieve the impacts of blockades, including regulating and prohibiting the use of property to fund or support the blockades.

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• (2055)

It gives temporary abilities to the RCMP to enforce municipal bylaws and provincial defences where required and to temporarily impose fines or imprisonment on those who do not follow the law.

These special measures are necessary, despite what others may say, and they are temporary. Moreover, these measures, like all other government actions, are subject to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Bill of Rights, which many of my colleagues have already spoken of. They give very clear, definitive definitions of those acts and what they mean. We are operating within the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Bill of Rights.

That brings me to what this "freedom convoy", as it has been known, really is. My idea of freedom in this country is having the freedom to express myself in a peaceful manner, having the freedom to walk outside my door and feel safe, having the freedom to go to bed at night unimpeded by honking horns, street parties and fireworks waking me up at all hours in the middle of the night. My idea of freedom in Canada is to be able to go to work—

• (2100)

The Deputy Speaker: We are out of time.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the demonstrators started out as a demonstration over the mandate for truckers to have to be vaccinated in order to go back and forth across the border.

Why is it okay for truckers who have had their COVID shots but who are bringing medical devices and other pandemic supplies across the border to not have to be quarantined or tested, but the other truckers who have not had their COVID shots are put into quarantine? Is one more dangerous than the other or are either dangerous at all?

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Mr. Speaker, realistically, when looking at the facts of what is happening here, this is not about a peaceful protest. This is about upholding the rule of law.

I have been involved in many protests in my day and I have seen many hard-working men and women who were convicted in their thinking, who walked protest lines for days and nights to bring their points to the government and to the ears of people who were listening, but they never brought harm to anyone around them and they certainly never confronted those in a violent and aggressive manner. What we are dealing with in Canada today is the complete neglect of the law, of Canadian—

*Statutory Order**[Translation]*

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, if we set aside the racist symbols, which have been discussed at length, I see quite a bit of distress among the protesters over these past few weeks. Canada is one of the most vaccinated countries in the world, with a 90% vaccination rate. People have followed the health rules. Despite this, Canada has been one of the slowest countries to lift restrictions. The main reason is that the health care system has been underfunded for the past 30 years.

Does my colleague agree that if federal governments, whether Liberal or Conservative, had properly funded the health care system for the past 30 years, the country might have been able to come out of lockdown a few months ago, and we might have avoided the mess we see out there right now?

[English]

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Mr. Speaker, I think we all recognize that the pandemic we have gone through in the last two years had no blueprint. There were no directions. There was not a plan for medical care or medical teams in this country or anywhere in the world to respond to a pandemic like we have just seen. I think the people in our health care system have done an exceptional job. I think the people who work there have stood up with tremendous resilience. They have neglected, in many ways, their own health to provide that care to so many other Canadians.

As the government, these mandates were necessary. It was necessary to protect all Canadians from—

The Deputy Speaker: I would like to get a few more questions in here before the end of the night. I apologize.

The hon. member for Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke.

• (2105)

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Labrador for drawing attention to the distortion that is caused by calling the protest in Ottawa “peaceful”. I made the mistake of walking through the group wearing a magenta mask and had a seven-letter f-word hurled at me. I witnessed journalists being physically intimidated.

Did the member ever hear the leaders of the so-called protest condemn these kinds of intimidation that were going on as part of the occupation of downtown Ottawa?

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate, but I have heard so many members of Parliament express support for this protest and I find it very disturbing. This is radicalism. These are people who have not shown respect for other Canadians or for the cities that they have occupied. They have not at all upheld the rule of law in terms of respecting other human beings.

I am always disturbed when I see any—

The Deputy Speaker: I want to try to get one more question in. I know the member for Scarborough—Agincourt has been trying really hard to get a question in.

Ms. Jean Yip (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, many constituents have heard about the racial slurs against Ottawa residents. This is worrying for many people, especially people of colour.

Could the hon. member elaborate on how the Emergencies Act can contain these extremist elements?

Ms. Yvonne Jones: Mr. Speaker, there is no room in Canada for these extreme behaviours and opinions. I really believe that the people who are in the protest are bringing to it all the issues that have plagued them for many years and many decades. This is not the place for it, and their actions have demonstrated that this is not acceptable in Canada.

I support the actions of the government and I support the Emergencies Act.

The Deputy Speaker: I just want to say we are getting a little long in our questions and answers, so let us keep up the speed. I know we are getting later on in the day and we want to make sure that we get as many people as possible represented.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Vancouver Centre.

Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I must say that I have been embarrassed for a long time about what has been going on in the country, especially in Ottawa. I have had a lot of friends across the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe who have been calling me, asking, “What is going on in Canada? You guys are such a great democracy; what’s happening?”, and so I have been embarrassed. They were in shock at what was going on here.

In many countries, there were copycats doing what the protesters were doing here, and I must tell members that those copycats were quelled immediately with water cannons, guns and tear gas, to keep them in line. However, what makes me proud of my country is that, in the last two days, we did not do that. The police in this country were restrained; they were professional and they were patient. They were taking abuse, both verbal and physical, and they also had people reach in to try to get their guns. They were mindful of the children in the group; children who were being used as frontline shields. I have no idea what kinds of parents would do that, but this was a way to make everybody see that they were nice and that they had little children. The children were in the front lines, though. Those are the kinds of things we saw going on here, and the police were very careful and worried about the children.

We are asking the question: Why use this Emergencies Act? I have to say that it is pretty easy to see why when we saw the city of Ottawa being occupied for 22 days, and not just by peaceful people who were sitting down singing *Kumbaya*, but by people who were threatening, verbally harassing and physically intimidating people wearing masks and people of visible minorities, who were scared. Some protesters had volatile materials like gasoline and diesel and were wandering around the city. They were setting off fireworks in a city that has huge high-rises without care or worry whether they would ignite something in the city. They were lawless, and that is the only word I can use. Well, if that is not enough reason to invoke the Emergencies Act in this country, then I do not know what is.

We talked a lot about the rule of law, and I have heard everybody invoking the rule of law. Canada is doing exactly that. This is a country of various jurisdictions under our Constitution. The federal government does not, like a great, wondrous matriarch, walk in and impose on every single municipality or province whatever its will is. It cannot do that. Therefore, what it had to do was to try to give the municipalities and provinces the tools they needed to empower them to be able to deal with the lawlessness, and that is exactly what this Emergencies Act is doing: It is helping municipalities and provinces to have the tools they need.

I have listened to the mayor of Ottawa saying today that they could not get tow trucks. The tow truck drivers did not want to come, because they were scared. They did not want to come in and tow the rigs that were hanging around. However, with the Emergencies Act, the tow trucks were told that they had to come and do that. Now, that is one simple example of how the resources and tools that the police needed had to come through the Emergencies Act.

The Emergencies Act also helps provinces and municipalities take on certain roles that they would not normally take on; for example, the ability for police to come from across the country, including from my own riding, the Vancouver Police Department, of which I am inordinately proud, to help Ottawa. There is the ability to follow the money, find out what foreign entities were funding this anarchy that was going on in our city for 22 days, find out who was sending money to whom and follow cryptocurrency, which was an important part of finding out that there were foreign entities behind all of this.

I heard people on the streets, when the police were moving them back, talking about their First Amendment rights and saying, “You cannot arrest this person; you did not read them their Miranda rights.” Come on, guys, do people not watch enough television to know that we do not do that in Canada? That is not Canadian, so we know that there were foreign entities in this country, manipulating what was going on.

• (2110)

Who is funding them? Who is paying for them? Where does a person get money to spend 22 days, with food, drink and everything they need? Somebody is paying for that. We have to find out who that is.

People talk about sovereignty. Part of that sovereignty is that Canada cannot allow foreign entities to dictate what we do in our democracy. This is a democracy, and in a democracy we have elected governments. I do not care what stripe the government is, but it is elected according to free and fair elections, which is a major part of a democracy. To try to overthrow duly elected officials by mob rule of law, threats and intimidation is anarchy. It cannot be allowed. If these people do not want the government anymore, they have the right to vote against the government in an election. That is what a democracy is about.

A democracy has free media and freedom of the press. The press has been intimidated, harassed, pushed, shoved, threatened and frightened, and I want to take my hat off to all of the press, who have been doing the yeomen's work, who have been unafraid and who have been doing what they need to do, because if the media is

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shut down, we really do not know what is happening and we are prone to listening to disinformation and false news.

These are some of the things we are talking about here, and I have to say that when the police kept saying to people to move on and get the children out of here, I looked at what was going in Coutts and at some of these border protests. At the Ambassador Bridge there was a line in front of the protesters, of children linking arms. What country are we in when we do that to children and use them as shields to protect so-called “protesters”. There is a dual reason for it. Not only are children shields, because they know nobody will harm children, but also it makes them look nice, quiet, family-oriented and all that kind of thing. That is not what is true. We are seeing this kind of manipulation and intimidation of media.

I must say that we know how much money there is. We look at the border crossings that have been blocked by the trucks, and 95% of our truckers are vaccinated and are going back and forth, bringing food, medicines and everything. We have the ones who did not want to be vaccinated, but freedom applies both ways. Freedom of choice means if someone does not choose to get vaccinated or does not choose to wear masks, they accept the consequences. I taught my kids that. My parents taught me that. We have a choice, but with a choice comes consequences. If, by doing it, it is felt that someone is actually harming others by exposing others to infection, then this is something the government must hear about.

When people say they are blocking truckers who are trying to get across the border to bring food and medicines and to keep trade going, which I think was about \$511 million a day when we count all the crossings, this is intimidation. This is not about truckers. This is not about vaccine mandates. This is about anarchy, and I think we need to remember that. For someone to say they will bring down a duly elected government and to use language that is threatening to our Prime Minister, who is duly elected, and when people hug and stand there taking photographs with these people, they are also agreeing that it is okay for mob rule to take down a duly elected government.

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It is not a democracy when people do that. We can look at the judges. We have an independent judiciary, and the independent judiciary is now issuing all kinds of writs against the people who have broken the law. Again, we come back to the rule of law. It cannot be had both ways. One cannot talk about rule of law on one hand, and then, when we impose rule of law because of the jurisdictional issues that make us have to do that, say we are breaking the law or imposing a dictatorship. That is not true. A dictator is someone who stops other people from having their freedoms. The protesters did that. They stopped everybody else from having the freedom to wear a mask, the freedom to go to a hospital to get care, the freedom to take their children to school and the freedom to go and shop. Occupiers closed down businesses. Businesses had to close their doors. They were walking into restaurants, intimidating and roughing up, both verbally and physically, waiters, waitresses and the people who were there.

This is not a lawful, peaceful protest, and today, when everyone was singing the national anthem and saying to the police, “We love you,” this is part of a propaganda machine, saying, “Look at us; we are nice people. Look at us; we have a bouncy castle and our children play. We are nice people.”

● (2115)

All of us sitting in the House of Commons must know this not to be true. We know what is happening—

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments, the hon. member for Calgary Shepard.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, there are three things I would like to address. The member talked about the independent judiciary being active right now. This member must know that the Emergencies Act actually removes the role of judges in FINTRAC and the freezing of bank accounts. This is the shortcut. A briefing one of our members received from government officials specifically says it takes too long to go to judges, so the member should understand that. That is the first item.

She also talked about how the media is being treated by some of the protesters, and I agree it is awful. I am going to remind her that back in 2017, VICE reporter Ben Makuch and Justin Brake from The Independent were being pursued in court by the government and facing charges for not wanting to reveal their sources.

Lastly, one thing the member did not mention was consultation. Seven out of 10 provinces publicly said they disagree with the Emergencies Act being used. How can she support this?

Hon. Hedy Fry: Mr. Speaker, judges are currently engaged in looking at those who have been arrested and are actually speaking out and saying what must be done. They have been speaking out loudly about it and saying that certain things must be done. That is going on right now.

The point is that Alberta wrote a letter to the Prime Minister, saying that it could not cope and did not have the resources within its municipalities and province to cope with what was going on at its borders. It was asking for help. The federal government then needed to have the tools. It needed to be able to look at jurisdictional issues and say—

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments, the hon. member for Beauport—Limoilou.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, one of the things my colleague said in her speech was that tow truck drivers were afraid to do their job, and that the government absolutely needed to use the Emergencies Act to compel them to do it.

That said, the Criminal Code does provide for other measures, such as court orders and even Attorney General's orders. Why were those solutions not proposed before using the nuclear option that is the Emergencies Act?

● (2120)

[English]

Hon. Hedy Fry: Mr. Speaker, that ability to bring in the tow trucks being asked for by a province and municipality is still provincial jurisdiction, and they do not have the powers to do that. The Emergencies Act gave them the authority to do that.

We should ask ourselves why tow truck drivers are afraid to do this. It is because they are intimidated by their own so-called trucker convoys. They have protected their driver's licences and truck companies because they are scared. They put on masks so nobody would know who they are. Is that the kind of—

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments, the hon. member for Nanaimo—Ladysmith.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the use of the Emergencies Act, even consideration of it, is an acknowledgement of a failure of leadership that has allowed things to escalate unchecked since the beginning. I am hearing concerns. I too am worried this emergency measures legislation could later be used against those truly participating in peaceful protests. What we are currently facing is not that.

This is an illegal occupation that has been harassing people for weeks. Does the member agree that action should have been taken earlier to avoid us being here today?

Hon. Hedy Fry: Mr. Speaker, this is interesting. If the Prime Minister had run out and imposed the Emergencies Act at the beginning of this, everyone would have asked him what he was doing and said that he was a bully. They would have asked him why he was not trying other methods of dealing with it.

This is what he did. He talked to provinces and municipalities and tried to work it out with them. He had round tables for quite a few days. Again, we are back to what jurisdictional authority is.

The point to remember is that this act is temporary, geographically targeted to places that need it, and proportionate. If we remember that, then we know it is going to end, and it is going to end with an inquiry, which makes it an accountable thing for the Government of Canada to be able to speak to.

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of very concerned constituents in the freedom-loving riding of Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke.

The Prime Minister's emergency decree has struck terror into the hearts of millions of Canadians. They do not understand why this unprecedented and un-Canadian action is being taken. They are wondering if they are going to have their bank accounts frozen for supporting the wrong political party. They want to know if they are going to lose their children for the simple fact of waving a Canadian flag.

I wish I could tell them it would never happen in Canada, but it is happening. I wish I could tell them this was not the Prime Minister's plan all along.

Ever since the government announced it was suspending the trucker vaccine mandate, only to reverse course 24 hours later, every action taken by the government and the Prime Minister has been to escalate and inflame. These actions were either calculations or incompetence. Either way, Canadians have lost all confidence in the Prime Minister.

The question is how long it will take for Liberal members to find the confidence to speak truth to power. Here is the truth: The only emergency is the Prime Minister's plummeting poll numbers. The government is pushing conspiracy theories full of more hot air than the bouncy castles on Wellington Street. To justify its fake emergency, it must ratchet up the rhetoric.

Are Canadians supposed to believe our democracy was under threat from dance parties and hot tubs? The only thing under threat is the credibility of the government. The Prime Minister has become the boy who cried racist insurrectionist. Canadians can see this clearly, and they are judging the Prime Minister harshly. Even Liberals are openly wondering what has become of the Prime Minister.

Two years ago to the day, the Prime Minister said this about a group of Canadians who were blockading critical infrastructure and calling on the Governor General to circumvent the elected government, "Our responsibility is to continue working on a peaceful and lasting solution to this troubling situation." Two years ago, the Prime Minister pleaded with Canadians for patience. He sent his minister to negotiate with the protesters. Once the political issue had been resolved, the OPP moved in and peacefully removed the blockades.

Canadians have the right to ask why this situation is different. Why is the government treating one group of protesters differently from another group of protesters? The one and only answer is politics. The government and its urban elite supporters despise rural Canadians unless they are indigenous, in which case they patronize them.

Where were the denunciations of the vigilante mob waving a Soviet flag that attacked motorists? There were none, because the mob was made up of six-figure salaried public sector union leaders and university professors, which are also known as the Liberal donor base. When wealthy, privileged Canadians wave flags of genocidal states, the media holds them up as the heroes who survived the "Battle of Billings Bridge".

When rural, blue-collar workers show up holding signs calling the government Nazis, the media paints them as barbarians at a tiki torch rally. Now the media cheers on the doxing of Canadians,

while the justice minister threatens to freeze the bank accounts of people who voted for the wrong presidential candidate.

The minister's comments to CTV Wednesday demonstrate beyond a reasonable doubt that the government cannot be trusted with emergency powers. When asked if people who donated to the convoy would have their bank accounts frozen, the justice minister said, "If you are a member of a pro-Trump movement who is donating...to this kind of thing, then you ought to be worried."

I do hope the minister can come before the House and explain which other so-called unacceptable views will determine if accounts are frozen. Sadly, we do not need the minister to explain. The media and the other radical activists that the government funds are already hard at work coming up with a progressive enemies list.

Wednesday saw the seemingly coordinated effort by the Liberal-funded CBC and the Liberal-funded anti-Canadian hate network to simultaneously publish stories about Christians supporting the convoy. Last week, op-eds in Liberal media explained how the Canadian flag has been tainted because it was waved by the wrong kind of Canadians.

● (2125)

The left-wing media and government-funded activists have certainly painted a clear picture of the type of people they believe hold unacceptable views. Christians, patriotic Canadians, even classic small-l liberals have made the urban socialists' enemies list. The media like to call this a culture war. We have an urban culture that is very conservative when it comes to lifting pandemic policies. We have a rural culture comprised of people who made the decision to trade the benefits of urban living for the benefits of rural freedoms. The mistake is in thinking that this is a war.

This has always been a rural David versus urban Goliath but with the slingshots banned by orders in council. This used to be a free country. The people in my riding elected a Liberal member of Parliament for most of the last century. That was until the Liberal Party began to turn its backs on rural Canadians with the long-gun registry. Since then, the Liberals have always chosen to support urban interests over rural interests, but it was only when the current Prime Minister and his woke McGuinty minions arrived that the game changed. Rather than just picking sides, they are seeking a total cultural domination.

Statutory Order

Tolerance used to mean accepting people, especially when we disagreed with them. The socialists have redefined tolerance to mean the complete submission to radical ideology. This is why the media are trying to recast the word “freedom” as “dog whistle”. That is why they attack the flag. It was a Liberal prime minister who said, “freedom is our nationality”. Canada and freedom used to be synonymous, but freedom means dissent is okay. Democracy means not everybody is going to agree and even when 90% of us agree, we must protect the right of the 10% to dissent. When the predecessor party to the NDP voted against the War Measures Act during an actual war fighting actual Nazis, nobody accused them of supporting Hitler. Dissent is the canary in the coal mine of democracy. This emergency decree strikes right at the heart of dissent.

With a stroke of his pen, the Prime Minister outlawed protesting on Parliament Hill for 30 days, to start. We are not talking about the streets of Ottawa. We are talking about the lawn. If Ukrainian Canadians want to demonstrate or rally on Parliament Hill in opposition to Russian aggression, they cannot because it is illegal now. The Prime Minister said the order would respect the charter. The charter is not worth the paper it is printed on if people cannot protest the declaration of an emergency order on Parliament Hill.

The government claims it needs extraordinary power to stop an imminent insurrection that is a threat to democracy. I know the Prime Minister does not like to spend time in the House and was off in his bunker at the start, but Parliament has been meeting, debating and voting the whole time the trucks were here. When people in other countries hear the word “insurrection”, they imagine military coups or communist takeovers. What they do not imagine is a small group of protesters asking the Liberal-appointed Governor General to form a government with the Liberal-appointed Senate amounting to a dangerous insurrection. Their latest plan to overthrow the government is to politely ask the Governor General to replace the Liberal Prime Minister with a different Liberal member. The Governor General has declined this request. If this is an insurrection, it is the most polite, non-violent, typically Canadian insurrection in history.

Protesters in Ottawa politely asked the government to overthrow itself and the government said no, so they threw a weeks-long block party. This bouncy castle insurrection is what the government needed to declare a national emergency for? This would be sad and pathetic were the precedent not so dangerous. It has invoked the Emergencies Act without sufficient grounds. Now it has trapped itself and to justify the power grab, it has to ratchet up the rhetoric further and further. To justify the government’s rhetoric, its media allies encouraged boycotts and vigilante mobs.

Two years ago the Prime Minister called for patience and now he is calling everybody Nazis while he sends in the storm troopers to break up the bouncy castles. This has to stop.

• (2130)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I always enjoy listening to my colleague and friend from across the way.

She talked about bouncy castles, the pools that were established and all of the fun that they had. The member opposite sees this as a

wonderful protest. She really does not have too much of a problem with it. She does not see the blockade and the many hardships that were caused, whether it was here in downtown Ottawa or at our international borders.

There is someone who does. Senator Vernon White was appointed by Stephen Harper. His was a Conservative Stephen Harper appointment as senator. He was also a former chief of police in Ottawa.

Does the member not think that he knows what he is talking about when he says that having the Emergencies Act is useful for this protest? In fact, it is a good thing. Would she not agree with such a strong, Conservative senator like that, with his experience?

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, what is a tragedy and painful are the millions of jobs that were lost as a consequence of the pandemic, the declaration, the restrictions, the lockdowns and keeping us in Canada and requiring many things that had no basis in science. The John Hopkins University study declared that all of the non-medical interventions had no effect on lowering the death or infection rates.

Just as it was an exaggeration to hold people down and make them lose their jobs, so too is it an exaggeration to invoke the Emergencies Act.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I see that my colleague is against resorting to the Emergencies Act.

We in the Bloc Québécois are obviously opposed to it, as we have an allergic reaction every time the federal government interferes in Quebec’s affairs. Unfortunately, we have seen members of the Conservative Party, including an aspiring leader, film themselves with truckers and encourage this movement.

My question is rather simple: How many Conservative parties are there in the House?

• (2135)

[English]

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, it is a great disappointment that my colleague agrees on the principle of it being unnecessary to invoke the Emergencies Act. The Conservative Party is more united and stronger than ever. We are growing in unity and numbers, and one day very soon, we are going to form government.

Statutory Order

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened with care to my hon. colleague. She gave a very interesting description of the rural-urban divide in this country. I am not sure that it accurately reflects the full diversity of opinion in this country. I agree with her that there have been many jobs lost in the pandemic, due to the virus itself and some of the policy responses. One of the ironies is that the impact of the blockades in Ottawa caused other people to lose their jobs, small businesses to not be able to open and custodians to not be able to work. People working in sandwich shops and restaurants lost income.

How would the member feel if one of the communities in her riding was blockaded by, say, 500 trucks, so that all of the businesses in one of the towns she represents could not earn an income for three weeks, or even longer? Would that be okay with her residents?

Mrs. Cheryl Gallant: Mr. Speaker, I must tell you about my residents. When the convoy was going through on the Trans-Canada Highway, people waited for four, six and eight hours to cheer on the trucks going from Deux-Rivières all the way through to the end of Arnprior. They were so happy that somebody was going to go to Ottawa and fight for their freedom.

They have the Conservatives in Parliament, people all over the country and now the world who understand that democracy and freedom are under attack in Canada.

Mr. Chris Warkentin (Grande Prairie—Mackenzie, CPC): Mr. Speaker, today I stand in the House to oppose the Prime Minister's unjustified, unconstitutional and unlawful imposition of the Emergencies Act. Tonight, I feel completely inadequate to convey the message that I feel burdened to give. In my mix of heartbreak, sorrow, anger and disgust at the Prime Minister's words and actions over the last two years, I struggle for words. It is made that much more difficult because I am starting to feel a contradiction of feelings.

Over the past couple of days, I have started to feel that there is maybe some reason for hope. I believe that faint hope is like a distant light on the horizon and it is going to spread and expand and be as uncontrollable by the Prime Minister as the morning sunrise. I am disgusted and angered by the things I have witnessed over the past months, and the sorrow and disgust almost broke me today as I witnessed what took place on the street just outside this building. Yes, the Prime Minister got his way. He cleared the streets. He pushed the voices of his critics far enough away that he could no longer hear them, and he did it all with pepper spray and force.

Colleagues, what are we doing here? When the Prime Minister enacted the Emergencies Act, he claimed that it was to save the economy, but the border blockades were already cleared and the protesters had started to dissipate. He then changed his story and claimed that it was all about saving our democracy. However, Parliament continued to operate, legislation continued to be debated and votes continued to happen. The Prime Minister then changed his story again and said the act was needed to remove the trucks. However, legal experts disputed that and said that authorities already existed to remove the trucks. Now, the trucks are gone and have been cleared, and he still wants these unprecedented powers.

Why does he need these powers? The borders are open, the trucks are gone and the streets are clear. What is left? It seems the Prime Minister is going to continue to suspend civil liberties and legal protections until he can be sure that he has silenced his opponents permanently and has sent the message to anyone who disagrees with him that he will do the same thing to them. He will seize bank accounts, phone records and whatever else he needs without the requirement for normal legal protections and court orders.

This did not start just a couple of weeks ago. The Prime Minister has been seeking to wedge, stigmatize and divide Canadians for his own political advantage for some time. Even members of his own party are starting to call him out for it. He said "those people". He called them extremists who do not believe in science. They are misogynists. They are often racists. They are science deniers, a fringe minority holding unacceptable opinions. They are anti-Semitic, Islamophobic, anti-Black, homophobic and transphobic. They are a small group of the population. They are taking up space, he said. He asked whether the country needed to "tolerate these people". The Prime Minister therefore enacted unjustified rules that were intentionally discriminatory so that those people "taking up space" would not need to be tolerated.

I will not share with the House her name, but a lady asked to meet with me in my constituency office several months ago. She sat across the boardroom table from me and told the story of losing her son to complications from a vaccination decades ago. She sobbed as she expressed her fears of getting the injection. She had fear for herself, fear for her children and fear for her grandchildren. She asked me why the Prime Minister would make her do this. Why would he not understand that she could not do it? She had already had COVID and wanted to know if she could get an exemption to the federal mandate so she could see her elderly mum, who lives a significant distance away. She needed to fly there.

● (2140)

I could not answer this lady's question. She is not a racist. She is not an extremist. She is not a fringe minority.

Norm and his family farmed a few miles away from the farm where I grew up. My entire life I knew he was a strong NDP supporter. I knew he had run for the party in 1988 under Ed Broadbent. Norm and his family were generous neighbours, and although our families may not have agreed when it came to politics, we always knew that if we needed help, we would help each other.

When I became an MP over 16 years ago, Norm maintained his communication with me and was always well read and informed when he would express concerns about multinational corporations or about the Harper government. More recently, he expressed a more urgent concern about the current Prime Minister and the mandates that have been imposed on all Canadians. He called it crushing citizens' rights to peaceful protest.

Statutory Order

I want to address my NDP friends. Norm has written to many of them, and although they cannot tell from his emails, his words are sincere. He fears for his grandchildren, children and neighbours. He has begged us not to support the passage of the Emergencies Act. Norm is a good man with a good family. He is not an extremist. He believes in science. He is not a misogynist, nor is he a racist.

Chris is a city councillor for the City of Grande Prairie. Chris cares deeply about our community, especially about the vulnerable who live within our region. Chris has been a leading advocate for bringing meaningful change and reconciliation for indigenous people who live in our communities. He is a good friend of mine.

Last week, Chris was in Ottawa to protest the discriminatory policies and mandates of the federal government. Chris is not an extremist. He is not anti-Semitic, Islamophobic, anti-Black, racist, homophobic or transphobic. One person in the House who knows that as well as I do is the Prime Minister. He knows Chris because they have close mutual friends. As a matter of fact, the Prime Minister called Chris personally to ask him to run for the Liberal Party of Canada. Unfortunately, because of his stand against injustice and division, people across the country have now echoed the Prime Minister's words and accused my friend, our friend, who has two Black sisters, of being a racist and a misogynist. This has to end.

My colleagues and I have a choice. History will judge us for our decision. Will we do the right thing and reject the politics of division and hate and end this attack on freedom, or will we grant the Prime Minister this unlimited power he wants so he can attack his political adversaries?

I said at the beginning of my speech that I had reason for hope, and I do have hope. The reason is that, while 338 of us in the House may or may not do the right thing, I know Canadians have had enough of the divisions, they have had enough of the hate and they have had enough of the political divisions.

I have no faith in the Prime Minister and have no faith that he will change, but I have faith that Canadians have seen all they need to see. They know who the Prime Minister is. They have seen the pain he is willing to inflict on people who do not agree with him. I trust Canadians. I hope my colleagues in this building will do the same and give Canadians their freedoms back.

• (2145)

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have three points of clarification. First, today, a blockade exists in Surrey, B.C. Second, the declaration order, notwithstanding the submissions from the member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, is not about entrusting the Prime Minister with emergency powers. It is about empowering police, who operate independently, to enforce the law. Third, lawful protest is permitted pursuant to this order and is always permitted under the charter. It is only protests that breach peace that would be prevented.

I am going to put this to the member very squarely. Members of his party have talked about law and order and have said it is founded on a law and order premise. Can we at least agree on one thing? When it gets to the point after 22 days that members of the public

in Ottawa are taking matters into their own hands because they are so frustrated with the lack of enforcement, we have a problem that needs to be addressed with powers, including increased powers such as the ones the interim chief, Steve Bell, has welcomed to empower enforcement.

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Mr. Speaker, this is the problem with the Liberal Party: Every day the story changes. Every day the reason it needs these powers changes. We know from legal experts that it does not need these powers to stop blockades. The powers exist. No government, since Pierre Elliott Trudeau was the Prime Minister, has required this. We have had 9/11, the Oka crisis and the G20 in Toronto. Never has a Prime Minister gone this far to punish political opponents.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I like that the member took the time to explain that there were people who supported the protest but in no way fit the descriptions made of them.

I also understand that when we find out that some more extremist factions are funding these groups, some soul-searching is in order.

Does the member think it possible that the fact that people who are fed up with the health measures have been described in ways that do not reflect them might ultimately have led them to support the demonstration, even though they may not have intended to do so at first?

[English]

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Mr. Speaker, what I have come to understand is that this does not follow along political lines. People across the country are fed up. They are fed up with the Prime Minister. They are fed up with the divisions. They are fed up with the hostilities. They do not understand why the Prime Minister will not do what every other provincial government has done and what countries around the world have done. Our allies around the world have either dropped restrictions or made plans to do so and have informed their citizens as to what the time frames will be for the reduction of those restrictions. Provincial leaders have done that. Why will the Prime Minister not do it? Canadians deserve an answer.

• (2150)

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I listened closely to the remarks by the member from Grande Prairie. I wish I would have caught the whole name of his riding. I am sure I will learn it over time.

I am a bit fascinated with the amount of time the Conservative Party is taking to talk about the NDP. I have heard members in the House talk glowingly about the legacies of Jack Layton and Tommy Douglas, reflecting back on 1970 and the vote on the War Measures Act, a vote in which the Conservative Party supported the use of that legislation, which is much more draconian than what we have in front of us today.

I wonder if my colleague could reflect on that vote. Would he vote the same way today? What does that say about his upcoming vote on the motion before us?

Mr. Chris Warkentin: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member that I was not old enough to sit in the House at that time. However, in all seriousness, the reason members of the House are pleading with the NDP is that it will decide if the Prime Minister will continue to have these powers or if on Monday he will be held accountable by the courts and the provisions and protections we all covet, which the NDP, at least under Tommy Douglas, believed in. I encourage the NDP to consider what legacy it wants to leave as a party when people look back 30 years from now.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais (Edmonton Griesbach, NDP): Mr. Speaker, people are frustrated with this pandemic. People in Edmonton Griesbach and every single Canadian, including each of us here, has been impacted by this deadly and once-in-a-lifetime disease, whether because we have lost loved ones, as I have, or whether because of restrictions due to the public health measures enacted upon the advice of medical professionals. I know how hard and truly challenging these divisive times can be and continue to be.

At the beginning of all of this, Canadians showed the world what community looks like. Everyone mobilized to take care of each other and to keep each other safe. Neighbours were helping neighbours, friends were dropping off care packages, and teachers and community organizers were going above and beyond to keep children learning and to keep them safe.

Throughout this pandemic, we have endured much pain. Many have lost loved ones. Many have lost critical time with those important to them, but we are surviving it. I want to thank every single Canadian for their continued resilience. This is what Canada is. This is the story we must tell, because it is true. Let us not forgo the sacrifices of the many for the benefit of the few.

Canada is not perfect. As an indigenous person, I know this really well. However, Canada is a place where forces of good can thrive, so long as we continue to see the liberty of others as the liberty as oneself, do not use our freedom to put our neighbours in harm's way, and certainly do not use it to destroy our democratic institutions by way of force. Other people's freedom ends at the end of my nose.

Today and over the next few days, we will hear from Conservatives about the need to listen, about the sacrifices and the hardship, but let me speak directly to those members about some of the people in my community of Edmonton Griesbach who have truly sacrificed. These are not the individuals who had the opportunity to play in bouncy castles. These are not the individuals who had the opportunity to sit in a hot tub for two weeks. These are not the people who have spent the last three weeks outside on Wellington Street. They are not those who wish to use force to bring about policy change. They are not those seeking to intimidate and harm others.

They are, as a matter of fact, the people who put their masks on every day so that their neighbour who is immunocompromised does not die. These are the nurses, the doctors and the medical personnel in my community who have endured the worst of this medical emergency and continue to do so as we speak. These are the essential workers, including police right now, who have come in day after day to keep our services going and to keep Canadians going. These are the parents who have been struggling at home to do their

work but to also teach when children could not go to school. These are the people who have had to choose between rent and food because the costs of groceries, bills, housing and unemployment have gone unaddressed by this failed Liberal government.

Colleagues, this is why we are in this circumstance. It is because of the Liberal government's failure to help people and to assist folks in these unprecedented and uncertain times. While the Conservatives and Liberals bicker amongst themselves, and the Bloc sits idle, protecting its narrow provincial objectives at the cost of Canadians and Quebecers, it is New Democrats who are forced to be the responsible ones, tasked with fixing this crisis outside because of the government's delay, and holding this lacklustre and—

• (2155)

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron: Madam Speaker, on a point of order. I believe my colleague meant to say he is splitting his time with his colleague for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Skeena—Bulkley Valley.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member for Edmonton Griesbach.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Madam Speaker, the government could have avoided this whole circumstance had it helped Canadians through this difficult time. Instead, it let inaction and partisanship guide it, and let those who sought to hurt our economy and our international reputation as Canadians by not acting sooner. All of this was done by the government, while Conservatives emboldened the occupiers, meeting with them as they stood shoulder to shoulder displaying Nazi and Confederate flags. The emergency we are facing was not a surprise.

Organizers such as Pat King, who was first listed as the Alberta organizer for Canada Unity, has a known history of white supremacy and has previously been seen on videos saying white people have the strongest bloodlines. When talking about COVID restrictions in December, just one month before the protest, he said, "The only way that this is going to be solved is with bullets." As much as I disagree, and as much as I condemn the statements of Mr. King and believe them to be hate-motivated, I respect every group's right to peaceful assembly and peaceful protest, but what we have witnessed here and across the country is certainly not that.

As a matter of fact, I have been in many protests over the past decade, and I am a proud indigenous land defender myself. I am a true believer in public demonstration and community solidarity. It is absolutely fundamental and necessary to ensuring democracy, accountability and diversity of opinion in Canada.

Statutory Order

That being said, it is clear that the situation across the country, in particular in my home province of Alberta, at the Ambassador Bridge in Windsor, and in Ottawa, should have never gotten to this point. There is a combination of ill forces that have contributed to this current crisis, such as the lack of proper leadership to combat disinformation in our country. Hate, racism and terrorism funding are undeniable facts of the situation and are some things anti-racism groups across our country have warned us against for years.

When we saw how fragile democracy was in the United States when the Capitol was attacked, we all thought it could not happen here. Here we are, three weeks into this, with hopes of finally restoring public order, which should have taken place a long time ago. We knew this was coming.

I am sure those who have engaged in peaceful assembly, such as myself, have noticed the extreme difference in the standard of policing for indigenous land defenders and for organizations such as the ones we are seeing right now. It has never taken the use of the Emergencies Act to have police forcefully remove land defenders, often with violence. It is an unfortunate precedent that already exists in our country. I mean to say that regardless of the Emergencies Act, indigenous people have been subject to state violence since the inception of Canada and its laws, and we need to tackle that issue. From the evidence today and yesterday, I am pleased to see that police can, in fact, enforce public order without the use of bullets, tear gas, chainsaws or axes. To the police, I know many others will be watching.

Over the past three weeks, Canadians have witnessed local and municipal police fail to uphold the most basic of bylaws and ordinances made to protect our economy, residents and transport corridors. Just last week, some members of the southern Alberta Coutts blockade were charged with conspiracy to murder RCMP officers after a weapons cache was found. It should never have gotten to that point. Armed violence and intimidation are not conducive to a free democracy, and instances such as this are likely in other parts of our country. I have heard from many Black, indigenous and other people-of-colour communities who are feeling scared right now. They are feeling intimidated for their immediate safety.

I have spoken to health care professionals in Edmonton Griesbach. Nurses, doctors and health care aides are feeling the same way. Hate toward frontline health care workers over the past few weeks has resulted in hospitals telling their own employees not to wear any identifiable health care clothes due to the rise in attacks. This is Canada, my friends. This is right now. This is today. A truly free democracy is one that does not allow discourse to take a back seat to intimidation and violence. This is not freedom. This is not Canada. It is clearly hate.

Lastly, without getting into the nuanced and complicated differences between Canadian civil rights guarantees and the rights of sovereign indigenous nations, please know that the use of the Emergencies Act does not in any way negate or dismiss indigenous people's rights and/or laws to access and occupy their own lands.

• (2200)

The reasons I have outlined here are why my NDP colleagues and I have decided to support these very limited measures under the Emergencies Act. They largely include the coordination of local en-

forcement, as noted by the interim Ottawa police chief, and powers to investigate foreign and domestic financial influences that are fuelling this hate-motivated occupation. My entire caucus and I believe in reasonable limits, which include the barring of any use of the Canadian Armed Forces, and the upholding and non-suspension of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

It is with the utmost reluctance we do this for the betterment of our safety, for our country and for the survival of our democracy. We will be steadfast in monitoring these powers and have a clear path to revoke or, at any time, not support these powers that infringe on our civil rights and our democracy. The tool can never become the problem. *Kinana'skomitina'wa'w.*

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I welcome the member for Edmonton Griesbach to the House. I admit to some extreme concern when members of the official opposition have actually belittled the concerns of other parliamentarians who do not share his particular demographic and the fears that they might be experiencing.

I want to ask the hon. member something, as a man who is an indigenous advocate and as a man who is indigenous himself. When he sees people who are being arrested assaulting the police officers, throwing bikes at police horses and attempting to remove weapons from police officers, can he contemplate how that kind of response would have been met had those protesters been Black, indigenous or people of colour? Could he perhaps discuss, with some further clarity, how the response would differ?

I firmly believe it would have differed. We need to move forward and really rethink how we are doing policing, notwithstanding the tremendous work that our law enforcement officials are attempting to do in this country right now.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Madam Speaker, I want to extend my best wishes and support from Edmonton Griesbach to the members of his community for what they have endured. I know, from listening to constituents of mine, how difficult this has been with the disruptions in services, the issues at hospitals, the harassment, and just the overall safety and well-being of community members.

What we are facing is truly serious. I would hope that members of this chamber would see how serious it is, particularly for members of Black, indigenous and people-of-colour communities. What we are witnessing right now is truly different from how we interact with police. We understand it is different, and I know for a fact, from being on those front lines, how different it is. I think we have a lot more work to go, and I think there should be more accountability for police in this.

• (2205)

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, under the new act that is being talked about, the Emergencies Act, financial institutions are required to cease dealing with designated persons. These designated persons are defined as anyone associated with a protest.

Using your past experience, were you a designated person in past protests? Were you a protest organizer? Were you a protest attendee? Were you a donor, or were you someone who just tweeted support? Would you, under this act, have your financial institution cease dealing with you?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I do not think the member was directing his question at me, so I would ask him not to use the word “you”. That might fix everything when he is asking questions.

The hon. member for Edmonton Griesbach.

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Madam Speaker, I have never in my entire life been a member of, or a participant in, or included myself in the advocacy toward overthrowing the country. I have never said that. I have never wanted to see Canada's democratic institutions overthrown with the use of violence to the point where they collapse altogether. That is uniquely different from what we are seeing here.

What we are seeing is the very explicit and stated purpose of overthrowing a democratically elected government, and having the force and means to do it. They have those means by way of financing around the globe, millions of dollars, and they have that by way of rifles. We saw that. These are two unique factors that I have never participated in.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, in his speech, my colleague suggested that our political party has narrow interests. I urge him to temper his remarks and to look at the work that the Bloc Québécois does in the House.

If he wonders what the point of our presence in the House is, and if he wants to know what we do, I will tell him that we stand up for our nation because, if we were not here to do that, few people would. Since we have been here, we have demonstrated that we work constructively in the collective interest, after all.

During his speech, my colleague kept referring to a gathering that has gone too far. However, his party, which is gradually turning into the left wing of the Liberal Party, voted last week against the motion to phase out the health measures.

Can he explain that to me?

[English]

Mr. Blake Desjarlais: Madam Speaker, I will try to be quick. There was a lot in there.

I have been involved in nation protection for the Métis people for a long time. Never in my life have I, in that role, protected through that nationalism defence the right to overthrow a democratically elected government. That is first and foremost.

Statutory Order

The second part of the member's question related to what members should be doing right now. We have to take this issue very seriously, and we should be thinking of the state of our country as a whole.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, before I begin, my thoughts are with the people of Bulkley Valley, who have been shocked by the recent violence and vandalism at a work site on the Marten Forest Service Road. My thoughts go out specifically to the workers of that site who have been traumatized and the officer who was injured. I denounce these acts, and I join my constituents in demanding a full and thorough investigation to hold those responsible accountable.

I rise this evening, at this troubling and historic time in our country, to address the motion before us to confirm the use of the Emergencies Act to restore social order. I have been here in Ottawa for last three weeks. I arrived the day after the convoy did. For most of the past 22 days, I have walked through downtown Ottawa twice a day, and I have paid close attention to the convoy, the messages on the signs, the people, and the people of this city, those who live and work downtown and who have been so profoundly affected by this illegal occupation.

I believe protest is an important part of our democracy. It can give the voiceless a voice and ensure that citizens have a way to communicate the strength of their feelings, views and beliefs to their government. I have attended dozens of protests in my life, and I have a particular respect for peaceful, non-violent, civil disobedience, which has played an important role in our history in so much of our social progress, but this is not that. What we have witnessed for the past three weeks is nothing short of the occupation of the capital city of a G7 country. It is an event that I find deeply troubling for a number of reasons.

The first lies in the stated goal of the leaders of this occupation, which, as my friend from Edmonton Griesbach articulated, is to subvert our democracy and overthrow a democratically elected government.

The second reason I find this troubling is the effect the occupation has had on the people of Ottawa. Thousands of innocent people, who were already struggling in the midst of the pandemic, are unable to go to work or go about their daily lives with the peace and security they so deserve. I also think of the thousands of people across Canada who have been affected similarly by blockades at bridges and along trade corridors.

The third reason I am troubled lies in the stream of funding coming from south of the border from individuals who see fit to destabilize our country in the same vein as the attempted insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021. Finally, the fourth reason is the presence of extremism, evidenced by the occupation's leaders, their history, their rhetoric and their associations.

Statutory Order

I know there are many people in northwest B.C. for whom the occupation and convoy have provided an outlet for their frustrations and anger. I ask them simply to look into who is behind this event. I considered naming the occupation leaders and some of their more troubling views here this evening, as my colleague and others have done previously in this debate, but I am not going to do that because I refuse to give them the notoriety they seem to crave.

At the centre of this crisis lies the failure of the police. If they had done their job properly from the outset and taken the threats seriously, we would not be finding ourselves where we are this evening. As the occupation dug in, I heard from many indigenous and non-indigenous constituents who were stunned by the contrast between the kid-glove approach of the Ottawa Police Service here and the way in which indigenous protesters in northwest B.C. and across Canada are policed. Many members in this place have noted that contrast, and it is something that must be addressed. It is because of the failure of local and provincial law enforcement to protect social order that we must consider this extraordinary measure before us.

I would simply ask those who are opposing this motion what the alternative is. They suggest that the Prime Minister should negotiate with those who have occupied the city, but negotiate with whom? Surely not the leaders of this occupation.

Others have suggested that the police forces have existing powers and legislation at their disposal, but what use are provisions in the Criminal Code if police are either unwilling or unable to apply them? In fact, the police have been calling out for help. They have said clearly that they are not able to deal with this situation with the powers, tools and resources at their disposal.

• (2210)

This occupation has gone on now for three weeks. Does such a situation not call for the government to consider providing additional powers? To be honest, I find the objections of some in this House to be somewhat naive, especially from those parties that traditionally espouse law and order. We are called on now to protect the people of our country, and we must step up.

This is not to say that I am comfortable with the invocation of the Emergencies Act. I hear the voices of those who caution us that this is a dangerous precedent and that it could lead to future uses that are less appropriate, including its use against lawful demonstration. It falls to all of us in this place to ensure that this does not happen. New Democrats have been clear that we will not tolerate the inappropriate use of these additional powers by the government, and we are prepared to initiate their revocation at a moment's notice.

Turning to the larger context of this global pandemic in which we find ourselves, I want to acknowledge that, two years in, a lot of people are fed up. Some are angry and some are desperate. How could they possibly be otherwise? We must not allow ourselves to fall into thinking that these circumstances are any kind of normal. A situation that requires such broad and sweeping restrictions as have been necessary is not normal.

Over the past three weeks, I have heard from many constituents with strong feelings about the government's management of the

pandemic and about the matter before us today. I want to speak directly to them now. I hear them. I hear their frustration and anger with a government and a prime minister that they feel are out of touch with the challenges they are facing. I hear their concern that the federal government has not always been transparent or explained the evidence upon which pandemic measures are based. I hear their concern that certain measures have affected small businesses, especially small tourism businesses, in ways that go beyond what the pandemic relief programs have compensated for. I hear their concern about the mental health impacts of the pandemic.

For the small number of constituents who have chosen not to get vaccinated and who stand to lose their livelihoods in a few short months, I say this: I disagree with their choice, but I empathize with their predicament. One's livelihood is a sacred thing and governments should only interfere with it in the direst of circumstances. I continue to push for the government to provide greater clarity as to whether such measures remain necessary at this juncture of the pandemic.

I hear them.

I will end with an expression of gratitude. It is gratitude for the thousands of people in northwest B.C. who have sacrificed in small and large ways out of concern for the health and well-being of their neighbours, their loved ones, the elders in our community and our seniors. It is gratitude for the health care workers who, for two years, have gone to work every day in the face of a struggling health care system and who have shown themselves to be nothing short of heroes. It is gratitude to live in a country where this debate is possible, where checks and balances exist and where democracy is strong enough to stand up against threats to the fabric of our nation.

I reject the notion that we are more divided than ever. It is the social solidarity of Canadians and our care for each other that has allowed us to reach this point with so many fewer deaths per capita than many other countries. It is this care and concern for each other that I believe lies as the basis of our freedom as a people.

When I search for strength in the face of a difficult decision in this place, my mind turns to home. It turns to Skeena and the places that inspire, ground and motivate so many. I think of the Skeena River, flowing free to the Pacific Ocean. I think of the people. They are strong, caring and good people. I am so deeply honoured to speak on their behalf.

• (2215)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Madam Speaker, first of all, I want to thank my colleague for his speech, which clearly explained the balance between freedoms and social order. However, he criticizes the government for not having acted quickly enough.

Could my colleague tell me what he would say to those who believe that the actions of the last few days constitute a crackdown and a denial of the right to protest?

[English]

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Madam Speaker, I was referring to the police not acting quickly enough in the face of the occupation, not the government. I believe that other cities' police forces learned from the failures of the police here in Ottawa and that acting more swiftly, taking the security intelligence more seriously, could have avoided much of the disruption and unrest that has occurred over the past three weeks.

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Madam Speaker, I wonder if the member could share his thoughts on why the government delayed and took so long to act. They knew this risk was in Ottawa. They were staying in a hotel here. Why did they not go out, question them, bring them in and have a chat with them?

Why does he think they stopped at that point and just ignored it for three weeks?

• (2220)

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Madam Speaker, it is clear that when it comes to illegal protests, protests that disrupt the flow of traffic and major roadways, and those sorts of matters, enforcing the statutes and laws in the city and in the province falls to the local police authorities.

While I believe it is incumbent on the Prime Minister and, in fact, all of us in this House to listen to people with a wide range of views and to consider what they have to say, I believe that very early on it was up to the police to intervene and to uphold social order in this city and across the country.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I very much enjoyed my colleague's speech.

I understand that there is some ambiguity and that this situation is not easy. We have a choice to make right now. This is emergency legislation that has been applied three times in the country's entire history. We are not voting on just any bill. The motion we are debating is important. We have to weigh the pros and the cons.

However, since the act was invoked a week ago, the situation on the ground has changed a lot. I heard one of his colleagues, the member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie say on Thursday on television in Quebec that if the situation changed in such a way that there would no longer be any protesters in Ottawa, the NDP might reconsider its decision to support the government on this legislation.

Does my colleague think that the situation has changed enough for the NDP to change its position?

[English]

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Madam Speaker, I am not sure if this came through in the translation, but I think I heard him say that the Emergencies Act has only been applied a few times in our history. To be clear, this is the first time that it has been applied. The War Measures Act is a very different piece of legislation. I could be mistaken there, but that is my understanding.

To his question about how these powers are applied, I want to assure him that should we support this, we will do it very reluctantly.

Statutory Order

I do not want to see these extra powers used one day longer than is necessary. We are going to be watching very carefully, holding the government accountable. We will revoke those powers at a moment's notice. I count on him to work with us in such a situation.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, I want to begin by informing you that I will be sharing my time with my esteemed colleague from Beauport—Limoilou.

The situation is serious. People are concerned. They are contacting us. I have received all sorts of messages. The vast majority are from people asking us not to support this special legislation. People are saying that they do not want us to support this unacceptable law.

We have also received messages from people asking how they can support the protesters. Those messages are fewer in number, but we have received some. Still other messages ask me how I can abandon people who are fighting for their freedom. These messages are coming from all over, but these people all have one thing in common. They are all worried and unhappy with the situation.

Let us ask ourselves why. How did we get to the point where our society has become so divided? I am sure that all my colleagues in the House are also receiving all kinds of messages. We are doing our best to answer them. We are explaining our positions. Generally, it is fine.

How did we get to this point? It is because we do not have a leader. The government is sowing division. Let me put it this way: The government had the audacity to use the collective distress of a certain group of people for political purposes, and it let those people settle in.

We could have handled the situation differently. It is always easier to say that in hindsight, of course, but we know it can be done. We have seen it elsewhere.

What did it take? It took a leader. What is the difference between Quebec City and Ottawa? Earlier, someone said that other cities had learned from Ottawa's experience. Beyond that, Quebec City had the benefit of a mayor and a premier who spoke to each other, created a crisis task force, coordinated police forces and recognized the demonstrators' right to protest. These things were completely missing in Ottawa. Ironically enough, the most reviled of those people were the ones who protested the longest. I am not saying whether they were right or wrong. I am speaking to the heart of the issue.

How can someone who is the Prime Minister, the head of state, throw fuel on the fire right from the outset and insult Canadians? Perhaps the Prime Minister did not agree with their message, but these people are Canadians.

A head of state must be able to calm things down. I am not talking about giving in either, but, first of all, he should not have insulted people. Second, why not at least meet with the truckers' official representatives? This has been mentioned several times in the debates. Ninety per cent of them are vaccinated too. For the most part, they did not agree with the protest. The Prime Minister did not meet with anyone.

Statutory Order

Every time there is a crisis, this Prime Minister hides and waits for things to blow over. In times of crisis, the 338 elected members of the House of Commons have a collective duty to come together and work for the common good. To do that, something has to happen. Someone has to be willing to talk to us. We cannot always be dealing people who only want to score political points.

That just does not work. We all saw the images from yesterday and today. I want to once again commend the police forces, because this is not an easy job. It is unfortunate that it has come to this. Everyone finds this sad.

How could the government allow the entire city to be occupied for 23 days? Think of Ottawa's residents and small businesses. We abandoned them.

Being Prime Minister is not about recognition. It is not about having an illustrious title and another trophy on the shelf.

● (2225)

Being prime minister is fraught with consequences. It comes with a very heavy burden. One must be worthy of the position. I am sad to say that no one saw the Prime Minister for three weeks. What happened? He went into hiding, hoping this would pass. It was not the first time this has happened.

Someone else mentioned this earlier today. I remember the blockades in support of the Wet'suwet'en Nation that took place not too long ago. No one talks about it, because it happened before COVID-19. It is as though we have forgotten everything before COVID-19.

Obviously, we are talking about two completely different types of protests. I am not trying to lump them together or draw a comparison. However, I remember that the blockades began in one place, but the government did absolutely nothing. Nothing happened. Our Prime Minister was in Africa, trying to win votes for Canada to get a seat at the UN. He never got it. He did not care about what was going on at home. He came back 10 days later. The crisis had grown, and it was much more difficult to manage.

We proposed solutions. We proposed that law enforcement, the RCMP, be withdrawn. We also proposed negotiations. In the beginning, the government wanted nothing to do with our proposals. What did it ultimately do to resolve the crisis? The government listened to the Bloc Québécois' recommendations.

I am very disappointed to say that this time no one listened to us at all. During the early days of the crisis, we called for the party leaders to meet. We also called for the creation of a crisis task force and a committee. There needs to be a discussion. Something needs to happen. We need to talk to our constituents, who are fed up and can no longer cope with the restrictions that have been in place for two years. That is the real situation. That is what happened.

I have a feeling—and it is just a feeling, not something I know for sure—but when I look at this from an outside perspective, I wonder why not let a demonstration go on in my capital in front of Parliament. It would make people unhappy and perhaps cause division within some of the opposition parties where there is some tension. It worked to some extent. After that, the protesters will get tired and leave. If they do not, then the government can intervene

and will come across looking strong. That was an error in judgment.

What consequences did waiting have? More people ended up coming and sticking around. Everything ended up being blockaded. It was at that point that the blockades at the Ambassador Bridge and the borders started.

Suddenly, there was a dramatic turn of events. The Prime Minister got a call from the U.S. President. I am not sure if my colleagues know this, but almost \$400 million worth of goods move across the Ambassador Bridge every day. If Ottawa residents have to put up with honking for a month, then that is no big deal. I am not saying that the bridge used for commerce should be left blocked, but I am drawing a parallel between the two.

The Prime Minister got a call from the U.S. President. Thrown into a panic, our poor Prime Minister started saying that this had to stop. That is when the police moved in, without using the Emergencies Act. That is the big difference. We did not need this law.

The same thing could have been done in the City of Ottawa. After it has dragged on for more than 20 days, it is much more difficult to move. We saw it in the last few days. It was predictable. This is a sad situation. It should not have gotten to this point. People have the right to protest, but they need to follow the rules while doing it. People have the right to protest, but they cannot occupy a city for a month. People have the right to go about their lives. This is not right.

Caught in a bind, the Liberals came up with a way to help the government and the Prime Minister save face by invoking this law as a publicity stunt. This is the first time that this has happened since 1988. In fact, this law has never been invoked before. Personally, I am deeply disturbed that it was invoked this time.

Of course, today's law is not the same as the 1970 law. I will not conflate the two. What bothers me a lot is that this sets a precedent. Now whenever a government gets into a political tight spot, it will use this law. What will happen five or 10 years from now, when another government, regardless of its political stripe, wants to use it? That is the question, and that is why we will be voting against it.

● (2230)

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Madam Speaker, my colleague does not seem to understand that governments do not direct the police.

Does my colleague realize that what we have seen and experienced is part of a something bigger than mandatory vaccination for truckers?

We already met with the convoy organizers two years ago. They came here with their trucks to protest the carbon tax.

Does my colleague also know that the Canada Unity Facebook page was created two years ago?

Does he not believe that we may be facing a movement that goes beyond the very narrow main objective mentioned during the protest, which was for the government to lift vaccination requirements for truckers?

Statutory Order

Mr. Yves Perron: Madam Speaker, I am well aware that the Prime Minister is not the one who manages the police.

I would like to ask my colleague a question in return. Does he understand that sometimes it would be nice to have a leader who can bring people together?

The person leading a country needs to talk to people. The member is saying that the government talked to the protesters two years ago, but I think it could have talked to them again this time.

My colleague is asking whether I am aware of what this organization is involved in. We know all that, and I hope that the speech I gave earlier was not misinterpreted. That was not the issue. The reason this happened is that the government failed to take action for 23 days.

• (2235)

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the member a question, but I also have a comment.

We often hear the Liberals say that the government does not direct the police. In reality, section 5 of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act clearly states that the Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, under the direction of the minister, has the control and management of the force and all matters connected with the force. Those are the exact words used in the act.

Therefore, the government cannot say that the police must do everything while it does nothing. Ultimately, it is up to the government to direct them and tell them what the purpose of public management of police operations is.

I would like my colleague from the Bloc to explain to us why the government is trying to suggest that it will do nothing and that the law just magically gets enforced.

Mr. Yves Perron: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. I agree with him.

I will again draw a comparison to how things work in Quebec. The Premier of Quebec did not control the Quebec City police. He met with the mayor to talk about what they would do and how they would organize everything. It is just about getting out in front of a situation, trying to plan and, of course, getting people together.

My Conservative colleague made a very good point. That impulse has to come from somewhere.

[English]

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I know I have not been able to be present for 100% of the debate here, but there is something that I have never heard from the Bloc Québécois members: an expression of concern for the people of Gatineau and elsewhere in the Outaouais, many of whom work in Ottawa and have lost jobs because businesses have closed down, public transit routes have been disrupted and the bridges have been clogged. It seems to me a bit curious that the Bloc Québécois members never talk about the people of the Outaouais, and the inconveniences and struggles they have faced during the lockdown in Ottawa.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron: Madam Speaker, I am not sure I understand. The question was not very clear.

Is he suggesting members of the Bloc Québécois never talk about the people of the Outaouais?

The people of the Outaouais most certainly were inconvenienced by blocked bridges. Of course there are people with family and friends on the Ottawa side.

However, it was downtown Ottawa that was occupied. The horns were blaring in downtown Ottawa. That is why we have been talking more about Ottawa. We are in Parliament, which is in Ottawa, and the trucks were here in front of Parliament.

I hope the member is not suggesting that we do not care about Quebec because that would be an ill-advised suggestion.

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulin, BQ): Madam Speaker, on Friday, I listened to my colleagues for nine hours. Today, I have been listening to them all day right from 7 a.m., even though I went to bed at 3 a.m. because I was writing this speech, and even though I will be here until midnight.

I have noticed the extent to which the polarization that I see on social media has crept into the House. I had difficulty writing this speech, which says a lot, because anyone observing me even a little in the House knows that I am constantly writing.

It is difficult to find the words to avoid polarization with all these emotions present. Emotions are running high, and I am hearing a lot of heated comments in the House at present.

It was not easy to write this speech because the invocation of the Emergencies Act is a historic event that will set the bar for its invocation in the future. Therefore, it is vital that we ensure that its use will not be taken lightly in the future just because it has been taken lightly today.

Canada has experienced some very dangerous, critical and urgent situations. Almost all of my colleagues have mentioned the Oka crisis, the rail blockades in 2020, the Caledonia crisis, September 11 and COVID-19.

I want to make one thing clear right now. I never have and never will have sympathy for extremists, on either the right or the left. I have never had sympathy for hate speech or threats. I was outraged and shocked to see Nazi and Confederate flags. I felt sick with anger. I will never minimize threats that someone may receive. I have been threatened myself after a member of Parliament spoke to the media and shared misinformation regarding a vote in committee.

All day yesterday, I responded to hundreds of emails, and every single one of them was calling on us not to enforce the Emergencies Act. I was getting emails not only from my constituents, but also from people in Calgary, Vancouver, Burnaby, Prince George, Toronto, Winnipeg, Montreal, Quebec City, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and even Ottawa. The people of Ottawa have been most affected by this situation. All that was missing were some emails from Prince Edward Island.

Statutory Order

This legislation scares them very much, and they have the right to be listened to, to be heard and to get answers. Section 3 of the Emergencies Act states that the government must demonstrate that there is a dangerous and urgent situation that cannot be effectively dealt with ordinary laws. However, the order does not demonstrate that existing intervention powers are inadequate.

In other places, law enforcement used the tools it was supposed to use, municipal bylaws, highway traffic acts and the Criminal Code. That is what should have been done here from the start. Some might say that there was no way to predict the future or know what was going to happen.

Of course Ottawa served as an example to others, but Ottawa was indeed aware of the situation. Many of my colleagues in the House of Commons mentioned that extremist groups have been on social media for two years. They also mentioned that on social media and in the media, there was talk of a convoy 70 kilometres long. The warning went out one week before the convoy arrived, which should have been enough time to plan and figure out how to contain the situation before it got out of hand the way it did. This type of action is possible through coordination, teamwork, the creation of an emergency response team, collaboration and visionary leadership.

The Prime Minister also explained to the House and in documents attached to the motion that he feared that other blockades would go up elsewhere in Canada, given the associations and the mobilization that is possible on social media. However, the act makes it clear that it must be invoked not based on hypothetical events, but on the presence of real danger.

● (2240)

The act is to be used when the police are unable to enforce the laws and bylaws available. Right now, I feel that the act is more of a positive move than a reasonable one. A reasonable move would have been to recognize that the problem lies primarily in Ottawa and not elsewhere in the country.

Several incidents have been cited in the House to persuade us that the Emergencies Act is necessary. On February 17, the theft of a trailer full of weapons in Peterborough was mentioned. At 1:55 p.m. that day, the member for Parkdale—High Park drew a connection between that theft and the protest that was going on at the time in Quebec City. That was on February 17. However, the trailer was found on February 16. It was wrong to couple the two together. That is misinformation. This incident cannot be used to support the invocation of the act.

On the same day, the crane truck that was parked in front of the Prime Minister's office was considered a threat. It is no longer there now, but if it was a threat, why was it not moved from the start? The Criminal Code is clear. Paragraphs 423(1)(a) to 423(1)(g) of the Criminal Code deal with such incidents, threats and intimidation. The vehicle already would have had to be moved under the existing Criminal Code and Highway Traffic Act.

Members talked about the threats in the videos. I saw those videos, and I did not like what I saw. My colleague talked about this earlier. We have known about some of these Facebook groups

for two years. I cannot understand why they were not shut down in accordance with the Criminal Code.

I know of seven sections of the Criminal Code that could have been used to silence the people who made those videos and bring them to justice because what they were doing was illegal: paragraph 261(1)(a); subsection 423(1), which I talked about earlier; subsection 46(2); subsections 59(1) to 59(3), paragraphs 63(1)(a) and 63(1)(b); and subsection 72(1). There are plenty of them.

For money coming from the United States and possibly, according to sources, from extremist supremacist groups, sections 83.02, 83.03 and 83.04 of the Criminal Code cover that. Section 83.11 says that banks can freeze assets. We had all the legislative tools we needed to address the crisis before it turned into a 23-day occupation.

To sum up, all law enforcement needed was coordination and the ability to call in tow trucks. The Criminal Code covers that too. With a court order or an order from the Attorney General, the tow trucks would have had no choice but to act, and they would have been supported.

In a crisis, we must all weigh our words and our actions carefully, whether we are MPs, the Prime Minister, law enforcement officers, mayors, municipal councillors or protesters. During a crisis, we must take the time to balance our emotional and rational selves. Too much of one or the other is not a good thing. Inaction can be just as damaging as sudden or extreme action. On both sides of this issue, consultation, collaboration and coordination between the various police forces were possible without applying the Emergencies Act. It took planning and leadership.

It was possible to arrest people who threatened others without applying the Emergencies Act. It was possible to arrest the ringleaders without applying the Emergencies Act. I could go on much longer. I have another two pages of examples.

The police asked for help as far back as February 7 and 11. Leadership and consultation are what this protest needed, and that is what police forces are providing right now.

● (2245)

We do not need to create a precedent.

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her speech.

[English]

The member referenced a number of provisions of the Criminal Code, and one that has come up repeatedly in today's debate, particularly from the official opposition and supported by the Bloc, is in section 129 of the Criminal Code. I have looked at this provision and thought about it. This provision is about an omission. It is about someone failing to assist a peace officer, and it allows for that person to be charged with an offence. There is an exclusion in the provision if that person who is not co-operating with the peace officer has a reasonable excuse.

To my mind, and I think to most legal analysts, when somebody receives a death threat, as has been evidenced by an Ottawa tow truck company that was accused of helping with the towing of a protester's truck, that would constitute a reasonable excuse.

I put it to the member opposite that we do not compel people to co-operate with peace officers in other investigations, such as when someone witnesses a gang shooting or a mafia-related incident. We do not arrest those individuals; we come up with other means to ensure their participation.

That is what—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I was trying to give the member a signal. There are other people who want to ask questions.

The hon. member for Beauport—Limoilou.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: Madam Speaker, my question is this: Did the tow truck drivers go in alone? I understand that some were afraid. I understand that, hence the importance of the words “consultation” and “collaboration” with law enforcement. They both needed to work together, as they did over the past two days, even if it meant getting help from the RCMP, from Toronto and other neighbouring cities, which is what happened in the end. By working together from the start, a lot of mistakes could have been avoided.

I understand that people were afraid of getting death threats. I have been on the receiving end, and it is not pleasant.

• (2250)

[English]

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her remarks. She made a number of very important points.

The first is that there are other legal tools in place. The government does not need to bring in the Emergencies Act every time there is a need for law enforcement action. The Emergencies Act has not been used since 1988. Obviously this country has faced blockades, standoffs and occupations as well as very violent situations and terrorist attacks in the intervening years, yet this is the first time the Emergencies Act has been used.

The member also correctly talked about how the Prime Minister could have sought to defuse the situation. I note the dramatic difference in the rhetoric being used today, the demonization of those with different points of view, from what the Prime Minister said two years ago about another set of blockades, when he said that it was important to talk to people, to listen and to try to come to an understanding.

It looks like the Prime Minister is using a hammer on those who have a political perspective that is different from his own, a hammer that is uniquely reserved for those with those kinds of perspectives. I wonder if the member could comment on that.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: Madam Speaker, I always try to avoid conflating issues as much as possible.

Statutory Order

I think there were other ways to deal with the situation we were facing, besides invoking the Emergencies Act. Doing nothing was certainly not the way to get people to leave.

Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have heard other Bloc Québécois members say this was not an emergency. I disagree.

When occupiers hold Ottawa residents hostage to the point where they are afraid to leave their homes for weeks, that is an emergency situation.

Would my colleague agree that this is an emergency situation and that we need to act now to ensure that it is treated as such?

Mrs. Julie Vignola: Madam Speaker, as I was saying in my speech yesterday and today, I listened to the debate.

There is ample agreement that the situation was urgent. However, where we do not agree on the act is that there is no national crisis. This is a local crisis. That is the difference.

[English]

Mr. Darrell Samson (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Veterans Affairs and Associate Minister of National Defence, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to speak in this historic debate on the declaration of an emergency.

I want to begin by saying that two long years with the COVID pandemic and now omicron have been difficult. They have shaped our lives over the last two years. It has taken a toll on work and how we talk to people and how we meet people. It has been very challenging. I want to say that up front, and I want to thank Canadians and thank Nova Scotians for their work and their contributions.

March 13, 2020, is the day we returned home from Parliament when the world seemed to have changed overnight. Let us be honest: Over three million Canadians lost their jobs in a very short period of time, and we knew as a government that we had to respond quickly. First and foremost, this was a pandemic, a health issue, and we wanted to, and would, work closely with the experts in public health. As a government, we would cut red tape and create programs in record time. We would work together across party lines and we would help Canadians. That was the objective from day one.

Statutory Order

Our government made promises that we would be there for Canadians, that we would have their backs. We did, and we will continue to do so until this is over. Programs for helping Canadians, such as the CERB and the wage and the rent subsidies, have been successful. When it came to getting tests, PPE, gowns and gloves, we were quick to produce those. We even asked our own business owners to help us produce those products, which they did, and I want to thank them for that. When it came to the vaccines, we were quick to procure those, and we had them in the arms of people much more quickly than anticipated. When the provinces needed help for health care and education, we were again very quick to respond, investing \$19 billion for a safe restart agreement and creating the safe return to class fund. The federal government contributed eight out of every 10 dollars that were invested in the pandemic.

Canadians helped us a lot as well. They followed the health guidelines. They came together to help each other. They took their vaccines when they were able to. We have the highest rate of vaccination in the world. I thank Canadians.

I know it has been two long years, and everyone is tired of COVID and the sacrifices they have made. People's lives were put on hold, and we all want to see COVID in the rear-view mirror. We know COVID has had a negative and significant impact on our health, including our economic health, our social health and our mental health. It has been very tough.

That is why it is important that we start looking at the restrictions, but let us keep in mind that most of those restrictions were put in place by provincial governments. Why? It was for good reason. The restrictions were dictated by the capacity on the ground, including the challenge in hospital beds, health care workers and frontline staff. I could go on. We noticed that we needed to continue to invest in supporting provinces in health care, and in other areas as well, but I am optimistic that we will soon see changes as we move forward and as we see more capacity in the hospitals with time.

We have already seen the easing of some restrictions. With respect to the travel restrictions, next month non-essential travel will be allowed for people who wish to do so. We will see the removal of quarantines while people are waiting for their test results. We will continue to be guided by data and circumstances on the ground. I refuse to let all that hard work go to waste. We just cannot drop the ball at the five-yard line.

● (2255)

The protests of the last three weeks have been very difficult. We witnessed the blockade associated with the convoy. I am a great believer in the right to protest and in respecting our rights under the charter, but this is not a peaceful protest. It is an occupation. It is controlled by individuals who want to overthrow an elected government.

Peaceful protest is not associated with symbols of hate and violence or the bullying and harassment of frontline workers. It is not about holding our city and infrastructure hostage and showing disrespect for our monuments or memorials. I watched the video of an individual dancing on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. It was very, very difficult to watch the disrespect. We were quick to put up fences to protect the monument from occupiers, but then I had to

watch, like many Canadians, a mob of people tear down the fencing.

I want to share a tweet from the Royal Canadian Legion: "The National War Memorial is a site of collective remembrance & must be treated with respect. The removal of protective barricades & the reported inaction by those charged with safeguarding this memorial is deeply disturbing. Those who sacrificed for our freedoms deserve better."

These actions do not reflect Canadian values. I reject the notion that this represents the will of the Canadian people. The more we learn about this occupation, the more disturbing elements we find.

Foreign actors are influencing and fuelling events on the ground, with 55% of the donors being American and 6% from other countries. Canadians represent 39% of the donors. Another very important fact is that 1,100 Americans who donated to the insurrection in the U.S. on January 6 also donated to the Canadian convoy occupation in Canada. This is not about truckers.

I also want to share with the House a joint statement by Canada's unions:

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 over the past thirteen days is something different altogether. This is not a protest, it is an occupation by an angry mob trying to disguise itself as a peaceful protest.

The statement goes on to say:

It is time for all levels of government to work together to help the people affected and put an end to this occupation of our nation's capital.

Invoking the Emergencies Act was necessary. For four weeks illegal disruption harmed our economy and endangered public safety. The people in Ottawa suffered for 23 days and counting. We needed to supplement provinces and territories with the authorities to address this challenge.

However, before launching into what the Emergencies Act will do, I want to talk about what it will not do. It will not take away the right to protest. It will not limit rights under the charter. It does not limit freedom of speech. There is no military involvement. It is reinforcing the principles and values of our institutions. It keeps Canada free. It is not the War Measures Act. It is much different.

The threats to the security of Canada are real. This group wanted to overthrow our leaders, our democratic government. Foreign money is influencing what is happening on the ground. Tracked and blocked foreign money is creating negative impacts on our economy and democracy.

The Emergencies Act will give the provinces and territories authority. It creates new authorities to regulate crowds, prohibit blockades and keep essential corridors open. Finally, it will mobilize essential services like tow trucks, which we did not have access to for a long time.

● (2300)

There are all kinds of declarations and clear oversight in this act. It takes in Parliament within seven days. We have the debate that we are having tonight, which is so important. We have a parliamentary committee that will provide oversight while emergencies are in effect. It will last 30 days or less. It can be revoked. What I find very interesting is it triggers an automatic inquiry. This will allow us to look back at all decisions.

I want to share some of the key things the acting chief of police, Steve Bell, and the mayor said. They said the Emergencies Act was very important for them to do their job. All three levels of authorities were needed to deliver what we are doing today. We know we have to now solve this as quickly as possible and this will allow us to do so.

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Madam Speaker, will this member speak on behalf of the Prime Minister and condemn what is happening in the B.C. Interior? There were 20 masked men armed with machetes and axes who attacked a group of pipeline workers causing millions of dollars in damage. Is he prepared, on behalf of the Liberal government, to condemn that type of activity?

● (2305)

Mr. Darrell Samson: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for that question, but we are focused on the issue today, which is the Emergencies Act. I want to remind my colleague that it is the Conservative Party, and I was listening earlier to the member for Louis-Saint-Laurent, who said that the interim leader is now saying that the truckers should leave. That is not what she said for the first two and a half weeks. She even wrote to the opposition leader of the day to tell him that it is the Prime Minister's problem and to go talk to them. A number of Conservatives were taking pictures and supporting this group. That is unacceptable. He should focus on what is at hand today.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Denis Garon (Mirabel, BQ): Madam Speaker, earlier the member for Lac-Saint-Louis told us that the opposition does not get it, and that the government did not control the police services, as if there was no middle ground between controlling the police services and taking action, as if the only option left was to use the emergency measures.

How is it that the Ottawa chief of police asked for 1,800 RCMP officers? How is it that the Government of Quebec, which manages public security, decided to go elsewhere? How is it that nobody understands anything except the Liberals?

Mr. Darrell Samson: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question. I always find it interesting to have discussions with him.

I would like to remind him that the Bloc Québécois needs to take a look in the mirror. It often claims to know the truth, but let us not forget that 72% of Quebecers are in favour of us applying the Emergencies Act. That is a sign that this party must keep in mind.

It is time to take action, and that is what the government is doing. We would like to have the support of the Bloc Québécois.

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[English]

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Madam Speaker, I have asked this question of others in this House, but I wanted to convey to him the comments I have received from many constituents who have noted the stark contrast between the way in which the Ottawa police responded to the convoy and the occupation, and the way in which indigenous people in northwest B.C. and across Canada are treated by police when they are protesting.

Could the member comment on whether he shares our concern on that contrast and whether he would support an independent public inquiry that would look into the way in which policing has been done over the past number of weeks in this situation?

Mr. Darrell Samson: Madam Speaker, first, I would like to say that I think there are a lot of people in Ottawa and across the country who are very disappointed with the way things unfolded with the police here locally. It took way too much time. We could have provided more tools earlier, I suspect.

The good thing about this Emergencies Act is that an automatic inquiry is embedded in it. That will allow us to reflect on what has transpired and how we can continue to do the work that needs to be done as parliamentarians.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I noted that my hon. friend from Sackville—Preston—Chezzetcook talked about foreign interference as though we were just talking about the flow of money in donations to the so-called “freedom convoy”. I wonder if he has turned his attention to foreign interference in the form of disinformation, largely emanating from Russian websites, social media activity, as well as that emanating from the U.S. Republican Party.

Mr. Darrell Samson: Madam Speaker, there are good people on both sides, the Conservatives and Trump, that is for sure. There was a flooding of 911 calls, most of them coming from the United States. As I said in my speech, 1,100 people who contributed to the insurrection in the U.S. contributed to this convoy. That tells us there has been a lot of involvement by a lot of right-wing people in this country and in the States.

● (2310)

Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.): Madam Speaker, there seem to be two conflicting views. One is that the convoy was all about vaccine mandates and personal freedoms. On the other hand, when listening to the leaders, it sounded like an insurrection, that they were coming with the intent of overthrowing the democratically elected government. The supporters of the protest, including the Conservatives, have either been naively blind to the fact that they were gamed by the true leaders of this, or they are wilfully blind to the evidence that those leaders presented. What are your thoughts on that?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am not going to tell you what my thoughts are, but I will let the parliamentary secretary do that.

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Mr. Darrell Samson: Madam Speaker, I am so proud of Canadians. We have over 80% double-vaccinated, which is very important. Some who have been vaccinated are very tired. I understand that people would like to get their lives back, but an organization that has as its main objective to overthrow the government, is unacceptable.

In my opinion, the Conservatives, looking at the interim leader's comments before she was interim leader, she told her leader to take pictures with these people and "Let this look like it's a Trudeau issue". That is unacceptable. That is a political game. That is all—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The parliamentary secretary cannot use the last name or first name of the Prime Minister.

I have another question. The hon. member for St. Albert—Edmonton.

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Madam Speaker, this legislation, the Emergencies Act, has been on the books for 34 years and it has never been invoked. The hon. member gave a 20-minute speech but not once did he talk about the legal threshold that must be satisfied, namely that the emergency is a situation that seriously threatens the ability of the Government of Canada to preserve the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of Canada.

Does he honestly believe that the situation in Ottawa met that threshold?

Mr. Darrell Samson: Madam Speaker, that is an easy question to answer. If the main objective is to overthrow a democratic government, that in itself indicates that sovereignty is in question. If people in Ottawa were afraid to leave their homes that is another very strong indicator. If the economy, our Canadian economy, is in trouble as well, that is a good indicator as well.

[Translation]

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, earlier, the Parliamentary Secretary referred to a poll.

Does he not get the impression that 72% of people were actually simply in favour of ending the protests because they have been going on for too long? Perhaps people got that impression because the government failed to take action for three weeks. I think that is what is happening.

I would like to hear what he has to say about that.

Mr. Darrell Samson: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

I understand Quebecers' hesitation given what they experienced in 1970. However, there is no doubt in my mind. As my colleague mentioned earlier, the people living in Gatineau and the Outaouais were also victims of this situation, just like the people of Ottawa. There is no doubt that this law is there for the governments that want to use it and that need it for a limited amount of time. If Quebec does not see it that way right now, that is fine.

[English]

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank anyone who is watching this now, at 11:15

p.m. We have been on this debate since 7 a.m., and I can say that, from participating in the debate and listening in since seven o'clock, I have heard a whole bunch of stories. Some were facts. Some were not facts. We have heard a lot of things.

The fact today is that it is my mother's birthday. To my mom, I would like to say "happy 81st birthday". I am sure that she loves that I have shared her age with everybody, but this is why I am here. I am here because of my family. I am here because of the families and the people across Canada. I will speak about the reasonable people I also represent.

I looked earlier at Twitter. My husband told me weeks ago to get off Twitter, because it never lets me sleep. To any of the members, to anybody out there, get off Twitter. If they want nightmares, just read Twitter.

I found one tweet today. It is from Aaron Wudrick. If anyone has been watching the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, he is a person I follow when we are talking about what is happening in the economy. Today, he talked about what is happening in the House of Commons. He said:

When I say I'm sympathetic to the goal of ending mandates, I get called an apologist for Nazis and insurrectionists. When I say that in spite of that sympathy I support the rule of law, I get called a globalist totalitarian libtard.

I apologize for any inappropriate language, but the fact is that no one is finding a side on this debate to land where they cannot look at the other person and say that they have a good point. Many of my colleagues today have made good points. Some of them I absolutely disagree with, but I believe that they have the right to their opinions, whether it is right or wrong. That is the fact.

I have been down here throughout this period of time and the biggest thing that I have found, even in trying to prepare my speech today, is that we cannot say anything right and we cannot say anything wrong without someone jumping on us. Every single parliamentarian here, every single politician or any leaders, every time we say something there is going to be somebody who will smack us down.

It was interesting, because prior to the protesters coming here on January 31, five days before, I did an interview with our local radio station. This would probably have been January 23. It was a month ago when we started talking about what this might look like. I said that I supported the trucker convoy and I supported the right to protest. However, we cannot question the fact that there are characters and actors out there who are not going to behave. We all know that. I do not think that anyone has seen a protest that has a large group of people where there has not been one small infraction.

We have talked about what these infractions look like. Being from Elgin—Middlesex—London, I can tell you that the last two years have been very difficult. It has been difficult for everybody, regardless of where they are living. We have seen this type of stuff happening in my riding since 2020. I think about things that happened in 2021, when the Prime Minister had gravel thrown at him by one of the protesters. We all agreed that it was wrong. That individual was apprehended and taken in.

This same protester was on our streets just a few days ago. I know him personally. What do I say about this protester? If he was listening today, which I do not think he is because I think he is in holdup, I would say to him that he has to step back and he has to listen. He has to be part of the conversation.

That is what I would like to say to the protesters who are going past that next step. If they want change, they will have to be part of the change. It is not always about getting exactly what they want.

That is the exact same thing that I have to say to the government. This is about finding a place of balance. We have listened to people. I have been called a racist, a misogynist and all of these wonderful names. When I called one of the members of the NDP out for that, she doubled down. That is not democracy. That is not the way we should be talking to other people. We are sitting here talking about what these “vile people” are saying outside, yet the same members of Parliament who are complaining about them are saying the exact same things inside this chamber today. They are calling us racists. They are calling us Nazis.

We will not get anywhere until we stop bullying one another and calling each other names. That is the bottom line to this.

No one planned to find a plan. I heard one of the guys, one of the members for whom I have great respect, and watched him open his arms and say that we thought the motion to say that they had a plan was going to fix everything.

• (2315)

It was not going to fix everything, but it was going to give a plan. It was going to give hope. The fact is that I saw an entire bench of members of Parliament of the government get whipped, instead of representing their people and saying, “My neighbour Johnny called me, and Johnny is tired. His son is tired and has missed two years of school. My sister is a mother, a single parent. She teaches kindergarten and has her own children.” We are forgetting about those people when we are in these discussions. We are forgetting that people are tired and that people do want hope.

I recognize that this is a critical mass. I recognize that with health care measures, we have to make sure they are measures. I am asking the government to show us the metrics, show us the measurements and give us some idea of what the long game looks like, because everybody is tired.

Last Monday, when we asked that question and we were denied it, the fact is that people were just looking for answers and solutions. That is where I am today, and I know that half of the members of Parliament in this place today are looking for the exact same thing. Unfortunately, I am saying only half, because I have listened to some of this crap that is being said to us today. I will be honest: I am ashamed when listening to some of this rhetoric. How can we expect people to be better?

I listened to the member of Parliament for Pickering—Uxbridge wanting to read out a horrible email she got because it was so visceral. I welcome that member to politics, because we always get those. I have had people tell me to grow a thick skin. I do not believe in having to grow a thick skin when in politics. It is about being a good person, for goodness' sake. Therefore, when somebody

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starts reading something into the record to say how badly they were treated, they are not trying to say, “look at me”. They are trying to pour on the gas and tell all the stuff they have been called.

I am concerned about where we are going. I am concerned, because I have been standing up for the rights of people. I am triple-vaccinated. I am proud of it, but I have been standing up for people in my riding, like a young woman I know who is 50 years of age. When she was young, she did have an interaction to a vaccination. She is scared of having another vaccination. I know her very well. She is scared of getting sick and missed Christmas with her family because there was somebody who was sick, and she did not want to make others sick. That is called personal responsibility, and I think that if we granted personal responsibility back to Canadians, they may just do that.

I look at my mom, who is 81 today, and I think of the fact that, when I come home from Ottawa, I have been sitting in an airport around hundreds of people and I have been on an airplane around hundreds of people. I take the first step and I choose not to go see my mom, because she is vulnerable. That is what Canadians do when they are given that sense of responsibility. We are losing that right now. We are losing this. The government has to tell us not to go see our moms. I am pretty sure this 50-year-old knows whether it is right or wrong to go see her mother, but we are being told by the government that this is the case.

I am going to end this with a simple story. I like to walk the streets of Ottawa. I do not mind walking by myself. I will not walk the streets of parts of my riding by myself, but when I am in Ottawa, I feel safe. My first week, when I was here, I dressed up every day, so I just looked like everybody else. Members would never find me all dressed up, but I wanted to look like everybody else because I was scared. I was worried about walking. Last week I started dressing normally and went back to being myself. Yesterday when I stopped and spoke to a guy who was in front of my apartment building, we talked for a few minutes. I finally asked him where he was from. He said he was from a little place outside of London. I said I was from London, and I asked him where. He said he was from Fingal. Fingal is where my brother plows the roads. Fingal is where my son has gone to see his friends.

We have to remember there is a whole bunch of regular people out there. We have to stop pushing them. We have to find solutions, and we have to do it now.

• (2320)

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it seems to be the Conservative position that, because they are regular people out there, we have to stop pushing them. Her colleague from Grande Prairie—Mackenzie gave a very emotional speech about regular people and how badly they were feeling, the name-calling that has gone on and the social marginalization, etc. Indeed, some members of this House may well be responsible for that name-calling, etc. One would wish that political discourse was a little more mature than that, but it is what it is.

However, there seems to be a very strange leap in logic from calling people names to supporting sedition, blockades and all of the police activities that have been required in order to just clear our streets.

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• (2325)

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Madam Speaker, we have just proven that we can actually have conversations, because I just heard a question from the member without being called any names. I thank that member.

The fact of what he is referring to, when we are looking at this, is that there is nobody here saying that we approve of the blockades. It is just being said we have. When I say there are regular people out there, I have never said that everybody is regular. I am saying the majority of people out there protesting, or that were out there protesting before these new measures came in, were just absolutely normal people.

There are always going to be those people. No matter what kind of protest, there are always going to be those individuals. That is something I am very concerned with.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ): Madam Speaker, I really liked my colleague's speech because he was calm and he distinguished between people who commit reprehensible acts and those who do not.

We have known about these reprehensible and the identities of the perpetrators for some time. Instead of invoking the Emergencies Act, what measures does he believe should be applied to those who were involved?

[English]

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Madam Speaker, it is exactly what she has asked. One of the biggest questions I had today was about how I was going to write my speech without just pointing my finger in blame. It is really easy to blame people in this situation.

We know things should have been done 23 days ago. We know that the intel was there over 30 days ago. I spoke to a person that I have great respect for today. The police are doing a job, not because it is violent out there and there is criminal activity. They are doing a job because we are in a political crisis right now. That is the job they are doing. We have angry Canadians out there, and we are in a political crisis because of the leadership.

What would I do? I would start being a leader. That is what I expect from the government.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to start by wishing my hon. colleague's mother a very happy birthday. I want to thank her for what I consider a measured speech. I must say I have always respected the tone that she brings to the House and the reasonableness and decorum that she shows. I want to thank her for that.

I want to shift gears a bit. About a week before the opposition day motion calling for a plan to end mandates, I gave a speech in the House that talked about the unfortunate polarity in our country between pro-vax and anti-vax, and how I really thought that two years into this pandemic that really does not work anymore. There are a lot of Canadians who have legitimate questions about this. Rather than end mandates, we should question every single public policy that we have right now, based on the data and science, and determine whether or not it is valid, and make changes if possible.

Would the member agree with me on that? Does she think that is something we should be looking at as a country going forward?

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Madam Speaker, it is easy to say I absolutely agree with him. This is what we should be doing. We should be working together and looking at solutions. I would sit down with that member any day, as part of representing our caucus, and everybody else, to move forward.

I know there are members on all sides who want to just see peace in this country again. It should not be about beliefs. It should not be about being vaccinated or unvaccinated. That is not what we should be doing. We should be worrying about the safety of all Canadians and the security of this country, not what the Liberal government has created.

• (2330)

Mr. Len Webber (Calgary Confederation, CPC): Madam Speaker, here we are this evening, debating the invoking of the Emergencies Act. It definitely is something I thought we would not be debating just three weeks ago. Like all Canadians, I expected that proper leadership would rise up and deal with this situation long ago, and of course that did not happen with the Liberal government and the Prime Minister. Instead, we are here debating this matter because of this gross lack of leadership. Instead of leadership that would bring us closer together and closer to a solution, we have a prime minister focused on inflaming the situation with reckless name-calling, provocation, division, smearing and dismissive attitude.

Before I get to my comments on the act, I want to make it clear that I strongly support the rights of all Canadians to peacefully and lawfully protest. I have never supported and will never support law-breaking in the name of protesting. Our society rests on the rule of law, and it must always be this way. There are plenty of ways to lawfully and effectively protest. I also believe protests are about having one's message heard, not destroying our economy and the lives of our fellow citizens while doing so. One only need look at the debates in this House, the media coverage, social media and the like to see that their message was heard long ago, and now it is time for the protesters to go home. It looks like they have gone. I have not looked outside recently, but I guess we will see what happens in the next few days.

However, we must remember that if people feel they are not heard, they will not listen. It is as simple as that. Protests are about being heard, not necessarily getting their way. Governments have a responsibility to listen to protesters, but no obligation to concede to their demands. Like any debate, including those in this House, we have the right to be heard, but not a right to get our desired result.

Canadians are justifiably concerned about the implementation of the Emergencies Act and how it will affect them. A lack of details about this legislation, its implementation and how it will be used is causing great angst for many, and understandably so.

Like almost everything since the beginning of this pandemic, the lack of a coherent, long-term plan from the Liberal government has resulted in Canadians living with an unacceptable level of uncertainty. It is hurting our economy and, more importantly, it is hurting our mental health. This is not the first protest in Canada, and it will not be the last. Canadians have always cherished their right to protest peacefully. Unfortunately, not all protests start or end peacefully, and we have many laws on the books to deal with these situations.

One way or another, police have found a way to end these protests with the tools already available to them. Even now, as we debate the use of the Emergencies Act, the Liberal government has still failed to explain why existing laws are not sufficient to deal with this situation. The Emergencies Act is an important and necessary legislative tool to have on the books. However, it is only meant to be used when existing legislation is insufficient to get the job done.

This subject has generated significant mail to my offices, and I am sure to all of my colleagues' offices as well. I would like to share some of them, as I think it is important that my constituents are heard in their own words.

Leanne said in a letter to the Prime Minister, and copied it to me, "While I can understand your frustration with some of the actions of the 'freedom convoy' protests, your actions go much too far."

Joe, in my riding, said in a letter to the Prime Minister, copied to me, "Even if you truly believe that these measures are justified now, have you considered what kind of precedent you're setting? When protestors were burning churches and committing other hate crimes last summer, would you have supported a call to freeze the bank accounts of Indigenous activists? What will you say if a future federal government bans crowdfunding by Black Lives Matter protestors?"

"Do you really want to be remembered as the Prime Minister who made it 'normal' for Canadian governments to take these actions against any protest movement that they disagree with?"

"Canada must remain a country where people of all viewpoints can protest freely, regardless of whether the people currently in power happen to agree with them."

"Step back, Prime Minister. You've gone too far."

● (2335)

Lorne said, "I do not believe the Prime Minister when he states this will be a measured and time limited response. This is the foot in the door to allow him or any standing government to overstep their authority in order to control Canadian citizens."

Nick said, "There is no need to escalate what is currently a civil, peaceful, legal protest, albeit with vehicles illegally parked and ticketed causing disruption to traffic, daily life and commerce in a small area. There is a practical political solution. I say: Do NOT ratify the imposition of the Emergencies Act."

As Beau pointed out, "section 3 of the Emergencies Act spells out the circumstances under which it may be invoked. These are: a) a national emergency that 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) a national emergency that seriously threatens the ability of the Government of Canada to preserve the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of Canada.

"Neither of these conditions are met.... By invoking the federal Emergencies Act in the complete absence of any reasonable justification, [the Prime Minister] is setting a dangerous precedent that threatens the right of all Canadians to peaceful assembly and association or protest."

I could go on for hours, literally, with the hundreds of letters I have received, and I have read them all. I have had only one letter, just a single letter, that supports the Liberal government's intentions. Remarkably, the Prime Minister and the Liberal government have united Canadians on this one issue: not to use the Emergencies Act like this. They should not use it now.

I am deeply concerned that using this legislation will normalize its use every time we have a few hundred protesters. This poses a direct threat to all Canadians in the future, when a government uses a hammer to deal with a fly. Once we cross this line and use the Emergencies Act, it will make it politically easier for any future government to do the same. I truly expect we will see it used again by this very government. Will it be used and abused against indigenous protests in the future? Will it be used and abused against environmental protesters in the future? Will it be used and abused against those protesting religious issues, immigration issues, race issues, global issues or taxation? I bet it will.

No matter where we sit on the political spectrum or where we sit on an issue, we ought to be united in our concern to protect the right to lawfully protest, the right to be heard.

Canadians cannot afford to build and entrench measures that silence Canadians, when democratic governments around the world should be striving to do a better job of listening to their citizens. Governments often limit activities over time, but rarely do they go the opposite way. If we lose something to the state today, we will likely not get it back any time soon.

I have listened. I have heard my constituents, and I certainly will not be voting for the use of the Emergencies Act at this time. To my colleagues in the NDP caucus, I will let them know that many NDP supporters in my riding have written to me in dismay at their party supporting this legislation. They realize the dangerous precedent this would set, and they are deeply concerned about this passing. They are concerned—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member's time is up. I am sure he will be able to add more during questions and comments.

Statutory Order

The hon. member for Lac-Saint-Louis.

• (2340)

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia (Lac-Saint-Louis, Lib.): Madam Speaker, one of the letters the hon. member read, from one of his constituents, implied very strongly that what we saw for the last three weeks in the streets of Ottawa was a legitimate protest. The leaders of the protest have contended they were just exercising their charter rights.

Does the member agree that this was an illegal protest, which was what prompted the police action? Why is the official opposition not more critical of the leadership of this illegal protest?

Mr. Len Webber: Madam Speaker, I want to continue my comments here before I quickly answer the member's question.

First of all, to my NDP colleagues, my constituents are concerned that this will set a dangerous precedent, and they are really not impressed at all. While many NDP supporters in my riding have made it very clear to me in the past that they do not support the policies of my party on this matter, they are very appreciative of our responsible and principled decision. Will my NDP colleagues in the House do the same?

Regarding the member's question, while I can understand your frustration with some of the actions of this "freedom convoy" protest, your actions go much too far with the Emergencies Act. Freezing the bank accounts of anyone who participates in this protest or cancelling a person's insurance, even if that person is completely non-violent, and without a court order no less, is fundamentally incompatible with the liberal democratic values that Canada is supposed to stand for.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry, but we have a point of order.

Mr. Francis Scarpaleggia: Madam Speaker, the hon. member has completely ignored my question and—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): That is not a point of order. That would be a point of debate.

I do want to remind the member for Calgary Confederation that he is to address the questions and comments through the Chair and not directly to the members.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Berthier—Maskinongé.

Mr. Yves Perron (Berthier—Maskinongé, BQ): Madam Speaker, we often hear the Liberals say that they want to help, that they are proactive and so forth.

I would like my colleague to comment on the fact that, when the Ottawa Police Service requested 1,800 additional officers, the federal government sent in only 275 RCMP officers and only 20 of them were assigned to the protests.

Would responding to that request not have been a much more practical way of supporting the city?

[*English*]

Mr. Len Webber: Madam Speaker, there are absolutely good points to these questions, and I thank the member for these points.

The bottom line is that the current thresholds of the Emergencies Act have not been met in this current situation, and I would hope the member does know that. That is the message I am leaving here to all the members in the House. I clearly object to the motion and the declaration of emergency. We must use prudence and tolerance over power and force.

Mr. Randall Garrison (Esquimalt—Saanich—Sooke, NDP): Madam Speaker, I very much appreciated the hon. member expressing clearly that he did not support illegal activities, but I wonder how he can gloss over the very frequent intimidation of businesses in Ottawa that were attempting to enforce mask mandates, or how he can endorse incidents like the one where one of my staff members was prevented from boarding the train to go home until he removed his mask.

This was not, by and large, a peaceful protest in downtown Ottawa. How is the member able to ignore the intimidation that resulted in the closure of over half the businesses in downtown Ottawa?

Mr. Len Webber: Madam Speaker, I absolutely do not endorse any of those actions, but let me summarize what a constituent has seen throughout this whole process.

Her name is Kirsten, and she said, "A group of Canadian citizens has a case they want to bring up with their Prime Minister, but he won't listen to them because they disagree with him. So they decide to bring the message personally to him and they are cheered on their way by other citizens. They come to Ottawa, but he still won't hear their case. He lets them wait for a couple of weeks at which point the neighbourhood where they are waiting gets irritated and wants them out."

Perhaps because some of the experiences—

• (2345)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I am sorry, but we have a point of order.

[*Translation*]

The hon. member for Beauport—Limoulin on a point of order.

Mrs. Julie Vignola: Madam Speaker, someone has their microphone switched on or there is something rubbing on a microphone which is preventing the interpreters from doing their job properly. It must be really tough to be hearing that this late at night.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There seem to be some people speaking right behind me. I hope they can be told to go talk somewhere else.

[*English*]

The time is up.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I guess the political left does not want to defund the police anymore.

This summer, I was at a friend's party and met a young couple who were in the process of making dramatic last-minute changes to their wedding plans. They had been planning to get married in the beautiful century-old Catholic church that was the heart and soul of the community of Morinville, Alberta. It was the church in which she had grown up. However, the church had been burned to the ground a few weeks before in a likely act of arson, protest and terror.

Morinville is about a 45-minute drive from where I live. On the morning after that fire, I drove out to see the situation. When I got there, the fire was still burning. While I watched, local fire crews had to do the painful work of knocking down parts of the structure to preserve public safety and avoid the risk of further spread. In addition to the threat of a burning building, there was also a gas line under the church and apartments nearby. Although no one was hurt in this attack, the additional risk of an explosion and risk to human life were very significant.

This violent and dangerous act in Morinville was not an isolated incident. In the summer of last year, acts of arson destroyed more than a dozen churches of various denominations, with innumerable other acts of vandalism or attempted violence happening as well. The Prime Minister answered a question from the media about what happened in Morinville, but did not proactively issue a single statement about this wild rampage of destruction in western Canada. The Prime Minister's close friend and former adviser Gerry Butts called these acts "understandable".

Two days ago, there was an extremely violent attack on a Coastal GasLink pipeline work site in B.C. The responding RCMP officers were blocked from entering the road by spiked boards, downed and tarred stumps and trees lit on fire and had smoke bombs and flaming sticks thrown at them. Meanwhile, additional violent protesters broke into the work site armed with axes and flare guns. These protesters toppled heavy machinery, cut fuel lines and smashed site vehicles and set them on fire with workers still inside.

On this incident, the public safety minister said, "I'm deeply concerned to hear reports of violent confrontations at a work site". I would say respectfully to the minister that this was not a matter of violent confrontation; it was a premeditated violent attack on working people who were just trying to do their jobs.

What is the climate in which such acts of violence against places of worship and energy workers have come to take place here in Canada? The much-venerated David Suzuki has said that pipelines will be "blown up". The current sitting Minister of Environment in the Liberal government once attacked the home of Alberta's then premier Ralph Klein. He climbed on the roof of his private home as part of an activist stunt, apparently terrifying the premier's wife, who was home alone at the time. Other members of the House, including the former leader of the Green Party and the former NDP MP who is now the mayor of Vancouver, have been arrested for more benign acts of law-breaking.

I believe in the rule of law. The rule of law means that everyone is equally bound and protected by law. Whether they are sitting in a protest camp on Wellington Street or sitting in the federal cabinet, whether they drive a truck to work or work in the federal public service or whether they belong to a populist pro-Trump movement

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or a democratic socialist climate alarmist movement, such people have an obligation to follow the law and also have a right to be protected by it. When the law is selectively applied to penalize people based on their political views, that is by definition a violation of the rule of law. While calling out illegal blockades of critical infrastructure and other forms of law-breaking by protesters, we must also acknowledge that the rule of law is being threatened by a government that is woefully inconsistent in the way it treats protesters, and that this inconsistency is based on the political preferences and biases of the people in power. This brings the law into disrepute.

At the heart of the idea of the rule of law is a contract: I will follow the law and I will have the protection of the law. When people are told to follow the law but do not have the fair and equal protection of the law, then we are no longer speaking of rule of law but of rule by law. Rule of law is where the law rules. Rule by law is where laws are used by powerful people to dominate others. We need to appreciate the difference.

The Oka crisis, 9/11, the violent G7 and G20 protests, the blockades from two years ago, the series of attacks on places of worship and the violence targeting energy workers were not cause for the use of emergency powers. When this hammer is being used to target working people engaged in civil disobedience in response to unjustified and unscientific vaccine mandates, we see that the contract at the heart of what it means to be a rule-of-law society seems to be fraying. If I had seen the church I was about to get married in burn to the ground, if I had lost my job or access to vital services because of vaccine mandates or if I had seen acts of lawlessness ignored, defended and even perpetrated by senior leaders in this country, then I would find it a bit rich for the government to say that the current situation constitutes a unique national emergency.

● (2350)

The contract at the heart of a rule-of-law society is fraying, and we see a Prime Minister with an incredible personal record of corruption, the only Prime Minister in history to violate ethics law on multiple occasions. He is now claiming that other people should be subject to severe and disproportionate consequences for so much as donating to the convoy even weeks before any blockading began.

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It seems to me that the most important question for Canada today is not just about the particulars of this moment, but about how we got here. We got here because of the arbitrary and inconsistent application of decisions by the government, the demonization of people who disagreed and the decline of our democratic institutions, leading people to believe that their voice cannot be heard any other way. If we are going to come together as a country and address the pain and division that have been sown, then we have to ask ourselves why the voice of a mother crying because her son lost his business and died by suicide because of COVID restrictions is not heard as loudly as the sound of a horn honking on Wellington Street. Why is it that a community of refugees from Egypt who had their house of worship burned to the ground in Surrey last year could not even get a statement from the Prime Minister, but potential for violence from this convoy led to a national state of emergency?

We have to address the lack of empathy that clearly permeates our halls of power and the lack of concern for working Canadians who have lost jobs and opportunity as a result of pandemic policy, as well as the broader attack on their livelihoods that we are seeing through government policy. It may be hard for some people here to fully understand what many Canadians are going through, but I ask members to spare a thought for people like the NDP leader's brother-in-law. The NDP leader may not be prepared to stand up for his brother-in-law, but I will be here to stand in the breach—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We have a point of order from the hon. member for Beauport—Limoilou. However, before I go to her, I would ask the hon. member to adjust his boom a bit higher because we are getting some popping, and I am not sure if that is causing the problem.

The hon. member for Beauport—Limoilou.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: Madam Speaker, my colleague is passionate, which means that he is speaking very quickly and the interpreters are having a hard time keeping up. I know that passion can be expressed in ways other than speaking quickly.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I encourage the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan to slow down a bit so that the interpreters can keep up with his speech.

[English]

The hon. member has three minutes.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I am grateful to the interpreters for the important work they do.

Mr. Dhaliwal donated \$13,000 to the “freedom convoy”. After the fact, according to an NDP source, Mr. Dhaliwal asked for his money back. This NDP source conveniently claims that there had been a misunderstanding about the true nature of the organization, which sounds like the sort of thing an NDP source would say. Regardless, let us take the NDP source at their word and suppose that Mr. Dhaliwal, the NDP leader's brother-in-law, donated as a result of a misunderstanding. Perhaps he accidentally clicked on the wrong GoFundMe page. Perhaps he donated \$13,000 before he had a chance to read the description. Let us say this is entirely true, and let us say that Mr. Dhaliwal was not the only one. I am sure there

are many everyday Canadians just like Mr. Dhaliwal who have donated to the convoy for various reasons: because they oppose mandates, because they are concerned about the impact on the supply chain, because they want to show support for truckers or because of some sort of misunderstanding. I do not want Mr. Dhaliwal to have to worry about his bank account being frozen without a court order because of these emergency measures.

The NDP might no longer be prepared to stand up for workers, civil liberties and members of the NDP leader's own family, but the Conservatives are prepared to step up when the NDP have let their own people down. My colleagues have pointed out that the NDP and the Liberals are becoming almost exactly alike, but I do see one clear difference: Unlike the NDP leader, we know that the Prime Minister has a track record of doing a great deal to defend the financial interests of his family.

In spite of the challenges we face, I am much more optimistic about the future of our country than I was three or four months ago. With its complex cast of characters, the presence of a few unsavoury individuals and tens of thousands of people working for an end to mandates and a return to normal life, the convoy movement has led to a renewed interest in political involvement and participation within my constituency and across the country. It has inspired more Canadians to stand up for peace, order and good government.

Last night, I held a virtual town hall on short notice to discuss the Emergencies Act. There were over 300 participants, plus their family members and spouses. The message was overwhelming and confirmed my decision to vote no. The participants also asked many good questions about how our democratic process works, how to influence change and how they can get involved. Canadians do not want division and they do not want lawlessness. They want a restoration of the rule of law through ordinary and lawful means, whereby citizens and leaders respect human rights and follow the law and whereby the law is applied equally to all regardless of their political views or status. They want an end to the mandates, and they want public health policies that are based on science. They want the ability to work and raise a family.

The next convoy will not be a protest convoy; it will be a voters' convoy. After this weekend, people will turn their attention toward learning about and engaging in the democratic process to defeat this divisive government and its NDP allies and replace them with a government that will defend freedom, opportunity and, yes, the rule of law. God keep our land glorious.

• (2355)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have listened quite extensively today to the Conservatives and their reactions to the blockades and the protesters, and I note the amount of support they continue to provide that group. There is a conflicting message. On one hand, they say that they are against the blockades and want people to go home, and on the other hand, they are worshipping their actions.

We have been consistent. The blockades have cost our communities a great deal. They shut down downtown Ottawa. Some blockades were for economic purposes and caused job losses at our borders in Manitoba, Alberta and Ontario. The need is there, and a good example with this enactment is the issue of children. Children were actually used as part of the blockade.

I wonder if the member can provide his thoughts about using children in illegal blockades. Does he support that too?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, frankly, even from this member I expect better. My position has been clear: yes to peaceful protests, yes to those calling for an end to mandates and no to illegal blockading of critical infrastructure. I would say this consistently across the board, regardless of who is doing the blockading. I would also say no to the arbitrary abuse of power by the government to target people who had only so much as donated to the convoy movement long before any of the blockades started. It should be a fairly simple principle, and it is one that members of the Liberals and the NDP used to understand. We cannot justify any abuse of power by government simply because we disagree with the actions of some protesters.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Trudel (Longueuil—Saint-Hubert, BQ): Madam Speaker, the situation has changed in the past 48 hours. The truckers have left and so have most of the protesters.

The NDP member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie told the media that, if the truckers left, the NDP might rethink its decision.

The truckers have left Ottawa and there is no more national emergency. If the Prime Minister held a free vote on this important issue, does my colleague think that there would be dissent among the Liberals and that some might vote against the decision to invoke the act?

[English]

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, I have been clear that I do not agree with the emergency measures being used in the first place. I think law enforcement already had the tools they needed and that has been clear. Certainly, it should be all the more evident now, even to those who were maybe on the fence before, that the border blockades had either already ended or were well on their way to ending at the time the emergency measures were brought in. It would not make sense to continue these emergency measures at any point after the protests and blockades ended. I do want to be

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clear, though, that I do not think there was any justification for bringing in these measures in the first place or at any time.

● (2400)

Mr. Arif Virani (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate that the member for Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan is a man of logic, so I am going to put to him some logical issues that are troubling some of us on this side of the House. One is that the protesters have talked about the importance of freedom of expression, yet assault a journalist. Second is the importance of being antilockdown, yet this resulted in the lockdown of downtown Ottawa. Third is this idea that robust supply chains are critical and then supply chains are blocked in his own province of Alberta.

Does he understand the reticence on this side of the House to dialogue with people who are engaging in such illegal activities?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Madam Speaker, in any other situation, the member would understand how problematic it is to cast such broad generalizations about groups of people, as if the protesters had all assaulted journalists and as if the protesters had all engaged in border blockades. This is utter nonsense. The member should know that tens of thousands of people have gone out across this country to engage in protests about these unjustifiable mandates. Many have done so peacefully. Many have done so having no sympathy whatsoever for blockading.

I deplore any violence, of course. I hear that a journalist was pepper-sprayed by somebody, perhaps law enforcement or somebody else. Any attacks on journalists are totally unacceptable, regardless of where they are coming from. However, this is not representative of—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It being 12:02 a.m., pursuant to an order made Thursday, February 17, having reached the expiry of the time provided for today's debate, the House will resume consideration of the motion for confirmation at the next sitting of the House.

[Translation]

Accordingly, the House stands adjourned until later this day at 7 a.m., pursuant to order made on Thursday, February 17.

(The House adjourned at 12:02 a.m.)

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