



HOUSE OF COMMONS
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CANADA

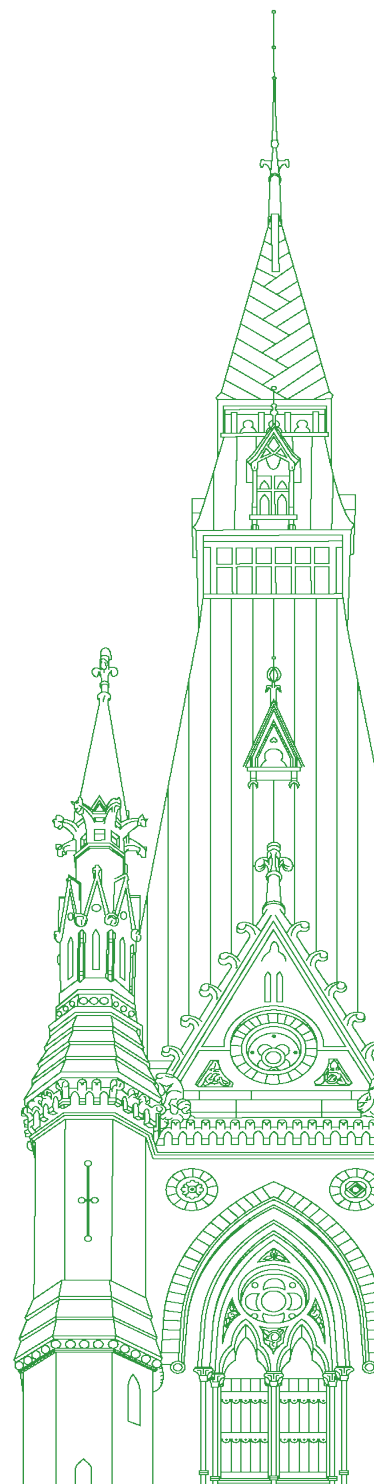
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Speaker: The Honourable Anthony Rota



CONTENTS

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

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Sunday, February 20, 2022

The House met at 7 a.m.

Prayer

ORDERS OF THE DAY

● (0700)

[English]

EMERGENCIES ACT

The House resumed from February 19 consideration of the motion.

Mr. Larry Brock (Brantford—Brant, CPC): Mr. Speaker, after practising law for 30 years and being a Crown attorney for the last 18 of them, I decided to dedicate myself to serving the people of the great riding of Brantford—Brant and across Canada.

It is a privilege to rise in the House early today, although I am doing this with a heavy heart. For the first time in our history, the Prime Minister, whose current support is as low as never before, decided to invoke the extreme power to handle the local Ottawa crisis that he escalated by his poor judgment, ineffective leadership, divisive rhetoric and non-science-based decisions.

I want to make this point abundantly clear: I will be voting to revoke the invocation of the Emergencies Act. The constitutionally protected rights of speech and assembly are a cornerstone of our democracy. The right of Canadians' voices to be heard to speak both in support of or in dissent of any policies proclaimed by the Canadian government is sacrosanct. The right to protest peacefully is essential to a democracy.

Obviously, the prolonged blockades in Ottawa and at border crossings were against the law, but the invocation to implement the Emergencies Act was completely unnecessary and, most important, did not meet the extremely high threshold as set out in the act. Our nation has seen countless numbers of disturbances, protests and blockades that all have been resolved without the imposition of this draconian piece of legislation. Critical infrastructure blockades of railways, pipelines, highways and border crossings have been resolved through dialogue, negotiation and effective police intervention. Without the suspension of our civil liberties, we witnessed the events and aftermath of 9/11 and the intentional storming of Centre Block, which resulted in gunfire.

The primary focus of my speech is that this crisis is entirely the result of a vacuum of leadership for this Prime Minister. The leadership traits of effective political leaders include vision, strategic and critical thinking, authenticity, self-awareness, open-mindedness, creativity, flexibility, responsibility and dependability, patience, tenacity and the pursuit of continuous improvement. Had our Prime Minister exhibited a fraction of these qualities, we would all be enjoying the weekend with our families.

Let us take some time to examine the failed leadership of our Prime Minister. At the beginning of the pandemic, he unnecessarily delayed the acquisition of vaccines. He signed a secret deal with China to make vaccines, which the Chinese reneged on. He tried to implement unrestricted spending powers to his cabinet without parliamentary oversight. He has the dishonour of wearing the badge of multiple ethical violations, the most in our history, including the luxury family holiday freebie with the Aga Khan and the aggregation of the rule of law to mitigate charges against SNC-Lavalin for years of illegal and corrupt practices. He also intervened in the funding distribution for his friends at the WE organization.

This is the Prime Minister who proposes to be a feminist. Notwithstanding, he fired two strong women from his cabinet, including the first indigenous justice minister, for having the courage to speak truth to power and call out his bullying, unethical and relentless pressure to interfere in a criminal prosecution. This is the Prime Minister who prorogued Parliament to protect his political interest. Every time, his justification is different, but the goal is the same: to protect his own political career.

This is the Prime Minister who deliberately wore blackface, as an adult, so many times that he cannot remember; a Prime Minister who travelled around the globe and gave away millions in foreign aid in the pursuit of a useless temporary seat on the UN Security Council; a Prime Minister and his ministers who swept under the table several sexual misconduct allegations in the Armed Forces.

This Prime Minister's response to the COVID-19 pandemic has been a moving target, cleverly designed to show empathy and support when it suits his political narrative. In May 2021, he made the definitive statement that he opposed mandatory vaccination laws. He stated, "We're not a country that makes vaccination mandatory". He also, at that time, opposed vaccine passports, saying that they would be divisive.

Statutory Order

This really begs the question: What happened to that Canadian Prime Minister? He studied the polls, which showed growing public anger aimed at the unvaccinated and more calls for harsher measures. We can never accuse this Prime Minister of not taking advantage of a good crisis, so what did he do? He called a completely unnecessary federal election in the middle of a pandemic, at a cost of \$610 million.

● (0705)

The Prime Minister's hubris and vanity saw a path to forming a majority government, never mind that he could have spent that money on clean water initiatives, reconciliation projects, mental health initiatives or simply investing in pandemic recovery.

The first few weeks of the election were not kind to the Prime Minister. Unable to clearly articulate a reason for calling the election and slipping badly in the polls, he pivoted to save his political career. He saw an opportunity to create a political wedge and divide Canadians against each other, the vaccinated versus the unvaccinated.

At the start of the pandemic, on March 31, 2020, he tweeted, "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 #ThankATrucker for everything they're doing and help them however you can."

Truckers who were once hailed by the Prime Minister as national heroes are now vilified. He refers to them as a small fringe minority. During the election he used words like "these people", "anti-vaxxers", "women haters", "misogynist", "racist", "science deniers" and asked how we could tolerate these people.

Now during the protest he described the truckers and their supporters as domestic terrorists. This is language shared by many in the Liberal government. I was completely stunned when I heard the member for Scarborough—Rouge Park, a lawyer and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice, refer to the people outside this building as terrorists and miscreants.

The Prime Minister's unquestionable contempt for these Canadians is pathetic. It is simply conduct unbecoming of a Canadian politician, let alone a prime minister.

When the trucks arrived, they had a legal right to park on the street in front of Parliament. They were directed there by the mayor of Ottawa. They were legally protesting for at least two days and two nights in extreme weather conditions. What did we hear from the Prime Minister or any Liberal ministers? We heard crickets.

The Prime Minister made no effort to de-escalate the situation, neither before his absence or after. We Conservatives were listening to people. We were not afraid of truckers and their supporters. We were walking through the protest to get from one building to another. We read their posters and talked to them. That is why called on the Liberal government to sit at the round table to find solutions that would work for all and for good. The government ignored our initiative.

The Conservatives also tabled a motion asking the government to release a plan to end all federal mandates and restrictions. We asked

for a plan after two years of the pandemic, but the Liberal-NDP coalition voted against it. The government does not have a plan and does not plan on having one.

Imposing powers of the Emergencies Act sets a dangerous precedent. It does not lead us to any constructive long-term solutions, plus it was unnecessary, expansive and will further divide the country.

I listened to what the Liberals had to say in justifying their decision to invoke the act. The Prime Minister stated that he had to invoke it because the situation could not be dealt with under any other law in Canada. That is where he is deliberately misleading Canadians.

The act is very clear it should only be used in a circumstance that seriously endangers the lives, health or safety of Canadians—

● (0710)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The member has said that the Prime Minister is deliberately misleading Canadians, and he should know he cannot do indirectly what he cannot do directly. It is pretty clear what he is trying to do indirectly in this case.

I would ask him to retract those comments, as it would be unparliamentary to leave them on the record.

The Deputy Speaker: The member is correct, so I would ask the member for Brantford—Brant to adjust that sentence, maybe retract it and try a different verbiage.

Mr. Larry Brock: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is using mixed language. The act is very clear it should only be used in circumstances that seriously endanger the lives, health or safety of Canadians—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I rise again on the same point of order. It is important that the member actually say for the record that he retracts the comments. He did not do that. He just attempted to continue to say it in a different way. He needs to say, "I retract the comments".

The Deputy Speaker: The point of order was pretty clear that he could retract and get back into it.

The hon. member for Brantford—Brant has the floor.

Mr. Larry Brock: Mr. Speaker, it is obvious I offended the delicate ears of my friend opposite. I retract the statement.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I again have a point of order.

The member has not taken the Deputy Speaker's advice on two occasions now. Rather than answer the question, he is now attempting to engage in debate. The Deputy Speaker has an obligation to enforce the rules of this House, and I would encourage him to do so.

Mr. John Brassard: Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point of order. The hon. member did retract it. He said it clearly. I think if you check with the Table, you will find that.

The Deputy Speaker: I did hear him retract it. I think the other member was standing at the same time. I will ask the member to clarify, and then we will continue.

Mr. Larry Brock: Mr. Speaker, to make it abundantly clear, for the second time, I retract that statement.

Blockades are already in violation of the Criminal Code, provincial highway acts and any number of municipal bylaws and court injunctions. This was and still remains the purview of the police. They had all the tools necessary.

The legal authority for the government to invoke this act is currently being challenged by both the Canadian Civil Liberties Association and the Canadian Constitution Foundation. They argue that the high legal threshold has not been met. They acknowledge that, in the language used by the government, they see no civil liberty violation because the act is still subject to the charter.

The talking points the Liberals extensively use argue that just because a process is supposed to obey the charter, it means that it will. By that logic, the mere fact that the charter exists should mean there will never be charter violations. This is simply not true. The Prime Minister now has carte blanche to do what he wants to, not only to the people who participated in the blockades and the convoy, but also to anyone merely suspected of being involved in sharing supplies. This is a dangerous precedent.

The Prime Minister is normalizing the use of emergency powers. The most disturbing aspect of the act is the broad sweeping banking measures. Banks now have the authority to freeze bank accounts without court order. The Prime Minister now has the broad discretion to seriously mess with the finances of anyone ever suspected of being involved in the protests anywhere in Canada.

Let me conclude with the following: There was no emergency that endangered the lives of Canadians or threatened the sovereignty of Canada. This was political overreach. This was a political emergency, not a national one. The Prime Minister's unjustified invocation of the act is deeply problematic and will have lasting consequences. The public's trust in our democratic and financial institutions has been seriously diminished. Invoking the act proves that the Prime Minister's absolute, unreserved incompetence made such an extreme measure necessary.

• (0715)

Mr. Chandra Arya (Nepean, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, it is unbelievable that the member opposite is defending the foreign-funded groups illegally occupying our city, illegally blocking our critical economic infrastructure and openly floating the rule of law. These foreign-funded groups have made a mockery of our law and have held our men and women in uniform in contempt.

Does the member not agree with the interim Ottawa police chief, who said that this Emergencies Act provided the police with the resources they needed to handle the situation? Senator—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Brantford—Brant.

Statutory Order

Mr. Larry Brock: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I was not entirely clear with the member. We are a party of law and order.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Larry Brock: Mr. Speaker, listen to the laughter. There is such disrespect for this particular member. I am trying to answer a question, and I have to be bothered by heckling and laughter. It speaks volumes to their character.

In any event, I have made it abundantly clear that we disagreed with some of the tactics used by the organizers of this protest. As a lawyer, I follow and hold sacrosanct our charter rights of protest and assembly. This was a failed leadership exercise by the Prime Minister and, by extension, the former chief of Ottawa Police Service, who has now resigned. He had all the tools necessary under the Criminal Code, provincial statutes, municipal bylaws and court injunctions. Failed—

The Deputy Speaker: We will continue with questions and comments.

The hon. member for Repentigny.

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pausé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for Brantford—Brant for his speech.

He just answered my question when he said that there was no legal vacuum. Everything was in place.

I will ask the following question instead. What lessons can be learned from what happened over the past month?

[English]

Mr. Larry Brock: Mr. Speaker, there are many lessons to be learned and I hope we decide that a national inquiry should be undertaken forthwith to look at the obvious levels of failed leadership and the decisions that were made. Most importantly, it comes down to looking at the litany of emergencies, the protests, the demonstrations, the blockades, the world events that have impacted Canada and how effectively police agencies and politicians across this great nation have effectively dealt with that without imposing this draconian piece of legislation that has not been used—

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments, the hon. member for Windsor West.

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, if I could put my monitor half a block behind me and zoom it, I could show the member the barricades that are still up in the Windsor area because the Ambassador Bridge blockade has now moved to city streets. Mohammed could not get to school last week and Joyce, a child, could not get to her doctor's appointment because of the blockade. The blockades have moved off Huron Church Road and are now blocking intersections. People cannot go to work and businesses are closed.

Statutory Order

What does the member say to Mohammed and Joyce who have missed school and missed a doctor's appointment? Who is responsible for that, because what has happened is not normal? The blockades are displaced and are now in one of the poorest neighbourhoods in Canada. What does he have to say to Mohammed and Joyce about their lives?

Mr. Larry Brock: Mr. Speaker, I would tell my hon. colleague to speak to the Prime Minister. He is the one who created this atmosphere of hostility, division and anger. We talk about hon. members in this House being conciliatory and needing to have open dialogue and discussion. There is none of that. None of that happens with the Prime Minister and his cabinet. That is who the member needs to talk to.

• (0720)

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member of Parliament for Windsor West.

Let me start by saying that we should not be having this debate today. The fact that this legislation is being contemplated, let alone invoked, is a failure of leadership at all levels of government to respond adequately to clear threats to national security and our very own democracy.

These threats are posed by con men and white nationalist leaders, including Pat King, an avowed white supremacist, who was quoted as saying that “the Anglo-Saxon race” has “the strongest bloodlines” and that unless we fight back, we will be all speaking Hebrew, a man who, according to Moose Jaw Today, appeared in a video receiving support from the member of Parliament for Cypress Hills—Grasslands; B.J. Dichter, known for his Islamophobic rants during the 2019 election as a candidate for the People's Party of Canada; and James Bauder, part of Canada Unity, who produced and proposed a memorandum of understanding demanding that the Governor General and the Senate rescind public health measures or force the government to resign en masse, which is a violation of our Constitution and a direct attack on our democracy and our institutions. In addition, there is the infiltration of former security experts, military personnel and police who have been key strategists in this illegal occupation, including an intelligence expert for the Canadian centre for intelligence and security studies and a former RCMP officer who was part of the Prime Minister's security detail.

This is a colossal failure of national security and the complete failure of the government to keep not only Ottawa but the whole country safe from a well-organized, well-funded extremist movement. We should not be here, but the reality is that we are here. While we are here, it is important for us to tell some hard truths about what is happening to our country and to our democracy.

When I say I am concerned about the health of our democracy, I do not only mean at a surface level. Yes, I am alarmed that we were not able to meet in this place on Friday and to do our work that people elected us to do, but it goes much deeper than that. I am concerned that an illegal occupation, supported in part by anonymous foreign funding, has brought our nation's capital to its knees, while smaller occupations throughout Canada, including in Winnipeg Centre, have subjected residents to days of sonic torture and harassment. I am concerned that neighbours are turning against

neighbours and even family members are turning against family members. This division is being fuelled by the current government and members of the official opposition. I am deeply concerned that instead of acting responsibly in the middle of a national crisis, some members of the official opposition are openly fanning the flames, cheering on an occupation whose leaders have expressed a desire to overthrow the democratically elected government of this country.

What we have witnessed over the last weeks is not a peaceful protest nor is it even a protest. I have been a part of movements for justice, including Idle No More, that have sought to advance human rights and real reconciliation. These movements are based in love and a respect for people and mother earth. There were no guns, threats of overthrowing the government, killing police officers and messages of vile hate. There is no comparison between Idle No More and an occupation that has featured widespread harassment of residents and workers; threatening of journalists; firearms hitting Coutts, Alberta blockades; and self-appointed leaders who have spewed racist and xenophobic hate.

I am also a strong supporter of public health measures, mandates which have been demonized by the official opposition members, that save lives. They have been particularly important in protecting people with disabilities, those with compromised immune systems and folks with underlying conditions.

• (0725)

We cannot forget those who are most at risk from COVID and the omicron variant as we begin easing restrictions, nor health care workers throughout this country who have sacrificed everything to save lives.

The real divide in this country is not between those who are pro-mandates and anti-mandates; it is between the wealthy elite and everyone else. We can look at what has happened during the pandemic. Essential workers have kept our communities going, serving food, taking care of seniors and loved ones, looking after our kids and healing the sick, and at the same time, some of the largest corporations have made a killing while treating these very same workers as disposable. We can take Loblaw's, owned by Galen Weston, a billionaire whose family is the third richest in Canada. Loblaw's saw a 26% increase in its profits, in its latest quarter, to \$431 million, yet it still refuses to bring back the \$2-an-hour pandemic pay increase it snatched away from its workers in June 2020. At Amazon, owned by Jeff Bezos, the third-wealthiest person in the world, two of their Brampton warehouses were ordered to close because of major COVID outbreaks due to a lack of safety precautions and working conditions that one worker likened to a hell, with minimal personal protective equipment and virtually no social distancing.

This brings me back to the illegal occupation. I have said it before, and I will say it again: This convoy is a fraud. Its lead organizers claim to represent workers, human rights, peace and love, but are, in fact, deeply hostile to the working class and have direct and close ties to hate groups. It is a dangerous movement that has been allowed to get out of control by a federal government that failed to pay attention and certain official opposition party members who not only supported but fuelled its fire, and the minimization of the threat we are faced with, the radicalization of individuals into white nationalist movements. It is backed by members of the ultra-wealthy, including Elon Musk, the richest man on earth, who will not let his workers form a union; Donald Trump, the disgraced former president of the United States and someone who was praised by the interim leader of the Conservative Party; and a number of wealthy Canadian elites who have made five-figure donations to this illegal occupation.

I ask members: Would real working-class movements be supported by such people? Of course they would not be. The public cannot let those with wealth and power distract them from the real reasons their lives are getting harder. They cannot let anyone shift the blame away from their corporate landlord who refuses to make essential repairs, from their boss who freezes their wages while inflation eats away at their paycheque, or the credit card company that takes federal money while charging them exorbitant interest rates. We must fight against all forms of oppression, inequality and inequity, and that takes a functioning democracy.

I also want to say to members of the government that we will be watching carefully. If there is any hint of overreach or any indication that these measures we are debating today are no longer necessary, we have been clear that they cannot count on our support. Our party fully supports the Canadian Civil Liberties Association's call for review of what has happened, and we expect a thorough and full public inquiry to identify systemic gaps in governance and policing that have resulted in this crisis.

Equally as important, we will be holding the government accountable to help countless individuals in Canada who were struggling before the pandemic and are finding life even more difficult almost two years after it began. This suffering is causing alienation and despair, which is fuelling the rise of extremist and anti-democratic movements. As we move beyond this illegal occupation, we must shift our focus to raising the living standards of millions of people, so we can replace that despair with hope. We will never stop fighting to make lives better, and we will never stop fighting to defend our democracy.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, in the previous engagement with the member for Brantford—Brant, he referenced the fact that this side of the House started to laugh when he said he was part of the party of law and order, and I want to read for him a quote from the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, that it “supports the fundamental objectives of the invocation of the Emergencies Act that is intended to regulate and prohibit illegal public assemblies and lead to the breach of peace, and to restrict the funding of such illegal assemblies.” The party of law and order across the way does not even agree with the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police. That is

why we find it remarkably funny, the position they have taken on this.

I am wondering if my NDP colleague can reflect on whether she also sees perplexing statements and positioning coming from the Conservative Party.

• (0730)

Ms. Leah Gazan: Mr. Speaker, this is exactly what I am talking about. We have two powerful men bantering back and forth. We have almost had the government overthrown. We have had to call in police.

Now is not the time for division. People across the country expect us to work together to get back on track. They are struggling. That is what the NDP is here to do.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am also very concerned about our democracy. Three million Canadians have had their charter right to freely enter and leave the country violated by the government and mandates. They are mandates that the government is continuing to add to, at a time when the World Health Organization and medical experts are saying that these kinds of restrictions are not working, now that omicron is everywhere.

On top of that, there are the digital privacy violations that the government has committed. On top of that, the government is freezing bank accounts. I have emails from people in my riding who are claiming that they had their accounts frozen for buying a “freedom convoy” T-shirt.

In part (f) in the Gazette, it says that the Prime Minister can take “other temporary measures authorized that are not yet known.” I think that basically means that if the Emergencies Act is put in place, he can do whatever he wants and there is no coming back from it.

Will my NDP colleague vote against this legislation, recognizing that charter rights continue to be violated?

Ms. Leah Gazan: Mr. Speaker, as I said in my speech, I do not think that this is about mandates or anti-mandates. This is about a growing extremist white national movement fuelled by members of the Conservative Party of Canada: the opposition party. It is not all members, but certain members.

We need to take a hard look at what we are doing to threaten our democracy, and we need to shift our behaviour quickly.

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I think we need to be careful because this debate is not just about the abuse that was committed during the protest. This movement took hold because some truckers were against mandatory vaccination for cross-border truckers and then the situation deteriorated.

Statutory Order

I do not want to minimize the movement, but the member said that the use of the Emergencies Act was the result of the government's lack of leadership. I imagine that she agrees that the government could have taken action sooner and used other tools instead of allowing the crisis to escalate and then using this law of last resort.

I would like to hear the member say that this debate is about the health measures and that the situation did not warrant the use of the Emergencies Act.

[English]

Ms. Leah Gazan: Mr. Speaker, I absolutely agree with my hon. colleague that, as a result of a failure of governance, and certainly policing, we are currently where we are, and we need to take all steps necessary to protect democracy.

I find deeply concerning the kind of rhetoric I hear in the House. It is comparing peaceful movements by students, environmental groups and indigenous peoples who are rightfully protecting their ancestral lands with the kind of visceral hate that is being fuelled by people who are known leaders of hate groups and white national movements in this country.

We saw it coming. We saw it rolling down the highway. The government should have acted. All levels of government should have acted, and the police should not have allowed it to get so far.

• (0735)

Mr. Brian Masse (Windsor West, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am speaking today from the well-travelled traditional grounds of the Three Fires Confederacy represented by the Ojibwa, Odawa and the Potawatomi. It is also an area for the Caldwell First Nation, whose people in the War of 1812 were very relevant to creating freedom for our country.

I have been very disappointed with regard to some of the debate that has taken place. My riding of Windsor West is the route for 40% of the trade per day to the United States, with 40,000 vehicles, of which 10,000 are transport trucks, travelling along this corridor. It is also the spot of an illegal blockade that took place. I do not know why the speaking points of the Conservatives and the Bloc Québécois continue to reference things being okay at the Ambassador Bridge. I can tell everyone they are not.

The blockades have moved off Huron Church Road. It is a traditional first nations route in this country as the area was settled first by the French, then by the British. It has now come to the point where the blockade is in the city streets, similar to Ottawa. We have Jersey barriers and blockades as part of our life.

Most people do not know that the Ambassador Bridge is privately owned by an American billionaire. For years, I have fought to get a new border crossing, which is finally happening. My first public meeting was in 1998. The provincial and federal governments, in their wisdom, decided to end the 401 approximately 17 kilometres from the actual border crossing because of jurisdictional wrangling, something we see today between Ontario and the federal government over day care. Ironically, things have not changed much.

At any point in time, a transport truck could turn over or have a spill. It would cost all kinds of money, and cause pain and anguish

to businesses and emergency services. It would cause all kinds of different repercussions to the Canadian economy. Not only do we build auto parts here, we also do mining and build other equipment. We are the lifeline and lifeblood of the country, with 40% of Canada's daily trade happening through this corridor.

In fact, right now someone could go on the bridge without seeing anybody and set off a bomb. They could go onto the plaza and do the same, and it would have lasting damage. It is why we fought for redundancy and why I have asked for government solutions. I am disappointed in the government in many respects. Even during this process, I proposed increasing the truck ferry redundancy and having a safe border task force to allow Canadian families to reunite, to take the steam off some of the frustration that we are faced with. We have residents in this community who have not seen their relatives for over two and a half years, who live two kilometres across the river. That is still no excuse for blocking that corridor. That corridor has often had demonstrations, but they have been peaceful and respectful. They have slowed traffic, but not at the expense of other people, their freedoms and their livelihoods.

Earlier today, I mentioned Mohammed, who could not go to school last week, and Joyce, whose doctor could not see her for her appointment because of the Jersey barriers that are here. Again, the Bloc and the Conservatives continue to profess that things are normal. Those individuals and their families paid just as much as anybody else in this pandemic, and now they are being further punished at their expense because other people think that their freedoms are greater. No. A child should be able to see their doctor. People should not have to go crying to services.

Most importantly, the residents there who are currently losing their jobs do not qualify for extra assistance right now. Who is there to help them? I have asked for reparations like Ottawa got: some money to help the businesses and so forth. I held a press conference in this area, which has had some of the highest child poverty in Canada. It is finally getting a new development, which now is under siege. There are police vehicles. Jersey barriers are up, and it is cut off.

If anyone wants to see the protest that took place, I would suggest they go to Twitter. Jon Liedtke, a journalist, went down there and filmed some of it. It is on Twitter, at @jonliedtke. He interviewed people there. Do members know why some people were there? It was because they wanted their dog to go to a South Carolinian beach. They had not been able to go there for the last couple of years. Other people did it because they were frustrated, because they had lost their jobs. They parked their cars and vehicles in the middle of the street like no one had done before. This is a 10-lane road where people brought picnics, bouncy castles and a whole series of different things as well as their children. Moving that crowd, and the occupation of Ottawa, required extensive police coordination. In fact, we had armoured vehicles down here.

● (0740)

I have never seen, in 25 years of representing this area, armoured vehicles. The last time the bridge was shut down because of a demonstration, it was over the original NAFTA. People were arrested for that.

Meanwhile, during the pandemic, the myth has been that the American border had been closed. It had not been closed. Truckers in my community had been crossing every single day. The numbers were down to 5,000, with 4,000 trucks to every 1,000 vehicles at one point. They crossed every single day until this illegal blockade. That kept this country moving. That kept medical supplies coming in. That kept the jobs open, the ones that were able to be. That gave us revenue to be able to deal with these things. It was only closed by the illegal blockade. That is the only time it happened.

As for the repercussions, Dr. Khahra is in a veterinary clinic right now. We talk about mental health. He cannot get to his clinic. People cannot help their pets right now during a time when people are isolated. I represent people with disabilities, children with pets and so forth. They cannot get to those things right now. Why do they have to pay extra?

They already turned away another convoy. A couple more convoys have come to shut us down, so the threat is not gone. The mayor of Windsor received a bomb threat, for which someone was arrested. That is what is taking place down here. That is what is happening.

If I walk to the end of my street and go two kilometres the other way, the barriers are there. People will not get to their jobs today. The Tim Hortons along the corridor is shut down. It is only open for the emergency vehicles there. Tim Hortons hires from Community Living. It hires from different organizations. It actually gives money to some of the area's schools and some of the area's community groups. It is shut down right now, and it does not have a future. Why does it have to pay extra during the pandemic?

What happens next time? There is no plan right now. I have asked for an operational plan to be supported, not only for now but in the future.

I am as frustrated as every other member of the House with regard to the Prime Minister's treatment of COVID and the way he has handled it. That does not take away my responsibility to do the things that are right for this community and for the country.

I wake up every single day and hope the Prime Minister and every other member of Parliament in this place has a better day, because if I actually get my job done here and I have a better day, and my representatives actually create better lives for people, it will help everybody else. Again, 40% of trade comes through this community.

That is my goal every day. I do not get up to go against whatever is happening in the House. I do not understand this. It has been 20 years that I have been in Parliament. I could not have imagined the divisiveness that is taking place. Somebody has some type of idea. I do not have all the solutions for things, but I can tell you one right now. If we do not do the things that are necessary right now to protect the corridor, the pain will continue.

Statutory Order

We get to live down here with the uncertainty. The bridge finally got a new corridor coming into it along the 401. We fought forever to get a new parkway developed so that it is no longer just all lights. There are several traffic lights there, and there are several intersections. We get to live with that over our heads every single day.

To get a resolution to this, a school along the corridor had a Health Canada study with backpacks to monitor children's air quality, because that is how many transport trucks go down this corridor.

We finally got some justice here. We are finally getting a new border crossing. In the meantime, we are going to have to live with the fact that at any point in time, 10 or 12 vehicles, or even two or three vehicles depending on what they want to do, could shut down this corridor.

I have to say that, when I look at some of the protests going on, there are some very legitimate concerns being expressed by Canadians, and so they should. As I mentioned earlier, I have been appealing to the government for a safe border task force, so we can get in front of some of the issues.

At the beginning of the pandemic, I had to fight tooth and nail to finally get somebody from the United States to be able to come to a hospice room to see a dying relative, without stopping anywhere and without ever having left the vehicle. It was only six kilometres away. It took moving a mountain.

I understand the frustrations. I have not seen my daughter for half a year because of COVID restrictions. She is away at school, and because she had a cold, she could not come home for the holidays. That is a minor thing compared with the fact that, here where I represent, people can walk down to the river, look across and see the United States, yet they have not been able to see their relatives.

I do not like the way the government has done some of the testing, or the cost of the testing. Right now, there are rich people who can cross over and see American relatives and their friends and families, whereas there are poor people who cannot, or they have to decide who it is that can go.

That does not give me the right to infringe on other people's freedoms. That does not give me the right to be so unhappy that I can shut down others' prosperity.

● (0745)

If we had a protest that blocked roads every single time in this country, nothing would be—

The Deputy Speaker: We have run out of time.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Barrie—Innisfil.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the hon. member's passion. I have no doubt about his sincerity in representing his constituents. I have seen it over and over in my six years of being here and his 20 years of being here.

Statutory Order

The government needs to provide solutions to the issues the member brings up. What solutions does he advise the government are required in his particular situation?

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the sincere question and the work that we have done before in pushing border issues in the United States. We need more of that in this country.

First, we would need an emergency plan to take barriers down and put them up when necessary, and compensation for businesses in the municipality. Right now, the municipality is on the hook for over \$10 million for policing.

Most importantly, we need a safe border task force so we can work operationally with the businesses, residents and people who need connections at the border as they travel. Those are things I have proposed for many years, and I will continue to do that. Those are solutions I believe would be helpful to take the edge off some of the frustrations Canadians are feeling.

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, part of what led us here was complicated messaging without clear demands. I wonder if the member would like to comment on the fact that truckers in this country are facing real issues. They continue to be frontline heroes who deliver goods and support our supply chains across the country. I ask the member to comment on how things got so complicated and which groups are being represented here. It is really the worker inequality in this country that should be addressed. Would he comment on that?

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, the jurisdictional football that people have watched take place with COVID is symptomatic of what I have seen in politics as a municipal city councillor, and it has continued to plague us.

I asked the government to do a vaccination program for truckers, similar to what provinces were doing in advance. The government refused to do that, so there has been no centralization of some of the programs that have taken place, even though the federal government has been presented with solutions. Those are the things we should get in front of. We are always on the defence.

To be frank, we need to stop the jurisdictional wrangling. The Ambassador Bridge sits on a road in the city of Windsor that goes to an interprovincial highway and then goes to the 401. Who is going to protect those roads? Who is going to pay when convoys are still coming here and the mayor receives a bomb threat for taking a stand? These things are not right and they are not helpful, and that is why I support corrective action now before things get worse.

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Windsor West.

I have heard the concerns he is talking about from Joyce and Mohammed, among others. I feel for my colleague who has not been able to see his daughter.

The order has been in effect since Monday, but we see that the situation in his community has not been fully resolved.

I know that my colleague will be voting in favour of the application of this legislation, but what about his community?

Was the situation in his community resolved as a result of the order that has been in effect since Monday? Can its use be justified?

[English]

Mr. Brian Masse: Mr. Speaker, that is part of it. It is certainly a reflection. It is also why I have been speaking so repeatedly to this issue: It is because the Bloc and the Conservatives continue to say that things are fine in this corridor, but they are not. I am not being partisan in pointing that out. It is part of their talking points and it keeps coming up over and over again and it is wrong.

I also believe there are other reasons. The financing issue is significant. We will find out later on through a public inquiry, an inquiry that I really want, that there were American-paid protesters in the protest in Windsor. We know that Americans were there. There were all kinds of different influences taking place, and I want a full investigation into those matters. A public inquiry is very important, because it involves not only Parliament but the general Canadian population, and it is accountable more than before. I think this is one of the reasons the Prime Minister did not even want to do this at first, because a full public inquiry would shed some light on a very difficult issue.

• (0750)

The Deputy Speaker: I just want to make a comment that we are doing pretty well, but we could shorten our questions and answers so more people will have an opportunity to speak.

The hon. member for Thérèse-De Blainville.

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by saying hello to the people in my riding of Thérèse-De Blainville, and thanking the many constituents who have sent messages of support for the position taken by my Bloc Québécois colleagues and I on the blockade in downtown Ottawa and in this debate on the Emergencies Act.

People have very legitimate questions, worries and concerns. We have listened carefully, and they have been heard. We also heard their heartfelt pleas that they never again wanted to experience or be afraid of experiencing the worst, that is events such as those of 1970, when the War Measures Act was invoked. The collective trauma and the fear experienced are still vivid and painful memories for an entire nation, namely, the people of Quebec.

I forgot to mention that, in the spirit of solidarity, I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Repentigny. We stand twice as united.

Of course, the Emergencies Act is not the same as the War Measures Act. We know the difference. The former is nevertheless the spawn of the latter, as our leader so aptly put it. Although these two acts must not be conflated, they do have one thing in common: They are both special laws. This means that the exception should not be the rule or become the norm in dealing with situations or events that can be resolved using other means, whether political or legal, or through laws already in place. Any government that is even considering using the Emergencies Act must demonstrate unequivocally that all avenues have been pursued and all options have been exhausted.

Isaac Newton said that we should only be certain about what can be proven. I am certain that the Emergencies Act is not necessary because the government and the Prime Minister have failed to prove that it is.

On the first day of debate in the House, the Prime Minister described the Emergencies Act as targeted, proportionate and reasonable. That same day, I described it as the opposite. This act is disproportionate and unreasonable. How can he claim that it is targeted when, in fact, its scope is from one end of Canada to the other, whether we need it or not?

One thing the act requires is consultation with the provinces. Even though seven of them said no, even though the Premier of Quebec said no, even though the National Assembly unanimously said no, the federal government does not care. It does not give a fig. That is bad.

To hear the Prime Minister tell it, this is a law of last resort to be used once options 1, 2 and 3 have all failed. Those options did not fail; they were not even tried.

Plans for a protest at the Parliament of Canada in the national capital were announced over three weeks ago now. We knew a convoy of truckers was coming from as far away as Vancouver, bearing a message for the federal government. What steps did the federal government take to prepare? Nobody knows. Did the federal government analyze the potential impact of the protest based on the messages it was expecting to hear from the protesters? Apparently not. It seems to have opted for a wait-and-see approach, which led the protesters to believe they were welcome in Ottawa and could make themselves right at home.

Once the protesters were settled in in front of Parliament Hill and on main downtown arteries, the only thing the Prime Minister deigned to say was that they were a fringe minority. After that, there was no sign of him. A few days later, things got worse. We acknowledge that. We condemn what happened. We do not tolerate these incidents. At that point, the Prime Minister said that it was not up to the government, that it was up to the City of Ottawa and its police service.

• (0755)

Funnily enough, around the same time, I heard a City of Ottawa police officer saying that the police were speaking to protesters, but that the protesters were not interested in talking to the police because they wanted to speak to the Prime Minister. That short message spoke volumes.

Statutory Order

In the House, we urged the government to take action and we proposed such solutions as creating a crisis task force, requesting a meeting with the opposition party leaders and the Prime Minister, and emphasizing that coordinated action was necessary. That would have been possible and, in fact, it proved to be possible when law enforcement coordinated their efforts and took down the protest in front of Parliament Hill in two days. No one had been able to take down that protest for three weeks.

The City of Ottawa requested an additional 1,800 police officers, and the federal government sent them 275 RCMP officers. The Prime Minister and his government had options and chose to let the situation drag on. What is worse, the government now wants our blessing for its inaction and is calling on us to vote in favour of using the Emergencies Act, a piece of legislation designed to be used in exceptional circumstances. We will not support the use of this act, because the evidence is clear that the government dropped the ball. Once again, one too many times, the Prime Minister and his government proved themselves to be incapable of managing conflicts.

There is no crisis in the country right now that warrants invoking the Emergencies Act. Yes, for the past 24 days there has been a protest-turned-blockade that is interfering with the peace of mind and safety of downtown Ottawa residents. We condemned this protest and continue to do so. However, the situation can and could have been dealt with long before, with the powers that the police already have and with the legislative tools already available.

The Emergencies Act was passed in 1988, over 30 years ago, and to this day it has never been enacted. The fact that the government is invoking it now is proof of its failure in managing the crisis. We cannot endorse it, because this government has failed to demonstrate that it is needed. Nor can it be considered a “just in case” option.

I heard the Minister of Justice say that this legislation is being invoked in case the protesters come back or in case the situation in Windsor becomes destabilized. The Emergencies Act is there to deal with an ongoing situation, not to prevent one in the future or to act retroactively on a past situation. The minister should know that, because it is an essential principle of natural justice.

There is one option that we would support, and that is for the government to withdraw this motion and to admit that it was wrong. That would take courage and humility. If that is not possible, we would be satisfied with an apology from the Prime Minister. We know that he is capable of giving them.

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her speech.

However, I want to point out that her comparison with the War Measures Act is inaccurate because we are talking about another act here. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that, for the Bloc Québécois, respecting areas of jurisdiction is only important from time to time. The member is asking us to act when she knows full well that, without the Emergencies Act, that is not part of our jurisdiction.

Statutory Order

Our NDP colleague from Windsor just told us that his community is in crisis. We know that Premier Doug Ford is incapable of dealing with the situation. How can she claim that we are not in a crisis situation?

There may not be a crisis in Quebec, but there is one in Ontario, especially in Windsor.

● (0800)

Ms. Louise Chabot: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I did not falsely conflate the two acts, but the trauma does still remain in our collective psyche. It makes no difference. There is no crisis. That is what is being falsely conflated. The Emergencies Act applies all across Canada to situations that are not crises, like the one we are experiencing.

The situation in Windsor has been resolved because the police managed to resolve it, and yes, it still needs to be stabilized, but the police must do that. We saw that it worked. Do we have to wait for President Biden to call the Prime Minister again to resolve the matter, because that makes it more important?

Jurisdictional issues are not an excuse for incompetence and the inability to coordinate all the resources that would have been necessary to deal with the situation in Ontario.

Mr. Luc Berthold (Mégantic—L'Érable, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague for her speech.

I am somewhat baffled by the comments I just heard from our Liberal colleague. The Liberals pick and choose what applies to us and claim that the Emergencies Act is there to be used but will have no impact on the provinces that decide not to use it.

Does my colleague agree that an emergency measures act that applies from coast to coast to coast will have consequences even in provinces that have decided not to use it and, more importantly, have said they do not want it imposed on their territory?

Ms. Louise Chabot: Mr. Speaker, what I find even more irritating is that they are downplaying the situation. We, the parliamentarians, are being asked to adopt a motion to confirm the proclamation of the Emergencies Act, but they are downplaying its scope.

They are acting like we are voting on an ordinary bill, but it is anything but. It is an extraordinary bill. I really do not understand why the other side of the House is resorting to this law, which has never been applied in over 30 years. They decided that it is the solution and that it is okay to use it. Someone is complaining on the other side of the street? The Emergencies Act will fix that. It is inconceivable. It is disgraceful. In a democracy, it is truly—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Hamilton Centre.

[English]

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, flags of the far-right Québécois ethnonationalist group La Meute have been present at the occupation here in Ottawa and at related protests across the province of Quebec. La Meute, or the Wolf Pack, was founded in Quebec by two former Canadian Armed Forces members, Éric Venne and Patrick Beaudry. I call on the member for the Bloc to take this opportunity to denounce Le Meute

and join my call for a secretariat or some other office to report on the radicalization in our Armed Forces and police.

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot: Mr. Speaker, I would love to get rid of all injustice and all the far-right groups and splinter groups that might infiltrate protests originally meant for a good cause.

I have participated in protests. We can condemn everything that should be condemned, but that cannot be the basis for adopting the motion and saying that we agree with the invocation of the Emergencies Act. We have to analyze it for what it is, not for what it is not. The Emergencies Act is not going to stop weapons at the border and prevent them from entering our cities and killing our youth. That will require a tough approach, and we must act.

The Emergencies Act will not resolve all the inequities and all the violence that my colleague mentioned.

● (0805)

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, it is unusual to greet you so early in the morning, but we have to acknowledge that what is happening now is also very unusual. I also want to greet the House staff who are here early this morning, making it possible for us to work. I thank them.

We are here to declare emergency measures or, better yet, to not declare emergency measures. The exchanges and comments over the past few days between members present in the House or attending remotely cover the entire spectrum of opinions, but I do not think I am wrong when I say that this government order leaves no one indifferent, as evidenced by the many emails my office is getting, even on the weekend.

The Emergencies Act takes on special meaning in the current context. I would like to note from the outset that the Premier of Quebec has made it clear that he does not want the act to be applied in Quebec, and he even secured a unanimous vote to that effect from the National Assembly of Quebec on February 15. For the people of Quebec, this is a bit of a touchy subject. It was 185 years ago to the day that the Patriotes were thrown in jail. I just had to add that little historical aside.

Let us now get back to the seven of the 10 Canadian provinces that told the Prime Minister on February 14 that they did not want this legislation invoked within their borders because they have the necessary tools and resources to manage the crisis and because invoking it would only add fuel to the fire. Newfoundland and British Columbia were in favour of this tool, but they do not need it. Therefore, the order should only apply to Ontario, if the province deems it necessary.

Invoking the Emergencies Act is a dangerous step to take. It is a legislative tool whose consequences must be carefully weighed, with an eye to the future. The self-styled “Freedom Convoy” did not sneak into Ottawa, as quiet as a mouse. After leaving British Columbia, the convoy got bigger and bigger. The traffic and the commotion it caused all along the Trans-Canada Highway could not have gone unnoticed. A momentum developed at the very heart of the convoy's partisan and politicized core. The convoy made its affiliations crystal clear, so it was able to rally supporters along the way.

By failing to prepare for what it knew to be a large convoy heading for the Canadian capital, the government did not keep its options open for dealing with what became a security issue for the parliamentary precinct and for the people of Ottawa and the neighbouring region of Quebec.

As several observers have noted, when the government waits 20 days after the arrival of the convoy to invoke the Emergencies Act, what is the point of that order?

I am asking because the fact that the Prime Minister took a few calls here and there and made the choice, when the convoy arrived, to offload intervention onto municipal and provincial police services is a clear indication of lack of leadership and, I have to say, incompetence. The convoy settled in in the parliamentary precinct and was widely condemned for its impact on the locals. In no time at all, it had spawned offshoots all over the place, including an occupation at the Ambassador Bridge.

The infamous convoy left its mark, even internationally. It instigated action at Fort Erie, Coutts, Emerson and Sarnia. Provincial law enforcement took the necessary steps to gradually and successfully disperse the blockades.

It took a call from the White House to the Prime Minister for the latter to start really thinking about this and for the bridge to Michigan, a key North American trade corridor, to be cleared. The Prime Minister decided against mobilizing Parliament Hill law enforcement and the RCMP when the convoy arrived. There was no attempt to prevent the convoy from occupying the area, no concrete bollards, no barricades, no roadblocks. At no time did the government appoint a representative to negotiate with the convoy's spokespeople.

● (0810)

When the Ottawa police asked for 1,800 federal officers, 275 were provided, of which only 20 were for the protests. Ottawa is not like other cities. Canada has a Prime Minister who has done virtually nothing to defend his country's capital. Was it not predictable that there would be public frustration with the health measures?

It was. We understand the fatigue of everyone who did what they felt was their civic duty: showing support for their community by getting vaccinated, so we can put this pandemic behind us. These people are exhausted. This also causes frustration for those who have chosen not to be vaccinated. We understand that. We are all going through it. What we are going through is nothing less than an ordeal.

Statutory Order

Quebec did not escape the protests spurred on by the Ottawa convoy, but the difference is that the Quebec government and the mayor of Quebec City both stood firm. They were not caught off guard like the Prime Minister. The municipal and provincial police were ready, even though they already had to manage the security logistics of the Quebec Winter Carnival. As a result, the city was not overrun. There were still angry protesters, but the leaders in Quebec and Quebec City did not allow them to set up hot tubs, skating rinks, barbecues, tents, and everything else that we could see in Ottawa.

Picture someone standing on the side of the road. A transport truck is approaching. They brace themselves. They know that if they do not get ready and take a step back, they will get a blast of exhaust and gravel right in the face.

That is what is happening to the Prime Minister. He is wiping the gravel off his face because he did not take the most elementary precautions. He and his government failed to make decisions, take action and provide assistance when it was needed.

Is it acceptable for a Prime Minister known for his indolent attitude to suddenly break out the heavy artillery?

This order in council is the government's last-resort attempt to cover for its failure to recognize what is going on, to cling to what little credibility it has left for its pseudo-strategy.

Although I am not on Parliament Hill, I still wondered every day what was going on. I did not understand this silence. I need someone to explain it to me.

What were the Prime Minister and his entourage waiting for to be proactive, to listen to and support the Ottawa police, to address the protesters at least once at the beginning?

What was the Prime Minister waiting for to show the country that he “continues to work hard”, if I may borrow one of his favourite sayings?

Let us be clear. The Bloc Québécois values freedom of expression. However, this freedom has limits. It does not come with limitless rights. It does not come with the right to protest to the detriment of an entire population.

The Bloc is in favour of health measures as long as public health and medical authorities recommend them. What the Bloc condemns is what is before us now, in other words this worrisome display of negligence via legislation. We all know the expression “too little, too late”. This morning, I would change that to “too much, too late”.

My colleague from Joliette did a fine job yesterday morning outlining all the inconsistencies topping the list in this order. There is no need to repeat what he said. We are on the same page and have reached identical and complementary conclusions, as has the member for Thérèse-De Blainville, who spoke before me and shared her speaking time with me.

Statutory Order

One thing is certain. What is needed right now is available through the existing legislation. Activating the Emergencies Act is neither justified nor required, unless the federal government is trying to get its hands on a tool that would inflame the situation. That is the last thing we need.

• (0815)

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am curious to know what the Bloc Québécois's position is, after polling shows that 72% of Quebecers support the government's measures.

Furthermore, this is not only a problem in Ottawa. As the member for Windsor West just explained, the threat to our borders and key infrastructure is not over.

The Ottawa police chief explained this weekend how important the emergency measures were in dealing with the situation in our nation's capital. I am voting in favour of these measures because I want to provide adequate tools to our police forces, whose job is very difficult.

When the member speaks to police officers in her community and to members of the Sûreté du Québec, how will she explain that she does not want them to have the same tools to ensure their safety during illegal blockades?

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Mr. Speaker, there is a lot to unpack in my colleague's question. I could address each point separately, but I will focus only on the last point, about co-operation among police forces.

Before Christmas, the Bloc Québécois spoke out about illegal weapons crossing the border. We talked about the need for Canadian, American and indigenous police forces to work together to solve the problem.

Are we now meant to believe that it would take the Emergencies Act for all these police forces to work together to solve a problem? Come on. The reasons given to justify the use of the Emergencies Act do not hold up, since we already have all the tools we need in the existing legislation.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member. She clearly explained that the government did nothing to prevent this situation.

The Prime Minister did not try to use diplomacy. He did not call President Biden to reach an agreement. He did not provide the police resources that were requested. I believe that the provinces and police services can currently address any situation that may arise.

Does my colleague share my concern about this urgent motion, which allows the government to put in place any other authorized measure that has yet to be identified? Is she worried about this?

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Mr. Speaker, yes, we are very worried about the expanded powers that this act could give the government.

Once again, we are insisting on the fact that everything we needed was already in place. Laws such as the Criminal Code already exist and injunctions can be obtained. Everything could have been addressed in some other way. As proof, crises were resolved elsewhere in Canada and in Quebec.

We must be vigilant. We cannot let people challenge the rule of law, but, at some point, we must intervene and be proactive.

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, the member for Repentigny, the riding next to mine, for her excellent speech.

Even before the Emergencies Act was invoked, she had already spoken about the fact that a whole series of situations had been resolved, including those at the Surrey border crossing and the Ambassador Bridge.

Is the Emergencies Act just being used, to some extent, to hide the government's inaction with respect to the situation in Ottawa?

Ms. Monique Pauzé: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague and riding neighbour.

I absolutely agree that the government is using this act to hide its complacency. I wonder whether, at some point, there was some political manoeuvring behind the decision to let the situation get as bad as it did.

The scope of this act is far too broad and that is being used to hide the Prime Minister's incompetence.

• (0820)

[English]

Mr. Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I should start by saying that I am opposed to the government's invoking the Emergencies Act, and I will be voting against this motion when it comes up for a vote tomorrow evening. I will now explain my reasons for doing so.

The invocation of the Emergencies Act, formally known as the War Measures Act, is an extremely serious matter that rightfully concerns all Canadians. This is only the fourth time in history that either of these acts has been invoked, and I certainly hope that it will be the last for the foreseeable future.

The first time the War Measures Act was invoked was during World War I, the second time was during World War II, and the third and most recent time was during the FLQ crisis of 1970. For context, I would like to speak a little more about this most recent invocation of the War Measures Act, in 1970, during the FLQ crisis.

The Front de libération du Québec, or FLQ, was by any objective measure a terrorist organization. The FLQ plotted and carried out dozens of bombings. The FLQ robbed banks. The FLQ performed kidnappings. The FLQ murdered a total of eight people and wounded dozens more. Finally, after all the bombings, all the bank robberies, all the kidnappings and all the murders, the federal government decided that this matter could no longer be left to local law enforcement officials; it decided to invoke the War Measures Act in October 1970. To this day, scholars, historians and even politicians who were there at the time remain critical of the decision by then prime minister Pierre Trudeau to invoke the War Measures Act in 1970. Instead, they argue that the matter should simply have been left to local law enforcement officials.

NDP leader Tommy Douglas was very critical of the decision on the floor of the House of Commons, noting that the Liberal government of the day did not provide one shred of evidence to support its claim of an apprehended insurrection. Don Jamieson, Pierre Trudeau's transport minister, wrote in his memoirs years later, "In concrete terms, we did not have a compelling case to put forward." In his opinion, invoking the War Measures Act was simply a way for Pierre Trudeau to make life difficult for his political opponents.

In the *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Professor Dominique Clément has argued, "The universal suspension of human rights is, in retrospect, the most damning indictment of the government's decision to invoke the War Measures Act." Richard Gwyn, one of Pierre Trudeau's biographers, argues, "Trudeau smeared irredeemably his reputation as a champion of civil liberties. No other prime minister has been so severely criticized for crushing civil liberties."

There is a strong argument to be made by historians and academics that even the FLQ crisis, with all of its bombings, bank robberies, kidnappings and murders, did not justify invoking the War Measures Act, and that these matters were best left to local law enforcement officials.

Therefore, if it is highly questionable as to whether the War Measures Act was justified in 1970, then what is the justification for invoking the Emergencies Act today? What are the protesters in downtown Ottawa and on Parliament Hill doing that would justify the invocation of this act?

Well, for starters, they have bouncy castles. I have walked through the crowd of protesters almost every morning on my way to work on Parliament Hill and I can confirm that there are bouncy castles, but bouncy castles do not justify invoking the Emergencies Act. Bouncy castles in the middle of the street are a matter for local law enforcement.

Many of these protesters and truckers have parked their trucks illegally and have been blaring their horns all night long. I think these trucks should be ticketed and towed, but the need to ticket and tow some vehicles does not justify invoking the Emergencies Act. Ticketing and towing vehicles is a matter for local law enforcement officials.

• (0825)

There has also been an incident of someone jumping up and down on the National War Memorial. There has been another incident of someone putting an upside-down flag on the Terry Fox statue. There have also been reports of local residents being intimidated and harassed. I certainly condemn all these activities, but none of this justifies invoking the emergency measures act. These are matters for local law enforcement, nothing more.

In order for the act to be invoked, I think it is important for Canadians, including members of this House, to understand the threshold that must be met. Section 16 of the act reads, "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". It says a "national emergency". The noisy truckers and the bouncy castles out on Wellington Street do not constitute a national emergency.

Statutory Order

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: They are not there anymore.

Mr. Michael Kram: Then they especially do not.

Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, I have walked through the crowds out on Wellington Street almost every morning on my way to work since the convoy arrived, and I lived to tell about it. There is no al Qaeda. There is no Taliban. There are no North Korean special forces looking to take over the government. This is a matter for local law enforcement officials, and it is wrong for the government to try to make it out to be anything more than that.

If the protesters out on Wellington Street are best left to local law enforcement, then that raises the following questions: What should the federal government be doing? How can the federal government best respond to this whole situation in a positive and constructive manner? I think the federal government needs to get to the root cause of the frustrations we have all been feeling over the last two years. Of course, I am talking about the pandemic restrictions that have been disrupting the lives of Canadians.

The government would do well to come up with a science-based and evidence-based plan to safely and responsibly wind down pandemic restrictions at the federal level. This is exactly what the Conservative opposition has been calling on the government to do for some time. In fact, every provincial government has already presented a science-based, evidence-based plan to gradually wind down most, if not all pandemic restrictions, in a measurable, quantifiable manner based on metrics, benchmarks and milestones.

It is time for the federal government to do the same. If the government would focus its efforts on coming up with a science-based and evidence-based plan to responsibly wind down pandemic restrictions, that would be infinitely more beneficial to the quality of life of Canadians than invoking the emergency measures act to deal with noisy truckers and bouncy castles.

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, let us hear from local law enforcement. In this case, it is Ottawa's chief of police, Steve Bell. He 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 Conservative Party disagree with the Ottawa chief of police?

Mr. Michael Kram: Mr. Speaker, I think it is important to realize that these protests and these demonstrations have not been limited to Ottawa. There have been similar protests and demonstrations all across the country, and every other municipal police force seems to have been able to deal with it in a satisfactory manner. The other police forces seem to know how to do crowd control, how to divert traffic and that sort of thing. I think it would be beneficial for the Ottawa police department to learn these best practices from other police departments and learn to do it how everyone else has.

*Statutory Order**[Translation]*

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I remind the House that the Bloc Québécois does not believe that protesters have the right to do whatever they want. They certainly do not have the right to protest in a way that hurts an entire community, but that is already in the past. I prefer to look toward the future.

What lessons should we learn from what has happened?

• (0830)

[English]

Mr. Michael Kram: Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of lessons to be learned by the Prime Minister. His rhetoric has certainly not helped the situation in the slightest. I saw on TV that the Prime Minister said many of these protesters are racist, sexist, misogynistic and hold unacceptable views.

The Prime Minister's rhetoric has not helped the situation in the slightest. It would be eminently more beneficial if we had a better prime minister to deal with this situation in a positive and constructive manner.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, it is lovely to finally have a chance to speak, having been here since 7 a.m., and I will be here until midnight.

I am trying to make up my mind on how I am going to vote. With a sincere effort to remain respectful, I must tell the member that it does not help when the crisis in Ottawa is minimized to a problem of bouncy castles. It was an occupation. It caused millions and millions of dollars of damage to this city and its residents. Honking horns all night actually qualifies, under the Geneva Convention, as torture. One is not allowed to do that to prisoners.

The people of Ottawa have been imprisoned by occupiers. They may not have known what they were doing. This is quite likely for many of them, especially the ones who seemed so surprised they were ultimately going to get arrested. Non-violent civil disobedience has a long tradition, which I will not go through, that includes knowing one is going to be arrested because one is breaking the law and has done this on principle.

Could we not at least agree what occurred here in Ottawa was, from the moment those large 18-wheelers started occupying whole streets so the people of Ottawa could not go about their day-to-day lives, a crisis? It was badly handled and I will not disagree with that. If we look at the place where we were last week, how would we have solved that without the powers in the Emergencies Act, particularly to compel tow truck drivers?

One of his colleagues on those benches directed me to section 129 of the Criminal Code, which I know is obstruction of a police officer, but it does not fit the circumstance.

Mr. Michael Kram: Mr. Speaker, I certainly hope the hon. member does vote against the invocation of this act. We can agree this whole situation could have been handled better, as we have seen with other police departments in other cities across the country.

There certainly is a role to be played for law enforcement. We cannot have law and order break down. I did say in my speech I

condemn the jumping up and down on the National War Memorial and the intimidation of local residents.

Again, these are matters for local law enforcement and do not justify the national emergency spelled out in the Emergencies Act.

Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the Liberals have invoked the Emergencies Act. This is the reformed War Measures Act that gives the federal government and police sweeping and never-before-used powers. Let us acknowledge what has happened. The Emergencies Act suspends civil liberties.

I said earlier this week that this is a deep stain on our country's reputation as a defender of rights and that the dictators around the world would be delighted with Canada. Government MPs scoffed when I said that in the House of Commons. If Canada does this, who could say tyrants, with protesters in their capital cities, could not do the same?

It was not long until we heard answers. China's state media was first, declaring Beijing had greater moral and legal authority to invoke its national security law in Hong Kong than Canada did against its truckers. Russia Today served up outsized reporting, four times that of the BBC and Al Jazeera, to gin up its viewers, and then there was the best. When I say the best, I mean the worst. The best was Iran's former leader Mahmoud Ahmadinejad tweeting out support. Oh, Canada, what horrible company for our nation to keep with Beijing, Moscow and Tehran cheering on the Liberal government. It must feel a little uncomfortable where Liberal, NDP and possibly Green MPs sit.

While the street blockade had to be resolved in Ottawa, the conditions to invoke the Emergencies Act have not been met. This is why I will vote to repeal this dreadful infringement by the federal government. Should most other MPs vote to endorse the Prime Minister's use of force, they will set a very low bar on future governments to suspend civil liberties. What should concern us, particularly opposition MPs who are willing to support the government's motion, is the test to invoke the Emergencies Act in the future will be today's feeble justifications. Here is the actual requirement:

...a national emergency is an urgent and critical situation of a temporary nature that

(a) seriously endangers the [lives,] health or safety of Canadians [that cannot be effectively dealt with by provinces or territories]

(b) 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 any other law of Canada".

Unlawful blockades in Surrey, Coutts and Windsor were dispersed prior to the invocation of the Emergencies Act. Should Parliament label protesters on Wellington and its surrounding streets in Ottawa as a genuine national emergency, a future government could easily find others, such as another protest outside Parliament, illegal immigration or eco-radicalism. Lawmakers should be careful on which path they lead our country.

The members opposite who would support this motion affix their names to it in perpetuity. They will authorize and endorse the suspension of constitutional rights. Government members argue civil liberties are not infringed merely because the law's preamble says that charter rights are protected, yet prohibiting public assembly is an infringement on civil liberties. Seizing private property without due process is an infringement on civil liberties. Withholding assets without the right to recourse is an infringement on civil liberties. Freezing bank accounts and forcing banks to share private information with security agencies, without any court oversight or even criminal charges being laid, is a gross violation of fundamental rights. Limiting travel is an infringement on civil liberties. There are over 100 police checkpoints in our nation's capital.

Today's invocation of the Emergencies Act is an out-of-proportion use of federal powers. Are MPs opposite going to vote to endorse this unwarranted withdrawal of civil liberties?

The government's actions, along with those of the police, will be studied and analyzed for decades to come by academics, researchers and students just as the draconian War Measures Act has been for the last 50 years. I do not believe their judgment will be a pleasant one. Indeed, I am already struck by the large and growing divergence in perspectives and reporting on this matter by our domestic media and foreign press.

• (0835)

Canada's media and elite opinion, albeit with some exceptions in both camps, have largely echoed the government's position. They say Ottawa protesters are not peaceful while downplaying the suspension of rights. Some simply parrot the government line. Others dismiss the legitimate concerns Canadians have about lockdowns, mandates and restrictions. What we do not see is a full-throated defence of charter freedoms from liberal reporters and opinion pundits whom we look for when rights are curtailed at home or abroad. This is in sharp contrast to foreign reporting.

What exactly is being reported beyond our borders?

A Newsweek editor wrote mid-week, "Canada is...arresting dissidents. A country that considers itself a democracy arresting people for the crime of organizing a mass grassroots nonviolent protest should horrify" us.

The Economist, which has long celebrated Canada's Liberals in its pages, wrote:

[The Prime Minister]'s crackdown on protests could make things worse....

Canada's government should have drawn a clear distinction between harmful acts and obnoxious or foolish words. Peaceful protests are fine; blocking crucial highways so that others cannot go about their business is not.

This is a clear distinction between border points and the Wellington Street protest. The Economist article continues:

Statutory Order

[T]he truckers have every right to express their disagreement. A wise government would [have] listen[ed] to them and respond[ed] politely, taking their complaints seriously....

[But the Liberal Prime Minister] has done the opposite.

Another respectful British magazine, The Spectator, was much more harsh, writing:

Peaceful civil disobedience is an established means of drawing attention to injustice when ordinary means of recourse have been exhausted....

... Canada's elites...are fixating on the presence of truckers in the capital and at the borders only as [a national] embarrassment.... They aren't interested in hearing about the impact of the mandates on citizens' lives....

It has not been possible for the truckers and their supporters to have their grievances addressed by ordinary civic means....

This civil disobedience is all [the Prime Minister] can cite in justification of the Emergencies Act. The [government] rationale is that ongoing protest and peaceful civil disobedience constitute a threat to national security and to the economy....[A] credible government would have avoided this situation entirely by addressing, or at least expressing a willingness to evaluate, the suffering it is inflicting on its own people.

The title of this provocative article is "[The PM]'s totalitarian turn", but its conclusion is identical to that of the liberal magazine, The Economist, along with Europe's Financial Times, which is that the Government of Canada got it wrong.

It goes on in other publications. The New York Times asserted, on Monday, that Canada "Declares National Emergency", allowing temporary suspension of civil liberties.

Ottawa-based reporters did not like that or that The New York Times included coverage as well as photos of police arresting protesters near our Parliament yesterday, at gunpoint.

The Wall Street Journal, which is the largest U.S. newspaper, editorialized that the truckers' protest could have been handled without abusing the law. "Government's job is to maintain public order while respecting civil liberties." Canada has failed on both scores.

Foreign press's conclusion is that our Prime Minister crossed a democratic line.

Canadians want the blockade to end, but it never should have come at the expense of the rule of law, crackdowns, abuse and totalitarian methods in Canada, say western press. Oh Canada, that is a deep stain and national embarrassment.

I miss my Canada, but there is some hope. The Wall Street Journal's editorial offers a warning and perhaps a way out, writing, "Protesters aren't emergencies, and Western leaders had better get used to handling civil disobedience firmly without traducing civil liberties."

Statutory Order

How should Parliament respond? The only question for us is this: Does this legislative body support trampling civil disobedience and protest by undermining rights and freedoms? We cannot undo what has happened. Invoking the Emergencies Act is on the Prime Minister and his Liberal cabinet, but we do not need to be culpable. We can stop it. Parliament can act. We must not approve our juvenile Prime Minister's decision and gross misuse of federal law. Parliament can reject the Emergencies Act. It should, because Canadians, along with the rest of the world, are watching and seeing whether we will get it right.

● (0840)

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I actually want to thank the member opposite, because a lot of what I have heard this morning has been very divisive in the name of non-divisiveness. While I may disagree with much of what was said, I actually appreciate that the tone did not go for that divisiveness.

What I wanted to speak about, though, is the trucking piece. I worry about minimizing what we have seen here in Ottawa. I was speaking to a constituent whose father was travelling back and forth delivering produce and was stuck at the U.S. border. He was vaccinated, but he was stuck because of the protest. He was unable to get more gas and food for himself because of what was happening while he was on the other side of the border.

Does the member not agree that the majority of truckers were not supporting what we saw in Ottawa, and in fact that what was happening in Ottawa was a massive disruption to the lives of people who live in this region?

Mr. John Williamson: Mr. Speaker, I have attempted to maintain a civil tone throughout these debates.

I actually do not know where the majority of truckers are on this question. I certainly know a lot of them are not happy with lockdowns, restrictions and mandates, even though the vast majority of them are vaccinated.

I represent a border community. There are five international crossings in my riding. I do not think that border points should be blocked, which is why I maintained from the outset that they had to be cleared out. That being said, peaceful civil disobedience is an acceptable way to express oneself. We have seen it throughout the ages, and I hope it will continue here in Canada.

● (0845)

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, could my colleague tell us more about the potential repercussions of using the Emergencies Act when it is not required, as is being done right now?

Mr. John Williamson: Mr. Speaker, I think it has repercussions on Canada's reputation.

Right now, in Europe, England, the United States and elsewhere, people are saying that Canada does not respect human rights. I find that disturbing and very unfortunate.

[English]

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Qujannamiik, Uqaqtittiji.* I would like to thank the member for New Brunswick Southwest. I have been thoroughly disgusted that the Conservatives continue to minimize the extremism that has been allowed to grow in all of Canada.

I have seen the effects of these extremist messages reach my home community of Iqaluit. Iqaluit has one of the lowest vaccination rates in Nunavut, albeit about 70%. These extremist ideologies, such as not getting vaccinated because of religion, have had detrimental effects in my community. Once COVID-19 arrived in Iqaluit, it rampaged through the community. For weeks, COVID-19 cases rose. Iqaluit is not the largest community in Nunavut, but it had the highest incidence rates for a while.

Does the member agree that these extremist views having infiltrated the farthest reaches of my riding in Nunavut is an indication that extremism such as this is a national issue requiring urgent action?

Mr. John Williamson: Mr. Speaker, I agree that citizens in this country should look to science and vaccines as a way out and a way to protect themselves. However, that does not involve invoking the Emergencies Act. I hope my remarks today have convinced NDP members to at least think about their support for the draconian actions that the government has taken and the impact on Canada's reputation. We cannot undo it, but Parliament should not sanction what the Liberal government has done.

Mr. Ryan Williams (Bay of Quinte, CPC): Mr. Speaker, if you fail to plan, you plan to fail. That is the deal.

From the early stages of the pandemic to a protest that has become the target of the sledgehammer that is the Emergencies Act, the government has failed in every way to plan for events that it had ample opportunity to be ready for. It has dismally planned to fail.

Before COVID-19 we had SARS, a precursor to the pandemic that should have given us a road map for what could come, but it did not. From a dismal lack of stockpiling of PPE to the completely inadequate health care capacity of our whole system to the failure to produce a single drop of vaccine two years in, Canada was not ready for what became the biggest spend of money in all Canadians' lifetimes combined.

What will we see in the next decade? Misspending has created the largest inflation in 30 years, gas prices are now over \$1.80 in some parts of the country, and grocery bills are crippling our families.

The government did what the government had to do when there was no plan: It intervened. The problem with the government taking total control is that it hates to lose the control that it has gained.

Let us switch gears to the protests here in Ottawa. The convoy drove from west to east, making its way slowly across the country while making it well known that it was not happy with the mandates. In every town it entered, it was met with thousands of Canadians who supported it, feeling hopeful for change. Canadians had their own reasons for supporting it, but the common thread was the need for change, for hope and for the end of suffering.

The government had fair warning. People were coming and they were unhappy. The government had ample time to listen to the people and create a plan, a road map out of this pandemic, that Canadians so desperately needed. However, instead of listening and seeing what other countries that had had fourth waves ahead of us were doing, on January 7 our health minister said that he saw more mandates coming.

There was Quebec's tax on health and the continued PCR testing that the WHO said was unnecessary. There was and has been no scientific medical data to back up these mandates, just as there was no data to prove that the Prime Minister was correct in suggesting that interprovincial passports for truckers were absolutely necessary.

Instead of listening and creating a safe, responsible plan, the government took a heavy hand, threatening more mandates and belittling Canadians for expressing their displeasure.

The Ottawa police, the RCMP and the Ontario Provincial Police had all the time they needed to prepare for trucks coming downtown, but let us be honest: There was no plan. An article in the National Post on Saturday stated that the Ottawa police's plan was that the trucker protest would last just a weekend. When police were overwhelmed, they still did not announce an emergency. The following week, they became more indecisive. The police chief stated that he believed protesters would dissipate on their own. It was a failure to plan.

Especially, there was no plan from the federal government to address this larger group or manage any elements of lawlessness. There was absolutely no plan to understand that this was not just a fringe element, but a larger movement of ordinary Canadians simply looking for hope from somebody, anybody, as we in the world continually reach the last phases of the pandemic and the beginning of an endemic. It was a larger group that had no affiliation with hate, intolerance or lawlessness. We only had to listen to and speak to many of those screaming to be heard, or see the messaging from our constituencies.

Most of all, it was a failure of the Prime Minister.

We must all remember just one thing in the House, and that is whom we work for, whom we represent and whom we answer to. When we forget that, and it feels like the government has forgotten it, we find a divided country. A divided country allows our country to be weak on the world stage, weak in future planning and weak to those who look to us for a path forward.

The Prime Minister made a choice, and that choice ignored Canadians when they most needed a leader to hear from. Here are some of the voices from Bay of Quinte in the last few weeks.

Statutory Order

My son struggles after COVID19 to the point where he has completely broken down. He can no longer play with friends and he has no interest in even attending school.

● (0850)

I had a major reaction to the first vaccine where I cannot mentally get the second and cannot get a medical exception. I am at the verge of breaking down every day and have never had so little hope.

I donated \$30 to the trucker convoy not because of any other reason than I wanted hope and an end to mandates. I'm a single mother and I'm afraid my bank account will be frozen, and I will be detained.

I am currently a teacher. I am speaking on behalf of children that are being masked all day long. They cannot breathe. They are not developing social skills with one another that they should be. The language development in several of my senior kindergarten students are being stunted because of masks.

This is after we should be celebrating what we have done as a country, a country that is 90% vaccinated, a country that has all the opportunity in front of it for a prosperous future and a country that can start to heal from its wounds.

As COVID-19 wanes, what is left today is a country in shambles. What remains is a country divided, leaving generations of mistrust in government. When a government divides and conquers, once trust is broken, it is almost impossible to build it back. Mothers, daughters and sons have contacted us in the last few weeks. There has been massive trauma experienced as a result of COVID-19. Domestic abuse and mental health issues have gone through the roof.

The question for the government is this: Why are your politics more important than the heart of this nation? We keep creating division when we should be healing. We cannot keep fighting across the aisle, slinging mud and acting like it is helpful. Canadians need us to meet them with an open heart, acknowledge the pain and trauma they have suffered throughout this pandemic and do all we can to be a light after this dark tunnel. It is time to say that we are sorry, right our wrongs, start mending our country and build trust again.

The government did what it had to do at the beginning of the pandemic: It intervened because it had no plan. There have been countless consequences of that. Again, with no plan to deal with a prolonged protest in downtown Ottawa, the government is in another failure scenario with the Emergencies Act. We are against this act.

The actions taken these past three weeks in several locations in Canada are not an aberration, but rather a manifestation of the growing frustration Canadians feel with our federal government and its inability to truly listen to Canadians and put them ahead of its overreach. The invocation of the Emergencies Act is a slap in the face to all Canadians and not a proud moment in our country's history.

Statutory Order

Even if the need for law enforcement is justified to bail out those who failed to plan, it is the financial overreach that has me most concerned. The law must be predictable and transparent, and the financial overreach of this act is not. Banks should not be and are not our nation's prosecutors. There are laws now that ensure law enforcement can and will go after unlawful activities, but no Canadian who innocently donated to a cause because they wanted desperately to feel hope should feel maligned. Certainly no government looking at powers that allow financial information to be accessed should be allowed to make those changes permanent, as the Deputy Prime Minister made claim to this week.

The invocation of the Emergencies Act under these circumstances is an insult to all Canadians and certainly not a proud moment in our country's history. Our nation needs to start healing now, and that is the only plan that we all need to get behind.

• (0855)

Ms. Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have noticed not only this morning but over the past couple of years a very targeted, divisive approach to get to this government, and not on any merit.

I will ask the member why he is blurring jurisdiction lines. I know we have heard from Bloc Québécois members about the importance of jurisdiction and from other members about the importance of ensuring that the rule of law and our Constitution are maintained. Our Constitution accounts for those jurisdictional lines. As part of their main argument, we have heard members talk about how our federal government has failed because of lack of action by regional or provincial governments. Can the member please clarify his position there?

Mr. Ryan Williams: Mr. Speaker, this was a failure of the government because it starts at the top. We have heard the government members on the other side blame every single party for this, but it starts with the tone and escalation of not treating Canadians as Canadians and pitting them against each other.

We talked about the failure of the police here in Ottawa to take care of the situation. I said that throughout my whole speech. However, it was also the government's tone in not recognizing what was happening, not listening to Canadians and not ensuring that we start healing this nation instead of dividing it.

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will ask my Conservative colleague whether he agrees with me on two things—not that he has to.

Especially since yesterday, I have noticed that the government has been constantly giving us the same two arguments. First, that a poll of 300 people shows that Quebecers approve, and second, that the City of Ottawa has said that the use of the Emergencies Act was necessary.

In the member's opinion, why is the scope of the Emergencies Act being downplayed?

What reason will we hear tomorrow in the House for why we should support invoking the Emergencies Act?

• (0900)

[English]

Mr. Ryan Williams: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague from Quebec and I agree. She talked about two points. We have talked about two points this week too: We are looking for point one and two of what the government did before invoking the Emergencies Act. We cannot seem to get that answer. There is no justification for it since we did not have step one, two or three introduced before this motion.

At the end of the day, we agree that this is a step too far, especially, as I mentioned, given the financial ramifications to Canadians and especially when the government wants some of these changes to be permanent, which we certainly do not agree with. As I have stated, it is definitely overreach by the government.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member spoke a lot about healing and the mending of fences. My concern through a lot of this is that alternative, right wing, white supremacist organizations are central to a lot of what we have seen over the last three weeks here in Ottawa and across the country. We should not associate, as some members across have, with people like Pat King, who talked about the depopulation of the Caucasian race and suggested that the only way the convoy in Ottawa would be solved is with bullets.

Could the member comment on the dangers of that and the fact that the government has to respond to it in an extremely serious and decisive manner?

Mr. Ryan Williams: Mr. Speaker, I am happy to address this. We have condemned it from the onset. We have condemned it every single day as MPs and as Canadians. At the end of the day, this is not what the protest movement was about. These are Canadians, and we are listening to them in our constituency offices. I get calls and emails as a member of Parliament, and the majority of Canadians wanted hope and wanted to end division and end mandates.

As to this element that exists in Canadian society, all of us as MPs strongly condemn it. I want to make that very clear. We have zero association to it, and all members of the House, who represent Canadians all across this country, condemn hate, condemn violence and condemn intolerance. Let us make sure that is the way we go forward from here on out.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my heart aches to be in the House speaking on this today, and I want to echo some words from my constituents. I know many of us in this room have had thousands of emails and phone calls from constituents. Here are just a couple of quotes from some of those emails and phone calls: “Never did I think I would see this in my country” and “I do not recognize our Canada right now. Our anthem has lost all meaning this week.” Let us remember our anthem: “True patriot love in all of us command” and “The True North strong and free!” That is what our anthem stands for, and when Canadians and my constituents are telling me they think our anthem has lost all meaning because of the actions over the last several weeks, it is disheartening.

They are sending these emails because there is a crisis in this country. However, the crisis is not what the Prime Minister is depicting. The crisis is a lack of trust from Canadians in the Liberal government and the Prime Minister. That is the crisis we are facing.

When citizens come to Ottawa, the seat of our national government, what they expect is to be heard and respected. Instead, the Prime Minister vilified, mocked and stigmatized. Let us take a look at what the Prime Minister preaches and what he practises. He preaches that diversity is our strength, that a Canadian is a Canadian is a Canadian and that he has their backs. However, what the Prime Minister practises is calling them racist, misogynist, the fringe and unacceptable. These are not the actions of a leader. These are the actions of a schoolyard bully, and that is exactly how the Prime Minister has acted.

The Prime Minister said invoking the Emergencies Act was the last possible step he would take. It was not the first, it was not the second and it was not the third. What were steps one, two and three? None of us have seen them. It clearly states in the Emergencies Act that to invoke the legislation we must table a document that outlines who we have spoken with, such as groups, organizations and people, before we press the nuclear option. Did he speak to anyone? Did he go outside and meet with the protesters? No. Did he speak with anyone outside his bubble before he pressed this nuclear option? No. What the Prime Minister did was hide in his cottage. When Canadians wanted hope and needed leadership, he abandoned them and neglected his duty.

The Prime Minister led us into this crisis. He had no intentions of ending the mandates. He wanted no path forward for a united Canada. Instead, every time, he doubled down. He threatened to increase restrictions and vilified millions of Canadians, further stoking fear and division. The Prime Minister's mission is accomplished. Here we are, as a country, divided and fallen.

This was not a national emergency. This was not a security issue. This was a political emergency brought on by the Prime Minister. It was a political emergency because over the last few weeks Canadians found their voice. They found their voice to stand up for what they believe in. They found their voice to push back against a bully. The vaccinated and unvaccinated found their voice to say they want their jobs back, they want their families back and they want their lives back, and when the Prime Minister saw Canadians standing up, he pressed the panic button. That panic button was the Emergencies Act.

Statutory Order

Here, I want to be very clear. The ramifications of invoking the Emergencies Act are profound. That is because it has never been done before. During 9/11, the Oka crisis and the height of this pandemic, no government ever talked about invoking the Emergencies Act. Two years ago, when antienergy activists blocked highways, railways and ports, the government under the Prime Minister never talked about the Emergencies Act. Those protests lasted for 17 days and actually brought our entire economy to its knees, as zero trade was happening. Did they think about the Emergencies Act then? No.

● (0905)

Meanwhile, over the last week, the blockades the Prime Minister is saying are devastating our economy in Coutts, at the Ambassador Bridge and Emerson have all been resolved and it did not take the Emergencies Act to do it. They were resolved because the police services in those areas used the tools that were available to them under the Criminal Code, existing tools. There was no need for the Emergencies Act to resolve these blockades.

In many cases, people just went there and listened. Did the Prime Minister do that? He has refused to do that. Several of my colleagues and I went to Coutts and spent hours talking with the organizers. They said they just wanted to be heard. That is what they were asking for. They felt they were heard because we went there. We reached out to them and had a conversation and they made the decision to start pulling out. These are families from across Alberta, in my case from Coutts, that are frustrated and angry because no one was listening to them.

What happened when they pulled out of the blockade? We can see it on video on YouTube. They stood hand in hand with police officers and sang *O Canada*, and in many cases hugged one another and shook hands. That is what happens when we do not use a sledgehammer.

What is the threat to national security? These blockades have been removed. What is the justification for invoking the Emergencies Act? The simple answer is that there is none. A prominent lawyer in my riding sent me a note that said, “There was never a point with regard to any alleged blockade that could not have been resolved under the existing Canadian law that would justify the invocation of the Emergencies Act.” Yesterday, in a scathing editorial, *The Wall Street Journal* stated, “In abusing these powers for a nonemergency, [the Prime Minister] crossed a democratic line.” I would argue the Prime Minister wants to erase that line entirely.

Statutory Order

The Liberal finance minister has already said that she wants to make some of the powers that have been invoked as part of Emergencies Act permanent. Was the endgame of invoking the Emergencies Act, which we all now know was unwarranted and unjustified, to simply make portions of this power grab permanent? Was that the Liberals' goal all along? Will the Liberals ban protests that do not align with their ideology? Will they retain access over Canadians' savings accounts?

They are saying these powers are geographically targeted. We know that is not true. The financial implications of freezing bank accounts impact every single Canadian. It is not geographically targeted. I have no words for this type of audacity and unfortunately this is real. This is happening in Canada, not Moscow, not North Korea and not Cuba. It is right here.

I received a call at my office from a single mother in my riding. She donated \$20 to the convoy because she felt it was important. She wanted an end to the mandates. She donated \$20. Since the Liberals have invoked the Emergencies Act, they have threatened to freeze the accounts of anybody who supported this convoy or the protests. When the Minister of Justice was asked what metrics there would be to decide whose accounts would be frozen, he could not answer or would not answer. Instead, he compared anyone who supported these protests to terrorists.

Is this mom a terrorist? Is she a racist? No, this mom is terrified. She is terrified her accounts will be frozen and she will be unable to feed her kids or will maybe miss a mortgage payment and lose her home. This is who this mom is. Of course she is not a terrorist, but this is the fearmongering we see and the threats that are happening.

This is a sad day in our country. It is incumbent on all of us in the House to defend civil liberties when a governing party so callously and blatantly wants to travel over them. I look at the bricks in this House that were built on a strong foundation of democracy, freedom and a strong, united country. The government is taking a sledgehammer to those foundational bricks of our democracy. We cannot and we must not let that happen.

● (0910)

Hon. Marc Garneau (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Westmount, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague said that all the truckers at Coutts wanted was to be heard. I would like him to comment on the fact that an arms cache was found at Coutts.

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, I am glad the hon. member raised that. I know the Liberals want to paint every single Canadian with the same brush, or every single person who was a part of that.

I will tell you that I was on the phone for hours on Monday, as were many of my colleagues, with the organizers of the Coutts protest. When they found out that a different group, a militant group, had made their way into the protest, they wanted nothing to do with it and they immediately stood down and brought down the blockade.

They were not associated with that group and it is shameful that the Liberals are trying to paint this group as being the same as every other protester who is out there and that this is exactly who everyone is, because they know it is not true.

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech.

Ironically, this morning I received an Instagram notification, which reminded me of what happened exactly two years ago, specifically the rail blockade of—

The Deputy Speaker: I am going to interrupt the member because there is a second conversation going on at the same time, which is preventing me from hearing the member's speech and question.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, on a point of order.

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, the member for St. Albert—Edmonton has referred to me as a despicable human being. I am pretty sure that is not parliamentary language. I would ask that you ask him to withdraw those comments, please.

● (0915)

The Deputy Speaker: I did hear that as well. I did see the exchange that was happening there. I did hear the member.

I wonder if the member would want to maybe retract that. I am looking at the member who did say it.

Mr. Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member claimed that I was taking a photo with swastikas and that is an absolute—

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Our parliamentary rules say that we cannot call an individual names. Again, this member called me a despicable human being. He is required, under our proceedings, to apologize and withdraw that comment. I would ask you—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

The hon. member for Saanich—Gulf Islands.

Ms. Elizabeth May: Mr. Speaker, I lament that we are here on a Sunday morning when, on a normal Sunday at 9:15 a.m., I would be at church. Right now, this is the opposite of any place that I have ever worshipped. The air is toxic.

Mr. Speaker, it is certainly for you to rule, but I wanted you to know that all of us in this corner heard the member for St. Albert—Edmonton say distinctly and clearly, “You are a despicable human being.”

I think he would want, reflecting on where he usually is on a Sunday morning, to decide, in his own heart, to withdraw those remarks as completely inappropriate.

Mr. Michael Cooper: Mr. Speaker, I withdraw the comment.

The Deputy Speaker: Let us all take a deep breath. I know it is early. I agree with the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands that normally we would be doing something different this morning. I know we have already been at it for three days now. We have today and tomorrow still to go to make sure that everybody has an opportunity to speak to this important motion.

[Translation]

The hon. member for Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia has the floor again and may start over.

Ms. Kristina Michaud: Mr. Speaker, I see that tempers are flaring. I will change my question because I want us to get back to the debate.

We are talking about the Emergencies Act, an act that has never been invoked since it was passed in 1988. There is a reason for that. I think that there are other tools that could have been used before we got to this point, which brings me back to my question.

Two years ago, the Wet'suwet'en were protesting the Coastal GasLink project. It did not take long before the RCMP was sent in. There was a court injunction. Clearly, other tools could have been used. There was no need for the Emergencies Act.

What does my colleague think about that?

[English]

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague is exactly right, which I think is the impetus of many of the speeches over this weekend and probably going into tomorrow.

There are other tools that law enforcement has in their tool box that would have addressed all of this. It addressed the illegal blockades at the borders previous to the Emergencies Act, but certainly to that specific case two years ago. That was where protesters were blocking critical infrastructure across the country for more than 17 days and the Liberals put out every minister possible to talk to those folks. They sent out the RCMP to dismantle those blockades. Did they do any of that this time?

Did a single member of the Liberal Party go out across the street and speak to a protester and hear what their concerns were? Did a single one do that? I do not think so.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member completely failed to address the previous important question posed. He painted a picture of Coutts only being about holding hands and singing *O Canada*.

This hon. member's denialism of what happened at Coutts is completely in line with his party's ongoing denialism of the extremist white supremacist threat to our Canadian democracy. There have been 13 people charged with conspiracy to commit murder after finding firearms and a cache of ammunition.

Why does this hon. member continue to downplay the clear and present threat of highly organized and violent elements within this extremist movement by wrapping it in the Canadian flag?

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, I love the fact that the NDP is trying to paint itself out of the corner it put itself in by supporting the Emergencies Act, when their party was founded on protecting the civil liberties of Canadians. Its members are going against the

very foundation of their party by trying to make this whole issue about white supremacy.

My constituents who live around Coutts and were down there are certainly not armed thugs and white supremacists. Did a group infiltrate that movement? Absolutely. Did they do everything they possibly could to purge it? Absolutely. This is a ridiculous argument by the NDP trying to defend the indefensible, which is supporting the Emergencies Act.

● (0920)

Ms. Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the member asked if anyone on the other side had talked to any of the protesters. I did speak to one of my constituents when she came back from Ottawa, and we had a very good conversation.

Is it okay, based on his speech, that a couple of hundred people can take over a city that inhabits tens and thousands of people and terrorize them, inconvenience their lives and harass their movement? Does he think those hundreds of people speak for all those tens of thousands?

Mr. John Barlow: Mr. Speaker, I am really happy with how the member asked that question. Does she think a few bad apples in a group speak for everyone? Is the constituent she met, which is her constituent, a racist, a misogynist, the fringe, unacceptable or taking up space? I would like to know what her perspective on her own constituent is.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, as always, it is a deep honour to stand in this place and represent the people of Edmonton Strathcona.

Today we gather to debate the enactment and bringing forward of the Emergencies Act. It is the enactment of legislation that has never been used before. I deeply feel the gravity and the responsibility of the work that we are doing in this place. I recognize the serious situation that we as parliamentarians, indeed we as Canadians, find ourselves at this pivotal time. I hope that every member in this place has spent time over the past several weeks thinking about our role as leaders in this country and the responsibility we have to make difficult decisions for the benefit of our constituents and for the benefit of Canada.

Before I share my thoughts on the implementation of the Emergencies Act, I want to take a moment, if I can, to acknowledge the staff and the security working on the Hill today. I want to thank all of those who have had to walk across a blockade to get to work. I want to thank all of those who are not spending the Family Day long weekend with their families because they are helping us in the House today, as well as the pages, as my colleague reminded me.

Statutory Order

I want to thank the law enforcement officers as well. I walked home from this place last night in the dark, protected by the police officers who held the line so that I could get to my apartment in Centretown, the police who have put themselves at risk today and for the last several days to make the city safe again for the people in Ottawa. I want to thank them.

Finally, I want to thank the journalists, who, in frigid temperatures for days on end, have brought information to Canadians. They have been sworn at. They have been spat at. They have been assaulted. They have been threatened. They have stood on the streets of Ottawa to tell this story every day. That is a cornerstone of our democracy and every Canadian should be thankful that we have members of an independent media that will tell the story and share the information that needs to be shared with Canadians.

Where we find ourselves as a nation is heartbreaking. What we have collectively witnessed over the past three weeks makes it crystal clear just how crucial it is that we do what we can to restore order in our country and to clear our borders of blockades and the illegal siege of Ottawa and the threats and intimidation directed at those who live and work here.

More importantly, as parliamentarians we need to make sure that this cannot happen again. I want to be very clear. I am not happy with where we find ourselves. I am angry that our country has come to this. The deep failures of our municipal and provincial governments and, yes, the failures of our federal government, have put us in a position where we are required to use extraordinary actions to go forward. Today and every day, I use my voice and I use my role in this place, in this chamber, to fix the issues that have led to the use of the Emergencies Act. I will use my role so that it never has to be used again.

We need to take a close look at policing in this country. We have seen obvious, systemic racism across the police force on an almost daily basis. There are far too many examples of unnecessary and excessive uses of force directed at Black, indigenous and racialized individuals and against the unhoused and others who are living in poverty. We have seen vicious attacks on these individuals' bodies and belongings, yet we know that the RCMP can exhibit incredible care and restraint. We have seen it. We saw it demonstrated in Ottawa, in Windsor, in Emerson and in Coutts. We saw incredible restraint and a refusal to act from our police forces play out, not over minutes and hours but over days and weeks.

● (0925)

As I stand in this place, I want us all to try to imagine how it must feel to be an indigenous land defender and watch white blockade members in Coutts, Alberta hug the RCMP. I want us to think about how it must feel for an unhoused person in Toronto who has been brutalized by police to watch the Ottawa police employ unbelievable gentleness with the illegal occupation in Ottawa.

In Alberta, we have a law that I deeply dislike. It was the very first law that was put in place under Premier Kenney: Bill 1, his first legislation. It was so that blockades could not stop our major infrastructure. It was to protect our major infrastructure from being clogged up. However, that law has not been enacted. If we ever needed something that proved to us that Bill 1 was never intended to be used against white people, that it was never intended to be

used against the premier's friends, this is proof. That legislation was put in place to hurt indigenous people. It was put in place to stop environmentalists. It was never intended to be used against Jason Kenney's friends, who have shown who they are, who have shown that they are white supremacists, who have shown that they have attempted murder. This is an armed insurrection on the border in our country, and the legislation was not used.

We also need to fully examine and strengthen our federal hate crime legislation to make sure that it can address the white supremacist and neo-Nazi extremism that is threatening our society.

I was happy to second the bill put forward by my dear friend, the member for New Westminster—Burnaby, to ban symbols of hate, symbols like swastikas and Confederate flags, symbols we have seen in our nation's capital during the illegal occupation. However, we cannot only ban the symbols of hate; we must counter the radicalization of Canadians that is happening online and over our public airwaves, like the trash radio that radicalized the man who killed six worshippers at the Quebec City mosque, like the online hate that radicalized one of the men arrested in Coutts, Alberta, who was accused of participating in a plot to murder an RCMP officer. According to his father, this man was radicalized online by a far-right extremist group known as Diagonal, a group that seeks to overthrow our government through violence.

The Liberal government has promised to table legislation to stop online hate, and it has failed, as of yet, to act on that. In fact, we see misinformation on our radio waves; we see Russian misinformation happening with CRTC licensing. This is something we can and need to fix now. We have to review and update our money laundering laws to combat the funding mechanisms that fund hate groups and that hate groups use to bankroll their activities. We need ongoing measures to prevent the funding of hate groups, not Emergencies Act legislation. We need ongoing support for that.

As my friend, the member for Hamilton Centre, said yesterday, none of this is new. None of this is things that we have not heard before. We have known that these are things that have to be fixed, and we have not done it. We find ourselves in an emergency situation because those steps have not been taken.

COVID has been incredibly hard for all of us. We have all had to deal with the lockdowns, the restrictions, the protections put in place for years. It has been a challenge.

● (0930)

I am a mother. I have watched my children be challenged and I have seen the things they have missed. I am a daughter, and I have elderly parents whom I worry about every day. I have seen people in our community lose loved ones, and I have seen them lose livelihoods. I have seen the impacts of the opioid addiction crisis, the unsafe drug supply crisis in my province.

However, we do not end pandemics with illegal blockades. We do not end pandemics with sieges and occupations. Viruses do not care if we are done with them; they are not done with us. That is not how it works. The only way to end a pandemic is through public health measures that are based on science. If we allow bullies to intimidate us out of protecting public health, as we have seen in Alberta, we are surrendering to injustice. We are allowing those with the strongest voices, the largest vehicles, the loudest horns to rule. We are capitulating to mob rule, and we are sacrificing our democracy and our own values.

The speaker before me made it sound like this is not what is happening in Alberta. However, we are seeing the worst of it in Alberta. Thirteen armed men are directing our public health policy in Alberta. Think about that for a moment.

Today, we are debating the Emergencies Act to deal with illegal activities that the province and the police forces have not had the will to address, but the government must also address the underlying cause of the alienation that many people feel in our country.

Over the past two decades, we have seen the wealth and well-being of ordinary Canadians decline, while wealth and power have accumulated to the top 1% in our country, the billionaire class. Costs continue to rise. Electricity and heating costs, grocery costs and housing costs are all rising, while incomes are staying stagnant. The urge to lower taxes that has obsessed our governments over the past 20 years may, on the surface, look like a solution, but upon closer examination, it actually contributed to the problems we are facing. Taxes for the wealthy corporations have been slashed dramatically, while the tax burden has shifted to low- and middle-income Canadians. It is not fair, and it is not working.

We have a housing crisis in this country. We have an opioid poisoning crisis in this country. One in 10 Canadians lives in poverty, and more than half of those are seniors. We have more Canadians working more hours with less job security than we have seen since the 1970s. This is not a sustainable plan. This is not a sustainable way for our country to go forward. When a crisis comes along, when a global pandemic threatens the life and livelihood of nearly every Canadian, we should not be surprised that some Canadians start to feel alienated and left out. We should not be surprised that they turn to false prophets and misinformation and turn on those who govern.

In the just over two years that I have been sitting as a member in the House, it is true that we have worked together through this pandemic, but we have not worked together to address the underlying issues, the root causes of the alienation and dissatisfaction that so many Canadians feel now and the sense of hopelessness that pervades.

Statutory Order

We do not know when this pandemic will end. No one in this House knows when this pandemic will end. We do not know how many times the virus will mutate. We do not know how many variants still await us or how many waves we may face. Yet, the government has been so anxious to cancel COVID support programs and so hesitant to address the underlying economic and social problems that the pandemic has laid bare and that have led to the sense of hopelessness so many Canadians feel.

● (0935)

We have so much work to do here, together, to create a better, fairer and more just Canada.

We know why we are here today. Ottawa has been under siege. Our borders have been blockaded. Our democracy has been threatened. We have witnessed some of the greatest failures of leadership our country has ever seen. Where was the coordination between the federal government, the province and the City of Ottawa? Why did it take so long for the Prime Minister to act?

So-called leaders, like Doug Ford and Jason Kenney, have completely failed their provinces. They have failed to act, they have failed to lead and they have failed to protect their citizens. They have failed to protect jobs and the economy. They have failed to protect health care workers. They have failed to even address the racism and violence that undermine our democracy.

A government member of the Legislative Assembly of Alberta in my province joined the illegal blockade at Coutts. Another Conservative MLA in Alberta actually urged police officers not to follow the orders of their superiors. They have encouraged lawlessness. They have taken selfies with extremist leaders.

Imagine what it feels like to be a racialized Canadian and to see the Conservative member of Parliament for Cypress Hills—Grasslands posing with Pat King, proclaiming his support for Pat King, the notorious leader of the convoy, the famous racist, the anti-Semitic and Islamophobic person who told us this thing would not end until bullets start flying.

Imagine what it feels like for people who live and work in Ottawa to not be able to go to their job, not be able to make an income, and to see the MP for Carleton handing out coffee and doughnuts to those who torment them.

Canadians have had enough of Conservatives playing footsie with radical extremists, with racists like Pat King and violent hate organizations like Diagonal. Canadians are fed up with the mob mentality of the Conservatives, and I would ask the Conservatives to apologize in this House.

Statutory Order

I accept the profound responsibility that the Emergencies Act entails. I will do everything I can, alongside my colleagues in this House, to ensure that the government does not abuse the powers granted to it by this act. We and other parties in the House have the power to stop the emergency declaration should that become necessary. We will not hesitate to use that power if the government exceeds the authority necessary to deal with this emergency.

My Canada is filled with kind, caring, intelligent people who care for their community. My Canada has frontline workers, doctors, nurses and health care workers who have literally risked their lives for years to protect us. My Canada has teachers who have worked every day despite all the challenges COVID-19 has thrown at them.

However, it is also very important that we acknowledge and recognize that my Canada also has racists. It also has anti-Semites. It has violent, hateful people, and until we acknowledge that part of our Canada, we will not be able to move forward.

We have work to do in this country, and that task belongs to all of us. We need to work together, even when we disagree, to heal this country. I honestly believe that every member in this place wants a stronger, more resilient Canada.

● (0940)

Despite our differences and the disagreements we have on how to move forward, we must, as Canadians, work together. It is the only way to protect our democracy. It is the only way to protect our freedom.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I really would like to thank the member for speaking so eloquently and forcefully. We often disagree on many things, but I did appreciate that she held her hand out to talk about how we need to address some very fundamental issues going forward. I appreciate the tone she has brought to this debate.

Earlier today, we heard from the member for Windsor West talk about how people in his community are still being impacted by people who continue to try to close the Ambassador Bridge. Could the member speak to the ongoing importance of making sure these important routes are protected, so people can access the things they need?

Ms. Heather McPherson: Mr. Speaker, I am going to talk from the perspective of being an Albertan and what has been happening in Alberta. I am the daughter of a truck driver, and the truck drivers that sat around my kitchen table while I was growing up, they got vaccinated. They care about their community. They care about the people they work with, and they want to get to work. They want to be able to make a living. Truck drivers do not make a living if they are not driving their truck. When their truck is parked, they do not make a living.

What I see in Coutts, and what I see when these major thoroughways are impacted, is the fact that these guys cannot get to work, and they cannot make an income. That is so unfair, to say nothing of the fact that the blockade, which was in place for 18 days, cost over \$40 million a day to the Alberta economy. If we cannot think

about the truckers who are trying to do their job, we can think about the economic impacts on Albertans.

Mr. John Williamson (New Brunswick Southwest, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I have two questions. First of all, is the member at all concerned that today's top bar for using the Emergencies Act will become the threshold going forward, that a future government could look upon other protesters or other challenges and invoke the Emergencies Act?

Second, has the member, and other members of the NDP, considered denying the government's use of the motion on Monday, since it will already have been in effect and will have permitted the government to do what had had to be done, but saying that it could go no further and that it needs to end on Monday?

Ms. Heather McPherson: Mr. Speaker, the member's question is very thoughtful. It is something that I have spent, and I hope everybody has spent, an awful lot of time on. I have deep concerns about using the Emergencies Act because of the precedent it might set. Like I said in my speech, there are steps that we need to take as parliamentarians to ensure that some of the things that are happening in our country will not be allowed to happen again, and that there is a transparent inquiry. We need a public, open inquiry to look at the failures in getting to this place, where we need to put this act in place.

The second question was whether or not we would consider that it has been in place long enough and whether or not during the vote tomorrow we would reconsider our support for that. On my part, I will consider that non-stop. As parliamentarians, we have to look at how the act is being used. If it is supported on Monday, it would be enacted for 30 days, but it can be stopped at any time. It can be stopped sooner than that. Parliamentarians, particularly in a minority government, have the ability to stop the Emergencies Act if we need to.

● (0945)

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Mr. Speaker, first I would like to thank my colleague from Edmonton Strathcona.

The things I have heard, observed and understood are deeply appalling. That said, one remark made me think of something. We can support the use of this act and vote in favour of it on Monday knowing the process can be stopped automatically, which is what we want. I think what just happened at the parliamentary precinct actually shows us that the police are able to work together under existing legislation. I do not know if I am mistaken, which is why I am asking my colleague this question. It is therefore possible to stop the use of this act, which is already being applied, even though the declaration is supposed to be approved on Monday.

If I am wrong about that, can my colleague explain to me how what happened over the last couple of days is the direct result of this act?

[English]

Ms. Heather McPherson: Mr. Speaker, my colleague and I have worked very closely on the ALS caucus. I know her to be an extremely strong member of Parliament.

What I would say, in terms of the policing, is that it was brought forward. It was made very clear by the Ottawa Police Service that they required that additional support from the Emergencies Act. They have told parliamentarians that it was necessary for them to do what they have done.

When I walked to work this morning, it was a very different scenario than it was prior to Monday, when the Emergencies Act was enacted. To say that the act has worked very well, my walk today made it appear so.

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to compliment the member on her intervention today, which related to where she saw the underpinning of this movement. She has really hit the nail on the head with respect to that.

I was on the Wyatt Sharpe Show recently, which a lot of MPs have been on. Wyatt is a 13-year-old interviewer. I was on with the member's colleague, the member for Cowichan—Malahat—Langford. On the show, I said that it was critically important that, when this measure was being put in place, Parliament was in a minority situation. That means that there has to be collaboration with at least one other party. It also ensures that proper tools can be exercised to reignite the debate in here at an appropriate time. It puts in the safeguards and it ensures that there is a certain level of accountability.

Can she expand on how important she thinks it is that we are doing this in a minority Parliament?

Ms. Heather McPherson: Mr. Speaker, I would like to give a shout-out to Wyatt Sharpe. He is an incredible young man and an incredible journalist, who is part of the independent media that shares his voice. To be so accomplished so young is quite remarkable.

In terms of this being a minority government and having those additional powers that a minority Parliament gives us, it is true, but it also brings up the concerns that I have about the Emergencies Act being used in a situation where we do not have a minority government in place.

Yes, right now, there is the power of other parliamentarians from the Bloc, the Conservatives and the NDP to ensure that the government does not overstep or overreach. My deep worry, and this is something that I have thought an awful lot about, is what happens if we have a government that is not a minority government.

What will that look like? How do we prevent there being an overreach in that situation?

• (0950)

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Mr. Speaker, my colleague mentioned at the end that she is worried that this may set the bar low and that the precedent has now been set for when the Emergencies Act can be invoked.

Statutory Order

The Canadian Civil Liberties Association is taking the federal government to court, stating, “the thresholds set out in the Emergencies Act, the legal requirements put in place to safeguard our democratic processes, have not been met.”

That is the non-partisan Civil Liberties Association. It has been very clear, in taking the federal government to court, that the legal processes have not been met.

If the member is worried about a future government and whether we have set the bar too low, why would she support the Emergencies Act? Clearly, the critical points have not been met. She is worried about future governments taking advantage of this precedent being set today.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Mr. Speaker, as the NDP, we are very excited to see the Civil Liberties Association bring this forward because we want there to be as much oversight as possible. This is an excellent way for us to get some answers to that question. However, we are in a moment in time when we have some very dangerous things happening in our country that we need to act upon.

Do I like that we are in this situation? No, I do not. Do I think that it is necessary? I do. Do I think that we need to do a lot of work as parliamentarians to ensure that we are protecting ourselves in the future? I absolutely do.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull (Whitby, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, like the previous speech that was given, my colleague acknowledged Wyatt Sharpe. I want to also take the time to acknowledge such a bright young man who is doing great work and pursuing a path in journalism at such a young age and so engaged in politics.

Today's debate is undoubtedly one the most important debates that I have had the opportunity to participate in since I was elected by the people of Whitby in 2019. The invocation of the Emergencies Act is not to be taken lightly. I do not believe our government has taken it lightly.

In preparation for this debate, I have taken the time to review documents, to reflect deeply on this moment, the situation our country is facing, and the special temporary measures our government has proposed to aid in the enforcement of the law and what is the best course of action. I will say that I have been following the events that have been unfolding across Canada. It has been deeply disturbing to watch as all of this unfolds in our great country. I have been following it closely over the last weeks and I think I really have a lot of the information that I need to make these judgments.

Statutory Order

To my mind, the debate today is about whether the invocation of the Emergencies Act is necessary and justified. I believe what we have seen happening does meet the threshold or criteria. More specifically, I will argue that based on reasonable grounds a public order emergency does exist and has existed, that the public order emergency necessitates the taking of special temporary measures that the government has proposed and that these are measures that are necessary because they could not be effectively dealt with by provinces and territories; that the proposed temporary measures are reasonable and proportionate in how they may limit the rights of citizens, and that the consultation, as required in section 25, was indeed carried out sufficiently. An acknowledgement was made by multiple jurisdictions that the current emergency could not be dealt with within their capacity or authority.

I want to say a few words about a public order emergency. The act defines a national emergency as:

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

With regard to a “urgent, temporary and critical situation...that...seriously endangers the health and safety of Canadians”, I think we can all agree that what we have seen across Canada was clearly escalating over time and seriously endangered the health and safety of Canadians. I will say why.

What we saw was a coordinated attempt. It was not an isolated incident or a multiple autonomous isolated incidents. It was a coordinated attempt to illegally occupy Ottawa. There have been attempts to occupy other major cities by the same group, which was centrally organized and had a stated intent to overthrow a democratically elected government. I would add that we should remember that that government was engaged in implementing platform commitments it was elected on. I think that is really important here.

These individuals unfortunately used large transport trucks to purposely disrupt the flow of traffic, impede the progress of other citizens and entrenched themselves in our capital city over weeks. These individuals and their supporters also said that they would not leave until their demands were met. In my books, that is extortion. It is coercion for the purpose of achieving a political and ideological objective. That is not okay in a democracy. It is completely unacceptable.

Certainly, the people of downtown Ottawa experienced a real endangerment to their health and safety. There is no doubt about that in my mind. I think we could talk to almost any individual who lives within the downtown core and they would say that they have been terrorized. I do not think anyone can deny that.

Many people in downtown Ottawa were harassed, from shop owners to workers, families and children. I have heard that people just walking down the street, who happened to be wearing a mask, were harassed. Businesses have been closed and shuttered for quite some time, and we know the Rideau Centre has been closed for weeks.

● (0955)

Schools and vaccine clinics were closed. We saw parties on the streets and fireworks, and horns honked all night long. We saw thefts and attempted arson. We saw the desecration of monuments to our national heroes, and we saw open displays of symbols of racism, hate and white supremacy.

We also saw the targeting of other essential infrastructure, including overwhelming 911 lines, which definitely impacted people's ability to access emergency services in a moment of crisis. We saw the planning for targeting, or potential targeting, of the international airport in Ottawa and even local schools.

These are acts of intimidation. We cannot call them anything else. This is not a peaceful protest. They are acts of intimidation for a political and ideological aim or purpose. These individuals were warned of the consequences of their illegal activity over and over again. Instead of discontinuing that behaviour, they persisted.

This is why I do not have much sympathy for the individuals who are performing these illegal blockades at this point, although I understand that we all need to listen to some of the concerns they express. I understand that. I do not paint them with a broad brush, but at the same time, the illegal activity and blockades that are impeding other people's rights and freedoms are really a significant concern to the health and safety of Canadians.

This has had such a prolonged and severe negative impact on the residents of downtown Ottawa that they decided to organize counterprotests to put an end to the occupation of their city. This is a recipe for disaster, in my book. When people's confidence in the rule of law has been so diminished that they decide to take matters into their own hands, we have got a major problem in this country. We cannot allow this to persist.

We know that participants were organized and became more entrenched. They set up their own sites, they stored supplies centrally and they coordinated through various communication channels. This continued lawlessness, coupled with the unfortunate inability, originally, to enforce the rule of law by the Ottawa police, contributed to the ongoing legitimization of this activity. Consequently, going unchecked, it spread fairly quickly. What we have seen is a spread.

This was encouraged and emboldened by the Conservative Party of Canada, which is utterly and completely shameful, in my book. They were out there serving coffee, taking selfies and pictures with these individuals and basically encouraging them.

What then spread throughout Canada at many different sites was an attempt to block ports of entry, including in Windsor, Ontario, Coutts, Alberta, and Emerson, Manitoba. The list goes on. Many other threats cropped up, which were real, including in Sarnia, Ontario, Fort Erie, Ontario, Surrey, B.C., and others. Just yesterday, there was another protest in Surrey, B.C.

This establishes that the emergency is national in nature. It is not limited to one area or jurisdiction, and it is not over yet. We know that the blockade at just one border crossing, the Ambassador Bridge in Windsor, would interrupt over \$390 million in trade per day. This had the immediate effect of causing a loss of wages and temporary layoffs for workers, as well as revenue losses for businesses. It crippled essential supply chains that provide fuel, food and health supplies, not to mention increasing the inflationary pressures that our opposition has been ranting and raving about in the House of Commons for weeks. It damaged the reputation of Canada as a reliable trade partner, affecting foreign investor confidence. The list goes on.

We all know how closely integrated the economies of Canada and the U.S. are, and how important critical infrastructure and trade routes are to ensuring the flow of essential goods and services. This is all essential to the health and security of all Canadians, which is part of the definition of a national emergency.

• (1000)

Seeing these blockades multiply, target our border crossings and purposely disrupt essential trade is most certainly a critical and urgent situation that endangers the health and safety of Canadians, again constituting a national emergency. I can add the fact that at the Coutts border crossing in Alberta there was a seizure of guns, body armour and ammunition, and that arrests were made and charges laid by the RCMP for conspiracy to commit murder. This also presents a threat to the security of Canada through “acts of serious violence against persons or property for the purpose of achieving a political or ideological objective”. These individuals, who are part of an extremist group called “Diagolon”, have a political and ideological motivation, and they were willing to use lethal force to carry out their agenda.

Errol Mendes, professor of constitutional and international law at the University of Ottawa, said it well. He said:

If you look at what's happened not just in Ottawa but at the Ambassador Bridge and Coutts, Alta. and in B.C., essentially we have a national emergency.

There were threats and credible intelligence that individuals coordinating all of this were also planning to target railway lines, airports and even schools. Just yesterday, we saw another attempted blockade in Surrey, as I have already mentioned, which again demonstrates that this emergency is not over yet.

We also need to consider the flow of funding into crowdfunding platforms to support all of this illegal activity. Hacked data from GiveSendGo that was released showed that 55.7% of the over 92,000 donations made to this so-called “freedom convoy” were made by donors in the U.S., compared with 39% from Canada. This was predominantly foreign-funded. The illegal occupation of our capital city by a group of centrally coordinated individuals who were terrorizing the citizens of Ottawa for three weeks with the stated intent of overthrowing the government, and the targeting of our borders through illegal blockades spreading through the country with far-right extremist elements conspiring in some cases to commit murder, and the disruption of the essential supply chains that Canadians rely on, in fact had the majority of their funding from foreign sources.

Statutory Order

Now, I think I am a pretty reasonable person in all of my dealings. I really believe in what I call the principle of sufficient reason. I do not know how any rational judge or person could see what I have just described as anything other than what it is, which is most certainly a public order emergency. I believe that wholeheartedly. This is a crisis that we are in, and it is appropriate to consider the Emergencies Act as a potential way to respond to such a crisis. When we look at the specific temporary measures that have been proposed, I think we need to determine whether those are actually needed, whether they are justified, whether they are reasonable and proportionate and whether they could not be used by any other level of authority in our country. If we look at those proposed measures, and there are five that I would like to talk about, I would maintain that they could not be enacted or used under any other law in our country.

On prohibiting any “public assembly that may reasonably be expected to lead to a breach of the peace”, we have seen that this allows for areas such as downtown Ottawa to be designated as areas where public assembly is prohibited. This can be used for ports of entry and other critical infrastructure. To my knowledge, there is no other way to do that within provincial or municipal jurisdiction. What we have seen occur in Ottawa over the past few days, although it is certainly not something I ever thought I would see in our country, is in my view certainly necessary. We have seen the police and law enforcement professionals collaborate on a level I have never seen before in my lifetime. They have professionally and methodically, with the least amount of force possible, moved people out of downtown Ottawa. This has worked.

• (1005)

The other thing I want to talk about is the need to remove the transport trucks that are being used to create these illegal blockades. Tow truck companies have refused to assist in this matter, some of them because of threats they may have experienced or because of concerns that they would experience those threats, and some of them maybe for ideological purposes. They may not want to support the removal of some of these blockades, and that is fine. The point is that Ontario's Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act authorizes persons to provide assistance, but does not compel them to do so. The Emergencies Act is unique, in that it allows for the compelling of the provision of those services, which are surely needed to get these blockades to come to an end. The tool that makes the difference there is the ability to compel.

Also, RCMP and other law enforcement professionals could be sworn in and allowed to enforce laws at the local level, which we have seen supplement the efforts of the Ottawa police over the past couple of days. These have certainly been effective in mobilizing quickly and putting the blockades and the occupation of Ottawa to an end quite quickly.

Statutory Order

Second to last, I want to talk about the shutdown of the flow of funds to the illegal blockades. My understanding is that requiring a comprehensive list of financial service providers to determine whether any property in their possession or control belonged to protesters participating in illegal blockades, and to cease dealing with those protesters, could not be done in any other way. Because of the flow of funds across jurisdictions and the specific nature of our financial industry, this could not be done unless we had an emergency economic measures order as a part of this whole package of tools.

The last tool I will mention is the cancellation of insurance for vehicles participating in illegal blockades. This could not be done without the Emergencies Act, because provincial governments cannot cancel insurance outside of their own jurisdiction. When we have transport trucks crossing the country to come and create illegal blockades in one of our cities, the hands of the city and the province are tied with regard to cancelling the insurance of those vehicles, at least for the time that they are participating in an illegal activity.

These specific measures are proportionate and reasonable. They allow for new essential tools that will certainly enhance our law enforcement services and restore the confidence of the public in the rule of law. We have seen how effective these measures have been over the past days in Ottawa, having cleared the streets. In fact, interim chief of police Steve Bell said on Friday, “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.”

I want to talk very briefly about consultations with provinces and territories. Under the Emergencies Act, there is a requirement to consult with provinces. Those consultations took place and are ongoing. At least three premiers publicly supported the act’s invocation, from Ontario, Newfoundland and Labrador and British Columbia. They have all said publicly that they supported the proposed, time-limited and targeted measures.

Let us not forget that the report to both Houses of Parliament, called the Emergencies Act Consultations, was tabled on February 16. It provides a detailed overview of the extensive consultations and engagement that took place at every level of government, and across ministries and departments. These conversations took place over weeks and made it clear that federal support was needed. Indeed, we heard calls from Mayor Dilkens in Windsor, who called the protests a national crisis and talked about the economic impact of the border closures. We also heard the Ottawa chief of police on February 2 say this is, “a national issue, not an Ottawa issue—

• (1010)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but we are out of time.

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

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member said in his speech that groups of people have been mobilizing and protesting across this country. They are protesting because the Liberal government’s mandates have driven them to do this. The Prime Minister and the government have been calling people names and saying they are a fringe minor-

ity of Canadians, yet millions of Canadians have come out in support of their freedoms across the country. It is the Prime Minister’s lack of leadership, divisive words, name-calling and unscientific mandates that started this in the first place. Canadians just wanted to be heard.

When will the member, the Prime Minister and the Liberals start taking responsibility for the division they have created in this country among Canadians?

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Madam Speaker, while I appreciate the member’s remarks and take her question in good faith, I patently deny that our government has in any way, shape or form intentionally tried to exacerbate this issue or divide Canadians.

I would also say that it is a delusion that seems to be perpetuated by the Conservative Party that somehow these illegal blockades are peaceful protests. Using transport trucks, occupying cities, harassing people and using intimidation to get one’s way is mob rule. That’s not how policy is changed in this country. It is not acceptable—

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

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, the member for Whitby gave a long speech that included a lot of points to ponder.

The Bloc Québécois believes intervention was called for. Had there been intervention, there would have been no need to invoke special legislation. However, what is past is past.

Still, we know the far right is on the rise, and the member talked about that.

Now let us talk about the future. The Emergencies Act was invoked without much thought, so where do we go from here? Will the government regularly invoke the Emergencies Act to thwart the far right?

Has my colleague given any thought to a plan for the future?

[English]

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Madam Speaker, if the Emergencies Act had been contemplated early on in this crisis, people would have a lot more cause for concern, but that is looking backward and the member opposite asked me to look forward.

This is about a time-limited, geographically specific, targeted measure that is reasonable and proportionate. It is not being looked at as something that is ongoing. It is limited, and I believe strongly that our government is interested in and fully supports the parliamentary oversight that is required to ensure that this is used not one day longer than it is needed.

• (1015)

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, let us get real. We saw the convoy rolling down the highway. We knew that this specific convoy had ties with leaders from white nationalist groups, yet the government failed to act. We saw a siege of the capital city. My riding of Winnipeg Centre is now undergoing an occupation, where people are being faced with sonic abuse day in and day out, as well as assault and harassment.

I am wondering why the government did not take the threat of white nationalist movements seriously enough, why it overlooked it and why we now find ourselves in this place.

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Madam Speaker, I really struggle to understand how we can lay blame so indiscriminately on the federal government, when this protest started with a convoy that came across the country. We all knew it was coming, but did the Ottawa police know just how quickly it would set in and become entrenched?

When we look back on this, all levels and orders of government will be able to see where they could have acted more quickly or taken the threat more seriously, but hindsight is always 20/20. To get real, as the member said, we need to look at where we are now and look forward to how we are going to deal with this national crisis. I agree that it is a severe crisis and we need to use every tool in the tool box to get it under control, because the confidence of Canadians in the rule of law—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Mississauga—Erin Mills.

Ms. Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate that my colleague has outlined the implications of this measure. We have seen throughout this debate and over the past number of years how misinformation feeds into confusion and a lack of understanding. I have talked with a number of my constituents about what this convoy is about, and there seems to be a lot of misinformation. Therefore, I would ask the member this. What responsibility do members in this House have to make sure that Canadians know exactly what is going on, and what level of duty do they have to speak the truth?

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Madam Speaker, it is an area I feel very passionately about and have been troubled by since becoming a member of Parliament and seeing the proliferation of disinformation online and the impacts it has had on people during COVID-19 while they have been isolated for periods of time. I think many people have consumed a lot of this misinformation or disinformation, and I believe it is incumbent upon all of us, as members of Parliament, to combat this and not lose sight of the fact that our dialogue and debates are supposed to be anchored in the pursuit of truth. If democracy loses sight of that, we are in big trouble, and I think that is what we are seeing today. People are misinformed. I watched the live news coverage on Friday, all day. I could not help but notice and be—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): We have to allow for other questions.

The hon. member for York—Simcoe.

Mr. Scot Davidson (York—Simcoe, CPC): Madam Speaker, I, like my colleague from Whitby, saw thousands of Canadians standing on the overpasses as the convoys moved through. I thank him

Statutory Order

for mentioning that we should not be looking at those who are struggling as our adversaries; rather, we should be looking at them with mutual respect and sometimes a little compromise.

We know it was the flip-flop on the mandates for the truckers that sparked this, and I would ask my colleague this. I have looked for the science behind this. We have a 90% vaccination rate. I wonder if he has seen the science from before the mandates were in. The government operated without mandates for two years, so are they justified at this point in the pandemic? I watched the hon. member for Thornhill at the transport committee ask the transport minister that. He could not answer.

I know we follow the science, but there is a carve-out. We are allowing truckers to deliver vaccines across the border without the mandates right now, so I am wondering what the scientific justification is for the mandates now.

• (1020)

Mr. Ryan Turnbull: Madam Speaker, from what I understand, omicron has changed the whole scenario we are in, so the context has shifted. However, that does not undermine the effectiveness of our vaccines in significantly reducing hospitalizations, severe illness and outcomes such as death. Vaccine mandates are still effective in reducing the spread of COVID-19, specifically the spread of severe outcomes, and alleviating the burden on our health care systems, which we saw come very close to breaking down completely in the omicron wave. We have to continue this fight. The higher the vaccination rates, the better, and vaccine mandates have been proven in many jurisdictions to push those vaccination rates up as high as possible, which is good for our country and for our economy. I fully believe every Canadian should choose for themselves whether to get vaccinated. If they choose not to do so, that is their choice, but there are going to be some consequences associated with that.

Hon. Mike Lake (Edmonton—Wetaskiwin, CPC): Madam Speaker, a year ago this week, I made a one-minute statement in the virtual House of Commons from my basement in Edmonton. I have reflected on that statement a lot over the past few weeks. Yesterday, as I listened to the debate and monitored my very active and animated social media feeds, I decided to work that statement into my speech this morning, if for no other reason than to anchor my own thoughts and emotions.

Here is what I said a year ago:

The past several years have been challenging for global democracy. We have seen a rise in polarization and increasingly vitriolic language expressed by hyper-partisans from all sides. Too often this leads to violence. Social media have exacerbated the problem. Sides are chosen and anchored in Twitter bios. Talking points are delivered in echo chambers, amplified by cryptic algorithms.

Six decades ago, President Dwight Eisenhower seemingly anticipated our current need for wisdom, saying, “The middle of the road is all of the usable surface. The extremes, right and left, are in the gutters.”

Statutory Order

Before our political labels, we are all just human beings. The middle of the road is simply our common ground. Make no mistake: Passionate political debate is foundational to a healthy democracy, but it is most effective when we engage in conversations not only seeking to persuade but open to being persuaded. This will require a significant shift in our current thinking, but in the end, we will all be better off for it.

I will let others wade into the speeches and comments from this debate to discern who is adding to the polarization and vitriol and who is working to de-escalate them, apart from singling out one colleague.

The speech by the new member for Simcoe North was the highlight of my day yesterday. His was a firm assessment. He was fair with his words and respectful in his tone. He is a worthy successor to the wonderful man who preceded him, Bruce Stanton.

The other day I had several conversations with members of my amazing team. They are being absolutely deluged with calls and emails from constituents concerned about the Prime Minister's use of the Emergencies Act, and they wanted me to post something on social media that they could point people to, that clearly stated my position.

In about a minute, as I walked from this chamber down to the street, I simply wrote, "I have received more calls and emails in opposition to [the Prime Minister's] Emergencies Act than perhaps any issue I've seen in 16 years. I agree with my constituents on this. It's massive Liberal overreach, a dangerous precedent, and I will be speaking and voting against it."

After that post, many rightfully asked what I would have done, which is a reasonable and fair question. Before I get into that, though, I want to make some observations.

During the debate yesterday, it was very clear that each of the two parties supporting the use of the Emergencies Act is taking a very different communications strategy. The Liberals have used the argument that the measures have been effective at clearing out Ottawa's downtown core, as though that is the sole determinant as to the rightness of the decision to employ the Emergencies Act.

Of course, there was never any question as to whether the measures would be effective. If they were not, we would have much bigger issues than we are dealing with here today. The question we need to ask is whether the invocation of the Emergencies Act is justified. The Prime Minister himself has said that it should not be the first, second or third response, but so far no Liberal has been able to say what the first, second or third response was before using an act that has not been used in its 34 years of existence.

NDP members in this debate have had an even more difficult time, having completely abandoned long-held NDP positions and principles. They have adopted a sort of scorched-earth approach to the debate, repeatedly highlighting a number of individual actions and situations that every member of the House agrees are completely unacceptable and then attempting to attach those unacceptable actions to the hundreds of thousands of Canadians who are demanding that their legitimate concerns be heard by their government.

If one wants to understand the traditional NDP position, one would be best to visit the Canadian Civil Liberties Association

website, because one will not hear any NDP members actually talking about it here.

Returning to my response to those who asked me what I would have done in this situation, they first need to recognize that just in the case of any protest movement since the beginning of time, there are those who will use the movement to pile on their own issues and agenda. I am going to deal with the core issue, which is federal vaccine mandates.

For starters, I would have followed the May 2021 principle laid out by the Prime Minister himself, who said in an interview, "We're not a country that makes vaccination mandatory." He and I are both pro-vaccine, and at the time were both anti-mandate. We would not be where we are today if he had not changed that during the election campaign. It made for a fantastic political wedge. I have never seen a more angry, divided electorate in my six campaigns. The Liberal campaign was invigorated by the issue, but it was a terribly divisive policy.

• (1025)

Our Conservative campaign position was a good one: no federal mandate and stronger testing. We expressed a belief in vaccine science and offered an alternative for those who were not there yet, but in the volatile last three campaign weeks, that rational message just did not cut through.

Here is the critical part. In order to comprehend where we are today, people might have to really work to put themselves in the position of someone who may have a view significantly different from theirs. This is increasingly rare in a world obsessed with othering.

I am solidly pro-vaccine. I have my three Pfizer shots. I believe in the evidence I have been presented, while also believing that we need to remain vigilant for emerging information. People I know and love have come to a completely different conclusion regarding the efficacy of vaccines. While I strongly disagree with them on vaccine efficacy, I support their right not to take the vaccine. We cannot be a country that forces people to inject themselves with things they believe will hurt them, whether we agree or not. Last May, the Prime Minister seemed to also hold that view.

People will say that we are not forcing anybody; they have a choice. This thinking is easy to get past with just a little personal reflection. Of course we all have things that we believe, rightly or wrongly, will hurt us. Most of us have never been told we will lose our careers over them.

Everybody is hurting right now because of COVID. The last two years have been tough, but there is a portion of the population who, because they will not take a vaccine that they genuinely believe will hurt them, have been forced out of their jobs and, in some cases, their homes. Whatever the percentage, the number of unvaccinated Canadians is not insignificant. Their intense, genuine frustration is completely understandable for anyone who takes the time to listen to their stories. We can have empathy without agreeing with their views on vaccines.

The Prime Minister could have tasked medical experts to persuade or most safely accommodate people with “deep convictions”, using the Prime Minister’s own May 2021 words, whom the government was unable to convince to take vaccines. If we were actually all in this together, then this is what he would have done. Instead of a strategy focused on real togetherness, though, the Prime Minister not only chose to exclude people who hold a different belief on vaccines than he does, which I share for that matter, but has consistently and deliberately demonized them for holding that belief.

Leaving aside the Prime Minister’s most inflammatory attacks, including remarks saying that many of them are misogynist and racist, let us zero in on the near-constant reference to unvaccinated Canadians as selfish. As a mass characterization, this is simply untrue. Some of the most generous people I know have chosen to be unvaccinated. Sure, most believe vaccines will hurt them on an individual level. That does not make them selfish. They also believe nobody should take them because they believe vaccines will hurt us and they care about us.

The bottom line is this. On Monday, Parliament voted on a non-partisan Conservative motion designed to de-escalate the situation. Conservatives also reiterated clearly that the illegal blockades need to end. That plan was rejected by Liberal and NDP members. Instead, the emergencies plan was announced.

While Liberal MPs are correct in pointing out that police have been effective in clearing the streets, surely we can agree that absolutely nothing has been done to address the legitimate concerns of the vast majority of people who supported this protest from across the country. If anything, those Canadians feel less heard and more abandoned by their government than they did four weeks ago. We are more divided today, as a country, than at any time in our history.

To close, I would like to say this in response to the mass branding project undertaken over the past few weeks by not all but too many members of the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party and, to be clear, a strategy too often used by members from all parties at times. Now, and in the future, no matter what might be the issue of the day, no matter what is being protested on and around Parliament Hill, I will never be afraid to talk to people I have never met, fearful that someone in the background whom I do not know might hold up a sign that anyone who knows me knows I would find abhorrent. I will never be afraid to have a meaningful conversation with a fellow human being because of some label that someone in this House or their partisan friends will attach to me for solely partisan political reasons.

If that is something we can all agree on as we find some time to breathe and reflect this week, perhaps that will be a starting point for real, powerful change in this country.

• (1030)

Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Tourism and Associate Minister of Finance, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech and mention that I, too, have had several conversations with several protesters. I think it is important to have those conversations. My question stems from the member’s comment regarding the fact that our government did not proceed with any actions prior to the invo-

cation of the emergency measures act, which is completely incorrect. We did provide RCMP at the request of provinces and territories on every occasion.

In fact, following that, the Government of Alberta sent a letter to our federal government and I will read a portion of it quickly into the record. It states:

The RCMP, along with local and provincial officials, have been working closely in an attempt to persuade the demonstration participants to remove their vehicles but have been unsuccessful. In addition, as a result of private industry concerns over negative consequences, the RCMP have been unable to secure the appropriate heavy duty equipment required to remove vehicles and other items such as trailers and tractors from the area. Attempts to procure these services with—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I will ask the hon. member to ask a question because we have to give other people opportunities to speak.

Ms. Rachel Bendayan: Madam Speaker, why is the member from Alberta denying the people of Alberta the protections that the government of his province had requested from the federal government?

Hon. Mike Lake: Madam Speaker, I want to commend the hon. member because it might be the first time I have heard a Liberal member mention Alberta in the House.

She has to recognize, first of all, that among my constituents, almost universally, the feedback we have gotten back has been opposed to the Emergencies Act. My staff tell me probably 95% of the feedback we have gotten has been people asking me to oppose the Emergencies Act. I would welcome any Liberal member of Parliament who wants to come out to Canada’s most populous riding, Edmonton—Wetaskiwin. I would gladly give them a tour so they can actually talk to some of the people they too often completely ignore.

[Translation]

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

He is right. It is deplorable that people’s opinions have turned into an issue, an argument among friends and family, and between the vaccinated and the unvaccinated. All of this has clearly exacerbated the divisions in Canadian society.

With all due respect to the member, I know that his party has finally reversed its position and asked the protesters to leave, but I still find it appalling to have seen members of the Conservative Party on social media, waging some kind of disinformation campaign about the motion the member mentioned. They said they were asking for a plan to lift public health measures. Certain Conservative Party members said that they were asking for the health measures to be lifted and that that was what the vote would be on, so they had to tell members to vote in favour of the motion.

Does the member not find that this exacerbated divisions and that it did a great disservice to the cause?

Statutory Order

● (1035)

[English]

Hon. Mike Lake: Madam Speaker, to be clear, Conservatives have been unequivocal in denouncing the clearly negative aspects of what happened outside this place, while at the same time clearly supporting individuals from across the country who have legitimate concerns about the approach the government is taking.

In regard to the plan the hon. member mentioned, I would point out that her party supported the plan. We appreciate that because last Monday we did have a chance to move forward. It was a simple ask of the government to put forward a plan on February 28, two weeks after that date and one week from tomorrow, that would have laid out where we plan to go with COVID. It is something that governments around the world are doing. It is something that would have definitely had an impact on many of the people who were protesting here in Ottawa and across the country.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, the hon. member tried to walk a very fine line in presenting this caring and compassionate middle ground. He stated that he would never be afraid to speak to people because of some label. Perhaps it is because he has never felt the existential threat of white supremacy.

How does the hon. member reconcile his attempts for this moderate position, while he totally disregards the very real threat of violent white supremacy caused to the communities it targets with vile hatred and violence?

Hon. Mike Lake: Madam Speaker, let me be 100% clear. This party, every member on this side of the House, is 100% against the issues he is talking about. We are against violent white supremacy, white supremacy of any kind, racial bigotry of any kind, and other bigotry of any kind.

What I actually said was I will not be afraid to have conversations with people I do not know as I am walking from my apartment to the House of Commons because I am afraid of a label that the opposition, particularly NDP members in the House, want to attach to me for partisan, political reasons.

Hon. Ed Fast (Abbotsford, CPC): Madam Speaker, the motion before us is a story of a profound failure of leadership. When I was elected to this chamber some 16 years ago and became the member of Parliament for Abbotsford, I would not have believed it if I had been told that I would be asked to approve giving the Prime Minister the extraordinary powers of the Emergencies Act.

I remember, when growing up as a teenager in 1970, Pierre Elliott Trudeau triggered the War Measures Act to quell the FLQ terrorist threat in Quebec. That crisis had gripped the nation for many months and involved kidnappings, extortion, over 200 bombings, gun violence, robbery and the eventual murder of a Quebec cabinet minister. The circumstances were clear and compelling, implicating the security and sovereignty of our country and justifying the use of this extreme measure.

Fast-forward to today and the circumstances are very different. For two years, truck drivers had been the heroes of the COVID pandemic, risking their health to transport goods and groceries as the virus raged across our nation. For a while, the truckers were the

good guys. Then the Prime Minister decided to deprive these heroes of their livelihoods because they chose not to get vaccinated, despite the Prime Minister failing to show any evidence that unvaccinated truckers were significant spreaders of the virus. He made no effort to accommodate these Canadians through the use of other tools like PCR or rapid tests.

The reaction of the truckers was swift. A convoy was organized with the goal of delivering to the Prime Minister one simple message: Do not force us truckers to get vaccinated in order to keep our jobs. We all know the rest of the story. The protests grew and ended up right here in Ottawa, camped out in front of the Parliament Buildings. They were expecting at the very least that the Prime Minister would be open to listening to their concerns, but they were wrong. He was not. It became clear that the Prime Minister was not interested in hearing out his own citizens. What he did do was resort to name-calling. The protesters were the fringes of Canadian society. They were misogynists, racist, science-deniers, un-Canadian. "Do we even tolerate these people?" he screamed. In fact, he questioned whether those people should have any place in his Canada.

In the meantime, residents of downtown Ottawa were rightly becoming agitated. With the incessant honking of horns, shops and malls that had to close their doors and send employees home, major traffic disruptions and misbehaviour by a small number of protesters, life in the protest zone was becoming unbearable. I know. My apartment is within that protest zone.

We Conservatives called upon the protesters to dismantle the barricades and for the Prime Minister to reach out to the truckers. He again refused, not even an olive branch. Instead, during the first week of the protests, the Prime Minister simply disappeared into his cottage, missing in action as a crisis developed. When he finally reappeared, we Conservatives began asking him what steps he was taking to resolve the impasse. After all, he had said that invoking the Emergencies Act should not be the first, second or even the third response.

We asked him what was his first, second or third response. Had he met with the protesters? Would he sit down with the other party leaders to discuss a resolution to the dispute? Had he deployed a negotiating team to resolve the impasse? Had he delivered the additional policing resources so desperately needed by the City of Ottawa? We were met with stony silence.

The answer was obviously, no, the Prime Minister had not taken any steps to address this evolving situation. He even rejected our request to create a plan to roll back mandates, which could have lowered the temperature. For three long weeks, the Prime Minister refused to act and then he did what only autocrats and authoritarian regimes do when faced with peaceful, civil disobedience.

● (1040)

He did what his father had done in 1970. He triggered Canada's war measures regime, except that this time the circumstances do not, in any way, rise to the level of those present during the FLQ crisis. There have been no bombings in the streets of Ottawa, no kidnappings, no robberies, no extortion or gun violence, no murders of politicians; only peaceful civil disobedience by frustrated Canadians who have concluded that the Prime Minister does not care for them. The Prime Minister had at his disposal all of the tools he needed to bring an end to this protest without invoking Canada's war measures legislation. Indeed, blockades at the Ambassador Bridge, the Coutts border crossing and in Emerson, Manitoba have all been resolved without resorting to the Emergencies Act. What about the violent rail blockades in 2020, the Oka standoff or the Wet'suwet'en dispute in B.C.? What about the riots in Toronto at the G7 in 2010? The Emergencies Act was not required. Not even the circumstances around 9/11 called for war measures legislation.

The Prime Minister already has the tools to respond to the Ottawa protest. It is just that he chose not to use them. There was no need to freeze the bank accounts of Canadians for exercising their right to peaceful protest or for donating to the cause. There was no need for the Liberal government to suspend the licences and livelihoods of truckers without due process, simply because they disagreed with his vaccine mandates. It was completely unnecessary and a reckless overreach by the power-hungry prime minister. By triggering extraordinary, sweeping powers under the Emergencies Act, the prime minister has set an incredibly low bar for abrogating the rights and freedoms of Canadians. How do we know that? The Canadian Civil Liberties Association is challenging the Prime Minister's power grab in court. Here is what it had to say:

The federal government has not met the threshold necessary to invoke the Emergencies Act. This law creates a high and clear standard for good reason: the Act allows government to bypass ordinary democratic processes. This standard has not been met.

Further, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association states:

The Emergencies Act is there to address these kinds of extreme threats to Canada, not to protect the economy [as the Prime Minister had suggested].

Emergency legislation should not be normalized. It threatens our democracy and our civil liberties.

Never before in the history of our country has the threshold for triggering martial law been so low and the overreach been so high as with the motion before us. When the story of this monumental overreach and abuse of power is finally written, when historians analyze and dissect why the Prime Minister would invoke martial law powers to quell peaceful civil disobedience, when historians try to explain why Canada's Prime Minister chose to use a constitutional sledgehammer to "crack a peanut", as the NDP's Tommy Douglas once put it, I want to be on the right side of that history. I want my children, my 12 grandchildren and their descendants to know that I stood on the side of freedom and that I stood up to a power-grabbing prime minister.

Yes, the streets of downtown Ottawa are now clear, protesters are in jail, truckers are on their way home; bank accounts have been frozen and the lives of many Canadians have been irrevocably damaged by the Prime Minister's failure to listen and his abuse of the Emergencies Act, but for what? I would ask the Prime Minister

Statutory Order

how it came to this. This was a mess of his own making. The Prime Minister could have listened and de-escalated. He had the tools to resolve the situation but he refused. That is a profound failure of leadership on his part.

Invoking the Emergencies Act is and was completely unnecessary and sets an extremely dangerous and ugly precedent for the future. For all of those reasons, I will be voting against this motion.

● (1045)

Mr. James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I, like the hon. member, believe in peaceful protest. I, like him, believe that we should try to de-escalate when possible. I have participated in peaceful protests before. If I ever attended one where others showed up who detracted from my message and, in fact, damaged my ability to deliver that message, I would leave. That is what we have seen in the past weeks in Ottawa. They did not leave.

I do not paint everybody with the same brush. There were peaceful protesters out there with the message.

Why does the hon. member think the protesters did not leave, and if he was in those circumstances, would he do the same and leave so his message would not be damaged?

Hon. Ed Fast: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for not painting everybody with the same brush, as some of his Liberal colleagues and the NDP do. That is to his credit. I live within the protest zone and every single day I walk to and from work through the protesters, I can tell him from experience that I never felt intimidated. I was never accosted. Yes, there were some people speaking loudly and some with strong views.

However, did it take the Emergencies Act, the sledgehammer of War Measures Act-type legislation to resolve this? No, the Prime Minister had all those tools available to him to resolve this crisis. He chose not to. That is to his discredit. That is his failure and his alone.

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Madam Speaker, as we know, the Ottawa police asked for 1,800 extra police officers, but the federal government sent only a handful.

Can the member explain that?

● (1050)

[English]

Hon. Ed Fast: Madam Speaker, I cannot explain it. I am as befuddled as he is. The Prime Minister says that he needed the Emergencies Act legislation because he did not have the tools, and yet with regard to the simple tools that are providing resources to the Ottawa police, those resources were never delivered by the Prime Minister, as the member has suggested. There was a better way of resolving—

Statutory Order

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Nunavut.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Qujannamiik, Uqaqtittiji.*

This is not just about the Prime Minister's failures. It is about a lot more. It is not just about peaceful disobedience. Questions have been raised about whether other tools could have been used instead of the Emergencies Act. I want to remind the member that in Ottawa there was a court-ordered injunction. Well, these extremists complied for a short term but then proceeded to ignore this legal instrument. Indeed, municipal and provincial state of emergency declarations did not affect the physical entrenchment for the remaining time.

Do the Conservatives not view this situation as an emergency, indeed a national emergency, to prevent more Canadians from being infiltrated by the extremists' ideology?

Hon. Ed Fast: Madam Speaker, I believe the hon. member and I have a very different perspective on what may have happened with the injunction against the truckers using their horns. Remember, I live in the middle of that protest zone. The trucks are right outside my doorway. When that injunction was issued, the truckers, for the most part, did comply with that injunction. I think anybody who would have walked through that area, post-injunction, would affirm my version of the events.

Does this have anything to do with racism? I would say to her, listen, when this convoy started out, when this protest started, it was about vaccine mandates being compelled by the Prime Minister. It is the Prime Minister's mess.

What happened, of course, like many protests, was that it evolved. Protests are like magnets, and they attract people who may not be desirable, who will have views that are very antithetical to Canadian values. We disavow those views. We have said that clearly.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the hon. member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore.

We have reached a critical point, a fork in the road, in the history of Canadian democracy, and that needs to be acknowledged. There is no Canadian exceptionalism. If there is not any American exceptionalism, and we know that is one of the founding myths of the United States in terms of its democracy, it is also true that it is a founding myth of this country. However, that myth has been exposed. There is nothing inevitable about Canadian democracy. There is nothing guaranteed about it. The past few weeks have shown that.

At the outset, before going into my remarks, let me thank law enforcement, here on the Hill, the Parliamentary Protective Service, for all the work they have done to ensure our security, also law enforcement, all law enforcement but especially in Ottawa those who have travelled from London. They have been here and they have been in Windsor in recent weeks. I deeply thank them for their service.

The Emergencies Act is an extraordinary measure, it is true. Introduced in 1988, it has never been used. I heard my colleague op-

posite's remarks. I have great respect for him. We served on the finance committee together for a time. I have to take issue with many of his remarks, especially when he said that the Emergencies Act confers onto the government martial law powers. That is an extraordinary way to look at it. It is also the wrong way to look at it.

As we know, and as the government has made clear, the Emergencies Act is subject to the charter, it is time limited, and it is geographically focused. On top of that and, interestingly, I have not heard very much from the Conservative Party on this, the act itself was introduced by a Progressive Conservative government in 1988 under Prime Minister Mulroney and under defence minister Perrin Beatty.

The debates on that act are very interesting. People could go back in the Hansard and look at them. Time and again it was emphasized by that Conservative government that the charter is sacrosanct. There was an attempt at that time to ensure that the infringements of civil liberties that had taken place under the War Measures Act in World War I, in World War II and in the October crisis of 1970 would not be repeated.

When I hear my colleagues talk about the Emergencies Act in the way that they do, as martial law or as war measures, there is nothing to that. If we are going to disagree, that is fine, but let us at least agree on a shared set of facts in order to have a meaningful discussion.

For the purposes of the act, I would remind my colleagues, if they have not read the act itself and it sounds as if they have not on the opposite side, unfortunately, that under the act:

A national emergency is an urgent and critical situation of a temporary nature that

(a) seriously endangers the lives, health or safety of Canadians and is of such proportions or nature as to exceed the capacity or authority of a province to deal with it.

Let us break that down to see if that first condition has been met, the "health or safety of Canadians." For the residents of Ottawa, life has been completely upended in the past few weeks, seniors unable to go get groceries, families unable to take their kids to school and people unable to get to work, among other deep challenges. This is a crisis. Challenge does not even begin to describe what the people of Ottawa have faced.

On top of that, "the capacity or authority of a province to deal with it." We heard yesterday, very clearly, from Ottawa's interim police chief, Steve Bell, who made it very clear that the Emergencies Act has been instrumental in the success that police have made over the past couple of days in terms of dealing with the challenge of the convoy and everything it represents, and pushing it back.

On top of that, we have the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police who have come out very strongly and agreed with the government's position on invoking the Emergencies Act.

The Mayor of Ottawa made clear, time and again, that his government lacked the resources to deal with the crisis.

• (1055)

The Premier of Ontario has made the same comment. The Premier of Ontario, a Conservative premier, has been very clear that he agrees with the invocation of the Emergencies Act. Under the act, I believe that section 3 paragraph (a), in terms of the definition of what an emergency constitutes, has been met. Section 3 paragraph (b) talks about an emergency being when there is a serious threat to “the ability of the Government of Canada to preserve the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity” of the country.

We have seen several border point crossings blockaded over many days. Borders are about many things. These vital crossings ensure economic security for our country. They ensure jobs for people. When they were blockaded, people could not get to work. They were temporarily laid off. More than that, I think we have to understand borders in terms of sovereignty and security. A country that is unable to control its borders because of a blockade has a threat to its sovereignty in place and a threat to its security in place and a threat to its people's security in place, so for that reason, I believe the condition in paragraph (b) has been met.

The government has elaborated that in the acts there are various ways an emergency is understood. What we have in front of us is a public order emergency. In the act, that is defined as “activities within or relating to Canada directed toward or in support of the threat or use of acts of serious violence against persons or property for the purpose of achieving a political, religious or ideological objective within Canada or a foreign state”.

It is that latter part that is crucial: “achieving a political, religious or ideological objective”. The convoy's organizers had as one of their principal motives the overthrow of a democratically elected government. This was their ideological objective. For that reason I think the government's position that this meets the definition of a public order emergency is exactly right.

I want to put my view on the record on why I think the invocation of the Emergencies Act is quite correct. Let me now deal with some broader issues in the abstract.

First of all, regarding freedom and democracy in the charter, I absolutely agree that these are sacrosanct values that underpin our democracy. The charter is, in many ways, the founding document of Canada, even though it was only introduced in 1982. Many observers have made the quite correct argument that Canada only really became an independent country in 1982, because that is when the charter was put in place. This document, as we know, ensures freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of association.

Without those freedoms, Canadians are not free. They ensure our ability as legislators to discuss and debate the issues of the day. They ensure the ability of our constituents to stand up and either agree or disagree. They ensure the ability of the press to carry out its work. How tragic and sad it has been to see that journalists have been treated in the way they have been. Maybe I will get to that if I have time a little later.

Crucial to the charter, and the part that so many forget to pay attention to, is that section 1 makes clear there are limits to these freedoms. In section 1, there is a guarantee of “rights and freedoms

Statutory Order

set out in it subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.”

I hear, for example, my colleagues opposite, especially in the Conservative Party, talk about how the government has upended the freedom of Canadians. When I hear convoy participants—and I will not call them “protesters”, because what they did is not a protest; it is more of an occupation—say that the government has violated the charter, it becomes difficult to take seriously that they have taken section 1 seriously. Section 1 makes clear these limits.

During a pandemic the government is quite right to introduce vaccine mandates, which, fair enough, could get in the way of some freedom, but there are limits on that. Peaceful assembly is not what we saw, and there is a reasonable limit in terms of—

• (1100)

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

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech, although I very much disagree. Clearly, he has read the charter, but there are three million Canadians whose charter rights to freely leave and enter the country are being violated by the Liberal government's vaccine mandates, not to mention the privacy violations, the discrimination of unvaccinated people collecting EI, and the like.

That said, my colleague is proposing that the reason the emergency measures act is needed is to remove this blockade in Ottawa, because all of the other things were removed with the existing provincial and police resources. However, the member for Windsor West has said he needs three more things, \$10 million, a plan to remove barriers and a safe border task force, all of which can be done without the emergency measures act.

I am concerned when I see bank accounts being frozen. The Minister of Justice said he is going to expand that to people who have pro-Trump ideas, and the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance said she would like to see those put permanently in place. If this is really just about the blockade, will the member rescind this act now that the blockades—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: Madam Speaker, with all due respect to my colleague who is just down the road from us in London. I know her and like her, but I do not know where to begin as there are so many things that she said that are outright false.

Statutory Order

One point that I think has caught on among the public, because I have had a number of constituents who have asked about it, is the freezing of bank accounts. If there is such a worry that bank accounts will be frozen at will by the government, why is it that only 73 bank accounts have been frozen? Several thousand people came to Ottawa to support the convoy and there have been many donors, but only 73 bank accounts have been frozen.

Charter rights have not been suspended here. The Emergencies Act is subject entirely to the charter. I invite my hon. colleague to read the Emergencies Act. Perhaps she has not.

• (1105)

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Chabot (Thérèse-De Blainville, BQ): Madam Speaker, I got shivers listening to the member's speech because special legislation, in other words, the Emergencies Act, cannot be invoked every time there is an illegal protest.

There are already rules in place in every province for these kinds of events. Consider, for example, the Maple Spring that happened in Quebec 10 years ago. According to my colleague, under the act, Ottawa could have come to Quebec City and shut it down.

That is completely inconceivable. Does my colleague agree?

[English]

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: Madam Speaker, I took special care in my speech to emphasize the importance of the charter. As I said at the outset, the Emergencies Act is subject to it. It is time limited for a period of 30 days. It is geographically focused. If police need those powers, then those extra powers are available, but if they do not need them, they do not need to use them. Therefore, I do not know where the concern of the Bloc and Conservative members comes from when they say there is a threat to freedom and that the government has engaged in overreach here. We heard from the police. They needed the extra powers in order to push back against what was a clear threat to our democracy, and it looks like in the past few days there was success in that regard because of the invocation of the Emergencies Act.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to address a bit of a local issue. The people of London have experienced first-hand the dangers caused by the right-wing extreme hatred. Unfortunately, in the last few days we have seen the raising of Confederate flags in London as well.

I want to ask the hon. member what he has heard from his constituents about that and how the government plans to address it. I would also ask him if he would be willing to support the NDP's private member's bill, Bill C-229, on the banning of those hate symbols.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: Madam Speaker, I would tell my colleague that I am quite interested in learning more about the bill. It was introduced by the member for New Westminster—Burnaby, if I am not mistaken. I will look at the details of it. I know it has raised interest in this House.

I have been very clear on what we saw in London a few days ago with respect to the raising of the Confederate flag. It is completely

unacceptable. We have to be very mindful of the rise of white supremacy and far-right—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore.

Mr. James Maloney (Etobicoke—Lakeshore, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is customary when we start a speech to say we are honoured to stand and are privileged to do so, but today is not one of those days. I do not believe anybody is happy about having to stand or sit and speak to the issues we are dealing with. In fact, it is very unfortunate.

I do not intend to repeat what others have said. We have been doing this for four days. I am not going to give free legal advice because, in my experience, free legal advice is worth exactly what one pays for it. I am going to speak, however, about the tone of the debate.

Several weeks ago, peaceful protests started across the country, in British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba and right here in Ontario. People were standing together. People were defending freedom and fighting against oppression. I proudly participated in those rallies with colleagues from both sides of the House of Commons. We even took pictures together. However, I am not talking about what happened here in Ottawa or Windsor or Emerson or Coutts. I am talking about standing side by side with Ukrainian Canadians and my parliamentary colleagues united in defence of the sovereignty of Ukraine. Those people were fighting for freedom.

What happened in Ottawa and Emerson and Coutts and other parts of the country, what happened on the streets in Ottawa, occupying streets and borders, harassing people and breaking the law, are not peaceful protests. People participating in the protests here could not be more free. They drove across the country and they are free to do so. They are free to stay in Ottawa as long as they want. They are free to leave when they want. They are free to stay where they want. However, when they were driving across the country, they were not free to park in the middle of the Trans-Canada Highway because that is illegal, nor is it peaceful.

Until recently, the protesters in Ottawa, with their claim to be fighting for freedom outside this seat of democracy we are sitting in, were making a mockery of the rights of Canadians who take the right to protest seriously. Freedom is not defended by bouncy castles. Freedom is not defended by sitting in a hot tub. It is certainly not defended by drinking beer in the middle of the street. It is defended by conviction and belief in building a stronger, better society for all and strengthening the fabric of our nation, not destroying it.

The occupiers here in Ottawa over the last few weeks have hijacked the term “freedom” and it is just wrong. In fact, the only freedom impacted by the protests here are of other Canadians, the people in Ottawa. Thousands of people cannot go to work. They feel unsafe leaving their home. They cannot go for a walk with their child. They cannot take their dog for a walk. It is ironic and it is tragic.

I know that some Canadians are frustrated, angry and exhausted. They are tired of everything that has been going on for the last couple of years. Everybody in this chamber today is exhausted. I understand, believe me. COVID-19 has been difficult on everybody. We all want this to end, but the real enemy here is not the governments or politicians; it is the virus itself. We have to remember that. We have not forgotten in the last few weeks about the health care workers who continue to fight for the lives of Canadians. I thank them again.

As time went on, it became clear that this occupation was not going to end on its own. The occupiers were free to leave. They had the chance to leave and they chose not to. Peace, order and good government is a phrase we are all familiar with. It is in our Constitution. This debate should be a sharing of ideas on how we move forward together, but sadly, it has become a toxic political debate.

When Ottawa declared an emergency, no one was opposed. The situation was the same when Ontario declared a state of emergency. The official opposition members have been calling on the federal government to introduce measures as well, for weeks, and yet, when the government does and invokes the Emergencies Act, the official opposition opposes the move. Let us look no further than the Premier of Alberta. Two weeks ago, he was crying for help and now he is crying foul. Do we need to wonder why this situation exists?

What does this all mean? The Emergencies Act gives police more tools. It strengthens their ability to fine and imprison, and to designate secure and protected critical places and infrastructure. It ensures essential services are rendered and prohibits the use of property to support illegal blockades. It allows the RCMP to enforce municipal bylaws and provincial offences when required. There is no army. We are doing what has been asked of us and what needs to be done.

• (1110)

Police forces have been using these rules over the past few days. Our forces from across Canada at various levels of jurisdiction came together and worked seamlessly to de-escalate the occupation of our capital, and they are to be thanked for their professionalism and complete dedication to ensuring the safety of everyone involved. My colleagues have mentioned the change today outside the House of Commons from days previous.

I would also like to thank the thousands of truckers and frontline workers who have worked through all of this. The storyline has been distorted to suggest that we stand against truckers. Nobody in this chamber stands against truckers; in fact, it is completely the opposite. They were critical in getting us this far, and we are with them now, as we always have been.

I want to give a special thanks to those who work at the Ontario Food Terminal in my riding. We are grateful to them. It has been especially important to recognize their contributions over the last few weeks. The truckers and workers at the food terminal have been working hard and tirelessly to keep goods and services moving for Canadians. It is a critical food hub for Ontario and many other parts of Canada. We depend heavily on imported fruits and vegetables at this time of year, and border disruptions put our sup-

ply of perishable food at risk. These disruptions are completely unacceptable.

The Emergencies Act measures are time-limited, geographically targeted, reasonable and proportionate to the threats. The act is only being used to strengthen and support law enforcement agencies at all levels across Canada.

People are trying to tie this act to the War Measures Act. Let me be crystal clear that this is not the War Measures Act. With this act we are not calling in the military and we are not overriding the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, nor are we limiting freedom of speech or freedom of peaceful assembly. This has been proven over the last few days. Canada is a rule-of-law country. The authorities have been cautious, careful, professional, respectful and patient, resulting in peaceful protesters leaving the streets of Ottawa. The Emergencies Act only applies to those involved in illegal activity. It is that simple.

I next want to address something that has been repeated by the opposition time and time again, which is that this government should meet with leaders of the protests, as if this would make the whole thing go away and solve all the problems. This is nothing more than a distraction, as we all know, because there are no real leaders. This is not a cohesive group that is united in one cause. I have spoken to people on all sides of the issue and I continue to. I do it every day by phone and email, and yes, in Ottawa.

Besides, if the Conservatives truly believed that meeting with any one group or individual would solve this problem and that was a real option, they would have done it. Instead, random MPs, including their now want-to-be leader, are taking pictures with random protesters. Now that aspiring leader is nowhere to be seen, following the selfies and photo ops which he has for so long criticized others for doing.

The government's action was about keeping Canadians safe and protecting people's jobs. Let us restore freedom to the people of Ottawa, Windsor, Coutts, Emerson and British Columbia and elsewhere. Let us restore confidence in our institutions. Let us restore order together, please. We need to work together. The question is not what happens if we do this; the real question is what happens if we do not. We need to be the ones fighting to protect our freedoms, not fighting with each other and trying to one-up each other.

In the coming days, a parliamentary committee will be struck to provide oversight while this emergency is in effect. Parliament has the ability to revoke the declaration of the emergency, as set out clearly in the act. There is no suspension of liberty here; we are trying to give people their liberty back. Peace, order and good government is what we were elected to provide, so let us do it.

Statutory Order

Statutory Order

• (1115)

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the story that was just told by the Liberal member in trying to perpetuate the myths the Liberals are putting forward, the myths that there is no charter infringement, there is nothing going on here and people are not losing their freedoms.

The government said it needed this act. Coutts got rid of the blockades without using the Emergencies Act. Surrey got rid of the blockades. Windsor got rid of the blockades. If the member does not think that individual Canadians are losing their freedoms, does he believe that the freezing of 73 bank accounts by the government is not a loss of freedom in Canadians' eyes?

Mr. James Maloney: Madam Speaker, this is a very serious issue, and when someone breaks the law, there are very serious consequences.

What this act does is give police the legal authorities across the country to protect us and our constituencies from people who are working behind the scenes, including people donating to this cause for the wrong purposes. Rights are protected. It is right in the legislation. The member's party made sure of that when it introduced this piece of legislation.

I am a lawyer. I worry all the time about protecting people's rights. I have spent my life fighting for them. I am comfortable with what we are doing here. It is the right thing to do.

• (1120)

[Translation]

Ms. Monique Pauzé (Repentigny, BQ): Madam Speaker, in his speech, the member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore said the government has been very patient. I would say it has been incompetent.

I am going to ask the member a question that might help him explain why it took so long for the government to act. Were there perhaps any political considerations behind the government's inaction?

[English]

Mr. James Maloney: Madam Speaker, this question sums up the whole problem that we have been facing for two years. Everybody likes blaming everybody else and taking credit for things they had nothing to do with.

People throughout this camp in this two-year process have been saying this person moved too quickly or this person moved too slowly, when what they should have been doing was sitting down with each other and asking how they could work together to make it right. That is the real issue.

Were there political considerations? Absolutely not. The only consideration here is the safety of Canadians and what the right steps are to make sure that they are safe. Full stop.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Qujannamiik, Uqaqtittiji.*

Madam Speaker, change is never easy. I hear Canadians having a difficult time adjusting to a new life by taking extra care when they go shopping or eat at a restaurant, but these are measures that we need to take to protect those who cannot get vaccinated.

Does this prevent everyday Canadians from living their daily lives?

Mr. James Maloney: Madam Speaker, that is an excellent question. The short answer is no, of course not.

It does not affect the people in my community or the communities of anybody in the House today, or stop them from carrying on with their normal lives. People are free to come and go and do what they want.

Freedom to protest does not mean parking at the end of my driveway, honking your horn for weeks on end so that I cannot sleep, prohibiting me from going to work and then peeing on my lawn.

This allows people—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Can I remind the hon. member to be a little more prudent in the use of language, please? That is not terribly parliamentary.

The hon. member for Etobicoke—Lakeshore may continue.

Mr. James Maloney: Madam Speaker, I apologize. The answer stands for itself. I will retract the use of that word and replace it with something more appropriate.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for his comments and his approach to the situation.

One of the concerns that I have had through this debate, because it is a very serious debate that we are facing, is that there seems to be a conflation sometimes between the issues raised by people who have been involved in blocking our border on bridges or involved in events here in Ottawa and the methods that they used to raise these issues. The impact on jobs, trade and people's lives has been very serious.

Could the member comment on whether he feels that the issues have been conflated? What is the impact?

Mr. James Maloney: Madam Speaker, the answer is yes. I alluded to this earlier in a question.

There is a message out there. People have opposing views. I respect those views, but if the people with whom I stand are suddenly hijacked by people who are doing something wrong and have a message that is inappropriate, we need to walk away and separate those messages so that we can—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Lambton—Kent—Middlesex.

Ms. Lianne Rood (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC): Madam Speaker, this is a sad and dark time for our great country. The last two years have been difficult for everyone. Every person in this country has been affected by the pandemic. No one has been exempt. How did we get here? What brought us to this point?

Standing here in this chamber today to debate the unprecedented use of Canada's Emergencies Act is upsetting, to say the least. The culmination of what has happened to our country under the Liberal government's divisive and stigmatizing leadership is tragic. We have seen peaceful law enforcement resolutions that ended multiple unlawful border blockades without the Emergencies Act. Why do we need to escalate to these drastic measures? I will always stand up for Canadians' rights to peacefully assemble and lawfully protest. Likewise, I will always condemn disrespectful, hateful and unlawful conduct. Conservatives have condemned the blocking of critical infrastructure and have called for a peaceful protest.

As the events evolved, the Prime Minister made no effort to de-escalate the situation. Instead, he escalated it by continuing to divide, wedge, stigmatize and traumatize Canadians. Instead of apologizing for his mistakes, he threw fuel on the fire and opted for extreme overreach. Canadians have had enough. At the very least, they deserve a plan from the Liberal government to end the mandates.

It has been said many times this week that the Emergencies Act has never been invoked and should only be used in the most dire situations. It was not invoked for the Oka crisis, not for 9/11, not for the shooting on Parliament Hill, not for the rail blockades or even for COVID-19. Where is the threat to our sovereignty and national security? What proof does the government have showing the threshold has been met to invoke its use now? Neither the Prime Minister nor any of his ministers have answered these questions.

The Prime Minister has said the act should not be used as a first, second or third choice, but we on the opposition side have asked repeatedly what his first, second and third choices were. The question has still not been answered. The government, which currently has immense powers granted by the Emergencies Act, refuses to be clear or accountable to Parliament. How can the government be trusted to show responsibility in answering to Canadians?

The situation has become a spectacle around the world as a result of the Prime Minister's failures. He tries to save face by using the Emergencies Act, a measure of last resort. It is like using a wrecking ball to fix a broken tractor. It makes no sense.

What also does not make sense is a February 17 tweet from Foreign Policy CAN which said, "Canada condemns Cuba's harsh sentencing following the July 2021 protests. Canada strongly advocates for freedom of expression and the right to peaceful assembly free from intimidation. We stand with the people of Cuba in their aspiration for democracy." This is a little rich, coming from a government that will not even so much as go out and listen to its own people who have been waiting to be heard.

The government claims that it will not use this piece of legislation to take away freedom of speech or freedom of assembly, but we have come to a point here where people from all over the country feel that they do not have a voice. We are at a point where the government has dropped a sledgehammer and is taking the most extreme action the government can take to silence the voices of Canadians who are simply asking to be heard. Again I must ask what the first, second and third things were that the government did to avoid getting to this place where we are now.

Statutory Order

I am not alone in wondering why the Liberal government is so hesitant to advocate the same freedoms for its own citizens that it has asked for Cubans. I know the Prime Minister has said that he admires basic dictatorships. Could it be that they find democratic rights, such as free expression and peaceful assembly, inconvenient when it does not align with their politics?

Real leadership involves listening to people and considering their opinions, whether one agrees with them or not. Real leadership is about making sure people feel heard. The Prime Minister continues to malign and name-call Canadians with whom he disagrees. This is not leadership. Real leadership allows people to write to one's office and say they appreciate that regardless of one's perspective on the mandates, one is open-minded enough to talk to them. Real leadership is acknowledging and owning our mistakes. It is humility, not hubris.

● (1125)

If our Prime Minister had at least attempted to listen to the people who came all the way to Ottawa, we would not be in this situation at all. Canadians came to Ottawa from coast to coast to coast. They spent thousands of their hard-earned dollars and days of their time to be here because they felt that their government was not listening to them. They felt the only way they could be heard was by coming to Ottawa. The Prime Minister has done nothing but divide, wedge, stigmatize and traumatize Canadians for two years. Canadians have seen that. Trust has been broken.

The Conservatives warned Canadians repeatedly about the Liberals' love of power. We have stood against the unprecedented power grabs and scandals since before the pandemic. We said no when they tried to grant themselves unlimited taxing and spending powers without parliamentary oversight. That all happened on a weekend, and here we are on a weekend again, debating another piece of emergency legislation that gives the government overreaching power.

The legislation grants unprecedented powers over Canadians' financial security. I have heard from thousands of residents of Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, most of whom have never contacted their MP's office. Simply put, they are traumatized. They are gripped with fear that donating to or purchasing from anything not approved by the government will result in their assets being frozen. They have very real concerns about how the changes brought by the act will impact their finances and their credit ratings long term. They have written me, saying, "My country is falling apart. What do I do?" They are hearing on the news that the Liberals are threatening to freeze their bank accounts if they support an organization they do not approve of.

Statutory Order

That is not an exaggeration. During an interview, the justice minister even replied in the affirmative when asked if the banks could freeze the accounts of anyone who donated for not liking the government's vaccine mandates. He 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 would say to the minister that this is not what we are seeing. It is ordinary Canadians, patriotic Canadians, who are having their accounts frozen. It is Canadians who disagreed with an unnecessary and divisive government policy. It is not people donating large sums of money. It is Canadians who donated \$20 who are being locked out of their bank accounts. It is those who got a T-shirt or a toque and those who sent money to a peaceful demonstration that gave them hope.

Even though the Liberal government says that the financial measures are temporary, regardless of how the vote goes, the Liberals will bring legislation forward to transition these powers into a permanent power grab. They want to permanently remove judges, who are the gatekeepers ensuring that big government overreach does not happen. The finance minister said as much during a press conference on Monday. He said the move to make crowdfunding platforms reportable to FINTRAC is going to be made permanent. She is also telling the banks to review their relationship with anyone involved in the blockades and report findings to the RCMP and CSIS.

When Canadians look back on this debate in the history books, they will see which of us, and the parties we represent, stood up for their interests, for their freedoms and for ending or enabling the continued trauma brought forward by the Prime Minister's inability to show compassion and leadership and by his power-seeking political games. It is the government's responsibility to stop contributing to the problem and to significantly improve its response to address the damage that is already done.

I encourage everyone to open compassionate eyes, hearts and hands to the burdens our families, neighbours and communities are bearing, and to create for each other the harbour of safety, respect and inclusion that we Canadians are known for. The Conservatives will continue to stand up for the rights and freedoms of all Canadians. We can do this without the government overreaching and using the Emergencies Act. Canadians are clear when they write our offices to say, "I am asking that you vote for ending all mandates, as well as the state of emergency immediately. It is time to follow the medical science and not political science, and do the right thing for the people." That is why I will be voting against this motion.

● (1130)

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I can agree with one thing the member said: Historians will look back on this pivotal moment in time in this chamber. However, I imagine some who teach political history will reflect on the fact that by some twisted logic, the Conservative Party, which touts itself to be the party of law and order, throughout the entire siege of Ottawa and its aftermath, sided with those who broke the law.

Can the member please shed some light on how the party of law and order, the party of Brian Mulroney and Flora MacDonald, who

brought this legislation into the House, is somehow siding and standing shoulder to shoulder with the occupiers, just not physically in the last few days?

● (1135)

Ms. Lianne Rood: Madam Speaker, when somebody is standing up for freedom for Canadians, they will never be on the wrong side of history in the history books. I encourage the member opposite to stop the divisive rhetoric that I hear constantly day in and day out here and actually show some leadership. He should be encouraging and should try to give Canadians hope, which is what the Conservatives are doing every day in this place and will continue to do.

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Hélène Gaudreau (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking my colleague for mentioning that we are experiencing a crisis of trust.

I witnessed the WE Charity saga. The first thing I thought was, how could our government be trusted?

We are seeing unreasonable and disproportionate measures right now, and it is going to dawn on people that what has happened in the last few days is not because of the order. I would like to know if my colleague agrees with that. The order could be confirmed by Parliament on Monday, but it could equally well be stopped.

Given what the world thinks of us, does my colleague think that the NDP might change its mind?

[English]

Ms. Lianne Rood: Madam Speaker, let me be clear that invoking this act is an attack the Prime Minister is using on his political opponents. This is not about public safety, and the Prime Minister has changed his story many times. The blockades at the borders were resolved before this act was involved, and the protest in Ottawa is now over.

Why does the government need to use these unprecedented powers? Why does the NDP want to side with the Liberals and be on the wrong side of history when it comes to the vote on Monday night?

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am not talking about all the people who have been involved, but all movements, as we know, have leaders. I heard members of the official opposition minimize what is currently going on, calling it peaceful and reflective of regular Canadians.

I would ask my colleague if she thinks the beliefs coming from the leaders are peaceful and non-misogynistic and are really reflective of freedom. Here is the first one: “Canada is ill and suffering and it is suffering from the stench of cultural relativism and political Islam.” That was from B.J. Dichter. Pat King said, “Trudeau, someone's gonna make you catch a bullet one day. To the rest of this government, someone's gonna—”

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I would remind the hon. member not to use names, please.

Ms. Leah Gazan: Madam Speaker, I am sorry, but it is in a quote.

Pat King said, “Trudeau, someone's gonna—”

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member can replace the name with the title.

Ms. Leah Gazan: Madam Speaker, Pat King said, “[Mr. Prime Minister], someone's gonna make you catch a bullet one day. To the rest of this government, someone's gonna...do you in, you sons of bitches.”

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I know it is in a quote, but I remind the member that it is unparliamentary language.

Ms. Leah Gazan: Madam Speaker, I am sorry, but I feel a little worked up because I do not think these beliefs are reflective of Canadians—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Unparliamentary language was an issue last evening and we agreed that we would not use it, even in quotes. I recommend that members stop using those words.

I will give the member for Lambton—Kent—Middlesex a chance to answer.

Ms. Lianne Rood: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question, but this is just more inflammatory rhetoric from the NDP. Why would the NDP support this? The party was founded on the principle of civil liberties, and the Canadian Civil Liberties Association is actually suing the government right now. It is unprecedented.

I did spend time talking with my own constituents, whom I met up here on the first weekend the protest started in Ottawa. I did not see any of these things. What I saw was patriotic, flag-waving Canadians who had more joy than I have ever seen before. People were hugging in the streets. It was like Canada Day times a thousand, bigger than any Canada Day I have ever seen in this country. I will always be proud to represent Canadians and constituents in my riding who are patriotic and who are free to speak and assemble peacefully.

• (1140)

Mr. Warren Steinley (Regina—Lewvan, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I join the debate today. I feel that we should not have gotten to this place where we are debating whether or not to use the Emergencies Act. I believe so many steps should have been taken before we got to the point where a government can freeze Canadians' bank accounts if they do not believe in

Statutory Order

its political ideology. It is not with great joy that I stand on my feet today, but it is always an honour to represent the people of Regina—Lewvan. I want to do that because I have had countless phone calls and hundreds of emails on what we are talking about today in the House of Commons.

I have constantly heard from the other side about the threat to democracy in Canada, but over the last three weeks, we have all been in the chamber, day in and day out, doing our jobs. We have been to committee, doing our jobs. Not once have I heard a Liberal member tell us what the threat to democracy is, because we have been here doing our jobs.

Our leader is a member of the Privy Council, and if there were imminent threats, they could have taken her in, briefed her and talked about what those imminent threats were. The only other group that is carrying the same narrative about a threat to democracy is the CBC. I would love to see the proof from my hon. Liberal colleagues about what is and what was the actual threat to democracy.

It seems that everyone on their feet today is trying to litigate the protest outside, which does not exist anymore, or trying to litigate whether the blockades were illegal. They were illegal, but they are over. What we are talking about is a government that never has the ability to look forward. This Monday, we asked the Liberals for a plan to get rid of mandates and restrictions and they voted against that because they did not have a plan to put in place.

When I stand on my feet today, I am not going to litigate the protests, nor whether the blockades were illegal, because they were illegal and they were removed. What I am going to talk about is whether the Emergencies Act, formerly the War Measures Act, is needed going forward. Does the government still need that power? Does the government still need the ability to freeze the bank accounts of people who donated to the “freedom convoy”? Does the government need the ability to freeze the bank accounts of people who have put pro-Donald Trump comments on their Facebook pages? Is that something that we believe as Canadians a government actually needs? Does the NDP believe that this is a power the government needs going forward?

These are the questions that I think everyone in the chamber should ask. The Liberals have invoked the Emergencies Act and used it to get rid of the protesters and the trucks on Wellington. They are not there anymore, so the question is, moving forward as Canadians, do we want to give the current Prime Minister these powers?

I have the order in council right here, and it is one of the reasons I could never support this act. The order in council, in item (c)(vi), says:

other temporary measures authorized under section 19 of the Emergencies Act that are not yet known.

Canadians do not want to give more power to the Prime Minister and his cabinet given not only what is in the act, but what is not even known yet about what they might use this power for. When I go back to Regina—Lewvan for door knocking and to talk to constituents, they are going to ask if I voted for this. I am going to be proud to say that I absolutely did not.

Statutory Order

There are so many other measures the government could have taken before we got to this point. It was unnecessary. We saw the illegal blockades at Coutts, Emerson and Surrey removed without this act. Going forward, when there are no protests and no trucks on Wellington, why would we ever approve this power? Not one Liberal has explained that to me. I hope that in questions and answers one of them does try to explain, first of all, why they need these powers going forward, and second of all, what the imminent threat to our democracy is. We are here. We are doing our jobs. Why would this power be needed going forward?

I had the experience, as many of my colleagues did, of staying downtown in a hotel and walking here and back over the last three weeks. My family was in town for the weekend. My wife, kids and I walked around and talked to some people who were from Saskatchewan. We had conversations and we never felt threatened.

The member for Whitby talked in his speech about downtown residents of Ottawa feeling terrorized by horn-honking and big trucks. I know one resident of downtown Ottawa who feels terrorized right now and her name is Tammy. She runs a gelato café.

• (1145)

Her bank account was just frozen because she has a big heart and she cares for people. She donated \$250 for the truck convoy and now her bank and business accounts are frozen. That is one citizen of Ottawa who is feeling terrorized by not the protesters, but by their own government right now. That is what we are talking about.

Citizens around this country are now feeling traumatized, stigmatized, divided from their government. What would my colleagues across the way have to say to Tammy? Do they think it is fair? She said in an interview that she has a big heart and cares for people, but her bank account was frozen. Do they think she is a domestic terrorist? Is that the type of people that now we are trying to protect other Canadians from? I would ask my friends on the NDP side to think about some of these statements because they are going to have to answer to their constituents as well.

I am from Saskatchewan, home of the CCF, home of Tommy Douglas. I guarantee if Tommy Douglas were in the chamber today, he would not be voting in favour of the Emergencies Act. He is the founder of the NDP. He built the principles that the party is supposed to stand on. I believe his comment was “using a sledgehammer to crack a walnut”. Do the New Democrats still have those same principles? Do they believe in the Civil Liberties Association of Canada that is suing the government now saying this is a step too far, this is unconstitutional?

In going home to our ridings, I believe my colleague and friend from Lambton—Kent—Middlesex was exactly right. This will be remembered throughout history. This speech is something that people will look back on and decide who was on the right side of this. The trucks are gone. The blockades are gone. Now we have to decide whether or not we want to be on that side.

I know my Liberal colleagues thought I was going to be up in arms in a very passionate speech, but it is something that is coming from my heart and from what people are telling me. The member for Winnipeg North is always on his feet and says a lot in the chamber and he is going to have to make a decision on how he is going

to vote. I know some of his constituents are asking how he is going to vote on this because some will not want him to and he is ignoring his community.

I have some really good friends, Derek, Ryan and Mike, who drove here to see what was going on. It is 30 hours from Saskatchewan. We walked around the other night and talked with people and they did not feel threatened. A couple of them started to tear up and these are grown farm kids when they saw what was going on in our country. They said is this what Canada looks like now? Is this the type of Canada we want to leave for our children? Police in riot gear and horses on the street. I remember the 2006 election campaign the Liberals said Stephen Harper was going to have police on the street. Well, the Liberals are actually fulfilling that prophesy. They brought in many armed riot police to make sure that Canadians were dispersed. There was not a lot of violence.

Why is no one talking about the violence that happened at the Coastal GasLink Pipeline, where 20 people with axes attacked police officers, did tens of millions of dollars worth of damage and there was not a peep from the Liberal side? Why is that so different from what is going on here? They tried to light a car on fire with people in it. I am troubled. What is the difference?

One of the things I want to get on the record is that the Liberals did not do the steps to make sure the protesters left before three weeks. They sent the Minister of Indigenous Services to talk to some of the protesters in 2020. They sent the Minister of Northern Affairs to talk to protesters at the Mohawk blockades. Why did not one of the front-benchers talk to the protesters and listen to what they had to say?

I will represent my people well. I will be voting against the Emergencies Act. There is no emergency. There is no threat to our democracy and it is a shame that the government has not pulled this bill.

• (1150)

Hon. Marc Garneau (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Westmount, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would be very interested in this colleague's personal view on whether he believes it is justifiable in what he calls civil disobedience, which is against the law, by the way, or occupation, whether it is acceptable to make the lives of other people very difficult, either because their jobs may be in jeopardy because their livelihoods depend on products crossing the border or the poor people who live in Ottawa Centre whose lives have been made very difficult over the past three weeks.

In the member's personal opinion, is that justifiable?

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, I am here to represent the people of Regina—Lewvan, Saskatchewan. Their lives have been made miserable for seven years because of Liberal policies.

There are people who have not been able to go to work for years, because of the anti-oil, anti-agriculture policies put in place. To talk down to me and expect that I do not know what people are going through or who have tough times is, quite frankly, disrespectful to me and to the people I represent. I am here because the people of Saskatchewan have had a tough time because of the pathetic policies these Liberals have implemented over the last seven years.

[Translation]

Ms. Kristina Michaud (Avignon—La Mitis—Matane—Matapédia, BQ): Madam Speaker, my colleague wondered whether the NDP had lost or changed its convictions, since it took a firm, clear position against the War Measures Act in 1970.

I would say to him that we are critical of people living in echo chambers right now because they only hear what they want to hear.

I feel like that is kind of what is going on with the NDP right now, because they are only focusing on the abusive actions and words of the protesters, and they are forgetting that the debate is about the Emergencies Act. This act of last resort allows for the use of measures that might be unjustifiable under normal circumstances.

Does my colleague not agree that the NDP is endorsing what could become a dangerous precedent?

[English]

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, that is a tough but fair question.

I do think the NDP are going to look back on this and have some reservations about giving unbridled power to the Liberal government. My hope is that through conversations and through talking with their constituents over the next couple of days that they will have a bit of a “come to Jesus” moment and realize that they should be on the side of freedom, they should be on the side of protecting Canadians' civil liberties.

If they go back and look at a few speeches from Tommy Douglas or at a column by Erin Weir, my predecessor, in the National Post about why they should not be supporting these measures, maybe a few of them will make sure they do the right thing on Monday and vote against the Emergencies Act.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Madam Speaker, a lot of people have been throwing around the name, Tommy Douglas. In any other circumstance, I would be happy about that. It is hard to know what Tommy would do at this point. These are very different times. It is also difficult because he has been gone for so long.

Maybe instead, I could quote someone who is very much in the present, a former Conservative leader, maybe a future, again, Conservative leader. He said:

This is not freedom, it's anarchy on display at the threshold of our democracy....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. Leaving aside the stated manifesto of the organizers to overthrow the government, these protests are weakening our economy and disrupting the freedoms of law-abiding citizens....Illegal activity cannot shape government policy.

Statutory Order

I would like the member to talk about what Peter MacKay and Conservative Senator Vern White had to say about what his party is doing.

• (1155)

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, this is what this question is about. To have one's own opinion about protesters and blockades, that is fine, but what we are talking about today is the Emergencies Act, and whether it should be used going forward and whether we in this House think the government needs that unbridled power—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I would call members to order so the hon. member's answer can be heard.

The hon. member for Regina—Lewvan.

Mr. Warren Steinley: Madam Speaker, we all know this is about whether the government should have unbridled power going forward after Monday. We all know this is a manufactured crisis because junior wanted his “just watch me” moment.

Mr. Mike Kelloway (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Steveston—Richmond East.

Today we are here to debate the decision by the Prime Minister to invoke the Emergencies Act with the purpose of bringing the unlawful protests in Ottawa to an end. After three weeks of exercising the right to protest, what has happened and what is happening in the streets of Ottawa must come to an end.

Over the last week, the “freedom convoy” taking place in our nation's capital has been on the minds of Canadians from coast to coast to coast. It has morphed into something it was not intended to be. It has been a demonstration organized by folks whose views that I believe at their core do not align with the Canadian values we are so proud of. Respecting the right of freedom of speech and the freedom to protest, I was disheartened by the way events over the last three weeks have unfolded. I have spent the last several weeks reflecting on how far we have come in this pandemic and how, over the past two years, we have all had to learn to live with COVID-19.

I will be the first to say that it has been challenging for all. Fortunately, across the country and in my riding of Cape Breton—Canso there have been thousands of dedicated, essential workers who, at a time when the world had come to a standstill, continued their work to ensure we were all able to live as normal a life as possible. All workers in Canada are important and have an essential role in our communities and, if I may, I would like to acknowledge as many as I can here, workers who continued to show up despite the challenges of the past two years.

Statutory Order

I thank the first responders who never stopped answering the calls for help, to the corrections staff for maintaining our jails, to the doctors, nurses and long-term care workers, pharmacists and all health care workers who show up every day. Let us not forget the amazing work of the cleaning, maintenance and kitchen staff in our hospitals and long-term care facilities. Thanks go to the home care workers who continue to go into the homes of those in our community who need that extra support. Also, thanks to the farmers for making sure we have food to eat and manufacturing employees who have been making PPE.

I thank the mechanics, plumbers, electricians and carpenters who can get calls at any time of day or night and show up to fix problems in our homes, hospitals and everywhere in between. Thanks to the tow truck drivers who help us on the side of the road when we need it. Thanks to those who make sure our water and waste-water systems continue to function and those who collect our solid waste. Thanks to the public works crews for keeping our roads clear and salted. Thanks to the contractors for fixing and replacing our bridges and buildings, particularly after major weather events.

I thank the early childhood educators, teachers and all staff who care for and teach our children. They reached out, even when the schools were closed, to help with virtual learning and to check in on children and families when they knew they needed their support. Thanks to those who work in retail and customer service, from big box stores to local community businesses and grocery stores, and the owners and employees who continued to do everything they could to keep the shelves stocked, always adapting to the endless changes to safety guidelines and to help people access the items they needed when they needed them.

I thank the truckers. Let us remember that when we were all staying home, many of them were going to where infections were the highest to bring home the food and supplies we needed. It is also important to note, as has been mentioned here today, that more than 90% of truckers are vaccinated and delivering goods across the continent as I speak. Thanks to the fishers who went out with their crews with so much uncertainty in their markets and thanks to the Canadian Coast Guard that is always there to answer the call and patrol our coasts.

I thank the pilots and flight crews who went to other countries to bring our fellow Canadians home, bring us PPE when we needed it and for taking supplies to countries as we worked together to end this global pandemic. Thanks to the Canadian Armed Forces that helped across this country in countless roles, from vaccinations to staffing long-term care facilities. Thanks to those in our financial sector, banks, credit unions and many others, who supported where they could, adapting to new government programs at record speed to help their customers and clients.

I thank the local arts and culture sector that has been hit hard and continues to find innovative ways to use their talents to keep us entertained. Mental health is as critically important as physical health and for this we certainly need our culture and arts sector. To those in the oil and gas and mining sectors, I thank them for making sure we have oil to heat our homes, gas to put in our vehicles and minerals as the raw materials for so much of our manufacturing.

● (1200)

I thank those working in our telecommunications sector, those who help with the purchasing of cellphones in-store, and those installing and repairing towers and lines to keep us online, and everything they do to help keep us connected.

I also thank the Nova Scotia Power employees, who ensure that they keep the power on and who repair the lines in some of the worst conditions imaginable. Finally, I thank seniors and seniors' groups such as the Reserve Mines Seniors and Pensioners Club and the Pensioners Association, which are there to ensure seniors receive the help when they need it.

I realize there are so many more people to thank in so many essential jobs, but I hope this helps people realize how intertwined our society is. One thing this pandemic has taught us, or it has certainly taught me, is that we could not do the job we do and could not live a life with some trace of normalcy without everyone else doing their job.

We cannot allow a small minority to cause us to forget our hard work over the last two years and the impact it has made. There have been millions of Canadians who have selflessly gone to work every day knowing they play a role in protecting their communities. In my opinion, that is what it means to be Canadian.

We all need to do our part, which is why I ask everyone to please get vaccinated. We are all living, everyone in the House and every Canadian, with COVID fatigue. We are tired of restrictions and the negativity associated with this pandemic. We are all concerned about the impacts on mental health.

We all want this to be over, and this is the way to get there, but I will tell members how we do not get there. We do not get there by threats, conspiracy theories and violence toward others. We get there by following public health guidelines, getting vaccinated, listening to the science and doing our part to keep our communities safe and healthy.

When I look at what has happened in Ottawa over the past several weeks, I am disappointed and disheartened. When I think of the intimidation tactics that have been used against parliamentarians and their staff, civil servants, hotel staff, those working in places like food banks, and all the citizens of Ottawa, I am disappointed and disheartened. When I see hate, disrespect and misinformation being spread from coast to coast to coast, I get angry, and quite frankly, I am sad about that.

We have seen examples of these attacks on our democracy and what they can do. We are past the point of whataboutisms or that it will blow over. It is here. It is outside these doors, and we need to call out this behaviour as we see it.

I really believe this is about democracy. We have been looking at this all wrong. It is not about traditional left, right and centre ideologies. We are talking about democracy and obstructionism. We are talking about democracy and intimidation, democracy and the viewpoint that the rule of law should not apply. That starts off small, and we have seen this play out in the United States, but it is growing. We have seen how it grew here in the last three weeks.

When there are some people in positions of authority going out and giving a wink-wink, nudge-nudge to people who are protesting unlawfully, it is a significant problem. Again, it happened south of the border, and it cannot happen here. I want to call that behaviour out clearly.

It is times like this I think about my dad. My father was in charge of mine rescue, and he would always say that, in times of struggle, crisis reveals character. Let me be very clear that we will not allow these demonstrations on Parliament Hill to intimidate our democratic and legislative process.

Despite what has been happening just outside the walls of the chamber, each of us has continued to do the work we were sent here to do. We have been here in Ottawa working hard for our constituents, whether those are my constituents in Cape Breton—Canso or those across the country.

For seniors who have been staying at home following public health guidelines, for the folks whose mental health has been impacted by the pandemic, for the businesses, not-for-profits and community organizations that have adapted to the pandemic, for the seasonal industries that have been hit the hardest, and for young people in particular, who have missed out on so much time for sports, school and with their friends, we are here in this House, in Canada's House of Commons, doing the work for them. That will not stop.

On Monday, I will be voting in favour of the Prime Minister's decision to invoke the Emergencies Act. What we are seeing here in Ottawa, what we saw in Coutts and what we continue to see in Windsor, and even at my constituency office in Nova Scotia, shows that the health and safety of Canadians is at risk. Frankly, I believe our democracy is at risk.

• (1205)

Before I finish, I would like to express my great—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Unfortunately, the hon. member has finished. He has run out of time, but I

Statutory Order

am sure he will be able to add more during the time for questions and comments.

The hon. member for Kelowna—Lake Country.

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Madam Speaker, the member was a member of Parliament in 2020, when there were protests across the country that shut down our rail system. This included both passengers and goods moving across the country. There was damage as well. In addition to that, at the time, there were more than a thousand people who were laid off. Even BC Ferries was shut down.

Looking at that, which was a national issue across the entire country that stopped all of our goods and services from moving across the country at the time, did he advocate then to invoke the Emergencies Act?

Mr. Mike Kelloway: Madam Speaker, in fact, no, I did not look to the Emergencies Act for that particular issue and the challenge that Canadians faced.

However, when we look at this particular challenge, the fact that it is coast to coast to coast and that it is, quite frankly, heavily invested in by American interest groups, we understand that the threat to democracy is imminent, whether it is in Ottawa, Coutts or Windsor. Situations dictate very timely responses.

That is what we are doing, and that is what we are going to continue to do.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the hon. members from the opposition that they just had a question. If they have more questions, hold on, rather than heckling across the way.

The hon. member for Nunavut.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Qujannamiik, Uqaqtittiji.*

Madam Speaker, this morning, I was relieved to see how the physical entrenchment of the extremists' acts were dismantled in Ottawa, though I was dismayed to see the extremists' ideologies expand to Surrey, British Columbia, as we were shown in the news this morning that protests against important public health measures were going on.

Even with the physical entrenchment that was allowed to happen removed because of the Emergencies Act, are there continuing threats to our democracy and to the everyday lives of Canadians?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Again, I want to remind hon. members that when somebody has the floor, to please hold their tongues until it is time for questions and comments.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Statutory Order

Mr. Mike Kelloway: Madam Speaker, this hits home with the part of my speech where I talked about how there is something happening in Canada right now. It is not what the media is talking about, *per se*, with the ideologies that are traditionally left, right and centre. There is a whole new ideology that is being born about being obstructionist and where the rule of law does not apply.

If we do not take this seriously, what are we going to take seriously? We need to ensure the safety of Canadians, as Mr. MacKay and the senator on the Conservative bench have said, and we will continue to do that.

Leadership has been talked about a lot lately in the House. Fundamentally, leadership is looking after those for whom you are responsible. We will continue to do the right things, whether it was two years ago with our pandemic response, or now in keeping Canadians safe.

Ms. Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the member had a very passionate speech.

Throughout the past couple of days, I have heard members from the opposition benches say that they do not feel threatened walking through the convoy. They do not feel that their security and safety are at risk. However, we have seen young women being attacked. We have had police reports filed by young women who have had hot coffee thrown at them.

The member prior said that there was not a lot of violence—

• (1210)

Mr. Rick Perkins: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The member has to back up statements with facts, as a requirement of giving a speech—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): That is debate.

The hon. member for Mississauga—Erin Mills will have to wrap up her question. That will give the parliamentary secretary enough time to respond.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Madam Speaker, I would love for all members in the House to back up their statements with facts. That would be wonderful.

I will ask a brief question for the parliamentary secretary. Why is it so important for us to protect the rule of law? What value does bringing the totality of lived experiences have for Parliament? Why is that so important for us here in Canada?

Mr. Mike Kelloway: Madam Speaker, I do truly believe in facts as well. Certain members in this House have not experienced a lot of push-back as a result of the blockade, but I have talked to many people, and I encourage members here to talk to people. I have talked to those who are working in hotels and who are immensely stressed out. They are stressed out and traumatized by seeing Confederate flags and Nazi symbols in the hotel. It is so important that we continue to focus on the rule of law, because that is the very essence of who we are as Canadians. The values we share are enshrined in the laws we have, and we must uphold them.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Again, I know this is a very passionate and important debate. I would just ask members to please be respectful when others have the floor. I

am sure they would appreciate that courtesy as well when it is their opportunity to speak.

We will resume debate. The hon. member for Steveston—Richmond East.

Mr. Parm Bains (Steveston—Richmond East, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am speaking today in solemn but resolute support of the Emergencies Act.

The past weeks have given me time to reflect on the words and actions of those who came to protest public health measures. One of the words we heard most from the demonstrators was “patriotism”. This frequently repeated word compelled me to consider its meaning. An act of patriotism is ultimately an act of self-sacrifice. It is a selfless act on behalf of our families, friends and communities. During the past two years we have seen extraordinary acts of selflessness by Canadians who sacrificed and stood together to keep each other safe during a pandemic.

Canadians found the strength to persevere in our shared values, our determination, our dedication and our commitment to community: Canadian truckers, frontline nurses, doctors, paramedics, firefighters, grocery store staff, our law enforcement officers and every essential worker across the nation, as the member for Cape Breton—Canso just mentioned.

Although many of the demonstrators label themselves as patriots and were invoking the memory of our veterans and their sacrifices, they forgot the lessons those veterans taught. During World War II, a typhus vaccine was developed and administered to Canadian soldiers. They did it to protect each other and their units. They did it so they could protect their nation. Not only did these vaccines work, but vaccine technology also grew rapidly. In the 1950s and 1960s, vaccines for polio, influenza and tetanus all emerged, and today, polio is a thing of the past. It is gone. It is gone because of the dedication and hard work of scientists, doctors and the millions of people who placed their trust in them.

Over the past two years, Canadians pulled together and cared for one another. They wore masks, physically distanced and got vaccinated. It is because of this that federal and provincial restrictions are slowly lifting across the country now, but we still need to hold strong.

Regretfully, most demonstrators refused to heed the advice of doctors. They neglected the example set by our veterans and chose to ignore the fact that we do not live in a society racked with polio. This is their right, but having made this choice of their own free will, Canadians who refuse vaccines must also accept responsibility for their choice. Others believe that federal and provincial public health measures went too far and chose to exercise their charter right to protest. That is their right.

Unfortunately, according to the intelligence assessments prepared by Canada's Integrated Terrorism Assessment Centre, extremist groups were using the protests as a cover. These groups' motivations extended well beyond grievances about public health measures and policy. Instead, their intent was to use the protest to advance an anti-democratic agenda.

With the intent of using trucks to blockade Ottawa's downtown core, demonstrators demanded an end to all mandates. Some even demanded an immediate and unlawful change in government. These actions emboldened others to blockade the downtown Ottawa core. Demonstrators demanded an end to all mandates. They blocked border points at the Ambassador Bridge, at Coutts, Alberta, at Emerson, Manitoba, and the Pacific Highway crossing in B.C. The Ottawa Hospital and the Windsor mayor received bomb threats.

● (1215)

Not only did these blockades cost hundreds of millions of dollars due to the loss of trade, but they interrupted the very supply lines these protesters claimed to be protecting. As the Ottawa occupation dragged on and even more anti-government demonstrators arrived, the unlawful conduct of the demonstrators continued.

The citizens of downtown Ottawa were subjected to constant and excessive horn honking and fireworks, a DJ blaring loud music, causing days of sleep deprivation for many residents. The demonstrators' disregard for mask mandates forced businesses to choose between employee safety and staying open. Most closed and remain closed today. The people of Ottawa reported numerous cases of illegal parking, idling, verbal, sexual and physical assault, intimidation and, worse still, death threats, an attempted arson, parliamentary staff followed home and children being used as shields.

Protest by its nature is disruptive, which we accept in a free and democratic society, but protests cannot be used to take hostage the charter rights of other Canadians as a means to force the government to accept political or ideological demands. This conduct gave way to a state of lawlessness in downtown Ottawa and compromised every resident's section 2 right to security of the person.

While these actions may not represent the majority of participants, it is also more than "a few bad apples", as the official opposition would say. Weapons seized from the Coutts border blockades and bomb threats received by the mayor of Windsor escalated this crisis. These actions are not peaceful; they are not lawful and they are not the actions of Canadians who share the values that got us through the pandemic.

The financial and additional enforcement powers, as well as streamlining jurisdictional concerns, have helped police authorities to responsibly disperse or arrest the unlawful demonstrators in Ottawa. It must be remembered that these demonstrators do not represent most Canadians. Roughly 85%, or more, of Canadians got vaccinated, and most of those who did not have not engaged in these disruptive protests.

Much more unites Canadians than divides them. The senseless and harmful acts of the past days do not reflect the attitudes of most Canadians. Initiating the Emergencies Act was a difficult but neces-

sary decision to protect the rule of law and give Canadians their freedom.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am curious. In the member's speech he referred to security intelligence reports showing the protests were a threat to democracy. I believe he knows that privy councillors are subject to the Official Secrets Act. Our leader, as a member of the Queen's Privy Council, was not asked or invited to anything.

I do not believe the hon. member is a member of the Queen's Privy Council. Could he share with us the intelligence briefings that he got as a person who is not a member of the Queen's Privy Council on the security threat to the Government of Canada?

● (1220)

Mr. Parm Bains: Madam Speaker, it was quite clear. We have received caucus updates as national caucus members. It was very clear that the groups that were demonstrating put forward a manifesto to overthrow government.

I think we need to look at the many facts that came forward and were well reported as indicators. Bomb threats, blockades, seized weapons; all of those things are quite evident and they are all before us. Everybody has access to that information.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Again, I want to remind members of the official opposition that even members who are participating virtually are actually part of the House and they deserve respect. There should not be heckling while a member is speaking.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Trois-Rivières.

[Translation]

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Steveston—Richmond East. I have the pleasure of working with him on the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics.

I really liked his definition of patriotism, and I think it is something we need to consider here. However, he was quick to paint patriots as the good guys, the ones who wanted to adopt the Emergencies Act, and said that the others were not patriots.

I want to know two things. First, does he therefore think that Bloc members are not patriots? Second, does he think that the Emergencies Act was the only solution, despite the problems and illegal activities that were going on?

[English]

Mr. Parm Bains: Madam Speaker, weapons were found and weapons were seized. There was a threat to government. A manifesto was put forward threatening the government.

Statutory Order

In my comments, I did indicate that some people may have come peacefully to protest and patriots in Canada come in many forms. However, when there are people who are organizing to try to overthrow a government, I do not see the patriotism there.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, the intelligence assessments referenced by the previous speaker were prepared by Canada's Integrated Terrorism Assessment Centre and were made available to the general public via The Guardian newspaper.

The thought was that tens of millions of dark money were flowing into the coffers of far-right extremist organizers like Tamara Lich and Pat King, into the coffers, potentially, of those currently charged with conspiracy to commit murder. It was made very clear early on in this occupation that crowd funding and now cryptocurrency was being used to fund illegal activities and the organizers who seek to put in place their own undemocratic government.

This demonstrated that concerning gap in reporting requirements. Why did the government not take immediate action to ensure that the proceeds of crime and terrorist financing regulations were updated to ensure these companies were not exempt from reporting suspicious transactions to FINTRAC?

Mr. Parm Bains: Madam Speaker, I would have to get a little more information on the FINTRAC involvement in this investigation. It is a great question, and I take it on notice.

• (1225)

[Translation]

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my colleague, the member for Rivière-du-Nord.

The Talleyrand quote “all that is excessive is insignificant” could have been said today about the situation we are debating in the House.

Yes, we are in the midst of a crisis, but the federal government chose to enforce an act by proclamation, which would allow the state to infringe on citizens' rights. Although the government could have taken many different paths, it chose to break out the heavy artillery. All that is excessive is insignificant.

The Liberal government claims that the Emergencies Act is necessary to resolve this crisis, but in reality, it needs to use this act because it was unable to properly manage the crisis from the outset. This type of act is meant to be used exceptionally, especially if it was designed to apply to Quebec. The War Measures Act may have gotten a new name, but it still brings back bad memories for Quebec.

If I may, I would like to provide a brief history of the introduction and use of the War Measures Act and the Emergencies Act. The War Measures Act was introduced and came into force in 1914, at the beginning of the First World War. Its purpose was to give additional powers to the government in the event of a war, invasion or insurrection. The act was used again in 1939 because of the Second World War.

The third time the government invoked this law—we still remember it in Quebec—was during the October crisis in 1970. Im-

mediately following the adoption of an executive order issued during the night at the request of Pierre Elliott Trudeau's government, the army took to the streets of Montreal in large numbers, striking terror and fear in the hearts of all Quebecers. That was when their rights and freedoms were trampled on. In total, 497 Quebecers were arrested and thrown in jail without reasonable cause or recourse. It happened before I was born, but the people have certainly not forgotten: “Je me souviens”.

In 1988, the Emergencies Act replaced the War Measures Act. The new act changed the way the federal government can use extraordinary powers in times of crisis. Since it was passed, the government has never invoked it, so why now?

To answer that question, let us look closely at the present situation and the invocation criteria for this act. To have the right to invoke the act, the government must prove two things: first, that a dangerous and urgent situation exists; second, that it is impossible to deal with the situation with any other existing law.

First, is the current situation dangerous and urgent? The government does not meet this requirement for the unilateral application of the act. Allow me to demonstrate. On January 15, 2020, proof of vaccination against COVID-19 became mandatory to cross the Canada-U.S. border. Two weeks later, on January 29, a truckers' movement opposed to this measure decided to gather and protest on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. So far, it all seems reasonable, because the right to protest and freedom of expression are guaranteed by both the Quebec and the Canadian charters of rights and freedoms.

The protest that was supposed to last a few days at the most turned into an occupation of the downtown area. At that point, the government should have dealt with the situation. Instead of taking action, the government washed its hands of it, claiming that crisis management was the Ottawa police's responsibility. On February 6, the City of Ottawa declared a state of emergency and the next day, on February 7, the Ottawa police force requested assistance from the federal and Ontario provincial governments. On February 11, the Ontario government declared a state of emergency, granting additional resources and powers to law enforcement services. The federal government continued doing nothing, except to polarize the public with inflammatory statements.

Let us keep in mind that in addition to the Ottawa siege, border blockades were set up in Ontario and elsewhere in Canada, in such places as Alberta, Manitoba and British Columbia.

• (1230)

However, these situations were resolved through existing laws. The same was obviously true for the protests in Quebec City.

As to whether this was an urgent and critical situation, if the situation was cause for concern, that was only true in Ontario, specifically in Ottawa, and nowhere else, especially not in Quebec. The Emergencies Act was to be used in a reasonable and proportionate manner, as the government had announced. That is clearly not the case.

The Liberal government's lack of leadership caused the situation to deteriorate. Each day of inaction strengthened the protesters' position. Each day required more effort to enforce the law and each day the Prime Minister refused to take action, choosing to throw fuel on the fire with disparaging statements. As a result, the offenders were allowed to organize. They were allowed to set up tents, toilets, kitchens, cafeterias, a stage and barbecues. They even let them install a hot tub. A hot tub impeded the smooth functioning of democracy in a G7 nation.

By allowing the situation to fester, the Prime Minister gave the protesters time—time to fortify their position, time for radicals to get from one coast to the other or to cross the border, and time for foreign elements seeking to destabilize democracy in Quebec and Canada to raise funds in support of the offenders. Had action been taken earlier, we would not be here in Ottawa on a Sunday. We would be home with our constituents, which is where we should be.

Invoking the Emergencies Act is a massive smokescreen, a diversion to trick Quebecers and Canadians into looking elsewhere so they will forget how things got to this point. It is unnecessary, dangerous and disproportionate. To be clear, the January 29 protest no longer has anything to do with the diehards who decided to place the House under siege. Those who continue to resist, if any, are extremists who should have been contained by law enforcement long ago.

Now let us turn to the second criterion for invoking the Emergencies Act. The situation must be such that ordinary laws cannot address it.

Could the crisis have been addressed with existing laws? The answer is yes.

These protesters had been breaking the law for weeks. All the police had to do was enforce the laws already in place, and the whole thing would have been over in two days. The government had plenty of options. The Criminal Code is full of offences that were committed by the protesters.

Subsection 63(1) talks about “unlawful assembly”; section 64 defines the term “riot”; section 68 deals with people who fail to peaceably disperse and depart from a riot; section 430 talks about “mischief”; subsection 181(1) describes “common nuisance”; subsection 423.1(1) talks about the intimidation of a journalist; and section 129 talks about the obstruction of public officers or peace officers.

Some police authorities claimed recently that the only solution was the integration of the various police forces involved. However, there is no need for the Emergencies Act to request reinforcements and coordinate efforts. The RCMP, the Parliamentary Protective Service, the OPP, municipal police forces from neighbouring cities and even the Sûreté du Québec were already working together, and this legislation was not required.

As for the claim that the occupation could not be dealt with using ordinary legislation, as I have demonstrated to the House, the Criminal Code was already more than adequate to deal with the threat.

The government decided to use legislation by proclamation, in other words without consulting the opposition parties or allowing

the smallest amendment. By ignoring those who were elected by the majority of the voters, this minority government is undermining its legitimacy and proving its detractors right. The Prime Minister decided to ignore the verdict of the voters, who gave him a minority mandate. He is acting as though he was granted all the power. That is not what the voters chose.

The government could use the act in specific locations, when the provinces request it. Quebec made it clear to the federal government that it wanted absolutely nothing to do with its emergency measures. Several Canadian provinces did the same. Rather than consult the provinces and Quebec, the Liberal government chose to impose an act that applies across Canada.

This law therefore cannot be limited. It is foreign to the reality of Quebec. It should not apply to Quebec.

● (1235)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Unfortunately, the member's speaking time has run out.

The hon. member can finish her remarks during the period of questions and comments.

The hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Westmount.

Hon. Marc Garneau (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Westmount, Lib.): Madam Speaker, with respect to the Emergencies Act, the interim chief of the Ottawa police said that it is because of the application of this legislation—which we hope will be temporary—that the police were able to take the various actions they did in the past few days.

What does my colleague think of this statement? Is what the interim chief of police is saying true?

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague for his question, which allows me to repeat something I said.

Yes, integrating the various police forces was probably necessary, but the Emergencies Act was not needed in order for the various police forces to work together and coordinate. This means that the law is unnecessary.

[English]

Mr. Michael Cooper (St. Albert—Edmonton, CPC): Madam Speaker, my colleague from Terrebonne very eloquently expressed the reasons why the threshold has not been satisfied under the Emergencies Act. What we have instead is an unprecedented overreach on the part of the government that threatens the foundations of democracy. As the member pointed out, the blockades along the Canada-U.S. border were dispersed before the invocation of the Emergencies Act. The protesters here in Ottawa have been dispersed, and yet here we are debating the Emergencies Act.

Would the member agree that the motivations behind this on the part of the government are in fact quite sinister and that it is not about what was happening here in Ottawa or what was happening at the Canada-U.S. border, but it is about crushing those who disagree with them?

Statutory Order

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I want to remind the members on the government side not to heckle or weigh into the discussion when it is not their time to speak.

The hon. member for Terrebonne.

[Translation]

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné: Madam Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague, with whom I have the pleasure of sitting on the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

I agree that this is a huge smokescreen. As I said in my speech, there was no need for this legislation.

Given its minority status, the government does not have the democratic legitimacy to impose such a far-reaching measure. The Emergencies Act cannot legitimately be applied because it does not meet the two criteria necessary to invoke it.

As representatives of the Quebec nation, we in the Bloc Québécois have the legitimacy to oppose it.

[English]

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I share my colleague's concern about the known extremist factions in this illegal occupation. They are dangerous and they were known prior to this.

I have a question that feeds into that. I am wondering if my colleague from the Bloc shares our concern that the Prime Minister has not shown any leadership. This is unacceptable not only to the residents of Ottawa, but certainly to the individuals and residents in my riding of Winnipeg Centre who have been overtaken by this illegal occupation with extremist white nationalist factions.

[Translation]

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné: Madam Speaker, I thank my esteemed colleague for her question.

I agree that Ottawa residents have suffered enough. I hope that I explained in my speech, and now in my answer, that this blockade should never have taken place.

The government's mistake was to allow the protesters to settle in and get organized. Things should never have gotten to that point. Extremists should never have gained so much visibility.

It was a mistake for the government to let this happen. It should have acted earlier, and it should never have gotten to the point of illegitimately invoking this law.

• (1240)

[English]

Ms. Leah Gazan: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

I sure hope I am wrong, but I heard, in my ear, someone using the F-word, referring to me saying, "Why don't you just eff off". I hope I am wrong. I hope that I did not hear that, but I want to bring that to your attention.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I thank the member. Certainly, there did not seem to be anything from this end from what I can gather. I am wondering if maybe, while there was some interpretation happening, there may have been somebody

speaking near the interpretation booth. I am not sure, but we certainly did not hear anything from here. I did not have my earphone on for the translation, so I am not sure if it would have been virtual or not. I am sure if it had been virtual, we would have heard the interruptions here. I am assuming that someone will look into what happened there.

Resuming debate, the hon. member for Rivière-du-Nord.

[Translation]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Madam Speaker, first, I need to clarify something. The Emergencies Act was assented to on July 21, 1988, and it replaced the War Measures Act. I would agree that there are important, not to say fundamental, differences between them. However, both acts set out the manner in which we wish to articulate our interventions and responses to the worst situations, namely a public welfare emergency, a public order emergency, an international emergency or a war emergency. There is nothing ordinary or trivial about this act. It is the heavy artillery of legislation. It must only be invoked sparingly and with the utmost prudence.

Today, we must decide if using this act in the current situation is appropriate. Are we in a state of emergency? If the answer is yes, does the seriousness of the situation justify invoking the Emergencies Act? If so, as provided for in subsection 17(2), what area is affected by this state of emergency?

Subsection 17(1) of the act provides for the Governor in Council to declare a state of emergency after holding consultations under section 25. Pursuant to section 25, this means that "the lieutenant governor in council of each province...shall be consulted". This exercise should usually make it possible to determine, with a modicum of reliability, if a situation exists in a province that requires us to invoke the Emergencies Act.

In the interest of being thorough, subsection 58(1) provides that the report on the consultations must be provided with the motion for confirmation of the potential proclamation. The Governor in Council's proclamation, dated February 15, 2022, states that the consultation under subsection 25(1) did take place, and it "declare[s] that a public order emergency exists throughout Canada and necessitates the taking of special temporary measures".

What does that mean, exactly? Like all the other members of the Bloc Québécois caucus, I think that ratifying this proclamation at this point in time would be a grave error that could have worse consequences than the situation it seeks to address. Even setting aside the fact that no end date is given for the allegedly temporary proposed measures, there are plainly at least two big issues with the proclamation. First of all, and this is no small matter, it is clear that there is no state of emergency as defined in the act, which I think nullifies any argument for authorizing the proclamation under section 17(1). The definition of a public order emergency is set out in section 16 of the act and requires “a national emergency”. This national emergency is itself defined in section 3 of the act, which states that the situation must be such that it “cannot be effectively dealt with under any other law of Canada”. It also states that the situation must “exceed the capacity or authority of a province to deal with it”.

However, the protests and the occupation in Ottawa and elsewhere in Canada have all been dealt with. The blockades have been removed and the offenders punished without the need to invoke the Emergencies Act. The existing laws and provincial and municipal powers to intervene were clearly sufficient. Moreover, the majority of premiers consulted by the Prime Minister confirmed that they did not need this act and made it clear that they were opposed to using it. In fact, of the 13 premiers consulted, only three said they supported invoking the act. How then can anyone seriously argue that the whole country is in a state of emergency?

The Premier of Quebec even said as much to the Prime Minister. Page 5 of the report attached to the proclamation says that “municipal police and the Sûreté du Québec have control of the situation”. It then says that “the use of the Act would be divisive”.

● (1245)

The least we can conclude from that is that the national emergency, which the act states is a condition for declaring a public order emergency, simply does not exist.

Furthermore, in the worst-case scenario, the report on the consultation with the provinces under in subsection 25(1) of the act would only justify the declaration of a public order emergency in the three provinces that were affected and that supported the declaration, namely Ontario, Newfoundland and Labrador, and British Columbia.

The premiers of Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Quebec all said that they had the situation under control and did not support the invocation of this act.

Unless the government has no regard for these premiers, it certainly cannot claim that there is a national emergency in these seven provinces as required by the act.

As for the premiers of Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, the report merely states that they have not issued public statements. It would be pretty difficult to interpret that silence as a call for help or as approval to invoke the Emergencies Act.

Statutory Order

As for Quebec, I will simply read the quote from the report on the consultations regarding the proclamation. It takes up just three short lines in an eight-page document:

The Premier of Quebec said that he opposed the application of the Emergencies Act in Quebec, stating that municipal police and the Sûreté du Québec have control of the situation, and arguing that the use of the Act would be divisive.

Under subsection 17(2) of the Act, the emergency, if it existed, was in only three provinces, so the proclamation should have stated that there was a situation in the provinces of Ontario, Newfoundland and Labrador, and British Columbia, rather than indicating that a state of emergency exists throughout the country, as appears in the third paragraph of the declaration.

The government's claim that the lieutenant governor in council of each province and the commissioners of Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut had been consulted and that it had therefore concluded that a state of emergency exists throughout the country inevitably suggests either a serious lack of judgment or equally serious wilful blindness. As the Premier of Quebec rightly said, this is not an inconsequential mistake, but a potentially divisive act. Do we really need this?

Moreover, it sets a dangerous precedent. This kind of law constitutes a serious argument to convince anyone that the Government of Canada has the power to control its territory. Invoking it on a whim anytime an unexpected situation causes headaches and creates major policing challenges actually weakens its impact. The most powerful weapons should be used only as a last resort. They tend to be more effective as a deterrent than when they are put to use.

Let us be clear. The situation that has been happening on Parliament Hill for the past three weeks is unacceptable in a democracy and should never have been tolerated this long. In a democracy, the right to express disapproval of our leaders' decisions and the right to assemble are sacred.

However, we must bear in mind that each individual's rights end where another's begin. Abuse of those rights is a violation that can and actually should always be punished. Have we reached the point of bringing out the heavy artillery? I do not think so. It might happen one day. We cannot rule it out. As I see it, this act should be delayed for as long as possible and be used as rarely as possible—ideally, never.

In conclusion, the invocation of the Emergencies Act at this point could be seen as a clumsy or perhaps desperate move on the part of a beleaguered Prime Minister trying to make it look like he took action to deal with a situation that is unacceptable in a democracy. Either way, it is a serious, dangerous move whose consequences will not be fully understood for years.

It is therefore my intention and that of the entire Bloc Québécois caucus to vote against the confirmation motion, and I urge my 306 colleagues, be they NDP, Conservative, Green, Liberal or independent, who also care about democracy and the rights we enjoy because of it, to reject this motion.

Statutory Order

• (1250)

[English]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, the unholy alliance between the Bloc and the Conservative Party against the Emergencies Act is actually quite disappointing. Contrary to what some of the premiers might actually be saying out west, Alberta has asked for support from Ottawa. The province did not have access to tow trucks. In the province of Manitoba, the premier literally begged and pleaded for Ottawa to get more engaged and show leadership just three days before the act was brought in. The premier of Ontario supports the measure. The interim chief of police indicates that, in essence, it is because of the measure that we can look outside today and start to see Ottawa's citizens getting back their city.

Why does the Bloc continue to support the Conservatives, and not support real people in our communities by voting in favour of this legislation?

[Translation]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his question.

Unfortunately, from listening to him, I can tell that he did not even read the documents he now wishes to endorse. He should read the report on the consultations with the provinces, which is appended to the proclamation. That is where I found the text I just read. It is in that document that we can see that only three provinces asked for the proclamation: Ontario, Newfoundland and British Columbia.

If he did not read these documents, I suggest that instead of rising to speak, he allow other members who have read the documents to have their say, so we can have an intelligent discussion about the situation.

Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for his speech.

The Liberals said that we needed to have the necessary measures to deal with the problem in downtown Ottawa. Now, that situation has been settled. Why do we still need these measures? Perhaps the government wants to have these unlimited powers?

Mr. Rhéal Fortin: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her question.

I completely agree with her. The situation has been resolved, as I said in my speech.

It is a difficult situation, we agree. It is unacceptable. People cannot block off streets like that. If there had been a fire or if someone had fallen ill on Wellington Street, it would have been impossible for an ambulance or the fire department to get there. I agree that this is unacceptable.

That said, the situation was resolved through the police. It was almost nice to see the various police forces supporting each other. That is how the situation was settled.

The Emergencies Act needs to be kept for real emergency measures, otherwise we will be shooting ourselves in the foot. It is

much like the story of Peter and the wolf. We cry wolf when there is no wolf. At some point, there will be a wolf, but our cries will not be heard.

I am urging us to show restraint. The Emergencies Act should be invoked when there are emergency measures to be taken. If there are other ways to deal with a situation, we should use them. If the act is to be invoked, it should be done sparingly and judiciously, selecting the places where it applies. It was only three provinces, not the ten provinces and three territories, that asked for it.

[English]

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Madam Speaker, I had the honour of travelling to Poland with the hon. member for the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. We have seen anti-Semitic symbols flying in our nation's capital. Many of the organizers of the convoy are well-known far-right figures who are known for their white supremacist ideologies.

Can the member speak to the need to tackle anti-Semitism across the country and ensure that this kind of thing never happens again?

• (1255)

[Translation]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague, whom I also appreciate very much.

I could not agree more with her. I looked at the protesters flying American flags, Canadian flags, Quebec flags and so on. It is easy to conflate all the causes and make comparisons to anti-Semitism. However, we are really far from that. If we were in a situation like the one Poland and Germany experienced in the dark years we would prefer to forget but can never forget, the Emergencies Act would obviously be called for. However, we are not there.

Conflating situations like this is dangerous. First, it does a disservice to the memory of victims of the Holocaust. Second, it undermines the sound, informed and intelligent management of situations here at home.

[English]

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Kanata—Carleton.

I rise today to take part in this historic debate in the House of Commons on the invocation of the Emergencies Act. I want to begin by thanking police chief Pam Mizuno and the men and women of the Windsor police force. The operation to clear the blockade of our community's lifeline, the Ambassador Bridge, was professional, effective and, above all, peaceful. They restored order at home and provided the blueprint for the peaceful operations in our nation's capital.

I thank the Ottawa police force and its police chief, Steve Bell. I thank the OPP and RCMP, and the police forces from communities across Canada, be it Peel, Durham, Calgary or beyond. Through the bitter cold of an Ottawa winter, when all they wished for was to return home safe with their families, they met the challenge with courage, professionalism and restraint. They have restored the rule of law and returned Ottawa to its residents. I thank them.

I thought carefully about what I wanted to say today in the House of Commons, not wanting to repeat too much of what has already been said. Last weekend, my family flew in from Windsor to join me in Ottawa for a special ceremony at the Embassy of the Republic of Poland. My father Richard was being honoured with the Cross of Freedom and Solidarity, which was presented by the Polish ambassador, Dr. Andrzej Kurnicki, on behalf of the President of Poland.

The Cross of Freedom and Solidarity is given to members of the democratic opposition movement in Poland, and to members of the Solidarity movement who were imprisoned or killed by the communist authoritarian regime in Poland, including during the imposition of martial law. My father was a member of the Solidarity movement, the first free and independent trade union in the Soviet bloc. He was the chair of Solidarity in a factory of 7,000 workers. They fought for the rights of workers and citizens.

On December 13, 1981, the communist dictatorship of Poland declared martial law on its people. Civil liberties were suspended. Communications were cut, both within Poland and to the outside world. Thousands of tanks, armoured vehicles and armed soldiers poured into the street. At 20 minutes past midnight, the police came to our door and arrested my father. For two weeks, our family did not know whether my father was alive or whether he was dead.

It was only many days later, when my mother was in an outdoor farmer's market picking up groceries, that a kind and courageous police officer carefully approached her. He told her not to turn around and not to look back. He slipped a note from my father into her pocket, written on a cigarette paper. It said, "Don't fret; I am alive, and I am being held in detention." Thousands of Solidarity members were rounded up that night, and during the subsequent years of martial law, many were killed.

During the ceremony, my father dedicated the Cross of Freedom and Solidarity he received to the memory of his cousin, Jozek Widerlik. Jozek was a 24-year-old shipyard worker, shot and killed by the military police coming out of a Gdansk shipyard during the protests in 1970. That same system that arrested my father and killed his cousin dubbed my father an enemy of the state. Canada gave us safe harbour, and in 1983 my family arrived at Pearson airport as political refugees.

Why do I raise my family's story today? For one, that ceremony at the embassy and my father's experience under martial law weighed heavily on my thoughts, because two days later we were debating the invocation of the Emergencies Act. It is a discussion and a decision I take seriously and with caution, but I support the rule of law and giving our law enforcement the tools they need to restore the rule of law, and I support these measures. Most telling is that my father supports these measures.

Statutory Order

As members can imagine, we have talked a lot about the situation in Canada, and I am grateful to have that opportunity in these difficult times. However, I also raise my family's story because I have heard many people during the protests, and here in this House, compare the Emergencies Act to martial law and to communism. Such language only inflames. It does little to advance our understanding of the Emergencies Act, and it cheapens the contribution and memory of the thousands, like my father, who fought communism and suffered under martial law.

It is important here to talk about the democratic safeguards in place that distinguish the Emergencies Act. The first point that bears repeating is what these measures are not: This is not the use of military forces. These measures do not displace the local and provincial law enforcement. The operations in Ottawa clearly demonstrated that.

● (1300)

Both Houses of Parliament must have the opportunity to debate and vote on the act within seven days of its invocation. The act automatically expires after 30 days, but Parliament can shorten its duration at any time. A joint oversight committee must be set up to oversee the operation of the act, and a public inquiry must be held immediately after the expiration of the act to analyze the basis for its invocation and its execution. Finally, and most importantly, all measures of the Emergencies Act must be subject to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The right to protest peacefully is sacrosanct, a cornerstone of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and it is a fundamental part of who we are as Canadians. We know that civil liberties organizations are already challenging the invocation of the act, and that is a good thing. We should challenge it, question it and debate it as MPs, as journalists, as civil society and as Canadians.

The key question many people ask is this: Does the threat meet the threshold? To answer that, I will provide another perspective, the view from my hometown in Windsor. There, a five-day blockade of the Ambassador Bridge shut down the very lifeline of our community, which is cross-border trade.

Statutory Order

That blockade disrupted 400 million dollars' worth of trade that crosses the bridge every single day. The hurt this inflicted on our community is beyond measure. Thousands of workers in auto plants were sent home because parts could not get through; businesses were brought to their knees; farmers could not get their produce to market; small businesses along Huron Church Road, like Fred's Farm Fresh market, to this day remain heavily impacted because of the barriers still in place; children cannot go to school; residents struggle to get groceries or access health care, and Windsor police resources continue to be diverted away from community policing to secure the bridge. Those are just the immediate impacts. The long-term impact on investments and jobs in my community is unknown. The scale of disruption to businesses and livelihoods and to our national economy meets the threshold of a national security threat.

Another important question being asked is this: Are these measures necessary?

Ottawa's police chief answered that question on Friday when he said unequivocally that both the provincial and the federal emergency powers were critical to the peaceful end of the protests. With measures like those to keep children from protest areas, measures that disrupt the finances that fuel the protests, and measures that prevent the occupation of critical infrastructure like the Ambassador Bridge, the Emergencies Act provides tools that help authorities to uphold the rule of law and keep the protest from spreading and taking hold in our communities.

However, it is important to emphasize that these measures are not imposed on communities that do not need them. These measures will be felt only by a few hundred unlawful protesters in communities like Ottawa, Windsor and Coutts, where disruptions took place.

A remarkable scene unfolded yesterday. Outside the gates of Parliament, hundreds of police officers were peacefully restoring public order and the rule of law on Wellington Street, which had been occupied for over 21 days. Metres away, inside the doors of the House of Commons, Parliament was in action, exercising democracy, debating the Emergencies Act.

The rule of law and democracy are intertwined and interdependent. One cannot exist without the other. The source of our democratic government is the ballot box, not the barricades, and here I want to return to the Cross of Freedom and Solidarity, for Pope John Paul once said, "There is no freedom without solidarity."

Solidarity means responsibility, not just for oneself but responsibility for others, looking out for our neighbour and being aware of how our actions impact the lives of those around us. Canadians who got vaccinated exemplified that credo. It means, at times, the willingness to give up a little of our freedom to protect the lives, safety and well-being of others. Sometimes it is about the willingness to give up something more. The greatest symbol of freedom in solidarity is a few short steps away from Parliament Hill, where we Canadians gather every November 11. Let us return to that spot, for it is there, in times of turmoil and trouble, that we Canadians will always find our compass and our way.

• (1305)

Mr. Terry Dowdall (Simcoe—Grey, CPC): Madam Speaker, I want to be crystal clear. I do not support the government with respect to these emergency actions. My office has never been so busy. This is the busiest it has been since 2019, when I was first elected, with emails and phone calls. My constituents are disturbed by their Prime Minister and what he has said. A lot of these people who are calling me are Liberal supporters.

My question for the member is this. Do you apologize for the Prime Minister's comments on racism and misogyny when you get calls, and what answer do you give?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I would remind the member that he should not use the word "you" because he is directing the question directly to the member when he should be directing it through the Chair.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: Madam Speaker, I believe that all of us have to first look at ourselves in this chamber with respect to our rhetoric and the words we use. I agree that we all have a role to play in turning down the temperature in our country, making sure we avoid divisive language as much as possible and coming together as Canadians.

I can tell the member that I have also heard from many in my constituency who were deeply hurt by the protests that took place on the Ambassador Bridge, the thousands of jobs lost, the workers who were sent home and the businesses that were brought to their knees. The Emergencies Act we are bringing forward here will help to make sure that never happens again on our Ambassador Bridge.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

His account of what happened to his family is unfortunately similar to what I have been told, and what my aunt and family friends have told me, about October 1970, and I totally understand the horror he must have experienced back then.

What is happening now is not about the army, it is about protesters. I kept reading and rereading, and I wondered what powers the police did not have before the Emergencies Act was invoked.

Were they unable to issue fines? Were they unable to co-operate? Were they unable to enforce a court order? What powers did they not have that were suddenly given to them?

[English]

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: Madam Speaker, I want to begin by saying that one thing that was remarkable about the operations here in Ottawa over the last couple of days is that we had police authorities from all across Canada coming to work together. The chief of police described it as a true team Canada approach and a true team Canada effort. We saw police from Calgary, Peel Region and Durham, as well as the Sûreté du Québec.

It is that team Canada approach that I feel is going to get us through this turmoil. It is important that we not lose sight of that, as well as of the fact that these measures are subject to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which protects Canadians from coast to coast to coast and will keep us on the good side of this new legislation.

• (1310)

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Uqaqtittiji*, many Canadians are struggling to get beyond the party politics, because it is mainly party politics that are being debated throughout this House. It is in part due to the effectiveness of the extremist ideologies that have infiltrated their minds, causing them to fear the Emergencies Act. Can the member explain to Canadians how their civil liberties are not being violated in this Emergencies Act and why they do not need to fear it?

Mr. Irek Kusmierczyk: Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. colleague for that key question we should be asking ourselves. I reiterate that the Emergencies Act is fundamentally subject to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. These measures are targeted. The time is limited as well. There is a 30-day sunset clause. At any time, Parliament can vote to reduce the timing of it. There is also a joint oversight committee that has to be struck, which oversees the enactment and operation of the Emergencies Act. There are many safeguards in place to protect the rights and freedoms of Canadians. That is the fundamental question we are debating here today.

Mrs. Jenna Sudds (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth, Lib.): Madam Speaker, although it is an honour today to rise in the House of Commons to discuss and debate imposing the Emergencies Act, I do so with a heavy heart. I am fiercely proud to be Canadian. I love our country and everything about it. That is why I am here today. It is a big part of why I ran and had the courage to put my name on a ballot, and that is why I must use my voice today as we take these historic measures. Undeniably, this is one of the most important debates that we will have in the House.

The debate is about a solution to a very big problem. It is a problem that we have seen exceed the ability of the Ottawa police force and other police forces across the country to address on their own. It is multi-faceted, it is menacing and it is an attack on our democracy. The protesters here in Ottawa just outside this building, the seat of our federal government, stated that their goal was to take down the government: to overthrow this democratically elected government. This certainly raises alarm bells in my head.

As we know, on Friday, all parties agreed to cancel the debate in the House on the Emergencies Act because of the emergency that was happening just outside this building. It was not considered safe for us to come to this building to debate the Emergencies Act. Let us all pause on that. I would say that when the elected representatives of this country are unable to safely debate in the House, it is an emergency of national significance.

I have received many emails, phone calls and messages from residents in my riding of Kanata—Carleton about these measures. I have been actively participating in and listening to this lengthy debate, and I would like to use my time today to share my view and to provide answers to the questions that many people seem to still have. I would also like to clarify that it is my job to represent the

residents of Kanata—Carleton to the best of my abilities. This is not about partisan politics, and it does not matter what stripe of politics I believe in. It matters that I rise and represent the will of my residents. That is exactly what I am here to do today.

Statutory Order

Why did we invoke the Emergencies Act? Canada is a rule-of-law country. By declaring a public order emergency under the act, we followed the law and we are acting within it. There are clear conditions set out in the Emergencies Act for a public order emergency to be declared, and these conditions have been met. Everyone in this chamber knows that the situation, particularly here in Ottawa, grew in intensity and in level of threat over the past 25 days. The threats at our land borders have mostly been managed to date, but with the benefit of planning and experience. The financing of the illegal occupation here in Ottawa has, as has now been exposed, required additional legislative powers to end it. The Ottawa Police Service acknowledged days ago it did not have the capacity to deal with this situation as it evolved over the last—

An hon. member: Oh, oh!

• (1315)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. I do want to remind the member for, I believe, South Shore—St. Margarets, and I do not know how many times I have already mentioned it while he has been in the room, to please hold on to his thoughts and the questions he may have. It disturbs the individuals who are speaking. I know that I have personally heard from individuals who have asked that order be held in the House so that they do not hear interruptions during speeches and votes.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mrs. Jenna Sudds: Madam Speaker, it is important to note that no level of government can direct a police force. We do not, nor should we, have these powers. The failure of the Ottawa Police Service to shut down this occupation quickly at the beginning will, I am sure, be the subject of further analysis, but that is not the debate today.

The Emergencies Act was enacted due to the inability of provincial and municipal law enforcement to peacefully enforce the rule of law to address the blockades and occupation, to keep Canadians safe, to protect people's jobs and to restore confidence in our institutions. I fear many Canadians do not understand that the Emergencies Act is, indeed, different from the War Measures Act. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms is still in place, of course, while the Emergencies Act is in force. Civil liberties are not suspended, nor is the charter set aside.

Statutory Order

If the above rationale is not sufficient, then I point members to the proclamation declaring the public order emergency with further rationale. That includes the continuing blockades occurring at various locations throughout Canada and continuing threats to oppose measures to remove blockades, including by force, for the purpose of achieving political or ideological objectives; the adverse impact on the Canadian economy from the impacts of the blockades, and on Canada's relationships with its trading partners, including the United States; the breakdown in the distribution chain and availability of essential goods, services and resources caused by the blockades, and the risk that this could continue; and the potential for an increase in the level of unrest and violence, with further threats to our safety and security as Canadians.

What does this actually mean? What does invoking the Emergencies Act actually do? Canadian governments at all levels have given the protesters a lot of leeway. Governments have allowed this protest to proceed despite a number of laws being broken. The protesters were allowed to make their point. We understand and continue to hear their concerns, and they have been debated at length in the House of Commons.

Some other levels of government have even met protesters' demands and have begun repealing some COVID-19 measures, yet in the words of the protest organizers themselves, these concessions are insufficient. Anything short of overthrowing this democratically elected government is insufficient. At some point, protesters need to abide by the rules of democracy, just as the rest of us do.

A democratically elected government, meaning us, may invoke duly enacted emergency laws that are reviewable by the courts, subject to compliance with the charter, that are proportionate to civil disturbance and that are limited in scope. That is what has happened here. Any action taken under the Emergencies Act must be accountable to Parliament, to the courts and to the imminent public inquiry on the use of the Emergencies Act. There is no better example of the need to invoke the Emergencies Act than what has transpired over the past 48 hours just outside these doors.

We heard directly from interim Ottawa police chief Steve Bell that the additional tools he had at his disposal because of this action the government took to invoke the Emergencies Act enabled his force, with the support of the RCMP, OPP and other police forces from across the country, to lawfully dismantle the siege that crippled our downtown for far too long.

I would like to review the measures that have been brought forward under the public order emergency very quickly. The first is regulation and prohibition of public assemblies that lead to the breach of the peace and go beyond lawful protest. The second is designating and securing places where blockades are to be prohibited. The third is directing persons to render essential services to relieve impacts of blockades. This is critical. This enabled us to compel tow truck drivers to engage and provide the services that we needed to clear this blockade.

• (1320)

The fourth is authorizing or directing financial institutions to render essential services to relieve the impact of blockades. The fifth covers measures enabling the RCMP to enforce municipal bylaws,

and the sixth is the imposition of fines or imprisonment for contravention of the order.

My hope is that we have seen invoking the Emergencies Act achieve two things. First, it gave the police forces the tools they needed to be able to end the occupation. Second, it enabled us to address the financial aspects of the protesters. We cannot let the international reputation of Canada be tarnished by letting our capital city fall because of this occupation.

Colleagues on all sides of the House, let us find a way to govern together. We all have the best interests of Canadians at heart. Let us learn from this, both from our mistakes and our successes. The safety of Canadians and our democracy cannot be a partisan issue.

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to stand here on behalf of Canadians to protect their freedoms.

I wonder, if it is okay to restrict travel, collect cellphone data, use military propaganda domestically, enact an Emergencies Act and restrict financial transactions, is it really democracy? I guess that is the point I would like to make here.

The crazy verge we are going upon, the precipice that the House is trying to prevent us from going towards, does appear to be a very partisan issue. I am really very unsure how the member opposite could call it a non-partisan issue when we have two parties who have clearly been, even before any debate, calling this a non-partisan issue. That does not make any sense to me.

I do not have a question, just a comment.

Mrs. Jenna Sudds: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the lack of a question. I am happy to speak to his comment.

My point is we are all here with Canadians' best interests at heart. That is why we should be here. It is our job to govern with their best interests at heart. I believe this should not be a partisan issue. This should be about the safety and security of Canadians. I believe that is what we are trying to achieve. We are invoking the Emergencies Act to protect the safety and security of Canadians across the country from the impact of these blockades and the occupation on our businesses, on our international reputation and importantly on the threat to our democracy, which they have stated is an objective.

With respect, I do believe we should all be able to come together to support this.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): There is still some heckling going on, and I just want to remind members to hold on.

Questions and comments, the hon. member for Trois-Rivières.

*Statutory Order**[Translation]*

Mr. René Villemure (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Kanata—Carleton for her point of view. I congratulate her on proposing a cross-partisan idea. I would like to hear it. I think we got to this point because of a lack of leadership. Nevertheless, I have the following question for the member: Does my colleague think that the Prime Minister should allow a free vote on this motion, as a way of showing leadership?

● (1325)

[English]

Mrs. Jenna Sudds: Madam Speaker, it is very hard to hear the translation with the talking that is happening across the way.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): I just want to remind members that if they want to have side conversations, they should maybe have them in the lobby.

The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mrs. Jenna Sudds: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the question. As I said earlier, this is a critical, and arguably the most important, debate that we have had here in the House. I am honoured to be a part of it.

I know that we all have Canadians' best interests at heart. I have heard from countless residents over the past three weeks about the impact that this occupation and the threats across the country have had. I believe it is important for all of us to listen, to hear what these residents have to say and to support them. By invoking the Emergencies Act, we have been able to empower our police forces to do the jobs they need to do to ensure safety and security across the country.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, the hon. member for Kanata—Carleton stated what she believed were the points of law to support the declaration of public order and the various ways in which the declaration was needed in this crisis, including the financial measures in order to curb the dark money flowing in and supporting these illegal activities.

I asked her colleague this question and he did not seem to have the answer, so I am going to ask her. It was made clear very early on in the occupation that crowdfunding and cryptocurrency were being used to fund illegal activity and organizers who seek to put in place their own undemocratic government. This was a demonstrated gap in the reporting requirements.

Why did the government not take immediate action to ensure the proceeds of crime and terrorist financing regulations were updated to ensure these companies were not exempt from reporting transactions to FINTRAC?

Mrs. Jenna Sudds: Madam Speaker, on the financial measures that are being put in place, I believe we have broadened the scope of Canada's anti-money laundering and terrorist financing rules so they cover crowdfunding platforms and their payment service providers, including digital assets such as cryptocurrencies.

The government is issuing this order, effective last week, so Canadian financial institutions are able to temporarily seize those funds as they are suspected to contribute to the occupations.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre (Carleton, CPC): Madam Speaker, there is indeed an emergency in this country. Indeed, there are a series of emergencies.

There is the emergency of the family whose 14-year-old daughter has attempted suicide after two years of isolation from sports, social interaction and other healthy activities that sustain a happy and heartfelt mind. There is the emergency of the federal public servant who, for unrecognized medical reasons, cannot get vaccinated and is now deprived of an income and a job. There is the emergency of the trucker who was hailed as a hero while driving our goods and services across international borders unvaccinated for over two years, who suddenly was declared a public health threat and deprived of his job as well. There is the emergency of the 32-year-old still living in his mom's basement, because under the pretext of COVID, the government printed so much money that it now costs \$836,000 for the average house. There is the emergency of the single mother trembling as she walks down the grocery aisle because she cannot afford a basket of affordable goods, because the government has inflated her cost of living. There is the emergency created by the regulatory gatekeepers who keep people in poverty by blockading first nations people from the ability to develop their own resources and blockading immigrants from the ability to work in the very professions for which they are trained and qualified.

These are the emergencies we should be addressing, but instead the Prime Minister has created a new emergency. What is his motivation? Of course, it is to divide and conquer. How did this all start? Let us remember that the Prime Minister suddenly imposed a brand new vaccine mandate on the very truckers who had been free to travel across borders without a vaccine, and he did it at a time when provinces and countries around the world were removing vaccine mandates. He did it to a group of people who are by far the least likely to transmit a virus, because they work and sleep all by themselves 22 hours a day.

Media asked his health minister and his chief medical officer for evidence supporting the decision. Neither had any. In fact, the medical officer said it was time to return to normalcy, yet the Prime Minister, in spite of all these facts, brought in this new mandate to deprive people of their living, because he knew that it would spark in them a sense of desperation. If he could deprive them of their incomes, they would be so desperate that they would have to rise up and protest, and then he could further demonize them, call them names, attack their motives, belittle them and dehumanize them in order to galvanize the majority against the minority.

Statutory Order

This must be the political opportunity his Deputy Prime Minister spoke about when she described what COVID represented to the government. The Liberals have attempted to amplify and take advantage of every pain, every fear and every tragedy that has struck throughout this pandemic in order to divide one person against another and replace the people's freedom with the government's power.

At the beginning of the pandemic, it started immediately. The government attempted to ram through a law that would have given it the power to raise any tax to any level for any reason without a vote in Parliament. It tried to pass Bill C-10 to strip away free speech online. Thankfully, Conservatives blocked it from doing so. The Prime Minister's authorities have said they want to track Canadian cellphones for the next five years. Now this, the Emergencies Act, is the latest and greatest example of attacks on our freedom.

Ostensibly, it was meant to stop blockades, which had already ended before he even brought forward this legislation. In Alberta, in Manitoba and at the Ambassador Bridge, those blockades were ended peacefully, in some cases with protesters hugging the police officers and bringing the matters to a successful close, so that goods and services could resume.

● (1330)

Instead, in that context, the Prime Minister brought in a law that not even Jean Chrétien brought in after 9/11 killed dozens of Canadians in a terrorist attack, that not even former prime minister Harper brought in when a terrorist murdered a Canadian soldier at the war monument and came running into Centre Block spraying bullets in all directions, and that not even the current Prime Minister brought in when blockades by first nations were standing in the way of those who were attempting to build the Coastal GasLink pipeline. For the first time in this law's three-decade history, the Prime Minister brings it in to address what he says was a protest in front of Parliament Hill.

Ironically, this power goes beyond any of the protests and/or blockades the Prime Minister claims to want to address. For example, it would allow governments and banks to seize people's bank accounts and money for donating to the wrong political cause. One journalist asked the justice minister if small sums donated, for example, to support an end to vaccine mandates could get someone's bank account frozen. The minister did not deny it. Instead, he said that people who make donations of that kind should be very worried.

To freeze people's bank accounts is not just an attack on their finances but on their personal security. If their bank accounts are frozen, they cannot buy food, they cannot buy fuel, they cannot pay their children's day care fees and, under this law, they can face this personal attack without being charged with a single, solitary crime.

The Prime Minister says that this is time-limited, yet his own finance minister said she wants some of the tools to be permanent. He said it will be geographically targeted, yet his own parliamentary secretary for justice said that "the act technically applies to all of Canada". The rules apply everywhere and indefinitely.

Finally, there is nothing in the act that limits the kinds of financial actions that could lead to people's accounts being frozen, and if

they are frozen unjustifiably, the act specifically bans people from suing either the bank or the government for that unjustifiable treatment, opening the door for people who have nothing whatsoever to do with either the blockades or the protest having their bank accounts frozen without cause.

The Prime Minister says he wants to do this to remove the blockades, blockades that have already been removed. He says he needs these unprecedented powers in order to bring our country's order back to the pre-protest period, although across this country that has already occurred.

I say to the House that I oppose this unjustifiable power grab and, as prime minister of Canada, I will ensure that no such abuse of power ever happens again.

However, I say that we should end some of these blockades. Let us—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

● (1335)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order.

Again, the hon. parliamentary secretary has been here when I have ruled, I do not know how many times today, and I am sure the hon. member who also has been yelling and heckling across the way was here as well, so I want to ask members, again, to please hold on to their thoughts. I will be recognizing them for questions and comments soon.

There is a minute and 50 seconds left for the hon. member for Carleton to do his speech.

I hope that people will hold their thoughts.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, we can remove all of the blockades. Let us remove the mandates and restrictions that are blocking people's livelihoods today. Let us end the blockades on freedom of speech that the government is trying to erect with its on-line censorship bill. Let us end the regulatory blockades so that builders can provide affordable homes, first nations can develop their economies and escape poverty, and newcomers can actually work in the professions for which they were trained. Let us remove the inflationary taxes, deficits, and money printing so that people's wages can again buy them homes, food and fuel. Let us remove that blockade.

Let us put people back in control of their lives by making Canada the freest place on earth: free to speak, free to think, free to work, free to worship, free to own a home and build one's own destiny. Let us bind up the nation's wounds with compassion and respect and unite our country for freedom.

Statutory Order

Mr. Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I heard today many comments that were more to do with a leadership campaign than helping the people of Ottawa and the people from communities across the country who have been impacted by the blockades. Not once did I hear about the city of Ottawa and what the residents have had to face for the last couple of days. This is all about political opportunism.

Is the member concerned about helping the people of Ottawa and those across the country who have been impacted by blockades and the occupation?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): It is now on the opposite side we are hearing the heckling, and I know very well the hon. member for Carleton can answer those questions without any help.

The hon. member for Carleton has the floor.

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, am I concerned about the people who have been harmed by blockades? Absolutely. That is why I am so disappointed the Prime Minister caused these blockades in the first place. I am concerned about the businesses that were affected and I am also concerned about the governmental blockades that remain in place today, the attacks on the freedoms of Canadians to have a job, go to work, frequent restaurants, raise their kids and have their kids smile and have that smile seen again. Those are the blockades we now need to focus on eliminating and what I will continue to fight for.

[Translation]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I share his point of view for the most part. He listed a series of emergency situations that warrant being addressed by the government and rightly so.

Would he agree that both this list of emergency situations and the events we have been experiencing on Parliament Hill over the past three weeks are situations that could be resolved if the government addressed these problems immediately, instead of breaking out the heavy artillery, like the Emergencies Act, every time a situation presents a challenge?

Would tackling the problem of the protests from day one—especially as they shifted from a demonstration to an occupation of Wellington Street in Ottawa—not have resolved the problem and prevented the use of the act before us today?

• (1340)

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, the answer is yes. In addition to taking action to deal with the problems the protesters raised, the Prime Minister could have avoided provoking these protests from the start. He is the one who attacked the jobs of the truckers, public servants and others, even as the rest of the world was lifting these restrictions and vaccine mandates.

Now he can take action to lift these restrictions and allow people to work and return to their workplaces. He should have stood up in the House of Commons to reject this unjustifiable power grab and give back to Canadians the freedom they are entitled to.

[English]

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member for Carleton's colleague, the MP for Cypress Hills—Grasslands, appeared in a video with convoy leader Pat King, an avowed white nationalist who is quoted as saying many racist, xenophobic, anti-indigenous and anti-Semitic things, including that “the Anglo-Saxon race” has the “strongest blood lines” and that unless we fight back, we will all be speaking Hebrew.

If he was elected leader of the Conservative Party, would he be willing to kick this member out of caucus or does he support fraternizing with dangerous white supremacists?

Hon. Pierre Poilievre: Madam Speaker, from the very beginning I stated that every single person who acts inappropriately, makes racist comments or engages in unlawfulness or blockades should be personally responsible for their conduct. That is something I would uphold as leader and as prime minister.

I would not tolerate any of the racist behaviour we have seen from the current Prime Minister, whether it is his ugly racist past, the racist manner in which he has treated numerous members of his caucus who have spoken out against him or whether it is continuing to give a billion dollars to the CBC, an organization that 500 employees have said is systematically racist. I will not tolerate any of that racism in my future government.

Mr. Mel Arnold (North Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Madam Speaker, today I join fellow members of Parliament in debating the government's invocation of the Emergencies Act and the extraordinary powers of the act that have never been used by any government since the act was created in 1988. As the House debates the matters in front of us today, I believe the responsibility each of us carries individually to our respective constituents and the responsibility we hold collectively to the people of Canada are of extreme gravity.

Today, Canada is likely more divided than we have ever been before. This division has grown during a time when Canada has faced not just one crisis but layers of crises and unprecedented challenges. It is within the context of division and crisis that Canadians look to us, their members of Parliament, to focus on the leadership required to start healing divisions and focus on the questions that need to be answered for the government to produce a plan for recovery. As we undertake our work today and any other day, let us not forget for a moment that Canadians are counting on us, all 338 of us, to deliver the leadership that they want and deserve.

Prior to the government's official confirmation on February 14 that it was invoking the Emergencies Act, the leader of the official opposition asked the Prime Minister if he considered the protests in Coutts, Alberta; Windsor; and Ottawa to be the “threats to the security of Canada” that section 16 of the act refers to. In response to her question, the public safety minister told the leader of the official opposition that, since the beginning of the blockades, “this federal government has provided law enforcement with all of the resources that they have needed.”

Statutory Order

It is important to note here that the Minister of Public Safety did not confirm that the blockades represented threats to the security of Canada, the threshold set out in section 16. Rather, the public safety minister confirmed that the federal government had provided law enforcement services with all of the resources they needed. If the government believed on February 14 that the blockades represented threats to the security of Canada, described by section 16, it should have said so, but it did not. If the government had truly provided law enforcement agencies with all of the resources they needed since the beginning, then who needed the resources of the unprecedented powers that the government invoked with the Emergencies Act?

On February 14, before the government invoked the Emergencies Act, the Ambassador Bridge in Windsor was reopened and the blockade at Coutts was in its waning hours before it ended the next day. In Ottawa, the RCMP and the Ontario Provincial Police had established an integrated command centre with the Ottawa Police Service, three weeks after the blockade began. Within four days of forming the integrated command centre, law enforcement officers in Ottawa were clearing the blockades. All of this is to say that, of all the blockades that the Prime Minister was questioned about on February 14, one was cleared, a second one was coming down and the days of the Ottawa blockades were numbered as law enforcement branches integrated their commands, yet here we are today, in this extraordinary sitting of the House, trying to get a straight answer from the government as to why it insists on continuing to invoke the extraordinary powers of the Emergencies Act.

This is a question of profound gravity because the powers the government has bestowed upon itself, with scant explanation of why, are profound. I am disappointed that we are here today debating this serious question. The fact that this question and many more have not been clearly answered by the government over the past six days should raise red flags for all members.

● (1345)

It is incumbent on all members of all parties to insist that the government provides us and Canadians clear, complete and timely answers because our history is stained by instances where individual rights and due process were errantly passed over by powers similar to those we are examining today.

The Emergencies Act was created in 1988 to replace and prevent the abuses inflicted under the War Measures Act. The War Measures Act was replaced because its powers had been wrongfully applied by federal governments that failed to reflect on asking and answering essential questions before its powers were deployed on Canadian citizens.

These powers were wielded in Canada's World War I internment activities from 1914-20. Although internees were predominantly recently immigrated Europeans, mostly from the western Ukraine, Canadian-born and naturalized British subjects were also interned. Similarly, the powers of the War Measures Act were also wielded in the internment of persons of Japanese heritage, including Canadian-born Japanese Canadians and others during the Second World War. These applications of the War Measures Act raised and continue to raise serious questions of what thresholds of threat to the se-

curity of Canada justify the application of powers such as those invoked by the government on February 14.

It is up to all of us here in the House of Commons to ensure that we have learned from history, because if we have not learned and if we have not asked the questions and if we have not made informed and just decisions, we make ourselves and Canada vulnerable to repeating history.

We are examining the questions before us today because the government has chosen to invoke the Emergencies Act even though two of the three blockades that existed a week ago have been eliminated and the third is all but over. That said, I call on the government to rescind this invocation and turn its focus and the focus of the House to the crises in Canada that persist unabated today.

As I mentioned at the outset, Canada today is severely divided, wrapped up in crises and Canadians are counting on us to provide leadership in pursuit of the recovery that all Canadians want and need. Last week, the Conservative motion proposing a reasonable approach to help lower the temperature across Canada by providing Canadians with a specific plan and timeline for ending all federal mandates was defeated. I call on colleagues from all parties to reflect on the opportunity that was missed last week, a missed opportunity to start taking down fences and rebuilding bridges.

Canadians need a signal and hope that we are nearing the end of restrictions and mandates. For too long, Canadians have been hoping for a plan to move forward and I am not sure how much longer some can continue to hold on. Over recent months, I have heard from constituents suffering from extreme stress and mental health challenges. Some called me in tears because they are afraid to leave their homes for fear of being confronted because they are unable to wear a mask or be vaccinated due to extreme conditions. Many others have called because they have not been able to spend time with their families and loved ones, and others have called because they have lost their jobs due to the multitude of COVID-related mandates and restrictions.

Canadians need unity, not division. Overcoming the crises and unprecedented challenges Canadians face today should start with the members of the House embracing the mantles of leadership, setting aside partisan interests and embracing national interests on behalf of Canadians. United we can learn from our past. United we can adapt to overcome the realities of COVID-19. United we can start reclaiming our economy, help Canadians get back to work and start paying off the national debt. United we can start to restore connections and mental health eroded by two years of restrictions and isolation. United we can rebuild the confidence of Canadians in their Parliament and their country. United we can build a better Canada.

• (1350)

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Natural Resources and to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, today I have heard a lot of conversation, particularly from the opposing side, about divisiveness and how we need to create greater unity across our country. In seeking that greater unity, how much has the member been speaking to people and what does he plan to do to help reach out to those people who may disagree with his perspectives? What will he say to reach out to the truckers who are unable to cross the border because of the blockades? They were unable to do their work because of those blockades by people who were illegally blocking our borders.

In seeking to overcome this divisiveness, what is he doing to reach out to those people who disagree with him?

Mr. Mel Arnold: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for asking me what I have been doing to reach out to people who disagree with me. I listen to them. I hear their phone messages. I receive their emails. There have been thousands of them over the past few days and weeks, unprecedented numbers. I read their emails. I listen to their messages and phone them back when time permits. That is unlike the Prime Minister who calls them misogynistic, racist and ignores their pleas to be listened to. That is what I am doing versus what the Prime Minister has done.

• (1355)

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Qujannamiik, Uqaqtittiji.*

I agree that we need to see a way out of the pandemic. I agree that we are in need of hope. Inuit, Métis and first nations were given hope by the former prime minister, Stephen Harper, when he gave an apology to former students of residential schools in 2008. That same government, the Conservatives, made cuts to important initiatives like the Aboriginal Healing Foundation.

Is this the same hope the Conservatives are aspiring to give to Canadians?

Mr. Mel Arnold: Madam Speaker, the indigenous connections that I have made since being elected in 2015 continue to build. We have built relationships and have a better understanding of the cultures. That is something I will strive to continue to build as I continue as a member of Parliament and I will continue to push that among the members I serve with here and all members on all sides of the House, so we can build those relationships with our indigenous people in Canada.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I have just a short reminder that it is quite offensive to refer to indigenous people in this country and whose territory we live on as “our” indigenous people.

The member referenced a number of emergencies where the Emergencies Act was not invoked. I was here in Parliament on October 14, 2014. There was a horrific event. It was a time when we actually closed Parliament for the afternoon, but not because there was an ongoing threat but because people were traumatized and needed to go home. The reality of that was there was no ongoing threat. It was over that day. It would be the same with 9/11. There was no attack on Canadian soil. There was no thought of an attack

Statutory Order

on Canadian soil. There was no threat to the security of Canada. A number of members of his caucus have made this point.

Does he not agree that it would be better not to put red herrings into this debate so we can talk about what is really happening now?

Mr. Mel Arnold: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the correction from the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands. I wrongly inserted the word “our” in my comment and I apologize for that.

I talked in my speech about the motion put forward on our opposition day a week and a half ago. It was voted down by members opposite. It would have seen hope for Canadians to move forward, a plan and some sort of timeline to get past the restrictions and mandates that we are seeing continue, and the continued restrictions now that are being put in place on people's bank accounts through the Emergencies Act.

This is a point where we all need to come together and work collectively as 338 parliamentarians to find solutions that Canadians need.

[Translation]

Mr. Francis Drouin (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Vancouver Granville.

It is not an honour for me to speak to this motion, today. I want to say that I do not hate the members of the Conservative Party, the Bloc Québécois, the NDP or the Green Party; I do not hate people who do not share my political agenda; I do not hate people who are unvaccinated.

In fact, I have some friends who are not vaccinated. We have had good, respectful discussions. Sometimes, I made some good points, and sometimes they made some good points. We still like each other and we are still friends, to this day, because we have discussed things respectfully. I have no problem talking to people who do not share my views, as long as those discussions are based on facts.

I support the right to protest. However, like any right or freedom, protests have limits.

Section 1 of the charter states:

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees the rights and freedoms set out in it subject only to such reasonable limits prescribed by law as can be demonstrably justified in a free and democratic society.

The charter recognizes that there are limits, and these limits must be reasonable. This leads me to ask the following questions.

Is it reasonable to protest on Parliament Hill? Is it reasonable to protest in the streets of a municipality for a day or two?

My answer to these two questions is “of course”.

Is it reasonable to protest for three weeks in the streets of a municipality, limiting the freedoms of those who live in this municipality?

Statutory Order

My answer to this question is “no”.

Is it reasonable to protest by blocking borders in areas of significant economic activity?

● (1400)

The economic impact is more than \$300 million a day.

That impact became apparent in my riding when one of our major employers phoned me and said that if this lasted four or five more days, he would have to take action and lay off more than 100 employees.

These border blockades are not reasonable. Weapons were discovered at the Coutts blockade, and that is not normal and certainly not reasonable.

I want to make it clear that there were reasonable people who came to protest. I spoke to truckers, farmers and parents who are frustrated because government told them to get vaccinated and there would be no more lockdowns. Unfortunately, there were lockdowns again in January.

I want to tell these people that I hear them and, of course, that I do not support indefinite lockdowns.

[English]

Having said that, I did not support or give any legitimacy to this protest in Ottawa because I knew who the organizers were right from the get-go. Yes, the protests did evolve, but the organizers were always the same. I know many who attended were not aware of these people's views.

In a democratic society, it is not normal for leaders of a protest to want to overthrow a government without any mandate from the people who elect us. In this chamber, opposition parties are free to present a non-confidence motion to the government if they have lost confidence in the government's ability to govern. They can do so without any fears from cabinet, the military or the police, something not all opposition parties in other countries get to cherish.

I support the motion for confirmation of a declaration of emergency. I believe the criteria have been met. Protesting to the extent of having a major economic impact at our borders is an emergency. Canada is a G7 country. An unstable border is bad for investment. Just this week, protesters again tried to occupy the Ambassador Bridge in Windsor. That is not normal. Supply chains were already fragile, but were being threatened by these blockades. Foreign cryptocurrency being used to finance these types of activities is not normal and not covered under any act at the moment. In fact, early analysis demonstrated that the majority of that funding came from outside of Canada.

The rule of law must always be upheld in Canada. We cannot enjoy any of our rights and freedoms if we do not have law and order.

I want to make it clear that this public order emergency is not about calling the army on civilians in Canada. I received many phone calls at my office about this. Of course I would oppose that if it were the case. In Ottawa, the tools that were given under the act were used by the police without any military presence. It was never about that. It was always about making sure law and order is re-

stored in Canada, but rather than condemning misinformation, some used it for their own political advantage.

I am concerned about the influence of misinformation that plays into our country and into people's lives in Canada. It is not normal for Canadians to be screaming or physically assaulting members of the media in a democratic society. The charter clearly outlines freedom of expression and guarantees freedom of the press. We must do everything to fight misinformation. It is incumbent on all of us, even when we do not like what journalists report or write about us, to support that freedom. Canada can only remain a true democratic democracy if the media is able to question and criticize governments and political leaders without fear of being assaulted by citizens.

I have had lots of conversations over the past few months with many who disagree with my view on vaccines. Many thought that the Prime Minister and political leaders are undergoing an international criminal law trial, and I worry about them as they are swimming in a bath of misinformation. I do not know how to help them. I have had many conversations with them and have tried to be rational, but they believe what they believe and I know that some in Ottawa also believe those same measures. However, at the end of the day, law and order must always be restored in Canada if we want to enjoy those freedoms.

I support this motion. As I have just said, law and order must be restored and without law and order, none of us can enjoy our rights and freedoms.

● (1405)

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoilou, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I liked the tone of the speech given by the member, my former colleague on the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates, with whom I have had the opportunity to share many thoughts.

Nevertheless, I will ask him the same question I asked my other colleague earlier. Where and how do these emergency measures give police rights and powers that they did not already have?

Before these emergency measures were invoked, were police forces from different municipalities not allowed to work together?

Could police officers not issue fines?

Could police officers not enforce court orders?

How do these emergency measures give the police new powers?

What are the new powers?

Mr. Francis Drouin: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague.

The purpose of this conversation, this debate, is not to target anyone or point fingers at anyone. As parliamentarians, we all have a duty to lead by example. I have to say that what I have seen so far, from all parties, is unacceptable.

In response to the member's question, I would point out that I mentioned the issue of outside financing in my speech. This power cannot be granted under the current legislation. The police chief of the City of Ottawa mentioned that he had used the powers that he had obtained.

I am a member from Ontario, and the Premier of Ontario supports our decision to have declared an emergency. Personally, I will side with the Premier of Ontario.

[English]

Mr. Stephen Ellis (Cumberland—Colchester, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to listen to the members opposite talking about things such as law and order and the seriousness of the situation.

I wonder if the member opposite could enlighten all of us in this House on the vast seriousness of the many people who were charged with treason, seditious conspiracy, seditious intent and riot, or were they perhaps charged with other things? Some, as we do know, were sent on their way after being led out the city.

I guess the other part about law and order is related specifically to not having a warrant to freeze people's bank accounts. Is that really what the member opposite thinks is law and order?

● (1410)

Mr. Francis Drouin: Mr. Speaker, I will just remind the hon. member that 73 bank accounts have been frozen to this date. There were thousands of protesters on Parliament Hill and in the streets of Ottawa who never saw their bank accounts frozen.

In terms of prosecution, I will not make a comment. I will remind the hon. member that some people were charged in the Vancouver riot five years after it took place, so obviously we have to let the police do their job. I will not comment on that, as it is not my place.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, given the parliamentary secretary's role in agriculture and agri-food, he would know the extraordinary importance of ensuring that our supply chain is maintained across that border. My colleague from Windsor West spoke this morning about the incredible impact that this blockade was having on his riding, which of course has a border crossing within it. He called for the government to put forward a safe border task force.

Is that something the hon. parliamentary secretary can support?

Mr. Francis Drouin: Mr. Speaker, I would support any measures that look at how to reinforce our border.

It was unthinkable in Canada that certain people would block the trade that happens between the U.S. and Canada, and not only with the U.S. but also with Mexico, as their goods also travel through there. For the first time, our supply chains were actually being threatened. When Ford and Toyota have to lay off people temporarily because they cannot operate, that is an issue. When food companies say they are not able either to send food down south or get food up here, that is an issue, and it actually threatens the security of Canadians.

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, like my colleague, I rise to speak in a moment when we

are called on to do what is right, to choose to defend our democracy and the fabric of our country.

I am the child of immigrants who were part of freedom movements that saw the overthrow of oppressive colonialism in East Africa. Members of my family experienced the violence of a dictatorial xenophobic regime in Uganda that used its powers to harm its citizens. I know all too well what happens when a government overuses its powers.

My family came to Canada to seek safety, prosperity, peace and order. To this day, my family is grateful for the freedoms they have as Canadians, freedoms that they have had and continue to have through the pandemic, freedoms enshrined by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. When they became Canadians, they also accepted the responsibilities that come with citizenship, responsibilities that I have come to realize many of us who were born in this country may have forgotten.

Our citizenship is not just about rights but also about responsibilities. It is our responsibility to protect one another's safety, to stand up in the face of hatred, to make sacrifices for the greater good, sacrifices like the ones Canadians have made throughout the pandemic because they know that is how we take care of each other. It means sacrifices like those being made by health care workers in my riding of Vancouver Granville, who continue to fight hard to keep us safe and healthy in the face of anger and threats.

Let us talk about where we are today. The illegal blockades in Ottawa, in other cities and at our borders is not about Canadian truckers. The vast majority of Canadian truckers are out there doing their jobs, keeping the Canadian economy going. They are, and continue to be, unsung heroes, and we thank them. They are not trying to hold Canadians hostage or encouraging violence against government or costing Canada billions of dollars.

The invocation of the Emergencies Act is in direct response to those who are trying to harm Canadians and the Canadian economy and those who are financing these efforts. It is not a decision for any government to take lightly. It is an instrument of last resort, and one that is subject to and upholds the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Let me be clear: The right to peaceful, lawful protest is a right Canadians have, and it is central to our democracy. We hold this right dearly, and it is one that we defend at all costs. However, that is not what we have been dealing with over the last three weeks. From its first day, this occupation was illegal. It was allowed to go on for 21 days in the hope that it would come to an end. Occupiers were warned repeatedly. They chose to ignore every single request to leave by the federal government, by the province, by the City of Ottawa and by the citizens of Ottawa themselves.

Statutory Order

The members of this occupation and the blockades actively chose to weaponize their misguided notions of freedom against our collective national interest, the Canadian economy and indeed Canadians themselves. Choking off cities, blocking off supply chains, shutting down borders and interrupting trade with a deleterious impact on the Canadian economy are not forms of legal protest. The participants in these illegal blockades are not free to take the law into their own hands, which is what they tried to do.

Their actions have negatively impacted the rights of workers to earn a living. They have harmed businesses already hit hard by COVID, and they have obstructed people's right to freely cross the border. These acts are illegal.

That is why the Premier of Ontario, Doug Ford, asked for federal assistance last week. He said, "But we need to do what it takes to restore law and order in our country. Blocking billions of dollars of trade, putting hundreds of thousands of jobs on the line, and continuing to disrupt the lives of everyday Ontarians cannot continue."

That is why even Jason Kenney's Conservative government acknowledged, in reference to the Coutts blockade, that local and provincial efforts to clear the blockade had failed. In a letter, Ric McIver, Minister of Municipal Affairs, wrote, "In order to ensure a return of free movement of people, vehicles and goods and services...we are seeking federal assistance in removing obstructions from the highway." He added, "We are looking to the Government of Canada for assistance."

We cannot and must not make this a partisan issue, yet sadly, the opposition has chosen to do just that. It surprises me that the Conservative Party, the authors of this very act that we have invoked, the party that has claimed to be the party of law and order, that claims to be on the side of law enforcement, is opposed to restoring law and order. Instead, the Conservative Party has stood with, supported—

• (1415)

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola: Mr. Speaker, I am rising on a point of order. I do not always agree with what is being said in the House, but regardless of who is speaking, it is nice to be able to listen to and hear each other. However, when people are speaking to each other from across the chamber, it makes it hard to hear.

I would appreciate it if any colleagues who insist on speaking would go out to the lobby.

The Deputy Speaker: I thank the hon. member for her comments.

I completely agree that we are here to discuss and to be heard. That is the main reason we are here. There are a lot of opportunities to ask questions and make comments after the speeches are finished.

[English]

The hon. member for Vancouver Granville has the floor.

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed: Mr. Speaker, instead, members of the opposition have stood with, encouraged, supported and even

broken bread with the very people who have terrorized the citizens of Ottawa and threatened the lives of law enforcement officials.

The organizers of this movement have led blockades that have cost the Canadian economy billions of dollars. Many of the organizers are not interested in protecting the rights of Canadians; they are interested in overthrowing a democratically elected government. They have told us this repeatedly, so we must take them at their word. This is precisely why we need the Emergencies Act.

Last week Richard Fadden, the former national security adviser to Stephen Harper and the former director of CSIS, agreed that it was appropriate to invoke the Emergencies Act, particularly referencing the federal banking measures as a clear example of where no other jurisdiction could intervene. He said, "I think it's pretty clear that there have been instances where the provinces, whatever they have done, have not had the necessary constitutional authority to make a difference."

The invocation of the Emergencies Act was absolutely essential for many reasons, and it allowed the federal government, in partnership with other jurisdictions, to implement a multipronged approach to address this national crisis. Here are some examples.

First, right here in Ottawa, it allowed the City to bring in police forces from outside jurisdictions and authorize them to get to work immediately without the need to be deputized, a process that would have further delayed clearing the occupation. I was particularly proud to see members of the Vancouver Police Department joining their colleagues from across Canada to defend our democracy.

Second, the act allows us to stop the financing of these illegal blockades. Further, it allows the City of Ottawa to seize and sell vehicles used in the illegal blockades and use the proceeds to offset the millions of dollars of losses incurred by the City of Ottawa.

Third, it prohibits the use of certain property, including goods, to support blockades. These are some examples.

While Ottawa has been cleared, thanks to the hard work of our police forces, there is still work to be done to bring this crisis to a conclusion. Like all in the House, I want this act to come to an end quickly, but we all know that there are credible threats that ultra-right-wing extremist forces continue to organize and are redoubling their efforts to disrupt Canadian society, our economy and our freedoms.

An example is what happened in Coutts. Weapons were found, along with body armour, machetes and oversized magazines. There were confirmations that some of those sought to kill RCMP officers if they tried to take down the blockade.

Let us not kid ourselves. This is not about their dislike of a Liberal government or a vaccine mandate, nor is it about freedom. This is about a fundamental opposition to, and a repudiation of, our democratic system of government, which values the voice of every single Canadian, regardless of race, sexual orientation, gender, identity or religion.

The role of Her Majesty's loyal opposition is to hold the government to account, and it must do this, but it must also remain loyal to Canada and its laws, and indeed to its democracy. In that spirit, I ask all members of the House to reflect on what we want to say to the world. Are we a country where a small, violent minority should be able to disrupt government, attack law enforcement officials with impunity, shut down trade routes and take over our capital for weeks?

I will say to the House that these threats to our pluralistic democracy are real. The Canada that has been built by Liberals, Conservatives, New Democrats and others is at risk. This is not the time to side with the extremists, nor to grant legitimacy to those who seek to undermine our democracy or our values. This is the time for all of us to stand united in our defence of peace, order and good government.

• (1420)

Mrs. Anna Roberts (King—Vaughan, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I want to share a story with my colleague today.

I spoke to a few of my constituents of King—Vaughan. A lady by the name of Rose called me with concerns. She has friends who have contributed to the convoy because they believe in their efforts. Now they are afraid that they will not be able to make their mortgage payment, pay their bills or feed their families.

How can we assure our citizens that the government will not pursue that action?

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed: Mr. Speaker, it is important to know that the government has reassured and continues to reassure citizens of this country that law-abiding citizens will not be caught up in some kind of massive dragnet. That is not what these measures are about. In fact, as my hon. friend said earlier, I believe there are 73 bank accounts in total that have been shut down.

The member should rest assured that lawful, law-abiding citizens have nothing to worry about.

[Translation]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I was listening carefully to my colleague's speech, and I have two questions for him.

I did not hear him talk much about his position on the right to demonstrate. I would like him to clearly express whether he believes the right to demonstrate is important.

In addition, Wellington Street in Ottawa has been cleared by law enforcement agencies that coordinated and worked together.

Does the member think that the Emergencies Act is still necessary, considering the situation now?

The act may be useful, but is it absolutely necessary?

[English]

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed: Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague's question is an important one.

On the first point the member raised, the right to demonstrate peacefully and lawfully is enshrined in our Charter of Rights and Freedoms. That is something that we all hold dear and that we will

Statutory Order

always defend. This is not meant to obstruct in any way, shape or form peaceful, legal protest.

To the member's second point, in respect to Wellington Street now being clear, as I said in my speech, this is not just about what is happening in Ottawa. This is about making sure that local police forces have the support that they need. It is about making sure that those issues that need to be resolved are resolved so that we can then pull back the use of this act as quickly and as promptly as possible. Like the member opposite, I share her desire for us to bring this to an end as quickly as possible.

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, we have witnessed some deeply troubling events, and I want to ask the member about two of them.

I was deeply disturbed to see how journalists have been treated over the past few weeks. Reporters have experienced harassment, threats and intimidation. Occupiers repeatedly yelled "fake news", spit on journalists and swarmed reporters. It was also horrifying to see hate symbols flying in our nation's capital.

As convoy members initially set up in Ottawa, and as far right white supremacists organized and foreign money poured into this movement, which aimed to undermine our democracy, this government did nothing. Why did the government wait? Why did it not act earlier to address the financing of far right white supremacists' plans to threaten our democracy? What will it do to ensure journalists are able to do their jobs without fear of violence?

• (1425)

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed: Mr. Speaker, I was speaking to a friend of mine who is a journalist and who was harassed yesterday by some of these so-called protesters. For the first time in his life, he was actually afraid to do his job.

It is incumbent upon all in the House not to feed the fake news narrative. It is incumbent upon all in the House to protect and preserve the rights of journalists to do their jobs, regardless of whether or not we like what they are saying. We need a free press in this country, and we will always defend the free press.

In respect to financing, I was very proud to bring forward a motion at the public safety and national security committee to look into the funding and the work behind ideologically motivated right wing extremism. This is something that is essential for us to do. I have been working very closely with members of the New Democratic Party to do this. I look forward to continue collaborating with them to ensure that we know the sources of the funds behind these movements, so we know where the money is coming from to fund hate in this country. We will work on this together, and it is my hope that we will work on it as members of the House from all parties.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am sharing time with the member for Victoria.

Statutory Order

It is with a heavy heart that I speak to the House today. In what is becoming a phrase used far too often over the last two years, we find ourselves in yet another unprecedented situation. How did we get to the point when the Emergencies Act needed to be used? The fact that we are here debating this is indicative of the fact that all levels of governments have failed to uphold even the most basic laws.

As we know, law enforcement has been paralyzed for weeks. Until Friday, the police response in Ottawa has been to avoid towing or even ticketing vehicles out of fear of confrontation. Indigenous, Black and other people of colour from coast to coast to coast looked at this situation and rightfully asked how heavy-handed those same police forces would have been if they were to crack down on them for attempting a fraction of what they were witnessing. Videos of police forces violently engaging with tent cities in parks for the homeless are circulating, reminding us of how hard police forces criminalize poverty.

It is clear that we are now long past due seriously examining the state and culture of policing in this country, but it extends beyond that. We saw the City of Ottawa change its electronic signs on the highway to properly guide the way for occupiers to reach their destination. The Prime Minister adopted a do-nothing approach and was quick to hide behind jurisdiction when it suited him, yet it is impossible to deny that the Liberals used vaccination as a wedge issue in the election, throwing aside real leadership for partisan gain in the hopes of recapturing a majority.

Meanwhile, Conservative MPs shook hands, vocally supported and even did interviews in front of Canadian flags defaced with swastikas. In support of the occupiers, the Conservative member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke even referenced global “jet-setting resetters”, a clear dog whistle for conspiracy theorists who believe the World Economic Forum is forcing some sort of great reset on society.

The interim leader of the Conservatives, while she blames the Liberals for creating division, in her emails, noting her party's support for the occupation, said, “I understand the mood may shift soon...we need to turn this into the [Prime Minister's] problem.” The only declared candidate for leader of the Conservatives, the member for Carleton, has been cheering the occupiers on from the start. However, here they are in this place, refusing to acknowledge the role they have played throughout the pandemic, nurturing the ecosystem of anti-vaxxers and conspiracy theorists, blaming everyone else for creating division.

In locations across the country, most significantly in the downtown core of Ottawa, we have witnessed over the past three weeks an illegal occupation. Lives have been utterly upended. This illegal occupation shut down business operations in Ottawa's downtown core for weeks. People are too intimidated to leave their homes.

Threats and harassment have been made, some of this abuse has been hurled at health care workers and school children on school property. Retail workers have been assaulted, and a building had an attempted arson where the doors were taped shut. Another building had occupiers attempting to handcuff the doors closed.

Measurements of sound have found unsafe decibel levels for prolonged exposure for residents that could cause permanent hearing loss. Measurements of pollution have shown that trucks idling in the core for this long have had a significant impact on air quality, not to mention the impact on climate change. Large amounts of firearms have been confiscated in Coutts, yet the main organizers of this illegal occupation, with a long history of posting white supremacy rants about Anglo-Saxon replacement theory, like to call it a peaceful protest.

Let us be clear. Hurling racist insults, harassing outreach workers to take food meant for the homeless, entering businesses while refusing to follow public health guidelines and intimidating workers, brandishing symbols of hate like Confederate flags and swastikas, yelling at school children, assaulting journalists, deputizing themselves with unlawful authority to detain people, using international money or cryptocurrencies to help fund this illegal occupation, issuing a pseudo-legal document to overthrow a democratically elected government and to install a governing coalition with the Governor General and Senate, is not peaceful protest.

● (1430)

These are occupiers who, while they complained about their freedoms being infringed on, sat in makeshift hot tubs on Wellington Street. Meanwhile their children, who they brought to the illegal occupation, played in a bouncy castle, with constant loud horns blaring, which could cause damage to one's hearing. The irony is somehow entirely lost on them.

Our Conservative friends, whether it concerns the existence of systemic discrimination, a woman's right to choose, gay marriage, trans rights or a number of other issues that pertain to the freedoms and rights of people in this country, are more than willing to ignore charter rights when it does not align with the views of their base.

The Liberals are not much better. Remember 2015 and the last election under the first past the post? That was scrapped when the identified proportional representation system did not align with what the Prime Minister wanted.

What about the freedom of assembly? Liberals are no better than the Conservatives, tripping over themselves to trample on the rights of workers with back-to-work legislation.

The Conservatives claim they are there for the workers. Although there have been more than 4,800 complaints regarding unpaid wages filed by long-haul truckers to Employment and Social Development Canada in the last three years alone, the Conservatives have been completely silent on this injustice. Not only that, why are they not advocating for the workers at the Rideau mall, which has over 1,000 workers and has been closed for weeks as a result of this illegal occupation? Retail workers in downtown Ottawa have a \$0 paycheque at this point.

We are in an unprecedented situation where the Conservatives have essentially cheered on this illegal occupation, while the Liberals sat on their hands, allowing things to escalate unchecked. It never should have come to this. We need a series of thorough examinations on how every level of government let things get to this state.

Make no mistake, the NDP is taking the use of the Emergencies Act very seriously. We will not give a blank cheque to the Liberals. The government will have to stay within the established powers and ensure those extraordinary powers are not abused or we will withdraw our support.

Thus far, police forces have shown great restraint and care as they retake our streets. It is heartening to witness. I sincerely hope this approach becomes the norm and not the exception, especially for peaceful demonstrations where there are indigenous or racialized people.

We need this occupation to end. We are all tired of the impact of the pandemic. We want to return to some form of normalcy. We want to see a plan going forward so Canadians know what they can expect. The NDP called for this when our leader called for an emergency debate back on February 7. All Canadians deserve to be safe and free of harassment. The residents of downtown Ottawa need us to act to ensure their safety and freedoms are protected.

Let us stop the partisanship. Let us get to work, and let us bring back safety for all Canadians. What is equally important after all of this, is for us to look deeply into the situation so we can prevent this from ever happening again. I am thankful for the opportunity to have my voice heard today.

• (1435)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate many of the comments the member made about shutting down the nation's capital; blockades of international trade corridors in Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario; appeals for support coming from the Alberta government through the Ministry of Transport and the premier's office in Manitoba; and Doug Ford supporting it here in Ottawa.

We look at the Emergencies Act, what it has been able to accomplish in the last few days and the potential threat going forward. Could the member provide her thoughts as to why it was necessary for Ottawa to step up to the plate to ensure rule of law?

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Mr. Speaker, of course the situation had escalated. If the Prime Minister had intervened and not sat on his hands for as long as he did and pass the buck to jurisdictions, we might have been able to avert the situation. The fact is that the Prime Min-

ister did not act, and here we are in a situation where it is necessary to invoke the Emergencies Act.

We know what is going on, and we are seeing what is going on. The damage and issue of safety for individuals have been significant. There is no question about it. That is why the NDP is supporting this at this time. However, it is not a blank cheque, and we will ensure these powers are not abused. These powers are not meant for everyday legal protests. Let us be clear that the situation right now is an illegal occupation. Let us call it for—

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments, the hon. member for Calgary Shepard.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed by the member's answer to the question before, but also by the speech because it is a blank cheque that the member has given. This is not the NDP of Tommy Douglas, who said that the Emergencies Act is a sledgehammer on the peanut of what is going on right now.

If this is not a blank cheque, then when should these emergency powers end? What is the view of the NDP? What is the member's view? When should these powers be gotten rid of? That is the question I am hearing from my constituents. They are panicked. They want to know when the NDP will stop supporting these measures.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Actually, Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed with the Conservatives and their actions to date, in some cases cheering on the occupation. That is the reality that has escalated the situation.

The New Democrats have been clear right from the start that we will ensure that powers are not abused. What is happening right now and was happening in the last three weeks is an illegal occupation. Under what circumstances is it okay for children and seniors and people living in the city of Ottawa to be afraid to walk outside of their homes and to have situations where people are experiencing loud noises at all hours of the day? If the member thinks that this is somehow okay, he needs to check himself about what he is doing.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if my hon. colleague from Vancouver East would agree that while the Emergencies Act might be required here, and I have still not decided how I am going to vote, it would be far better if there were precision around such things as how banking regulations will be used and what kind of financial support is required before a government would intervene and freeze a bank account. That is still a wide-open question. I am sure there is an answer somewhere, but we have not had it.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Mr. Speaker, New Democrats have called for measures for the government to ensure, for example, the issue of money laundering and how it is being used and how it has impacted Canada for a long time now and the government has not acted. The member is right that we need to see accountability with these measures and we will continue to pursue that.

Statutory Order

I also want to note something for the Conservative friends who say that we do not need to take these actions. I would remind them that former Conservative MP Peter MacKay and Senator Vern White have also called for this action. They have indicated this very clearly, saying:

[W]hat 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. Leaving aside the stated manifesto of the organizers to overthrow the government—

• (1440)

The Deputy Speaker: I know the member for Nunavut has been trying to get in to ask a question as well. I have time for a quick question and answer here.

The hon. member for Nunavut.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Qujannamiik, Uqaqtittiji.*

Some have tried to hide the influence that foreign extremists had in the illegal blockade and what they might continue to have.

It is also great to start seeing Ottawans walking the streets in joy and with freedom from fear from the so-called freedom convoy. It is great to see them wearing their masks and enjoying the normally beautiful downtown core.

Can the member say whether it is more important to listen to public health officials whose interests are to protect the health of Canadians or to the extremist leadership who have attempted to overthrow a democratically elected government?

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for her advocacy for Canadians and particularly for people in her community.

There is no question that we need to listen to the science and respect health authorities and their advice to us. If we all do that, we can all get out of this and, yes, by then we should be able to end the mandate. I would ask people to please get vaccinated so we can see an end to the mandates.

Ms. Laurel Collins (Victoria, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am struck today by the importance of this moment and also by the immense responsibility that we hold as members of Parliament. As people across the country deal with the impacts of the global pandemic, we are tasked with creating the laws that will best help them deal with the challenges they face, keep them safe and healthy and provide the supports they need.

In this already unparalleled moment in our history, on top of everything else, we have witnessed the occupation of our nation's capital. We are now tasked in this debate with examining and deciding on the use, for the first time ever, of the Emergencies Act. This is not a moment any of us should take lightly.

As someone who came to this role through community activism, attending countless protests, standing in front of trucks filled with contaminated soil, delivering food to tree sitters, protecting fragile ecosystems and organizing climate demonstrations, protest, dissent and social movements are vital elements of our democracy. We need to ensure that non-violent civil disobedience remains a protected and valued part of our society.

We also need to ensure there is effective oversight of any additional powers given to government. The Emergencies Act itself has

provisions that require, after the emergency is over, an inquiry into the circumstances under which the declaration was issued and the measures taken. This should also include a public inquiry into the role of law enforcement in these occupations, the reports of officers supporting the occupiers and police refusing to enforce the law. It is clear there needs to be a sober examination of policing in Canada. The difference between how occupiers were treated by police versus how indigenous and racialized people have been treated is stark. This disparity is unjust and also undermines the trust of Canadians in law enforcement.

I have been contacted by many people who are concerned about the use of the Emergencies Act. Many are concerned that we should not set a precedent of cracking down on protests. It is important to note that what we have seen over the past 24 days has not just been a protest. It has not been peaceful.

The core organizers of this occupation were very clear from the outset that their goal was to overthrow a democratically elected government. I have to admit that I laughed when I first read their aim. Like most Canadians, to me it sounded preposterous. They could not seriously think the Governor General and the Senate could just remove the Prime Minister or that it would be possible in Canada to hand over power to an unelected group of occupiers, but these organizers, many of whom are well-known far-right figures, who have espoused Islamophobic, anti-Semitic, anti-indigenous and other hateful views, published their goal to take down the government in a manifesto.

To quote Maya Anjelou, “When someone shows you who they are, believe them”. This illegal occupation raised millions of dollars, had significant foreign involvement and was explicit in its goal to undermine our democracy. We have also witnessed instances of organized militia-style activity, weapons seized, body armour with white supremacist insignia and thousands of rounds of ammunition. In January, as the convoy initially rolled across the country, there were supporters who went on TV to say they had guns and would stand up and bring them out. When people tell us who they are, we should believe them.

While all of this was happening, a number of Conservative MPs were welcoming the convoy to the city, handing out doughnuts, making excuses for the deplorable actions at memorials and encouraging the convoy participants to stay. The member for Carleton said that he was proud of the convoy and stands with it. Convoy participants occupied the city, making it unbearable for residents. They harassed journalists and health care workers. There were reports of attempted arson, bomb threats to hospitals and plans to block airports and railways. Our borders were shut down. Weapons were seized. There were attempted murder charges laid. The member for Carleton, who wants to be the prime minister of Canada, stands with them. When people tell us who they are, we should believe them.

If the Conservative members truly stand with truckers, they should stand with the 90% of truckers who are vaccinated and the truckers who have been profoundly negatively impacted by border blockades. They should listen to the Canadian Trucking Alliance, which put out a statement saying that it applauds the use of the Emergencies Act to help end the illegal blockades.

In those initial weeks, while Conservative MPs encouraged the occupiers, the Liberal government stood idly by. As the convoy rolled toward Ottawa, as the far-right rhetoric rose in the truck convoy, as foreign funding poured into a movement that aimed to undermine our democracy, the government did nothing. It should have never come to this.

• (1445)

The use of the Emergencies Act is an acknowledgement of a failure of leadership. The government has allowed things to escalate unchecked and could have addressed this crisis early on but failed to. After over two weeks of turmoil and chaos, the Ottawa Police Services Board chair stated, “Frankly, the response to this crisis so far has been ineffective.” She said that police have been “unable to adequately enforce our law and our residents continue to be terrorized.”

In this debate, we are being asked whether the Emergencies Act is necessary. It has been clear that for the past three weeks the municipality and a number of provinces were not able to maintain security in our nation's capital and at our borders. This is one of the key reasons why the situation meets the definition of a national emergency under section 3 of the act.

Once the Emergencies Act was enacted, the interim Ottawa police chief made it clear that without these additional powers, they would not have been able to make the progress that they have made. Over the past week, we finally saw police taking appropriate and measured steps to remove the occupiers.

The act allowed the RCMP to direct tow truck drivers to tow vehicles. In addition, without the Emergencies Act, the RCMP and financial institutions could not quickly freeze funds that were fundraised with the explicit intent to destabilize our elected government.

We know there has been significant foreign funding. When the convoy's GoFundMe site was shut down, they started using GiveSendGo, a Christian platform infamously known for being the platform used by many of the groups involved in the January 6 at-

Statutory Order

tack on the U.S. Capitol, and also for raising millions for the Proud Boys, a listed terrorist entity in Canada. A recent data leak identifying GiveSendGo's donors to the convoy campaign showed that over half of the donors were from the U.S. and less than a third of the donors were Canadian.

The Emergencies Act also gives the power to prohibit bringing children to unlawful assemblies. Many of us watched in horror as occupiers brought their children to block the border crossing. We heard reports of occupiers keeping their kids near the police line, using them as shields. As a parent, it is hard to wrap my head around the choice to bring children into such dangerous situations.

The powers granted by the Emergencies Act were needed as they did help secure our national capital. Yesterday, the occupation was still happening and there were still border closures happening in Surrey because of the convoy protest. Today, things are quieter. New Democrats have been clear that we are ready to withdraw our support at any time. If the situation is actually under control, then the government has to provide a compelling reason for why it still needs these emergency powers. If there is not one, then we have said all along that we will withdraw support.

We have heard again and again comparisons to the War Measures Act, but we know this is not the same law. It is not even close. Under the War Measures Act, there is no Constitution, no Bill of Rights, no provincial constitutions. The government would have the power to do anything it wants to intern citizens, to deport any citizen, to arrest any person. We can all agree that is unacceptable.

That is why Tommy Douglas and other New Democrats voted against it. The War Measures Act suspended the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It is why, in 1988, the act was repealed. The Emergencies Act, the act that replaced it, is subject to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It is subject to the Canadian Bill of Rights.

There is still a valid concern that the government could misuse the powers in the Emergencies Act. This is why New Democrats have been clear that if we vote in favour of the government's request, the government must stay within the established powers or we will withdraw support.

We will protect the right to protest. We must continue to hold dissent and non-violent civil disobedience as sacred, as integral parts of our democracy.

Statutory Order

I want to close my speech by speaking to the vast majority of Canadians who have been following public health orders, who banged pots to show support for health care workers, who have been helping out their neighbours, who have made great sacrifices in order to keep their loved ones, their families and their communities safe.

As mandates and restrictions begin to lift, they should know that it is because of their acts of solidarity and the fact that they got vaccinated, and the convoy participants, while they might not realize it, owe the majority of Canadians a great debt of gratitude. The vast majority of Canadians have not only saved lives, but they are also the reason we are going to get through this together.

• (1450)

Mr. Kody Blois (Kings—Hants, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Victoria was not wrong when she was talking about the gravity of what we are debating today. Ultimately, on future legal tests, jurists will look back to our words here on Hansard to help them understand why the precedent was set.

My rationale is not unlike hers, which is the national capital being occupied and the fact that individuals had talked about overthrowing a democratically elected government. It was not everyone, but certainly some of the core group that was involved. Then there was the economic harm that was associated with it, the fact that members have talked about re-establishing blockades, and the fact that there has been this level of foreign funding and a real focus on the disruption of critical infrastructure.

I support those limited enforcement tools. Of course, some Conservatives are trying to make parallels to Wet'suwet'en and some of the blockades we have seen. To me, that did not give the same level of rise, because there was not a threat to overthrow a democratic government; there was not the same level of foreign financing, and it was certainly clear that it could be addressed at the municipal and provincial levels.

Could the member give those who might look back on this time a legal precedent as to whether or not she would agree with those principles of why this is being established?

Ms. Laurel Collins: Mr. Speaker, I agree that in this case we are talking about people who were explicit in their intention to undermine our democracy. Over the past few weeks we have seen assaults, attempted arson, widespread harassment of homes and workplaces, promotion of hate and then also convoy members giving themselves false powers to detain people, deputizing themselves. Rather than denouncing those actions and finding ways to help Canadians who do not feel safe in their homes, Conservatives have been spending all their time defending and fuelling this. This is shameful, but it is also shameful that it took this long for the government to act.

Mr. Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC): Mr. Speaker, does the hon. member really believe that the trucker convoy is going to overthrow the federal government, and if so, how?

Ms. Laurel Collins: Mr. Speaker, it is deeply concerning when a group of people espouse white supremacist, hateful, Islamophobic rhetoric and explicitly publish a manifesto that declares their intention to undermine our democracy. They fundraised millions of dollars, the majority of that coming from donors from outside of our

country. It is deeply concerning. The fact that the member rises without that same concern is troubling.

• (1455)

[Translation]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech.

I was pleasantly surprised that she did not affirmatively state that she would be supporting the governing party's use of this law and that she set out conditions for supporting it.

I would like to know her opinion as a member of Parliament. Police have now removed the blockades at the border crossings. As of yesterday, Ottawa is practically free of protesters. That being the case, does she still believe that the act is useful, necessary or essential today?

[English]

Ms. Laurel Collins: Mr. Speaker, we have been clear from the outset. New Democrats believe that this is a national emergency, that it was absolutely warranted to invoke the Emergencies Act and that at any point, when it is no longer necessary or if the government overreaches, we will withdraw our support. It is really incumbent on the Liberal government to demonstrate clearly why these powers are still necessary.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her intervention and share her concern about extremism and the kind of heckling we have seen today, particularly from the official opposition, which is undermining it. It is particularly concerning when 45%, according to new reports, support this extremist convoy leadership.

I am wondering if my hon. colleague feels the same way I do, that it is unfortunate that we are here and the only reason we are here is the failure of all levels of government, including institutions such as the Ottawa Police Service, to actually deal with this matter.

Ms. Laurel Collins: Mr. Speaker, absolutely. I agree 100%. We have seen weapons seized: 14 firearms, sets of body armour, a machete and large quantities of ammunition, including high-capacity magazines. There are charges for conspiracy to commit murder. We are seeing white supremacy rear its ugly head. We knew it was there.

The government needs to take action in the future, after this emergency is over, to address the white supremacist rhetoric and groups that so clearly exist in our country.

[Translation]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion (Housing), Lib.): Mr. Speaker, before I start, I would first like to acknowledge that I am attending this sitting virtually from the traditional territory of the Kanienkehaka Mohawk people. I will be sharing my time with the member for Etobicoke North.

I too would like to thank all parliamentary employees, as well as the Parliamentary Protective Service, which always keeps us safe. It is thanks to them and their hard work that we are able to do our job today.

The first time I went to a protest, I sat in a carriage with my mother on the streets of Santiago. We lived in a country where peaceful protests were illegal and where the police were politically controlled by a dictatorship, which is a non-democratically elected government.

My family and I came to Canada as political refugees. As Patrick Lagacé so aptly said, “Real dictatorships do not mess around.” They do not let truckers camp out in the streets of their capital city, waving banners that openly insult the government. No, real dictatorships do not have as much respect for the rule of law. They do not have a charter of rights and freedoms that guarantees protections to all.

I am also hearing my colleagues talk about the tragic events of the October crisis in 1970, and I can understand that. I can understand that Quebecers are not comfortable, given the trauma they may have experienced in the past. I understand that invoking the Emergencies Act reawakened and reinforced this sentiment.

However, that context was very different from today's, and drawing parallels between the two laws is an undesirable shortcut. It politicizes a historical context that is different from the one we have today. Based on the calls I have received and the conversations I have had, especially with my constituents, people can differentiate the past from the present.

Our government invoked the Emergencies Act because the current situation warrants it. We saw what happened over the weekend. For 24 days now, blockades have been illegally disrupting Canadians' lives and have impacted our economy and public safety.

The trucks came to town to protest vaccine mandates, but the protest rapidly morphed into an occupation of the city by people who openly and officially stated that their goal was to overthrow the government. This protest was a total violation of the public order.

As someone from a family of left-wing socialist activists, am I happy that the Emergencies Act has been invoked? Definitely not. In the current context, however, it is the responsible choice. This legislation does not seek to remove the right to protest, which is essential in a democracy. It is a right that we need in order to defend all our other rights. Historically, protests have led to significant political and social changes.

Every international human rights instrument recognizes the right to peaceful protest and its importance to freedom of expression, and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is no exception. We have seen it before: a peaceful protest is the historic march involving half a million people who took to the streets of Montreal to protest climate change in 2019. It is the thousands of young people who stood up for students' rights in 2012.

What we are seeing in Ottawa is not a peaceful protest, but a coordinated occupation and obstruction, and acts and threats targeting the very foundation of our democracy. Tamara Lich is not a trucker.

Statutory Order

She was the secretary of the separatist Maverick Party and creator of the convoy's GoFundMe campaign. The speculation that the movement benefited from foreign funding donated with a view to destabilizing Canada has now been made public.

Jessica Davis, an author and former employee of the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada, said, “Is it possible that some of this money is coming in from overseas? I think that this is a very important hypothesis to explore.”

● (1500)

The right to protest cannot be used to occupy a city. The right to protest cannot be used to put a city under siege. The right to protest cannot be used to prevent people from going to work. The right to protest cannot be used to scare and harass residents and force them to remove their masks.

Obviously, we must protect the right to protest peacefully. However, we know that the situation is no longer peaceful and that many laws have been and continue to be broken.

In a democracy, we must take a stand against those who threaten and assault people and prevent them from living freely. At no time should the right to protest infringe on others' rights and freedoms. The freedom to protest also comes with its set of responsibilities.

The purpose of the Emergencies Act is not to infringe on Canadians' rights and freedoms—quite the contrary. The Act has a specific, limited and targeted scope. It allows the government to call in essential services, like tow trucks, and enables the RCMP to take quicker action to enforce compliance with local laws. These measures are targeted, temporary and proportional.

The specific measures in the Emergencies Act are subject to numerous checks and safeguards by Parliament. These measures must be consistent with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

We are all tired of this pandemic. We all want to get back to normal and be done with the health measures. The past two years have been difficult for everyone. Everyone feels that way.

Canadians stepped up and followed public health guidelines in order to keep their loved ones safe. I witnessed it in my own riding, where people were helping each other and proving how resilient they are. A crisis like the one we have been in for the past two years really highlights the solidarity between businesses and people.

The presence of trucks in the city, the occupation and the blockades have direct consequences for businesses. These are real consequences that are jeopardizing businesses, both big and small, as well as Canadians' livelihoods.

Statutory Order

We have been through two years of the pandemic, and Canadians do not need another test of their resilience. Everyone deserves to feel safe in their own home. Now is the time for us to fight for an end to this pandemic, to think about the recovery, about our future together, as Canadians, in a country that unequivocally condemns systemic discrimination, that works to end poverty and that fights to help our communities thrive. Now is not the time to sow division. Now is the time to come together and work with one another.

• (1505)

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the member, who is a parliamentary secretary, the following question: When will the implementation of the Emergencies Act end, since the protesters in Ottawa have been dispersed and the blockades at the border were removed before the act was even invoked? When will the special powers that the government is asking for end?

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for his question.

As he is well aware, the act that was invoked gives us a 30-day period during which it can be revoked. We hope to be able to revoke it as quickly as possible.

That said, this act is necessary because it will enable us to grant the powers and tools needed to restore order and security for the people of Ottawa, as well as for people anywhere else in the country, should that be necessary.

[English]

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this moment to commend you and the other speakers for presiding over this debate with impartiality and care. I know it has not always been easy, given what is at stake.

I would like to thank the member for Hochelaga for her remarks outlining the Emergencies Act and summarizing all the ways it may come into effect over these next 30 days. I want to pay particular attention to the ways FINTRAC and the tracking of dark money coming into the country could be extended beyond these Emergencies Act measures.

What does the hon. member believe her government can do, beyond the Emergencies Act, to ensure that we do not fall back into the same type of event where we have foreign monies flooding over our borders to fund illegal activities?

[Translation]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his very relevant question.

I believe that it is important to be aware that the act is subject to a process of parliamentary transparency and oversight. In addition, we must ensure compliance with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Obviously, understanding where the funding for the protests in Ottawa came from is crucial. Surely, it comes from beyond our borders. All of this will be done under the watchful eye of Parliament and in a way that respects people's rights. It will be done in order to obtain the answers that I believe Canadians deserve.

[English]

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to ask specifically about the safeguards available in the Emergencies Act. Could the member highlight some of the safeguards in place as we invoke the act?

[Translation]

Ms. Soraya Martinez Ferrada: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. As he knows full well, the Emergencies Act must comply with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We must also be transparent about everything that goes on in Parliament. Lastly, we will be able to revoke the act at any time we deem it is no longer needed.

• (1510)

[English]

Hon. Kirsty Duncan (Deputy House Leader of the Government, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, what I have always loved about this place, the people's House, is that it represents our great country of Canada. Each day we have the opportunity to listen to our colleagues and friends here in the House, who represent and serve their constituents from every corner of the country. This is the place where we come together to challenge and debate ideas by always putting Canadians first.

Canadians are hurting. It has been a long, hard two years. Families have lost loved ones and friends. Many had to say goodbye over Zoom, never getting to see their family, hold their hand or give them comfort. They have lost businesses, and health care and emergency professionals have been tirelessly fighting COVID-19 day in and day out for two years. Families, communities and Canadians have been fighting COVID-19 in their own way. The silent majority of Canadians understand that the past two years have been about a public health crisis. When Canadians are hurting, it is our job to work even harder to come together, to lose the rhetoric, to lower the temperature, especially during volatile times, and to find a better way forward for all of us, for our children and for our most vulnerable.

I think we can agree that our Constitution is founded on the values of peace, order and good government, and that people have the right to peaceful protest. I think we can also agree that the blockades have caused major damage to our economy. The blockade at the Ambassador Bridge alone has affected about \$390 million in trade each day. This bridge supports 30% of all trade by road between Canada and the United States, our most important trading partner. In Coutts, Alberta, about \$48 million in daily trade has been lost to the blockades. In Emerson, Manitoba, about \$73 million in daily trade has been lost to the blockades. These costs are real. They threaten businesses big and small, and they threaten the livelihoods of Canadian workers, just as everyone is working hard to recover from the economic damage caused by COVID-19.

I think we can agree that blocking trade routes, hurting the Canadian economy and preventing food and medicine from being delivered is not okay. Blocking life-saving ambulances, preventing cancer treatment appointments and the picking up of prescriptions, and forcing hospitals to take on extra security is not okay.

I think we can also agree emphatically that desecrating the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is not okay, and that none of us ever wants to see a Nazi swastika flown anywhere in Canada. However, this sacred tomb has been desecrated. It is a place of national remembrance, a place that must be respected at all times. Nazi swastikas have been flown here and around Parliament Hill. This is not peaceful protest. Rather, these are heinous and incendiary acts that must be condemned in the strongest possible terms.

The Nazi swastika symbolizes a regime that murdered six million Jews. It has an unimaginable and transgenerational impact on Holocaust survivors and on families that lost mothers, brothers, sisters, grandparents and loved ones. It is beyond disgusting and horrific that people would use symbols like the Nazi swastika, symbols that are like daggers, that are meant to hurt and meant to cause pain. In Germany, the public display of the Nazi swastika is punishable by jail time. It is our shared responsibility to remember those who suffered under the Nazi regime, to protect the truth, to confront those who seek to deny, to support research and documentation and to teach about the Holocaust so that education may prevent anti-Semitism and all forms of racism.

• (1515)

It is also our job to protect children, the most vulnerable of the vulnerable. On Friday, Ottawa police reported that protesters had put children between police operations and the unlawful protest site. No child should ever be put in harm's way, let alone in the middle of a demonstration where a police operation is unfolding.

Canadians do not want finger pointing. They do not want name-calling. They do not want blaming other levels of government. They want us to work together to put an end to this. Canadians understand that what was happening in Ottawa was no longer a lawful protest, but rather an illegal occupation. In fact, a national survey shows two-thirds of Canadians support the decision to invoke the Emergencies Act and believe that it is time to restore order and peace in Ottawa.

As elected officials, our first responsibility is to protect those we serve. How would we feel if what we have been witnessing in Ottawa were happening in other communities that we serve? How

would we feel if businesses, schools and vaccine clinics were closed? How would we feel if people were driving trucks around elementary schools and neighbourhoods, and swearing at and intimidating children? How would we feel if major arteries were blocked, access roads to airports were blocked or highly flammable materials were near campfires? How would we feel if public safety were threatened through deliberate acts of discrimination, displays of hate symbols, harassment, physical assault and vandalism?

On Friday, the gridlock in our capital city reached a sad climax when Ottawa police reported that protesters had assaulted officers and tried to remove their weapons. In response, city, provincial and federal law enforcement officers began an operation Friday morning to remove protesters along with their vehicles. One person was arrested after throwing a bicycle toward a police horse. By the end of yesterday, more than 170 were arrested and 53 vehicles were towed.

This unprecedented situation prompted the House to be shuttered Friday out of an abundance of caution, and it was agreed to by all political parties. Let us actually break that down a bit. While people talked about freedom and the importance of protecting freedom, on Friday, the freedom to speak in the House, the seat of our democracy, had to be suspended to protect the health and safety of everyone who works in the precinct.

All of us have heard from people in our communities with varying perspectives, but it is clear that the majority of Canadians want this to stop and that a majority support the Emergencies Act. The actions we have witnessed these past weeks go far beyond what we accept as free speech. The Nazi swastika and other hate symbols threaten democracy itself. Protests that embrace such symbols and that have connections outside our country threaten our democracy. How we choose to act in this chamber, what we choose to say and what we learn will really matter as we recover from COVID-19 and this illegal occupation.

My hope is that we will choose to make our flag a hopeful rallying point, with more and more people feeling they belong, they matter and they are included. We must choose to make our political dialogue peaceful and respectful and choose to think about how to regulate and prevent the spread of hate speech and other forms of misinformation. Canada's silent majority must be given a greater voice. After all, the silent majority is winning the war against the pandemic. Together, we must rebuild a better, brighter future for all.

Statutory Order

● (1520)

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I absolutely 100% agree, as do all members on this side of the House, that the swastika does represent hate and is certainly a repugnant, abhorrent symbol. However, on Wednesday, we witnessed what I would say was one of the worst incidents of an attack on a member in my six years in the House. We saw the Prime Minister attack a Jewish member of the House, the member for Thornhill, who is a descendant of Holocaust survivors. He suggested she was standing with those who were displaying the swastika. It was the Prime Minister who said this.

Will the member condemn the Prime Minister for that statement?

Hon. Kirsty Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague and friend for the question. He and I attended high school together.

This is an opportunity to remember the six million Jews who perished in the Holocaust, along with the Roma and Sinti, and countless other victims of its unprecedented horror. We can never forget the systemic extermination and genocide during the Nazi regime. Today, we must also recognize that the world is witnessing an alarming increase in anti-Semitism, Holocaust denial, xenophobia and hate.

We must pledge to always be vigilant, to stand against the Nazi swastika and other symbols of hate, and to uphold human rights and dignity for all. We must refute those who seek to distort facts and commit to educating new generations, upholding the truth, embracing equality and protecting the rights of the most vulnerable.

[Translation]

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech.

We heard her present a long list of isolated incidents.

Does my colleague think it is right for the government to invoke an act with such huge ramifications in order to deal with isolated incidents?

[English]

Hon. Kirsty Duncan: Mr. Speaker, children should be able to go to school and go to the doctor unimpeded, and families should be able to go to the hospital unimpeded. One Nazi swastika is too many.

For weeks, blockades have been illegally disrupting the lives of Canadians, harming our economy and endangering public safety, and it became clear that there were serious challenges to local law enforcement's ability to effectively enforce the law. The Emergencies Act supplements provincial and territorial authorities to address the blockades and occupation to keep Canadians safe, protect people's jobs and restore confidence in our institutions.

This debate is about keeping Canadians safe, protecting people's jobs and restoring faith in our institutions.

Ms. Lindsay Mathyssen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Mr. Speaker, in the House over the past several days, we have heard quite the debate about what kinds of things are going on outside of the House. Is it a protest? Is it a friendly protest? Is it an illegal oc-

cupation? I know where I stand on this, but I find that division extremely dangerous as well.

Could the member please explain to the House why she shares the opinion that downplaying what is going on as just a friendly protest is so dangerous?

Hon. Kirsty Duncan: Mr. Speaker, it is really important to understand that when we see a Nazi swastika, we cannot dismiss it as a few bad apples. One flag is too many.

Let me be clear that the measures we are discussing today are targeted, temporary and proportionate. They are subject to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, subject to democratic debate, which we are having now through this very weekend, and subject to a vote.

● (1525)

Mr. Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, earlier today, we heard a speech from the member for Carleton, who talked about everything to do with blockades but neglected to talk about the situation here in Ottawa. I thought it was a little bit disturbing that a leadership hopeful would take the opportunity to talk about everything to do with his campaign except for the issues that his own constituents in the Ottawa region face.

Can the member account for the disinterest and the lackadaisical approach that the member for Carleton has taken as it relates to the blockades and what is happening here in Ottawa?

Hon. Kirsty Duncan: Mr. Speaker, the reality is that Canadians are tired. They want the blockades to end and they want their lives and neighbourhoods back. Going forward, we must work to bring people together, choose to make our political dialogue peaceful and respectful, and choose to think about how to regulate and prevent the spread of hate speech and other forms of misinformation.

Mr. Dan Mazier (Dauphin—Swan River—Neepawa, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I believe the debate we are having on the Emergencies Act is the most important and significant debate Parliament will have in a generation. Canadians are watching what we do. I have never received more emails and phone calls from my constituents since I have been elected. The vote on such unprecedented powers should not be taken lightly by any member of the House. This is not just another vote on another bill. It is setting a precedent in the House of Commons the people of this nation will judge for generations to come. This is not a vote that will impact a few Canadians. It is a decision that will impact the lives of every single Canadian from coast to coast to coast.

I want to begin by discussing how we got here, before I tell the House why I believe the use of the Emergencies Act is not warranted in this situation. The Prime Minister is responsible for this mess. He pushed Canadians to the breaking point. He stripped them of their dignity. He deprived them of their livelihoods. He made absolutely no attempt to unite this country or heal divisions. He pitted friends against friends, neighbours against neighbours and kids against parents. While other world leaders encouraged and supported their citizens to get vaccinated, the Prime Minister pressured, insulted and demonized ours. Our Prime Minister is not a leader, and history will show that he is not fit to lead our nation.

When faced with a growing crisis, he made no attempt to resolve the problem, and now the Prime Minister is trying to cover up his own inaction with a dramatic political performance. I should remind members of the House that the Prime Minister was not confined to two options in addressing the state of affairs we face today. This was not a binary choice between choosing not to do anything and choosing to invoke the Emergencies Act. The Prime Minister has decided to go from zero to 100 without attempting to solve the problem.

Parliamentarians have been urging the Prime Minister to resolve the situation at hand. Last week, Conservatives put forward a reasonable solution to resolve it. We introduced a motion calling on the government to present a plan on when Canadians could regain control of their lives. Canadians saw a glimmer of hope, but the government voted against the plan for them. The Liberals could have de-escalated the situation, but they chose not to for their own political gain. The government never attempted to de-escalate the situation. We should not have ever gotten to this point.

The question we are debating today is not whether the blockades should come down. We should not tolerate blockades on any occasion. They are illegal and must be removed. I thank law enforcement for doing its job on that front. The question we are debating today is whether the Emergencies Act, an act that has never been used before in our nation's history, is an appropriate and justified response to the situation our nation is facing. When I read the criteria for implementing the Emergencies Act, it is clear that the extreme use of this government power is not only excessive for the situation at hand, but also an infringement on some of our very basic freedoms.

The House must ask itself what constitutes a national emergency to give the government such extreme and excessive powers. Section 2 of the Emergencies Act defines a national emergency as meeting one of two criteria. Does it “seriously endanger the lives, health or safety of Canadians”, and is it “of such proportions or nature as to exceed the capacity or authority of a province to deal with it”?

Let us examine section 2(a). Does the situation we are encountering exceed the capacity or authority of a province to deal with it? The answer is no. The provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia have all publicly opposed the Prime Minister's use of the Emergencies Act, and the illegal blockades at the Coutts border in Alberta, the Emerson border in Manitoba and the Ambassador Bridge in Ontario have all been resolved with the tools and resources available to those provinces.

Statutory Order

The Emergencies Act is supposed to be used for emergency situations that existing laws cannot address.

• (1530)

The government has failed to provide any evidence that we cannot end illegal blockades without the use of the Emergencies Act. There is a stark difference between inaction and not having the ability to act. Parliament has clearly heard that the government could have used existing legislation to address the situation, but failed to do so. Now the government faces court challenges from both the Canadian Civil Liberties Association and the Canadian Constitution Foundation for failing to meet the threshold defined in the act.

Let us examine section 2(b). Does this “seriously threaten the ability of the Government of Canada to preserve the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of Canada”? Does the situation we are encountering threaten the sovereignty of our nation? Again, the answer is no. Our sovereignty is not in question.

Do members of the House believe that semi trucks on Parliament Hill threaten our territorial integrity? The government has provided zero evidence to support such an extreme assumption, and now there are more questions than there are answers.

Suppose a grandmother donated \$20 to feed local truckers four weeks ago. Will she be treated as someone who funded a terrorism activity, and be barred from using her bank account? Suppose a Canadian walks down to the main street in their local community to peacefully voice their concerns with their government. Will they be arrested and criminally charged for peacefully protesting?

We have faced many crises in my lifetime: the Oka crisis, the aftermath of 9/11, the Parliament Hill shooting, deadly wildfires, historic floods, the pandemic and many blockades, just to name a few. Not once have such powers been needed to address these problems. Invoking such extreme measures without meeting the high threshold outlined in the act is setting a dangerous precedent of government overreach. Who are we as a nation if we normalize the use of emergency powers? I encourage all the members of the House not to dilute the magnitude of the decision on this vote.

To my NDP colleagues, who I hear plan to support the Prime Minister in this excessive power grab, I want to remind them of the words of their former leader, Tommy Douglas, who famously took a principled stand and opposed the War Measures Act in 1970. He stood in this same democratic chamber and stated:

The fact is, and this is very clear, that the government has panicked and is now putting on a dramatic performance to cover up its own ineptitude.

Statutory Order

Those words could not be truer today. This is nothing more than a dramatic performance to cover up the Liberals' own ineptitude. I also want to remind my NDP colleagues that disagreeing with the demonstrations and disagreeing with the Emergencies Act are not mutually exclusive. They can do both.

We have a decision to make. Will we stand up for the freedoms of Canadians, or will we hand over the unprecedented reins of power to a Prime Minister who has shown no respect for our democratic institutions? The Prime Minister thinks he is leaving behind a legacy, when he is really leaving behind a scar that will take years to heal.

I will be voting against the Emergencies Act, and I encourage every other member in the House to do the same as well.

• (1535)

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his acknowledgement of the illegality of the blockades. I know that he referenced the steps undertaken by the government. I am wondering if he had a chance to read the "Report to the Houses of Parliament: Emergencies Act Consultations". It is an eight-page report that was tabled. It outlines all of the measures undertaken by the government, including the Prime Minister and a number of ministers who were involved with this.

Could he comment on why he feels that this is inadequate? This does really outline the urgent manner in which this issue has been addressed throughout the government since the beginning.

Mr. Dan Mazier: Mr. Speaker, I guess the bottom line is that they are words on paper. I wonder what kind of relationship they have with those provinces. I wonder how many times the actual Prime Minister just happened to talk personally to all of the officials who were involved. Did they actually sit down and ask what they could do with the tools available?

When the trucks started showing up there, they had weeks of advance warning to say, "Here, we better get ready for something", but no. They waited. They waited three weeks to do something, and then they put on laws and put in acts that control everybody in Canada. It is just unacceptable.

Mr. John Brassard (Barrie—Innisfil, CPC): Mr. Speaker, over the course of the last couple of days, I know my office has been receiving literally thousands of emails. I suspect that colleagues across all parties are receiving the emails, particularly as they relate to the Emergencies Act and the concern that Canadians are now waking up to as they start to better understand just the expansive overreach of the state into their lives. I just wonder if the member can comment on that.

Mr. Dan Mazier: Mr. Speaker, overreach is something we have not talked about in the House. I got an email yesterday from a person who has been charged under this act, a family. The husband was out here protesting. They had their truck confiscated and taken away. The mom was at home. She had nothing to do with the protest, nothing like that at all. Meanwhile, she has a one-year-old baby she is looking after. She went to get some groceries and realized that their accounts had been seized. They are shut right down, no credit card, no bank account, nothing. Meanwhile, her husband was out here just doing his thing, having a protest.

An hon. member: How is that standing up for Canadians?

Mr. Dan Mazier: Mr. Speaker, I cannot imagine having that kind of thing happen, when someone has nothing to do with the organization at all.

[Translation]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech. I would like to ask him whether he believes the situation for which the government is taking emergency measures could be handled using the legislative tools that we already have, such as the Criminal Code or any other federal or provincial legislation in effect in Canada.

Should we not consider using other acts or legislative tools to manage the blockades and protests?

[English]

Mr. Dan Mazier: Mr. Speaker, I guess this is what I cannot understand. I am relatively new to this parliamentary position. There are acts. There are laws. Many of my colleagues have pointed out that, with the Criminal Code, they could have nipped this in the bud and kept it under control. If they were that worried about it, where was the plan? It is so typical of the current government and of the Prime Minister. The Liberals figure they are above the law or figure they do not have to be accountable to Canadians. It is just sad how we ended up in this situation.

Ms. Melissa Lantsman (Thornhill, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is dark days for our country. I am here before members, despondent, with some serious questions about the motion before us. History will look back on the debate today as a black mark on the leadership of the Prime Minister, of the government and of all those who lend their support to this gross overreach.

All members of the House have watched the lawlessness paralyzing Ottawa and the key border crossings across the country with great concern. Every single member of the House has done that no matter what people hear from those who have convinced themselves otherwise. However, never has the Emergencies Act been invoked. It has always been there but never used. In challenging times and in times of true crisis, it has always been there, but it was never used because it was viewed as a last resort and not a first resort. The motion before us today asks members to approve an act that gives the federal government enhanced powers.

As its questionable justification is being discussed in this House for the first time, Canadians are watching. Much of this debate has been mired in the hyperbole of members opposite tripping over one another to claim that any member of this House encouraged the lawlessness that they, themselves, stoked. The idea that any member of the House would support the vile elements of this protest is wrong and members of the House know it. There is no precedent for this. Instead, we are making a precedent. The points we make, the evidence we present and the tone we use will be judged by those who will look back on these dark days to ask, “How did we get here?”

Everyone has a right to peacefully protest any government policy. This is a fundamental freedom in our democracy. It protects the rights of individuals to express their views, even when those views are not shared by the elected government of the day. While these protests are a fundamental part of Canadian democracy, so too is the rule of law. The blockades that incapacitate our critical infrastructure, including our rail lines, our pipelines, our bridges and our urban downtown areas, are illegal. We cannot and should not arbitrarily decide to apply the rule of law to some situations and not others, like we are doing today, because that is not how we build precedent.

I do not think for a moment the threshold has been met to apply the Emergencies Act. This debate has failed to make that threshold known. There is no question that some in these protests and their views are alarming. They have been categorically denounced by every member of the House.

Let us be clear. Not everyone who has participated in these protests is a racist, a misogynist or a woman-hating terrorist trying to overthrow a government. Hearing members of the House suggest they are is the ugliest of politics, something Canadians have come to distrust and reject.

Some of those outside are frustrated by the government’s inability to manage a pandemic two years in without relying on tired talking points and ancient solutions that fail to hear the outcry of those disproportionately hurt by the government’s addiction to lockdowns, restrictions and mandates as the only policy response.

We hear the other side talking about the economic activity jeopardized by these blockades as the primary reason for the invocation of the Emergencies Act. While I will never disagree that our economy is fundamental to the function of our nation, I will remind these very members that for two years few of them raised questions about the economic activity in this country lost due to the heavy-handed COVID restrictions and mandates that have come to be the cornerstone of the Canadian policy response.

There have been terrorist attacks, economic collapses, national protest movements and a pandemic. Every single one of these situations were dealt with using existing laws and existing democratic processes, and at times, when absolutely necessary, municipal and provincial emergency powers.

Let me remind Canadians that there have also been national protest movements that have occupied city streets and parks for months and blockaded critical infrastructure like railways where essential democratic activity, economic activity, had been disrupted or

stopped entirely. These have all been responded to within the context of existing laws, every single one of them.

Statutory Order

Not only is it not necessary to invoke the Emergencies Act to address them, but it is frustrating to watch members of the government take credit for things that were resolved outside of the powers of this act. Two of the most serious incidents, the blockading of the Ambassador Bridge and the RCMP arrests in Alberta, were both accomplished without the need to invoke the legislation. A national emergency has a high bar for the very reason that it must actually be a national emergency. The answer to lawlessness cannot and should not be a greater level of lawlessness.

● (1540)

The government is asking members of the House to suspend certain laws to deal with those breaking other laws, and we are being asked to undermine democratic principles to address some who wish to see our very democracy undermined. These powers allow the government to freeze Canadians’ assets with no recourse. The 76 bank accounts so far is 76 bank accounts too many. We have seen some very troubling scenes outside of this place over the last couple of days and hearing few mention it shows Canadians that this is still an insular talking club of those who show little regard for the people who do not share their views.

Less than one week ago, the Prime Minister, after 18 days of doing absolutely nothing about the situation in Ottawa, convened the cabinet on Sunday, told his caucus, informed premiers on Monday and, by press conference, later that day informed Canadians that the Emergencies Act was needed to do the very thing by last resort he failed to do by first resort.

It took days for the Prime Minister to address the House. There were no briefings, no intelligence, no committees struck and if there were evidence pointing to some serious issue of public safety, should members not have been told? If we were all under siege by terrorists waiting to breach the gate of Parliament Hill, would it not be the government’s responsibility to tell members of the House not to cross the street right through the protests every day?

Statutory Order

The story has changed more times than Canadians can keep up with today and the government's justification in the House was a calculated solution to its own political peril. The Prime Minister's vague claims that whatever he does with these currently unchecked powers will be targeted and time-limited simply is not backed up by the formal text or members of his own caucus. Nor did the text contain any detail on what he planned to do. All he was saying was "trust me". Forgive me, he has given Canadians absolutely no reason to trust him.

At the beginning of this pandemic, the government proposed giving itself unlimited spending powers for almost two years without oversight of Parliament. They said, "trust me". The government has given itself the power to freeze the assets and finances of people involved in political protests, people who disagree with the government's COVID policy, without the courts' oversight and with no recourse available to those targeted. We cannot treat this as a foregone conclusion because we have an NDP that cannot and will not stand up for protests, for scrutiny or have any courage on this one.

If we wanted to pretend that this was not about politics, the information would have been shared immediately. Otherwise, the only conclusion of any of this is that this is all politics.

The House must approach every decision with caution. The consequences for individuals are too great if we decide to approve the use of this act, and the precedent that will be set is too great to shrug off the legitimate questions and concerns that I think are valid in this discussion. We are setting a very dangerous precedent and it would be a shame if members of the House decide to invoke a never before used disproportional act, when there are very clearly other actions the government could have taken.

We should be cautious about normalizing the use of a blunt instrument in this circumstance. If we consider using the Emergencies Act every time there is a protest that lasts a certain number of days, we have much bigger problems in our democracy. The threshold has not been met and we cannot leave the decision to politics over the real scrutiny that is required. It will be a dark chapter in our history when members of the House choose political expediency over the rights of individuals.

I implore my colleagues, those with a voice, to vote against this motion, because I certainly will.

● (1545)

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have two questions. First of all, would the member acknowledge that the Emergencies Act brought in place by a Conservative government is subject to the charter? The charter still reigns supreme. Would she acknowledge that?

Second, how does she feel about the fact that the Conservative Party is now on the opposite side of this issue, not just with respect to where the government sits but also the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, the Ottawa police chief and the Conservative Premier of Ontario? All of these three have supported the government putting in place the Emergencies Act. How does she feel about those two things?

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: Mr. Speaker, I would remind the member that the government's primary responsibility is peace, order and good government. There is no peace, there is no order and there is certainly no government. This act is unnecessary. It is disproportionate. It violates individual rights. It intrudes on provincial jurisdiction and it creates a very dangerous precedent.

I would implore the member, and any other members showing trepidation on continuing what is abundantly clear to Canadians wondering how this could happen here, that the member opposite should know history is forever and so is his vote on this. He has not proven to the House that there is a justification for this act.

● (1550)

[Translation]

Ms. Nathalie Sinclair-Desgagné (Terrebonne, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech, in which she very eloquently explained all the reasons for which this legislation was not necessary.

Does my hon. colleague agree that, even if it was necessary to use the Emergencies Act in downtown Ottawa, the law could and should have been limited to this city instead of being enforced across Canada?

[English]

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: Mr. Speaker, I see where the hon. member is coming from. I laid out very clearly in my remarks that I do not think the threshold has been met. I do not think it has been met on where the act would apply or why the act should apply to begin with. There are a number of ways the government could have acted before using this. It has said to the House that this was not option one, two or three, and has not named what those options were. Instead, it just went to this without giving members of Parliament a justification. It still has not done that up to this moment.

Ms. Lori Idlout (Nunavut, NDP): *Qujannamiik, Uqaqtittiji.*

Since the Emergencies Act was declared last week and used this weekend, it has been with reluctance I have participated in this debate. I have done so with my heart and my mind open. I am deeply concerned with the threat to our democracy based on the demonstrations of anti-Semitism and hate we have seen within our immediate vicinity and across Canada.

Does the member agree the leaders identified as extremists have penetrated the minds of Canadians and this penetration continues to pose a threat to our democracy?

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: Mr. Speaker, there is not a single member of this House who has stood with any symbol of hate or who has said the hateful comments that have come out of the convoy have been okay. Instead of doubling down on the Prime Minister's disgusting comments last week, I will give the member the opportunity to show some courage and apologize for painting every member she does not agree with or and every member of the opposition with the same brush as an attempt to fuel hate and division in this conversation.

We are talking about the Emergencies Act, and there is no justification the government has presented for her to turn her back on her NDP voters and vote for this act.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Mr. Speaker, Andreas Park, who is a finance professor at the University of Toronto, commenting on the extraordinary financial powers to freeze people's bank accounts said, "What we're doing is we're taking people who have not been charged with a crime and we're threatening them with financial ruin. It strikes me as the mob rule."

They should be afraid of mob rules since the Minister of Justice indicated that political movements the Liberal government disapproves of should be worried. Would the member please comment on that extraordinary power?

Ms. Melissa Lantsman: Mr. Speaker, members of this House should be very concerned when a government can freeze the assets, effectively unbank and unperson a Canadian, without them having any recourse. One cannot possibly think it is okay in a democracy to freeze the assets of somebody whose opinion one does not agree with. This act goes too far and should have never been used.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Emergency Preparedness, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, thank you for recognizing me and giving me the opportunity to speak in this extraordinary debate that is taking place in this House.

It is the Sunday afternoon of the Family Day long weekend in Ontario, but here we are, as parliamentarians, debating a very important issue.

As members know, I represent the riding of Ottawa Centre. Parliament is located in the riding of Ottawa Centre. The occupation we all witnessed for over 20 days primarily took place in the riding of Ottawa Centre.

I am speaking today with a profound sense of sadness. The events we saw over the last 22 or 23 days were troubling. In particular, the attempt by police to end this illegal occupation and return my community back to its peaceful state was in fact quite sad. Over the last two days I have had a chance to speak to a lot of my constituents who have been aggrieved by this illegal occupation. I asked them how they were feeling. An overwhelming number of them are sad. They are definitely relieved, but they are also sad.

I spent some time wondering why I am feeling sad when we will hopefully have some sense of normalcy back and why the members of my community are feeling sad.

I do not think I have figured out all of the answers yet, as it is still quite raw, but I have a feeling, a sense as to what it is. I think the sadness stems from the fact that, although we live in the nation's capital, in one of the most democratic countries in the world, I have never seen the kind of illegal occupation we just saw in our community. We have never seen that many police officers descend on our community. That did not give us comfort. We are relieved they did their job and ended this occupation, but it did not give us any comfort. If anything, we feel sad it came to the point where this action was necessary to put an end to this illegal occupation and reclaim our streets and neighbourhoods so people can go back to their normal lives.

Statutory Order

I cannot overstate the profound impact this occupation has had on my community. In fact, I talked about that with the time I have been given on the floor of this House over the last three weeks and outlined to members what my community has gone through.

I should have said this at the outset. I am not trying to be partisan, because this debate is far more important than partisanship. I am here to speak on behalf of my community. I do not think members in this House will deny that some members live in my riding of Ottawa Centre. Many of them have personally confided in me about their own experiences, such as the horn honking in the middle of the night for weeks, the hurling of fireworks in a densely populated neighbourhood, and the harassment and intimidation of people on the street as they were trying to go from one place to another and live their normal lives.

• (1555)

I have heard from constituents, and I have read many of those emails in this House, such as the seniors who had not been able to go grocery shopping, because they were just too concerned. None of that is partisan. I am not suggesting that every single one of those people voted for me, probably not, but they are real people with real stories of what my community has gone through. It will take some time for my community to heal from this.

As I have said before, it is not like we have been immune to protests in this community. We recognize that we live in the nation's capital. We recognize that we live in downtown Ottawa where Parliament Hill is located. We have seen protests, festivals and all kinds of marches. We accept it and recognize that it is a very important expression of a free and democratic society. However, they have been lawful and peaceful. In fact, at times there were two or three protests at a time, and we did not know they were taking place. People are free to express themselves in a peaceful and lawful way.

We never imagined that we would come to this point with a protest that should have been peaceful, that should have been legitimate with grievances cited. In the end, there were quite a few different grievances cited by people, which would have been okay had those grievances been cited in a peaceful way. Whether the protesters disagreed with vaccines, disagreed with mandates, were tired of the pandemic, did not like the government or thought that certain things that are happening in society are not correct, whatever the case may be, people are free to express their point of view. However, in a democratic society, they are expected to do so in a way that does not rob other people's peace, but we saw that just evaporate in this particular operation. We saw three weekends of mayhem, intentional lawlessness and partying take place in the downtown core in a residential area where people felt unsafe. People felt threatened.

Statutory Order

Now that we have started the process of recovering our community, we are still sad that it came to this, that we had to resort to invoking the Emergencies Act to bring law and order back into our community. That is why I am supportive of the invocation of the Emergencies Act.

I am a lawyer by training and have served as the attorney general for the Province of Ontario. I have brought that lens, that skill set, to my analysis as to why it is legitimate to invoke the Emergencies Act. The legislation is extraordinary in nature, but the history of the legislation is very interesting, because it was crafted in a manner to ensure that people's charter rights are always protected. That has been the premise of the legislation.

Let us not forget that this legislation replaced the War Measures Act, which was crafted before the Charter of Rights and Freedoms came into our lives as part of our Constitution. In fact, it had powers of extraordinary measure that could take away people's charter rights.

● (1600)

The government at the time rightly decided that the War Measures Act would not sustain the charter. It needed to repeal that act and come up with new legislation that would be charter compliant. Hence, the Emergencies Act was created.

If we look back, we can see that there was a very thorough debate by our predecessors in this House. I know it has been said before, but is worth repeating: When the government invoked this act, it was in the spirit that the measures are very targeted in geographical scope; they are temporary in nature, remaining in force for only 30 days; and the response is proportional to the situation we are dealing with. All of that is to ensure that the charter is not violated. That is what we are looking at. That is what we are working with in order to ensure that the siege of Ottawa is stopped, as has been the case now for two days, and to ensure that we put an end to blockades at our vital trade links and our border crossings and prevent them from happening. Yesterday we saw an attempt in British Columbia with the blocking of the Pacific Highway. All of those considerations are extremely important in our deliberations here in this House.

I will go back to what I know best, which is Ottawa. I have been involved since day one in all the work that has gone on that led to the invocation of the Emergencies Act, given the fact that I represent the riding of Ottawa Centre. We have engaged from the very first day with our municipal government and the provincial government in Ontario through the work the federal government was doing, whether it meant providing resources by way of the RCMP or the OPP or by providing other municipal services. These resources to put an end to this illegal occupation came not just two days ago, but over time. We made sure that we had the legal authority or legislative mechanisms to take action.

Let us not forget that this situation got to the point where the City of Ottawa and the Province of Ontario had to declare states of emergency, yet despite all of that, the occupation continued. It was with the powers that came through the invocation of the Emergencies Act that law enforcement authorities were able to put an end to it. One of these powers was declaring a set geographic area as a no-go zone, which in Ottawa is called the red zone, so that no protests

or occupation could take place. Another power facilitated the transfer of police services from other jurisdictions to come here and enforce the law, which would otherwise have to be done by swearing in police officers to give them jurisdiction to operate in Ottawa, which takes time. Another power enabled the procuring of tow trucks so that the trucks blocking the roads in the downtown core could be towed, as we saw happen over the last 24 or 48 hours.

● (1605)

That is not to mention that when we learned of the sophisticated nature of this occupation, including the coordination aspects and the role of foreign money, we were able to give financial measures to FINTRAC to enable our banks to stop the flow of money that was fuelling this illegal occupation.

All these steps and measures were necessary to have a successful outcome, and we are still not out yet. I just got in to the House of Commons through I do not know how many checkpoints, because I am a member of Parliament. Imagine how sad I feel, as I was saying earlier, to see my downtown feel like a war zone. My beloved city and hometown has roadblocks all over, and I ask members, all of us, to close their eyes for a moment and imagine their communities in that state. I have stayed pretty calm all through this ordeal because I am a calm person by nature. I know that many people would not, because of the tragedy of it. I am saying this in the hope of persuading members to support this measure or at the least to demonstrate to members my reasons for supporting the invocation of the Emergencies Act.

I think my time is limited. I want to say this at the end, and I am going to speak as a fellow parliamentarian to all the members.

We are quite privileged to be the 338 people who have this incredible opportunity to serve not only our communities but our country, and I am confident when I say that every single one of us loves our country. Every single one of us is here for the same reason, which is to build Canada into an even better place than we found it. We may differ in the path we take to do it, and that is totally legitimate. I hope we do, because that exchange of ideas would result in a better path forward. That friction is a healthy friction in our democracy, but I think we are more united than we like to think, and I think it would serve us well if we remind Canadians of that unity as well.

I have been listening to a lot of this rhetoric that we are developing about how we are so divided. I disagree. We may have our disagreements, but as a country we are not divided. When I look at the number of people who have gotten themselves vaccinated, I see that it is over 80%. Have we ever seen Canadians agree that much on anything? Over 80% of Canadians being fully vaccinated tells us how united we are to get through this pandemic, which has been terrible and devastating to all of us, and I think that is the unease and the anxiety that we feel right now.

If I asked members right now to raise their hands if they love their country, to raise their hands if they love their province or their territory, to raise their hands if they love their city, their town, their village or their hamlet, to raise their hands if they love their community, to raise their hands if they love their family, we will see that we have more in common than divides us. Let us work together.

• (1610)

Mrs. Tracy Gray (Kelowna—Lake Country, CPC): Madam Speaker, I was in the House yesterday when that member yelled across the floor to a colleague of mine from B.C. in the official opposition, asking them something to the effect of how they would feel if something like this was happening in their community.

I just want to remind the member that last year a huge portion of B.C., my riding and neighbouring ridings in particular, had extensive fires, floods, mudslides, lives lost, houses burnt, substantial infrastructure destroyed and livelihoods destroyed. The member talked about having to go through some checkpoints to get to his office; in British Columbia, for many days and weeks, many members of Parliament could not get around their constituencies and could not even get to the airport to come to Ottawa. It just shows a disconnect with what is happening across the rest of the country.

The member is in the government and knows the serious crisis that we had. Just as a reflection, the act defines an emergency as a situation that “seriously endangers the lives, health or safety of Canadians”. Based on that, was this member involved last summer, due to the serious situations happening in British Columbia, and did he advocate invoking the Emergencies Act at that time, or is he only considering—

• (1615)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Madam Speaker, my heart ached as a Canadian when I saw communities in British Columbia going through the torturing heat or the flooding that I have seen just recently, or the parts of the country that experienced forest fires.

This is a big country, and what binds us, unites us and glues us together is that we care for each other, so I say that I will stand with the member opposite, shoulder to shoulder, if her community goes through a disaster. I will listen to her carefully, because she will be in a better position to share with the rest of us what her community has gone through, as I am sharing with her how my community feels, and I will find ways to work with her.

Mr. Matthew Green (Hamilton Centre, NDP): Madam Speaker, I believe the hon. member raised an incredibly important point of law around the protection of our rights and freedoms under our charter. It is necessary for him to clearly answer this point in order for us to fully understand the scale and scope of powers granted under the provisions of the proclamation.

I know the hon. member to be a learned lawyer who would have some knowledge of this incredibly important point of law as the former attorney general of Ontario. Will he please confirm and clearly state whether the rights afforded by the charter remain whole and intact; or is the government, through its declaration, attempting to surreptitiously rescue any potential charter breaches, violations and abuses of government authority through section 1 of the charter and thereby being compliant, as he has so far stated? The public and this House deserve to know.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Madam Speaker, the member is right. He and I had the opportunity to work on very important charter-related issues when we were banning the practice of carding in the province

Statutory Order

of Ontario. The member was a city councillor then, and he and I worked together on that particular aspect.

The essence of the Emergencies Act is to ensure that charter rights are protected. That is very much the intention and motivation behind it. It states so within the legislation itself. We also have to remember that the charter rights come with reasonable limits. There are reasonable limits that allow for charter rights. For example, as long as a protest is a peaceful and lawful expression of ideas, that is within the charter rights, but if it becomes not peaceful or becomes unlawful, then there is recourse available to ensure that the protest or, in this instance, an occupation almost four weeks long, a total siege, can be put to an end.

[Translation]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

Does he believe that Canada's current laws and the provinces' current resources and powers are so insufficient as to warrant federal intervention when a protest takes place or streets get blocked? If so, should we expect the Emergencies Act to be invoked every time there is a protest on Wellington Street in Ottawa?

[English]

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Madam Speaker, what we have to remember in this instance is that for over three weeks, we were not able to put an end to the occupation. It continued on. Different tactics were used, with the application of existing law being present, but our law enforcement agencies were not able to end this occupation.

Through the provision of powers, some of which I articulated, and their application, law enforcement was able to end the occupation. We heard that from our local interim police chief in Ottawa. These powers that were given to him through the Emergencies Act gave him sufficient tools to end the illegal occupation of downtown Ottawa.

• (1620)

[Translation]

Mr. René Arseneault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Ottawa Centre for his speech.

I certainly appreciated his analysis of the events based on his experience and his perspective as a lawyer and former attorney general of Ontario.

I would actually like to ask my colleague to tell us, based on that perspective, what test needs to be met to make the Emergencies Act necessary.

Statutory Order

[English]

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Madam Speaker, the test is in the legislation. There has to be a threat that is national in scope. We did not have the tools available that could deal with that.

This emergency is national in scope. It has impacted pretty much the entire country. There is not only the occupation of downtown Ottawa, but also the blockades that we saw in Windsor, in Manitoba at the Emerson crossing, in Coutts, Alberta and, most recently, in British Columbia. Certain tactics have been used to impede not only people's lives, like in the case of Ottawa, but also the commerce and economic viability of the country.

The tools that were available to use were not sufficient to put an end to it. This is not to mention the financial aspect, which is very necessary and very much part and parcel of this emergency declaration.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Ottawa Centre for some good points. I disagree with some of them, but he is debating in a strong parliamentary fashion.

I disagree with some of the things he said. As mentioned, under the Emergencies Act, the key test is whether or not existing laws in Canada can solve the problems we face. In the case of Ottawa, and I have been in and out of the city since the truckers' protest began, the actions we saw in the last couple of days were a reflection not so much of the fact that we needed the Emergencies Act, but that the Ottawa police had finally started to act. At the very beginning, we could have avoided some of the challenges that we have today if the Ottawa police had taken a different approach from the onset.

The member opposite is the former attorney general of Ontario. There have been many cases in Ontario where a large police presence was required, such as the G20 summit a number of years ago. It had a huge police presence and was able to contain a large crowd.

I still have not received enough evidence from the government to determine that no other existing laws could have effectively dealt with the current situation.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Madam Speaker, the member opposite knows that politicians cannot dictate to law enforcement how to apply the law. We have to rely on law enforcement to do the work.

We have heard from our interim police chief that the Emergencies Act allowed him to do the important work he has done, with the help of many other police services, including the RCMP and the OPP, to put an end to this illegal occupation here in Ottawa.

Ms. Iqra Khalid (Mississauga—Erin Mills, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Fredericton.

I have listened quite intently to the debate that has been ongoing on the question of the emergency measures act. While I am sometimes disappointed in the partisan and petty level of debate coming from the opposition benches, I think there are some things we can agree on as a House.

We can agree that all Canadians are protected by our Charter of Rights and Freedoms and that it is our job as MPs in this House to protect those rights, including the right to expression, to peaceful

assembly and to the safety and security of the person. We can agree that the majority of Canadians are frustrated and tired of this COVID-19 pandemic, which has claimed the lives of over 34,000 Canadians.

We can agree that our Prime Minister did not create COVID-19 or this global pandemic. He and his government created measures to combat it, with the objective of protecting Canadians' health and safety. We can agree that a convoy of protesters drove for days, uninhibited, to Ottawa to protest various provincial and some federal regulations. For at least three weeks, they blocked major streets and were allowed to set up tents, speak their minds and express their feelings.

We can agree that the organizers of this convoy-turned occupation officially called for the fall of this democratically elected government and its replacement by people of their own choosing. We can agree that crowdsourcing efforts raised millions of dollars for this occupation, and that over 50% of that funding came from foreign lands. We can agree that the Ambassador Bridge was blocked by these protesters for many days, causing hundreds of millions of dollars lost in trade per day, and that those losses still continue.

We can agree that lethal weapons were seized in Coutts, Alberta from protesters and over a dozen people were charged with conspiracy to commit murder. We can agree that children were used as shields in Ottawa and on the Ambassador Bridge. We also agree that Canada is a federation, with separation of powers outlined in our Constitution, and that those powers include policing powers, where provinces take leadership, including in Ontario, Alberta, Quebec, Manitoba, British Columbia and so forth.

I have received thousands of emails from across Canada, and not just from my own riding, from people who are confused and scared. Some were repeating misinformation about what is happening in our country. My job as a member of Parliament is to listen to all voices in my riding and balance the diverse ideas into a consensus that I then represent in this esteemed House. I will continue to try to clear up some of that misinformation that has been disseminated irresponsibly by some in this very place.

This convoy does not represent all truckers, and it has been condemned by all major trucking organizations across Canada. I have heard from truckers living in Mississauga—Erin Mills, and they have expressed to me their disgust with the actions we are seeing from certain participants in the convoy. They pleaded with me not to judge them for the protesters' actions, because they do not represent them or their industry.

Statutory Order

I do not believe that every person supporting these convoys has behaved in this way. For many, this was a way to express their frustration with the pandemic. The fact is that these incidents keep happening. They keep encroaching on the rights of Canadians, and it needs to stop. When it comes to this issue, the majority of Canadians do not care about a person's politics and they do not care about what colour a person's party is. This behaviour just cannot be defended and our citizens have demanded action.

When these convoys arrived in the GTA, the greater Toronto area, we saw that appropriate police action could minimize the harm and damage to local residents. We need to understand why Ottawa had so much trouble. I appreciate that the hard-working women and men of our police services and our federal government have been responding since day one with all the support we could provide under normal circumstances. To be honest, I am disappointed that the provincial and local leadership could not handle policing these demonstrations to ensure that Ottawa citizens were treated with respect and that our supply chains were secure.

• (1625)

After two weeks of what we saw here, the Premier of Ontario declared a state of emergency and called for greater tools from our federal government to take action, which could be administered only through the Emergencies Act. Instead of leaving Ontario out in the cold, our government is invoking this legislation, after careful consideration and after exhausting all other measures, to provide these greater tools to local authorities to address the situation.

We are taking action to keep Canadians safe, to protect people's jobs and to restore confidence in our institutions. If we look outside, we will see that the emergency orders we are debating right now are already helping local law enforcement restore safety and a sense of normalcy to the streets of Ottawa.

After weeks on end of working day and night, they now have the tools they need to enforce the law, thanks to the federal government. Citizens should be able to walk freely without the fear of being harassed. They have the right to safety and security. Small businesses in the downtown core should be able to open their doors to the public again without fearing for their safety and that of their staff. These organizers have had weeks to address the hate symbols and disturbing statements, weeks to root out the participants who are putting the citizens of Ottawa in danger, weeks to leave and go home. They refused at every turn, and that is what brought us to today.

The Prime Minister has said this over and over again and I will say it once more. These measures are temporary. To be clear, the Emergencies Act does not involve the military and will not be used to limit people's freedom of expression or freedom of speech.

In fact, the Emergencies Act requires that any steps taken be reasonable and proportionate to the situation. There is a strict time limit of 30 days, unless the House votes to extend, and the House of Commons has the power to revoke these measures at any time. It will not prevent people from peacefully protesting. It will certainly not infringe on individual rights, which will always be protected by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

• (1630)

There must also be a joint review by Parliament, including the Senate, to ensure that all requirements under the act were followed and justified. Residents in Erin Mills have told me that they would expect such a review to also scrutinize the response of provincial and municipal governments and why they needed to kick this issue up to the federal government.

We must maintain the appropriate balance between Canadians' rights and their freedoms, including the right to peacefully protest. At the same time, we must protect the safety and well-being of Canadians and of our nation's supply chains. I assure my constituents that I will be the first to defend them against government erosion of their rights. I sincerely do not believe that these powers are abusive, and I sincerely do believe they will help to restore peace and order and the rule of law in our Canada.

I recognize that we are all tired of the pandemic and we are all tired of the public health measures that have separated us from our loved ones for over two years. We want life to go back to a semblance of normalcy, and that is what we are all working towards every single day.

Our government has already been loosening certain restrictions at the federal level that pertain to travel, and will continue to do so at a pace that ensures that Canadians' health and safety are protected.

If we are to live with COVID-19, then we need to make COVID-19 livable for everyone, especially vulnerable residents for whom this virus is a death sentence.

I am encouraging all of us to take a step back and start connecting with our residents on the ground rather than with spectators on social media, to take the time to clear up the misconceptions and misinformation that are beginning to fester in our grassroots. It is time we really talked about the real issues, and I am looking forward to spending time this coming week connecting with Erin Mills and celebrating Black History Month the way we should.

I look forward to hearing from constituents about our ongoing budget, which is our plan forward out of the pandemic and out of this economic downturn.

• (1635)

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, the Emergencies Act allows the government powers without judicial oversight. That is what is going to happen. The Emergencies Act removes judicial oversight regarding the freezing of bank accounts.

Earlier today, members on the Liberal side mentioned 73 bank accounts have been frozen. Andreas Park, a finance professor at the University of Toronto, expressed alarm at the scope of the government's financial measures. He says, "It doesn't just raise eyeballs, it makes your head explode." He believes that Canadians have a "fundamental right to participate in the economy".

Statutory Order

What the member supports is that without judicial oversight, the government can order financial institutions to freeze bank accounts. Does she think that is right? How will charter rights be protected if there is no recourse? Will people have to go to their financial institution? Do they have to go to court?

There are also civil liabilities. The banks are protected when they do this, so if they do it in error to someone, how will a person have recourse during this so-called emergency the government is claiming?

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Madam Speaker, in the incident that has occurred over the past number of weeks and months, we saw how much foreign interference there was in the funding of the convoy and occupation. I think we need to be very strict with how we approach this to ensure that Canadians are protected, that our borders are protected and that we are making our own decisions as citizens.

As I mentioned in my speech, these measures have a very limited time frame. An inquiry will happen and a joint committee will sit. Canadians will have their rights protected through this.

[Translation]

Mrs. Julie Vignola (Beauport—Limoulu, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to stay on the topic of the financial measures.

I was reading the order and its requirements. It talks about financial monitoring and accounts getting frozen. All of that is already part of the existing Criminal Code, but what about cryptocurrency?

If that is the only element that is not in the Criminal Code, was it really worth proceeding with the Emergencies Act, instead of quickly passing a bill to include cryptocurrency as personal property that can be seized in the event of illegal transactions, as the member said?

[English]

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Madam Speaker, what we need to do is take swift action to ensure that we are protecting rules-based laws and the lives we live very peacefully here in Canada. Through this, we are also seeing some of the gaps that exist within our current FINTRAC laws, for example.

As we go through the process, it will be a great learning experience for all members of the House to see how we can strengthen our laws to ensure that we are protecting Canadians from fraud, protecting Canadians from crime and protecting Canadians from the national security issues that some of this has triggered.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, I think it is very much incumbent on the government to explain to Canadians on an ongoing basis the justification for the Emergencies Act. I agree that a situation exists that requires its invocation now, but in her mind, what conditions would need to exist to convince her that the Emergencies Act is no longer necessary? I think Canadians really need to have that kind of an explanation because they are quite concerned with it being invoked.

Ms. Iqra Khalid: Madam Speaker, the Emergencies Act that is being invoked now has a sunset clause of 30 days. Not only that, but members in the House can revoke it at any time. Those are the powers within the House. On a consensus basis and a majority basis, we can continue to debate and continue to keep ourselves apprised

of the fluid situation to ensure that everything we are doing is within the limits. In fact, as the Prime Minister has said, none of this applies to the whole country. All of the measures taken will be very targeted to the issues that we are facing currently, and as those issues are resolved, we will be bringing this issue back to the House.

● (1640)

Mrs. Jenica Atwin (Fredericton, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in the clash of words and social media clickbait we are witnessing around this conflict, I feel it necessary to remind the House and Canadians that we are taking part in this critical debate as people, speaking from our individual vantage points. It is the same for all who comment, who analyze, who interpret and who express their opinions. We are all just people.

We are here today to deal in facts and to debate the unprecedented use of a tool of government to deal with a crisis. The Emergencies Act authorizes the taking of special, temporary measures to ensure safety and security during national emergencies. With its inception, it created more limited and specific powers for the federal government to deal with security emergencies of five different types: national emergencies, public welfare emergencies, public order emergencies, international emergencies and war emergencies.

To demonstrate my support for deployment of the act, I am going to share facts from my vantage point, which, as I also hope to demonstrate, comes from a place of love and deep respect for this country.

I have formally trained in critical studies and education. I have had the privilege of studying the lenses of oppression in our society from a white gaze. I am going to recommend that all who identify as the same check that privilege when having this discussion. While we are talking about privilege, as a scholar of Canadian and international military history, we must also check our privilege as citizens in a democracy and in an ever-progressing judicial system designed to protect our individual freedoms. We represent less than 0.5% of the total world population and have the second-largest land mass. We are truly among the most privileged people in the world. We must never forget that.

I challenge Canadians and members of the House to question their echo chambers, to check themselves and their privilege and to try to see things from the other side, even if it is only to strengthen their arguments. At least that moves us past assumptions, which are the real scourge of our society. They are what really divide us.

Many Canadians are being misled. These Canadians do not need us to encourage them or keep them blissfully ignorant. Today, far too much of Canadian discourse is hateful, reactionary and dangerous, and the political rhetoric that ramps it up is reprehensible. We are indeed facing extremism in Canada, and it is incumbent on each of us to call it what it is.

As New Brunswick's commissioner on systemic racism said, continuing to pretend that what we have witnessed over the last three weeks is not a cover for a maturing anti-government, anti-pluralist, far-right extremism does nothing to combat the rising hate in this country. That extremism culminated in the occupation of our nation's capital and other key locations, in a politically motivated coup attempt, and it requires decisive action with measures that are targeted, temporary and proportionate.

This is what has brought us here today. I have heard many in the House ask this question during this debate: How did we get here? It has been clear from the outset, long before the initial convoy colonizers arrived in Ottawa, Windsor, Surrey or Coutts, that the intent has been to disrupt and indeed overthrow our government. This is not a simple question of public health mandates. This cannot be denied, and there is no integrity in calling these protests peaceful.

A protest cannot be deemed peaceful unless every citizen feels safe and protected while being exposed to it. That was certainly not the experience of hundreds of people across this country and the residents in Ottawa. People were being harassed and intimidated by illegal occupiers simply because they were wearing masks. Women were targeted, noise levels were unbearable, hotel lobbies and retail spaces were taken over, staff were terrorized and ultimately businesses were forced to close. The narrative that this was peaceful was false from the beginning.

It feels as though the Conservatives are celebrating these occupations, purposely inflaming the debate, intentionally escalating tensions while claiming the opposite. Sowing mistrust in government institutions and public health advice is causing further harm. I have had many conversations about vaccines specifically in my community. I encourage people to listen to their health care providers, not politicians and certainly not the loudest voices in an angry mob.

In Ottawa, over the last three weeks, residents lost their sense of safety. Countless testimonials describe vitriol and harassment. Our 2SLGBTQ+ community members, racialized community members and women had to limit their movement, shelter at home or, as a last resort, leave the city because they were not feeling safe. Terrorizing people for weeks is an act of violence, regardless of the perceived merits of the original intent.

Minimizing what is happening here and how we got here is unacceptable, as is minimizing other large-scale demonstrations and incidents of civil disobedience because of what they too were trying to say and how they felt the need to express it. There is a lot to be learned from what has transpired.

I have committed to the people of Fredericton that with each new issue, I ask for input. I ask constituents to engage to help me take the temperature, to listen, to learn and to then act after thoughtful, informed, evidence-based consideration.

• (1645)

I know I am not alone in the House in saying that I received thousands of emails, letters and calls and had many conversations on what has been playing out. Many are asking to be heard, and I am listening. While there are many who have legitimate questions and concerns that I do my best to address, what I am also hearing

are strings of false narratives and scapegoating. I see fear based on misinformation.

A lot of people need help right now. That is unequivocally clear based on the number of threats I have received, that my staff has had to endure and that anyone involved has been subjected to. I have been told that my family is also at risk, and that if I exercise my vote in a way some do not agree with, I should watch my back. There have been threats to our Prime Minister and all government members with bullets and nooses. It is enough.

That is how I know these are not peaceful protesters. It is how I know we have a very real and serious problem in Canada.

I have been mad, disrespected and wronged, and I have stood up. I have protested for justice for many causes, with the law on my side, within my rights and with a firm understanding of the charter. I also took things further when I felt it was not enough and felt the system had failed and had to be changed. I organized and ran for office, again with great privilege. It takes a lot of hard work and dedication, it takes sacrifices and it takes a toll, but it is the greatest honour. Thanks to political financing laws, we are a collection of everyday Canadians who have the trust and respect of our electors.

Here in Canada, to vote is a sacred right and a duty, and I serve to protect that right every day in the House. Those who disagree with me, based on the laws of this land and under our flag that has been so disrespected, do not get to shut down critical infrastructure, illegally disrupt the lives of Canadians and endanger public safety. We are not living in a dictatorship; we are not living in tyranny. The misleading, the agitating, the grifting, the harassment and the threats must all come to an end. It has become clear, after three weeks of coordinated, foreign-funded and right-wing white supremacy infiltration, that we have reached the threshold of emergency requiring the implementation of this act.

I have heard Conservative members of the House suggest that this is not necessary, that we have not met the threshold, that there are more options available and that our focus must be on de-escalation. On that last point alone, I agree. We absolutely must de-escalate, which is what we see unfolding before us in a renewed law enforcement operation, initiated only after engaging the Emergencies Act.

Statutory Order

In the words of the interim Ottawa Police chief, without the additional legislation, we could not have done what we did. De-escalation was stopping the weekend protest tourism from ramping up again in Ottawa. De-escalation was stopping the never-ending stream of supplies and funds from siege supporters laughing in the wings. Compromise has been on the table since the beginning, and the comparisons with how demonstrators of different stripes have been treated within mere hours of assembly suggest to me, as far as law enforcement and government go, that we have been more than tolerant, perhaps unjustifiably so. I would support a national inquiry into the original police response.

I was born and raised in a military town, with military roots and a deep respect for our Canadian Armed Forces. I was also raised to respect the men and women in police uniforms serving and protecting our communities. Having said this, after watching video of uniformed police saying it feels like war, with a service weapon on their hip, or high-fiving, smiling for selfies, using squad cars as carnival rides and turning a blind eye to bylaw and Criminal Code infractions, or when neighbours from my local military community threaten me directly, I know we have a very serious problem.

I am white. I can only imagine how some Canadians who have demonstrated in their lives against oppression must be feeling as they watched how white protesters were comfortably dealt with over the last weeks. We have been watching the entitlement of those who party in hot tubs, with their barbecues and fireworks, having street fires or stockpiling diesel and propane near the parliamentary precinct. They claim oppression, claim that we do not live in a free society and claim that there was no other recourse for their grievances to be heard. It is enough. This needs to stop, and that is what the government is committed to doing.

Mr. Michael Kram (Regina—Wascana, CPC): Madam Speaker, does the hon. member really think the trucker convoy is going to take over the federal government? If so, how?

Mrs. Jenica Atwin: Madam Speaker, there was a very clearly stated outcome in a widely circulated memorandum of understanding that specifically set out the terms and demands of this occupation. It was indeed to overthrow the government by having a special committee selected by Canada Unity, with the Governor General and the Senate. Yes, I do believe that was the stated intent.

• (1650)

[Translation]

Mr. Rhéal Fortin (Rivière-du-Nord, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech.

I understand that she believes that the situation is untenable, and I share that point of view. It is not normal to set up barbecues and occupy a street like that for three weeks.

However, I also understand that she believes that nothing could have been done, that the government did not have the means to remove the blockades. I gather from her response to my other colleague that her government would have crumbled and that the protesters could have taken over.

I would like to know whether my colleague, whose constituency is in New Brunswick, agrees with her province's premier. According to page 6 of the report that is appended to the proclamation we

are talking about, the Premier of New Brunswick commented that he does not believe the Emergencies Act is necessary in his province, stating that policing services have sufficient authority to enforce the law.

Am I to understand that my colleague—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I must give the member a chance to answer the question.

The hon. member for Fredericton.

Mrs. Jenica Atwin: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

[English]

It should come as no surprise, but I often disagree with my premier on many, many issues. Based on some of the things he has said over the last year in particular, it does not surprise me that he is putting forth some resistance to this measure. I am not shocked at all, and I disagree.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for raising the reality of hate, which all in the House over the past few days have denounced. That is one single point of consensus I have heard.

Could the member talk about how we as parliamentarians can deal with this going forward?

Mrs. Jenica Atwin: Madam Speaker, my background is in education. Education is the key. Anti-racism education is the key. We have to keep confronting these realities.

Based on the progressive nature of Canada over the last couple of years, it really should not shock any of us that such resistance has been met with this progression. We have to keep moving forward, having these conversations, calling out the hate when we see it and making sure it is unacceptable in our society.

We just have to believe in better. I still have hope, despite what we have seen over the past couple of weeks. I know that Canadians can do better and members of the House can do better as well.

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Fredericton for her thoughts and say on a personal level how deeply distressing it is to imagine that people in her own community are making her feel physically threatened based on how she may vote on the matter here in the House of Commons.

It seems to me that the convoy exposes white supremacists and racism in a well-organized, alt-right network that is fuelled by social media, Facebook and Russian sites, not just here, but also elsewhere. The problem is that the Emergencies Act can only last 30 days. We are uncovering a cesspool that will take years to clean up. How does the hon. member think we can cut short the Emergencies Act, which I think should be done very soon if we keep and, and not let go of what we are discovering?

Mrs. Jenica Atwin: Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague said it. How do we keep this going? We cannot forget. I mentioned in my speech the lessons that are to be learned from this and the whole pandemic experience. It really has exposed the deep crevices in our society, the inequality.

I know the member for Winnipeg Centre talked a lot about wealth inequality, particularly poverty. There are so many things we need to tackle, but the key is doing it together. That is the unity I want to see in the House.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs (Lakeland, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will split my time with the member for Saskatoon—Grasswood.

Today, I must oppose the Prime Minister's unjustified and draconian invocation of the Emergencies Act for the first time in Canada. Like so many watching from home in Lakeland, I am struggling with the events of the last two days. Seared in my mind are images of fellow Canadians literally and metaphorically trampled, pushed back, struck down, driven out and away by the might, scope and scale of the unrestrained power of the state.

Like many colleagues here, I have lived, worked and walked in the downtown Ottawa core for the past three weeks, and my truth is this: The most violence, obstruction and tension I have witnessed started on Friday. My constituents are asking what is going on here and how the heck did it all come to this?

Canadians have faced emergencies and threats; plane bombings; lengthy armed standoffs; threats of terrorist attacks; 9/11; massive riots; critical infrastructure and mine bombings; prolonged biker gang wars; year-long housing development occupations; mass shootings; churches deliberately burned to the ground over several months; blockades on rail lines, ports, bridges and highways, some which lasted for more than a month; flooding; droughts; wildfires; and even the possibility of foreign invasion. Canadians came through each of these tests—

• (1655)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I apologize for interrupting the hon. member, but can members bring the noise down? I think it may be outside the chamber, but it is becoming very noisy, and I can hardly hear the hon. member for Lakeland.

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Madam Speaker, Canadians came through each of these tests, all of them emergencies, many involving deaths, injuries, significant and expensive property damage and major economic impacts, without the legislation that is designed only for crises where there are no other options, which we debate with heavy hearts today. Canadians always unite to defend our safety and security without violating the rights and civil liberties so many of our relatives fought and died for, which define us as a country and are the bedrock of our peaceful, free democracy.

Statutory Order

Canada has been a beacon to the rest of the world for our respect of enshrined rights, like free expression and peaceful assembly, and for a commitment to protect and defend them in the face of threats and emergencies. We look back on times when that balance was tipped with shame and apologies. That beacon's light has dimmed during the last six years. Today, it is nearly extinguished by the actions of the Prime Minister. He is setting a dangerous and unwarranted precedent, evocative of the response of authoritarian regimes to dissent, protest and opposition.

The Prime Minister created this crisis from beginning to end. He called the marginalized 10% of Canadians who have chosen, for various and private reasons, to not be vaccinated “misogynist”, “racist”, “science deniers”. He said Canadians who travelled to Ottawa to demonstrate and ask for an end to government mandates and lockdowns are conspiracy theorists who hold unacceptable views. His actions imply that they are terrorists. Terrorism, by the way, must involve bombings, shootings and kidnappings, as legally defined, none of which have happened in Ottawa in the past three weeks. Of all these fellow Canadians, he actually bemoaned that they take up space and asked, “Do we tolerate these people?”

Let me say that I hope there is room for every Canadian to exist, to take up space, no matter their views on vaccines or any government policy, whether I agree with them or not. Whatever happened to respect, tolerance and diversity to resisting the tyranny of the majority? It is chilling to think a prime minister would wedge, divide and stigmatize his fellow Canadians for his personal partisan purposes, but so he has done. More than a few people from Lakeland have pointed out that it sure went from a fringe minority to an emergency in a hurry. It would almost be amusing if it weren't so grave.

Statutory Order

Let us remember what is going on here. Three years in, we have one of the highest vaccination rates in the world and untold government-caused harm to families, businesses, mental health, kids' learning progress, jobs, relationships, travel. After so much isolation, fear, stress, confusion and restrictions, for which there was inconsistent or no evidence of efficacy, the Liberal government refused to do what many developed countries and most provinces are doing already, which is to end the increasingly pointless mandates. Conservatives simply asked for a plan to do so two weeks ago, and the Liberals said no. The Prime Minister attacked and then refused to meet or hear from Canadians with whom he disagrees, and he has imposed his heavy-handed will despite the strong opposition of seven provinces.

The Emergencies Act was never designed nor intended to be used to limit the rights of Canadians who express opposition to government measures. I confess that I do have trouble seeing how parked trucks, bouncy castles, a big daily barbecue, ball hockey, Canadian flags, singing and donations for the homeless in front of Parliament meet these criteria. The Emergencies Act requires threats to the security, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Canada, including serious violence against persons or property and impediments to democracy and an "urgent, temporary and critical situation that seriously endangers the health and safety of Canadians that cannot be effectively dealt with by the provinces or territories".

Does this all add up? Well, the short answer is no. First, provincial governments and law enforcement has already used and can continue to use existing measures and tools to disperse protests and clear borders in B.C., Manitoba, Quebec, the Windsor-Detroit bridge in Ontario, and in Alberta, where a group with firearms were disavowed by demonstrators and the mayor confirmed was not connected with them. This was all done through negotiation with law enforcement and, frankly, with common Canadian decency, all before the Emergencies Act was invoked.

Second, we MPs have been coming right here to do our jobs in the literal seats of Canadian democracy every day for the last three weeks, except for the Friday after the Emergencies Act was imposed. Third, the recent clearing of protesters from Ottawa on charges such as mischief used existing laws, while even the lawyer who secured the injunction against honking, with which truckers complied, is against the Emergencies Act.

The Canadian Civil Liberties Association puts a fine point on it. It said:

This law creates a high and clear standard for good reason: [It] allows government to bypass ordinary democratic processes....

Governments regularly deal with difficult situations, and do so using powers granted to them by democratically elected representatives. Emergency legislation should not be normalized. It threatens our democracy and our civil liberties.

The CCLA has taken the government to court over it.

● (1700)

The impacts of the Emergencies Act are wide-ranging and severe, and violate fundamental Canadian values. Regulations stipulate that kids who have been hanging out happily, as if they were at a carnival, will not be allowed within 500 metres of their parents or guardians if they are involved in protests. The Liberals evidently

believe separating children from families or guardians is legitimate. Anyone who does not agree can get a \$5,000 fine or five years in prison while Canada is under the Emergencies Act. The same penalties will apply to anyone who participates directly or who brings aid, such as food or fuel.

As someone of Ojibway descent, I thought by now we had agreed in Canada that it is morally repugnant and wrong for the government to separate children from their parents or guardians unless the adults are harming them. How callous of the Liberals to be prepared to ensure those Canadians are deprived of food and fuel. Apparently, pets are targeted as well.

The Emergencies Act enables the freezing of the personal and business bank accounts of anyone directly or indirectly linked to the protests without a court order or due process. The rules will cover cryptocurrencies and crowdfunding platforms also. It is already happening to my constituents. One guy who never came to Ottawa or donated 25 bucks. Another woman's business account was shut down. She said that it is "devastating" and describes, "We can't pay our employees or our bills. How will people live? We had no part...sent no money.... Our bank does not know when it will be up and running again". So much for localized, targeted action.

Meanwhile, security and military experts actually say that there are no suspicious activities or credible threats identified with any of the protest-related financial transactions, and the only rationale the government has shown are assertions from the CBC. That is truly shocking.

The Emergencies Act is already violating rights to mobility, association and assembly. Big fences are already keeping Canadians away from here, a building that is theirs, grounds that are theirs. It is the people's place, the very place of all where they ought to be able to express their views on government policies and law. Gatherings around legislative buildings and national monuments, public assembly near critical infrastructure, official residences, government buildings and war monuments, other than lawful advocacy protests or dissent, much of which has now been criminalized retroactively, are banned.

Canadians cheering all of this on must really consider how they would view these measures if the cause was one they liked and if the government was one they did not. If their perspective changes, the unjust moral implications are blindingly clear.

Much has been said of the Conservatives and law and order. Let me explain my view. I believe in the rule of law and in freedom, so I am for individual rights, limited government, personal responsibility and social co-operation. I am against squashing dissent; authoritarian policies; tyranny, even if it is popular; and using police to achieve these ends.

The CCLA stated, "Protest is how people in a democracy express and share their political messages.... Many protests are disruptive. It is possible for a gathering to be both disruptive and also peaceful and nonviolent. Disruptive protest while often unlawful...can be the most effective way of raising awareness."

Through history, countless wrongs have been lawful and justified by governments and citizens. Basic rights and freedoms have been illegal. The side in favour of the invasive, unforgiving, unyielding power of the state and against the sovereignty and freedom of individuals over themselves and their lives is never right.

One day we will be judged for this and the Conservatives will be on the right side. I hope every MP will be as well.

• (1705)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in one word, wow. I think the member should be recruiting Max Bernier to run for the Conservative Party. We are seeing the extreme right. Talk about a speech. Would members say she supports the rule of law?

Listen to the comments that she put on the record. It is almost as if she is patting the truckers on the back saying the blockade was a wonderful thing and that we should be encouraging these things to take place. Does the member and her Conservative colleagues not realize the damage and hurt that was caused to the people who lost their jobs? She wants to see children put up as barriers. It is incredible.

Does she support the People's Party? I cannot believe the comments that are coming from the Conservative members. My question is this: Seriously, does she support the rule of law?

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Madam Speaker, that is precisely an example of the name-calling, of the extremist and inflammatory frothing at the mouth, of words being put into a person's mouth, of painting with one big broad brush and twisting the points a person

Statutory Order

has made, that has driven hundreds of thousands of Canadians to feel ignored, abandoned, insulted and attacked by elected representatives, by the Prime Minister and by the government. Frankly, the member should be ashamed of himself.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I do not always agree with members of the Liberal Party, but I am quite shocked with some of the comments we heard in the member's speech. It brought something to mind, and I looked it up. I read an article by Andrew Coyne yesterday in *The Globe and Mail*, in which he said, "Conservatives have of late devolved into political magpies, snatching up whatever shiny object crosses their path, no matter how incoherent, indefensible or unconservative, just so long as it enrages liberals."

There were threats of insurrection against our government and violence in the streets of our capital city that have made it unsafe for my employees to come to work. If that is not an emergency, what is? Is this not just another shiny thing for the Conservative Party to be picking at?

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: No, Madam Speaker. This is about a fundamental principle of the ability of citizens to express themselves and not have the government take extreme and unprecedented action, which is invasive in all parts of their lives, for which tools already exist. That is what we are debating here today with the Emergencies Act.

When it comes to threatening people's lives, assaulting or criminal activities, of course, I am sure that colleagues, if they are dealing with me in good faith in this House, know that I would be among the first to say we should throw the book at them, charge them, take them to jail and increase penalties. What we are debating is a government doing something that has never been done before, where the consequences are wide-ranging and severe on issues that provinces and law enforcement have shown repeatedly they can take care of and manage themselves.

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Madam Speaker, can my colleague from Lakeland, who seems to be so appalled by the Emergencies Act measures, explain to Canadians if the Critical Infrastructure Defence Act of Premier Kenney, which suppresses almost any demonstration with the highest penalties in Canada, appalls her as much?

Mrs. Shannon Stubbs: Madam Speaker, I am here on behalf of the people of Lakeland whose bank accounts have already been frozen, who are worried about the impacts on their ability to attend public events with their children, who are not sure if they are going to be targeted, shut down and pursued by a government with which they simply ideologically and politically disagree. What I am opposed to in the House of Commons is the Prime Minister's unprecedented, unnecessary and draconian invocation of the Emergencies Act, and that is what I will vote against.

Statutory Order

• (1710)

Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC): Madam Speaker, I was a young teenager when the War Measures Act in 1970 gripped the country for many days. I know I do not look that old, but I remember that, back in 1970. I remember watching the event on television, fearful for my country. Fifty-two years later, under a new act, 37 million Canadians in this country are more divided than ever. Our country is in the spotlight for all the wrong reasons.

In 1988—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I am sorry to interrupt.

[Translation]

Can I ask hon. members to avoid making noise while their colleagues are speaking?

The hon. member for Saskatoon—Grasswood.

[English]

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Madam Speaker, in 1988 under the Conservatives, Parliament debated for months the new Emergencies Act, and up until this week it was never used. The question on everyone's mind in the House is whether the current government should have invoked the Emergencies Act. We have asked the government for weeks what it was doing to defuse the convoy. Many MPs from the opposition side had dialogue with the protesters. In fact, I was one of them. I listened to a number of Saskatchewan drivers who made their way to the nation's capital. That is our job as members of Parliament, to listen to other views that, at times, we may not agree with. That is the tough part of this job, but we have to listen.

I found it surprising today that a number of parliamentary secretaries from the government side actually admitted that they, too, were on the street talking with their constituents. That is a shock, because the government never admitted that until today. While it is true that there were many different views being represented in this city, it is entirely unfair to categorize all protesters as fringe extremists. This was the Prime Minister's first reaction in the House. He has a pattern of saying divisive and derogatory things when he is faced with major issues that he is not equipped to handle.

We saw a prime example of this just last week when the Prime Minister hurled a very disgraceful insult at my friend and our colleague, the member for Thornhill, a granddaughter of a Holocaust survivor, accusing her of supporting a profoundly immoral ideology, the same evil ideology that claimed millions of innocent Jews during the Holocaust. He still today has not apologized. That is shameful for the leader of this country.

With regard to the current debate surrounding the Emergencies Act, I do not believe the Prime Minister has met the key thresholds outlined to invoke this act, but we have seen in the last 23 days or so that it lies at the feet of the Prime Minister and his cabinet. The government has totally mismanaged this situation. It could have ended, like the blockades at Coutts, Alberta; Emerson, Manitoba; Surrey, B.C.; and the Ambassador Bridge in Windsor, without the need for the Emergencies Act. All four or five of those incidents I

just spoke about actually did not need the Emergencies Act. A protest happened, and it was quietly done away with.

Why did the Prime Minister then go from zero to 100% without any action or even any dialogue? The key to conflict resolution is to work with people. We all know that. We try desperately on each side to work with people, but using derogatory and divisive language only fans the flames of disagreement, which we certainly saw in the last 23 days. We are all aware that there were some people protesting here in this city with abhorrent, racist views, and I will be crystal clear that I condemn this behaviour and all those views without any reservation.

Let us make no mistake. The events of the last month and the government's mishandling of them will go down in history as one of the darkest times in this country.

Lots has been said in the House about the foreign money coming into this country with the convoy. GoFundMe froze the funds and returned some to the donors, and then GiveSendGo's website was mysteriously hacked, revealing the names and email addresses of those who contributed to the protests. I can tell members that many Canadians, 48%, donated to this cause. We know Canadians coast to coast to coast have donated \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50 or more. In fact, in my province of Saskatchewan, over 1,300 people contributed to the convoy. Of those donations out of my province, 72% were under \$100, so we are talking about \$10, \$20, \$50 and so on.

• (1715)

I have talked with people who donated and who are now very worried that their bank accounts will be frozen. This is just a terrifying situation for many innocent people who have made modest donations to a cause they supported. The potential for this to severely damage their personal and even business finances is extremely distressing, and it should be for all Canadians. Canadians should not have to worry that their finances are in danger of ruin by the government because they supported this protest. Yes, I do understand that there are extreme cases where this becomes a factor, but in this situation, the government is being heavy-handed, punitive and trying to control by fear.

I have received dozens of emails on this matter. I am just going to give three examples, because I have received a big pile over the last three days. On Thursday, I received an email from a woman in my riding saying she donated to the convoy. She is now scared that her bank account will be frozen. The next day she went down to the bank and withdrew a sizable amount of money. Members should think about that. The next day, Friday morning, she is down at the bank saying she wants to withdraw most of her money.

A senior in my riding is most disturbed that the government is targeting individual bank accounts. There is another email saying that freezing Canadians' personal or business bank accounts without court order or consequence is totally unacceptable and should have Canadians very worried. I know I am. We all should be very concerned about this.

Another troubling aspect of invoking this act is that there are already tools at the disposal of law enforcement to deal with this unlawful protest. The Liberal justice minister claimed it was necessary to invoke the Emergencies Act in order to compel tow truck operators to remove illegally parked vehicles. However, paragraph 129(b) of the Criminal Code does give 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."

I and my Conservative colleagues oppose invoking the Emergencies Act. This is a clear case of government overreach. The act is supposed to be used for emergency situations that cannot be addressed through existing laws. The government has failed to explain why, precisely, this act needed to be invoked at this time. In fact, the following organizations have come out publicly against this Liberal overreach: the World Sikh Organization of Canada, the B.C. Civil Liberties Association, the Canadian Constitution Foundation. This is in addition to the opposition of seven provincial governments. As we know, governments in the different provinces all have the powers they need to deal with blockades and street protests.

This is a totally dangerous precedent that cannot be easily undone. The Conservative Party has spoken again and again in favour of dialogue and discussion. However, the Prime Minister has repeatedly refused. He has chosen instead to divide and insult Canadians. Canadians agree that law and order must be maintained, but the Emergencies Act, the successor of the War Measures Act, is not the way to do it.

I cannot, in good conscience, support giving unlimited and unchecked power to a Liberal Prime Minister who has repeatedly demonstrated lack of good judgment here in the House of Commons. My constituents have spoken loud and clear. They demand better leadership than we currently have in this country.

• (1720)

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have a great deal of respect for my friend opposite, and we have worked well together over the years.

I do want to give him some startling numbers. I know he cited some numbers. With respect to the fundraising, some 52% of the funds came from the U.S. and 1,100 of those names relate to the same donors who donated to the January 6 insurrection at Capitol Hill last year. Does it not worry him, the level of hatred that we have seen? It is not an isolated one or two or three people. These are a number of different people with a number of different symbols as well as expressions of hate.

Without others denouncing them, particularly the leadership denouncing this hatred, does it not worry him that we are going in the

wrong direction and the support of these blockades really sends the wrong signal in terms of law enforcement and in terms of having a safe country for all?

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Madam Speaker, it is interesting how the government gets around looking at bank accounts. I remember in 2015, Leadnow cost Joan Crockatt her MP seat in the city of Calgary. Thousands of dollars from Leadnow, from outside this country, went into the Calgary riding and cost Joan Crockatt her seat. Four years later, we won it back.

What about the Tides Foundation in this country? Can we look at those books? It has done irreparable damage in western Canada, with all of the money coming in from the United States and from throughout the world.

Those are two great examples to refute what the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice just mentioned about people in this country who are worried about this situation.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member cited a lot of people in his speech, but I wonder what he thinks about the comments from former Conservative MP Peter MacKay and Senator Vern White, who said:

...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. Leaving aside the stated manifesto of the organizers to overthrow the government, these protests are weakening our economy and disrupting the freedoms of law-abiding citizens.

As we have seen, many citizens, particularly in downtown Ottawa, were not able to leave their homes. They felt unsafe, they were harassed and they were shouted at.

What are the member's comments to those law-abiding citizens? Does he think that his former colleague, former MP Peter MacKay, and Senator Vern White are wrong?

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Madam Speaker, I wonder about the great Tommy Douglas. What would he think about her party here today? Tommy Douglas supported the 1970 War Measures Act.

What about Svend Robinson, from the member's province of B.C.? He tweeted out that he cannot believe what the NDP stands for today. Why is that? Because it stands for nothing. We know that. It does not stand for Canadians.

What about Erin Weir, the former Saskatchewan MP? By the way, we have no more NDP MPs in our province, and have not for two elections in a row. Why is that? It is because citizens of Saskatchewan have seen through that party.

Statutory Order

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, we have seen something called a “war room” in the Alberta government and a very expensive report that looked into all of the foundation money that ever went into Alberta. It did not find any evidence of anything. It was all reported. It was never hidden. As for Leadnow, as far as I know, all of its donors are Canadian. We have already put the rumours to bed.

If the member wants to find foreign-funded, large influence on energy policy in Alberta, he need look no further than the board of directors of the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, where 80% of them are controlled by foreign interests.

• (1725)

Mr. Kevin Waugh: Madam Speaker, I will say this, because I have watched quite a bit of the debate for the last two days. The member for Saanich—Gulf Islands has not made up her mind on this. I believe her. We are looking forward to seeing where her vote goes tomorrow night.

In western Canada, they are looking at every NDP and Green MP to see which way they vote tomorrow night, and they will not forget.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marilène Gill (Manicouagan, BQ): Madam Speaker, I would like to offer my most sincere and heartfelt thanks to all municipal and provincial police forces, to the officers of the Parliamentary Protective Service, and to RCMP officers.

I am thinking in particular of the Sûreté du Québec officers who were deployed to resolve the impasse, although we cannot yet say it is over. They acted in exemplary fashion at a time when the eyes of the whole world were riveted on Canada—for the wrong reasons, unfortunately.

I thank all these people for their dedication.

I forgot to mention that I will be splitting my time with the member for Salaberry—Suroît.

Speaking of looks, since I just mentioned how all eyes were on Canada, I have always admired the work of editorial cartoonists. The art of editorial cartoons has been part of political discourse since the invention of the printing press in the western world in the late 18th century and early 19th century. It is a counterpoint. An editorial cartoon sums up a political situation with a single, strikingly clear image; the picture tells the whole story. Such a cartoon captures the very essence of a person or event in a humorous way, although that humour can often be biting or cynical. Editorial cartoons are not necessarily designed to convey truth or fact in a single glance, but rather to give the reader pause. Editorial cartoons are meant to inspire necessary and meaningful reflection.

A shining example of the mastery of this informative visual art was published yesterday, around the same time, in the *Journal de Montréal* by cartoonist Ygreck. Of course, I cannot show members this cartoon without breaking the rules of the House, but I will describe it for them instead. Everyone will just have to use their imaginations. Describing something is just a different way of showing it. At the end of my speech, members will see that the things I have

said that gave them pause are actually strong arguments as to why I am voting against the order.

First of all, I would like to set the stage for the cartoon and talk about where it takes place.

First, we have the Prime Minister's office, which has a desk and a chair. The chair is moved to the right to free up space underneath the desk. The desk has a few things on it.

On the left, there is a picture frame and a landline telephone. In the frame, there is a photo of Pierre Elliott Trudeau, the Prime Minister's father, who is covering his eyes with his right hand, a gesture of dismay everyone can recognize. It is commonly known as “facepalming”.

On the other side of the desk, there is a pink teddy bear—some may see a resemblance with a Care Bear. Behind the teddy bear, there is something that looks like a mug in the shape of a unicorn head.

The Emergencies Act is front and centre on the desk and appears to be freshly signed by the Prime Minister, since there is a pen lying across it.

When I said that the desk chair was placed to the right, it was to make room below the desk for the Prime Minister, who is hiding there and dressed like Waldo, from the acclaimed “Where's Waldo” puzzle books. I will remind members that the purpose of the game is to find Waldo, who is camouflaged by his surroundings. The Prime Minister is crouching and looks worried, looking out at the readers and asking them, “Is it over?” with his fingers crossed. The Prime Minister is wondering about the state of the country he is supposed to be governing: “Is it over?”

Let us focus on certain details concerning the two focal points of the scene I described earlier, the setting and the character. Members will recall that the Emergencies Act looms large on the desk. I remind them that on the left, there is a photo of former prime minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau, whose hand seems to be disavowing what his son has done. Although the reasons why Trudeau Sr. invoked such a law are his own and do not interest me anyway—we are talking about a depiction—it goes without saying that the cartoon clearly and colourfully conveys that it is a mistake. In my view, it points out that it is a mistake to use, for the first time in the history of Canada, a legislative measure passed in 1988 that is a modernized version of the War Measures Act, an act that has a significant, and I daresay even traumatic, place in the collective psyche of the Quebec nation.

• (1730)

Not only has this new version of the act never even been used by any government, but also, using it now is way out of proportion to the situation. As everyone knows, the blockades in Windsor, Sarnia, Fort Erie, Emerson, Coutts and Vancouver were dealt with before the order was released on February 14. Only Ottawa, specifically the seat of government, not the whole city of Ottawa, was occupied until today. Now the occupation is over.

What this means is that an instrument of last resort was ordered to resolve problems that absolutely did not create a need for the Emergencies Act in the first place, because the necessary tools were already available. Moreover, the issues had already been addressed everywhere but in Canada's capital.

In addition, six Canadian provinces plus Quebec, whose National Assembly unanimously passed a motion, categorically refused to allow the application of the Emergencies Act on their territory.

That was the backdrop against which the government issued its February 14 order to invoke a completely unnecessary and disproportionate measure to address a situation that was no longer even a situation. The whole thing is utterly absurd. To paraphrase my colleague from Joliette, this is like me using a nuclear weapon to destroy a mosquito that did not even land on my arm.

Let us turn our attention to the objects sitting to the right of the War Measures Act on the Prime Minister's desk in the cartoon, specifically the pink stuffed animal and the mug in the shape of a unicorn's head. Of course, Ygrek's cartoons about the Prime Minister are often peppered with objects that are reminiscent of childhood and an imaginary world, and that evoke a certain naïveté. In this case, they are used pejoratively, perhaps intended as harsh criticisms of the Prime Minister, as they emphasize what could be described as his magical thinking: believing that his abstract wishes are all it takes to solve concrete problems, without him ever having to do anything. The pink teddy bear and the mythical horned animal, representing the power of love and purity, respectively, reflect the Prime Minister's tendency to refuse to take reality into account, to flee from it, thereby shirking his responsibilities.

The Prime Minister's undeniable tendency to shirk responsibility is conveyed by his clothing, as he is dressed like the "Where's Waldo" character, as I mentioned earlier. This is someone who hides in the crowd at all times and is hard to find. He looks like Waldo cowering under his desk, using it like a toy bunker, with his fingers crossed for good luck. The Prime Minister's chair is symbolically empty. Basically, the Prime Minister is nowhere to be found.

Indeed, where was the Prime Minister before news of the crisis first broke? When it was first reported that the convoy was about to leave, once the convoy did set off, once it arrived in Ottawa and first settled in and once it became entrenched, the Prime Minister should have been there for Canadians, as he has been happy to repeat ad nauseam for the past few weeks. Yes, he should have been there, even with all his smugness, his arrogance and his contempt. Yes, he should have been there, even in what I would call his selective absence, that fascinating ability that some people have to decide when they will make an appearance without ever being really, fully present.

Rainbows or unicorns, I do not believe for one minute that the Prime Minister is that naive. I see a clear lack of leadership, since the most important quality of a leader is the ability to communicate. To communicate like a leader fundamentally means needing to persuade, if not convince, people. To be a leader means not only truly being there, but also being there to take action. A leader has to be an agent.

Statutory Order

I will conclude with the question asked by the Prime Minister in this cartoon, which captures the essence of what we are seized with today in the House. Legend has it that the fires that have been burning from Quebec City to Vancouver have been put out these past few days by the magical power of the rhetoric surrounding the invocation of the Emergencies Act, which was proportionately inflated by the cosmic emptiness of the Prime Minister and his lack of leadership. Yes, a big balloon, an inflated measure might grab attention, but it is full of air and eventually deflates.

• (1735)

To answer the question of the prime minister character who asks whether it is over, I would say—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The member's time is up.

We will now move on to questions and comments.

The hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am certainly not one to wade into how the politics in Quebec work, but I am pretty sure that there is not a single member in this House who ever thought the Bloc Québécois would vote in favour of this, just given its position, generally speaking, when it comes to national legislation like this.

Having said that, this member's attempt to conflate the War Measures Act with the Emergencies Act, just like the Conservatives have done, is disingenuous at best and an attempt to completely misinform the Canadian public at worst. This member should know full well that the War Measures Act actually removed civil liberties that were afforded to Canadians. This piece of legislation specifically states in it that the Charter of Rights must be upheld, which is the defining feature between this and the War Measures Act. How can this member continue to perpetuate this misinformation?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

I would say that in reply to the Prime Minister's question asking whether the crisis was over, I would answer that it is over, and it was over well before he took action. I would answer that, three weeks after the start of this protest, he can now come out of hiding and take the true measure of what he thought was an emergency. He could have seen from the very beginning that there was no national crisis.

What is a real emergency and a national crisis is that this government needs a leader.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): That does not answer the question.

The hon. member for Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague from Manicouagan for her speech.

Statutory Order

We both agree that the Prime Minister and the Liberal government let the situation fester. The Prime Minister was missing in action, and therefore this crisis was not resolved as quickly as it should have been.

Will my colleague not admit that in the face of a convoy organized by the far right and radicals who said outright that they wanted to overthrow the elected government and who terrorized, harassed and intimidated the people of downtown Ottawa, there is a crisis situation?

Does she not agree that invoking the act made it possible to establish a perimeter preventing people from entering the downtown, declare that their unjustified presence was illegal, and increase fines and freeze bank accounts?

None of these measures could have been taken without invoking the Emergencies Act, as the acting police chief of Ottawa stated.

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. I absolutely denounce the presence of far-right groups, no matter where they are.

I have to say that this is not new. When I was 14 years old, I was a part of anti-racist and anti-fascist groups. Far-right groups were around back in 1990.

It is now 2022 and there are laws that enable us to combat these groups. This is nothing new. What is happening right now is the result of the Prime Minister's laissez-faire approach. He has been hands-off from the beginning, letting the whole situation escalate before calling in the heavy artillery, even though he did nothing from the outset.

[English]

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Madam Speaker, I have heard often from members opposite that they could not do some of the things they needed without invoking the Emergencies Act. However, section 129 of the Criminal Code allows the Minister of Justice to impose on and get people, tow trucks, to work with police. The Interprovincial Policing Act in Ontario enables a police chief to deputize any person simply to do this.

Can the hon. member tell me if she has heard any arguments from the government during this important debate that justify or demonstrate that the government pursued any of these legal tools before invoking this act?

• (1740)

[Translation]

Mrs. Marilène Gill: Madam Speaker, this government has clearly not managed to justify anything. If the order does get adopted, there will need to be a report. This government will have to justify its decision.

The Prime Minister has treated Ottawa like any other city, when it is a national capital. He let it all escalate.

The Prime Minister has been selectively absent and has demonstrated a lack of leadership.

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille (Salaberry—Suroît, BQ): Madam Speaker, I wish to join my colleague from Manicouagan in thanking the police. I also want to take a moment today to thank the in-

terpreters who have been providing service to us from 7 a.m. until late into the night since Thursday morning and will continue to do so until tomorrow, Monday. I want to recognize them and sincerely thank them.

I am the 22nd Bloc Québécois member to speak about the ratification of the Emergencies Act. I listened carefully to the debate. This is a moment that will go down in history. It is the first time that parliamentarians have been called upon to approve the use of the Emergencies Act. So far, my Bloc Québécois colleagues have shown that law enforcement had all the tools it needed to take strong action sooner in order to put an end to the occupation in Ottawa.

I hope that all members of the House are aware of the incitement to hatred, hate propaganda and defamation that we have seen from some convoy leaders. Such actions are unacceptable and already prohibited under the Criminal Code. Everyone in this House knows that it is already illegal to occupy a city; intimidate residents and local merchants; and push, intimidate and spit on reporters. Those things are already prohibited and illegal under the Criminal Code. We are already able to investigate the inflow of foreign money in order to destabilize the political order.

I am proud of my colleagues and their nuanced thinking. They reminded us that we all agree that the situation in Ottawa became illegal and untenable a long time ago, that we never should have gotten to this point, and that we have been witnessing a clear and serious lack of leadership, as my colleague from Manicouagan so aptly stated. We agree that something had to be done about the occupation in Ottawa. However, what we have been debating for the past few days and will continue debating tomorrow is the ratification of the Emergencies Act, and that is where opinions differ.

Essentially, do we agree to this special act being applied as ordered by the Liberal government across Canada as a whole? Were the extraordinary powers of the Emergencies Act really absolutely necessary to resolve the impasse in Ottawa?

The Bloc Québécois has argued that it was dangerous to downplay invoking this act across Canada, without considering that the emergency was different in Quebec, Ontario, Saskatchewan and Nunavut. We have shown that, in our opinion, the government did not prove beyond a doubt that all criteria were met to invoke emergency measures. We established that this improvised use of the act created a precedent that could be dangerous.

Today, I would like parliamentarians to realize that the Bloc Québécois's position is rooted in the unanimous voice of the National Assembly. Quebec's elected officials, including its ministers, all rejected the invocation of the Emergencies Act by unanimously passing a motion in the National Assembly. On February 15, Quebec spoke with one voice.

I will repeat that all elected Quebecers, one by one, opposed the invocation of the Emergencies Act in Quebec. That is fundamentally how one can interpret the position of the Bloc Québécois, because it is in a way the underlying reason for our opposition to confirming the Emergencies Act, which applies to Quebec.

● (1745)

As François Paradis, the Speaker of the Quebec National Assembly, can attest, this unanimous support comes from the five different political parties and all independent members. I think that means something. The message could not be any clearer.

I am proud of my caucus, which, throughout this debate, has given a loud and clear voice to the legitimate wishes of the Quebec National Assembly. I hope my speech will make the members of this House grasp the significance of a unanimous vote in a national assembly and in the legislatures of other provinces.

I am proud of my caucus, which has shown some nuanced thinking in a context that leaves little room for nuance, something that has been missing in these debates and in this pandemic. I call on everyone here to be very careful about making generalizations.

This motion is about ratifying the invocation of the Emergencies Act, not about the cause the protesters were defending. There is a bit of mixed messaging in some of the speeches we have heard from our colleagues in the opposition parties.

We have spoken rationally, but also from the heart. I am really proud of our contribution to the debate, which made members think. In response to our questions, we have learned that even certain members on the government benches do not seem 100% convinced of the need to invoke this last-resort act. When agreeing to invoke special legislation, it seems to me we must be convinced of the necessity to do so, of the fact that using the law is essential.

Personally, I am confident in my vote and I know that on Monday night, I will vote no to this extraordinary legislation. On Monday, in addition to all the political and legal arguments that my colleagues have presented, the Bloc Québécois will vote in line with the unanimous will of the Quebec National Assembly. That, it seems to me, is entirely consistent with the fundamental essence of our political commitment.

With respect to the unanimous will of the National Assembly, I will add that I would have also liked to see that unanimity in the House. I would have liked to see parliamentarians from all parties discuss the proclamation on emergency measures before, not after the fact. I would have liked to see a more elevated and serious discussion.

Unfortunately, we saw partisanship and insinuations of support for the far right and even racism. We have heard it. This seems to be bigger than we are. We have seen it: the petty politics, the insults, and the bad faith are far too commonplace in the House of Commons, even during an historic debate.

We have the opportunity to rise above. We have a duty to rise above. I invite my esteemed colleagues to ask themselves whether they are sure beyond a shadow of a doubt that this was the only way, whether they are comfortable incorporating the Emergencies Act into the modus operandi of government crisis management and

whether they truly believe that our democracy will be stronger for it.

I invite them to think about it because our debate is not about what happened in the streets of Ottawa. From the beginning, this debate has essentially been about our democracy.

[English]

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, I appreciate being here in the House debating the very important piece of legislation before us.

I want to thank the member who just spoke. I work with her closely in our joint roles as whips, and I really appreciated the very sensitive approach she took in her speech. I also want to say that these are amazing times. I believe we should not be here, yet here we are. I also want to say that today when I was walking to come to work I saw something that really bothered me. I saw a small business owner chasing two men out of his store with a stick, yelling at them. He could not get hold of the police.

I am just wondering if the member could talk about the impacts this kind of recklessness is having in this country, when we see this extremism, when we see a blockade for three weeks, when we see people feeling so afraid and we also see the impacts of that activity, which means our social structures start to come undone. If we cannot stand up in this House and talk about how we are going to deal with that, then I do not think we are doing our jobs very well. I would love to hear her thoughtful response, just as thoughtful as her speech was.

● (1750)

[Translation]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Speaker, I thank my whip colleague for the question.

This allows me to clarify that the people who were part of the convoy or the hundreds of people who occupied the streets did not all have the same message. They were not a monolithic group, but we seem to have forgotten that when we focused our attention on one group over another.

Like my colleague, I have seen testimonials and I have spoken to people who were in tears because they wanted to withdraw from the convoy but were stuck. We have seen and heard all sorts of things.

The important thing today is that the streets are empty. The occupation is over. We no longer need this legislation. It is no longer useful, vital or necessary to manage the crisis that is coming to a close.

Statutory Order

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, I do not entirely disagree with the comments from my colleague in the Bloc when she said a lot of people were caught up in this whose intentions were different from those who were on the path of the lawless behaviour that we have seen. However, I would say that the vast majority of those who were here in the week leading up to the police action that we saw in the last three days had by that point dug in their heels and were saying that they would not leave.

More importantly, we have heard a lot about how the powers were there and the provinces had the powers to do this or that. Yes, the provinces had the power to bring in other police forces, but they did not. The provinces did not do anything.

Is this member saying that it just happens to be a coincidence?

I would like to ask my question without being heckled.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order.

Can we listen to the question until the end?

Mr. Mark Gerretsen: Madam Speaker, is this member suggesting that it just happened to be a coincidence that the Emergencies Act came in on Monday and then we started to see real action on Thursday? Is that just a coincidence that has nothing to do with the emergency measures?

[Translation]

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Speaker, frankly, I am flabbergasted by my colleague's question.

From what I understand, he is saying that the provinces did not do a damn thing and stood by while the situation got worse, and that the good old federal government had to come in to whip the troops into line and invoke special legislation to get them to do their jobs—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order.

Mrs. Claude DeBellefeuille: Madam Speaker, I am very sorry, but I think the member for Kingston and the Islands is running out of arguments. He has been here arguing for a long time. He is tired and is now taking things too far.

All of the police forces came together, teamed up, joined forces and worked together. They are the ones who managed to push the protesters back, with support and coordination from their command centre. It was not special legislation or an order that came in to save the day.

[English]

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be splitting my time today with the member from Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River.

It is a sad day to be speaking here on behalf of the constituents of Saskatoon West. When I first ran for office two and a half years ago, I never thought I would spend most of my time representing my constituents during a time of COVID-19. When I ran for re-election just six months ago, I never imagined that I would be representing them during a debate about martial law being imposed upon them. From day one of that campaign, when the Prime Minister deliberately set out to wedge, divide and stigmatize our population, the wisest among us may have foreseen this power grab. Unfortunately, I was naive enough to think that even this Prime Minister still had a modicum of love and respect for his fellow Canadians and for democracy. The truth is that his love is for power and his respect is for dictatorships.

What is the Emergencies Act? I want to be absolutely clear. This is a naked power grab by the Prime Minister, and I will not be supporting it. This act allows the government, under certain strict criteria, to override all established laws, regulations and norms of Canadian democracy. It is, simply put, the imposition of martial law. The New York Times reported these measures for what they are: a “temporary suspension of civil liberties”.

This legislation is a successor to the War Measures Act and has never been used in Canadian history. Its predecessor was used during times of world wars to help Canada mobilize and by the first Trudeau to go after real terrorists in Quebec during the FLQ crisis in 1970. Today his son, our current Prime Minister, is using emergency powers to clear vehicles on Ottawa streets.

To be clear, I and my colleagues in the Conservative Party have called for an end to these blockades, but the vehicles at the U.S. border crossings were already gone before this Emergencies Act was even initiated. The Liberals said they needed this power to compel Ottawa tow truck operators. They did not. Existing laws already gave that power. In fact, nearly everything they are doing could have been done under the provincial emergency order.

The extraordinary powers of the federal Emergencies Act have never been invoked, not even when the twin towers were toppled on 9/11, when we went to war in Afghanistan or when an actual terrorist stormed Parliament here in 2014 and tried to assassinate the prime minister at that time. The fact is that the Prime Minister mishandled this situation right from the beginning. Every parent teaches their children to use their words, not their fists. Instead, our incompetent Prime Minister chose division over leadership, chose name-calling over dialogue.

As an aviation enthusiast, I am fascinated by airplane crashes. The root cause of a plane crash can always be traced back to someone not even on the plane. The reason for the crash is never the most obvious one. One must ask why. Why did the engine quit? Why was there no fuel? Why was the fuel gauge incorrect, etc., etc., until one gets to the root cause. If we apply that strategy here, what is the root cause of the unrest we see today? Is it the protesters themselves? Certainly they will be the ones held accountable for their actions, but why were they here? One root cause was the mandate for truckers to be vaccinated. Who forced that? It was the Prime Minister.

Another root cause is frustration and weariness with COVID restrictions in general. When the provinces began to relax restrictions, the federal government was intent on keeping them in place. Who forced that? Again it was the Prime Minister. In fact, time and time again, the root cause of this conflict can be traced right to the feet of the Prime Minister. His own MPs have said that the Prime Minister has politicized the pandemic, using division and fear to pit Canadian against Canadian. We have neighbours snitching on their neighbours, fully encouraged by the government.

The Prime Minister desires division and depends on it to retain his political power. Conservatives want to lead with dialogue and mutual respect. We know that a root cause of this conflict is the lack of a plan to move us past the COVID restrictions of the last two years, so last Monday there was a vote in the House of Commons on our Conservative motion to make a plan to end COVID-19 mandates and restrictions. The Liberals and their lackeys in the NDP voted it down.

In this situation it is the cheerleading of the NDP that is perhaps the most telling of all. The NDP, going back to its CCF roots in Saskatchewan, pretends to be the hero of the little guy, the working class. These last few weeks have finally discredited that myth. We know that many of the current NDP are self-proclaimed socialists. Just like our PM admires Communist China's basic dictatorship, today's NDP looks back in time at Lenin and Stalin and yearn for a return to those days.

• (1755)

The whole philosophy of socialism as written by Marx was to put down dissent and seize power through violence. I read with great interest the tweet of former NDP member of Parliament Svend Robinson. He was referring to the 1970 vote, when the first Trudeau invoked these emergency powers. Svend said, "The NDP Caucus in 1970 under Tommy Douglas took a courageous and principled stand against the War Measures Act. Today's @NDP under [its leader] betrays that legacy and supports Liberals on the Emergencies Act. Shame. A very dangerous precedent is being set."

Traditionally, the NDP has stood on the side of civil liberties and prevented governments from being granted sweeping powers; today's NDP, well, not so much. This will not come as a surprise to current NDP leadership, but it should be a wake-up call to all Canadians who support the NDP. The NDP is not the friend of democracy.

I want to get to the heart of the matter. A leader skilled in dividing and stigmatizing is also skilled at distracting. Like a clever magician, our Prime Minister is having us look at downtown Ottawa

Statutory Order

while he works behind the scenes to carry out his true goal. What is that? As they say, follow the money.

The finance minister let slip this week that the government's real desire is to make some of the emergency measures permanently available to the government. Which measures was she referring to? She was referring to financial tools.

Let us take a step back. All dictators want control. In our modern society, control is exercised through money. One cannot do anything without money. Even exercising constitutional freedoms requires money. For example, freedom of speech might require a website, a pamphlet, an advertisement, etc., all of which require money. If someone takes away our money, they take away our freedoms.

My parents grew up with cash. A person could accumulate a pillowcase full of cash, put all that cash into a briefcase and buy a neighbour's house by handing that briefcase over to him. In most of human history, that is how transactions were done, using shells, gold, cattle, etc. Today, if someone shows up with a briefcase full of money, that person will likely be arrested. Governments, through their central banks, want cash to be eliminated so that they can control our money and therefore control us. This plan was going very well until GoFundMe and cryptocurrencies showed up. These new payment methods have thrown a big monkey wrench into the wheels of government control—that is, until now.

What did the finance minister let slip this week? She let slip that the government would take the overreaching powers of the Emergencies Act regarding financial controls and make them permanent, particularly as they relate to crowdsourcing and cryptocurrencies. In other words, in a moment when Canadians are allowing the government to have absolute power, the government is using that opportunity to slip in some permanent changes

I am not a conspiracy theorist; I am just making an observation and hoping people pick up on this discussion and really pay attention.

These emergency powers are significant. What are the people of Saskatoon West saying about this? Cora in my riding said, "This language of hate and divide needs to stop. Love and kindness is the only way forward. ... I can't help but wonder if we continue on this path how long it will take for myself to be on the receiving side of hate from our government because of policies that go against my well intended morals and values. It's only a matter of time...and I'm scared."

Statutory Order

I am scared too.

Matthew said, “As a constituent of your riding, I just wanted to voice my extreme concern that the Federal Government of Canada has implemented this measure over a peaceful protest. I know you're part of the opposition, and I have been glad to see some of the members of your party speak plainly to the Canadian people. I don't typically take the time to get involved in politics, but it's absolutely disgusting what's going on right now. I am embarrassed to be a Canadian at this point.”

We should all be embarrassed. A recent immigrant from Bangladesh told me plainly, “Things going on in Ottawa are very sad. [The Prime Minister] is becoming a dictator. Yes! People around the globe know Canada as a calm and peaceful nation. We love friendly, peaceful Canada, and that is why we moved to Canada. Please raise your united voice in the House against all kinds of violence.”

The Prime Minister is embarrassing Canada on a global scale, but all is not lost. My home province of Saskatchewan shone a beacon of hope last week for Canada. It ended the vaccine passport system on February 14, the very same day the Prime Minister took his drastic step federally. I have listened to my constituents, unlike the Prime Minister, who attempts to shut down opposing voices.

I have much more to say, but my time is up. In summary, the Prime Minister has created this situation. He has the power to make it worse and the power to make it better. I pray he chooses wisely.

• (1805)

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to ask my colleague if he owns a business in the downtown Ottawa area. What would he think if, for three weeks, he could not open, he could not pay his rent and he had to tell his employees that they would lose their jobs?

In addition, what does he think about closing bridges that are a vital path for the commercial trade between us and the United States? What does he think about threats to our supply chain?

What does he think about the people receiving funds from outside Canada? What does he think about more than 70% of Canadians supporting the decision of the Prime Minister?

Is the member aware that the Prime Minister was patient? The protesters stayed for close to three weeks. The Prime Minister was giving them a chance. What—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The member has a lot of questions and I have to allow other members to ask theirs.

The hon. member for Saskatoon West.

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Madam Speaker, there were a lot of questions. For the businesses in downtown Ottawa, it has been difficult, but I must remind the member that there have been two years of difficulties for business owners in this country. For two years, businesses have not been able to open. It has been difficult for everybody.

I also want to remind the member that the bridges that he referred to opened up prior to the imposition of the Emergencies Act.

They were dealt with through the regular channels of the system of law that we have in our country. Those were taken care of through regular laws. We did not need the Emergencies Act for that.

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Madam Speaker, I agree with my colleague. The blockades had almost all been removed before the emergency measures came into force.

Could my colleague talk about the consequences of invoking the Emergencies Act when it is not required?

[English]

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Madam Speaker, there are significant consequences. I want to particularly highlight the people I have been talking to. For example, an older lady called my office in tears because she had donated a small amount of money to the convoy and was worried that her bank accounts would be frozen. Businesses' bank accounts are now frozen because of the imposition of the Emergencies Act. This is having very significant financial implications on individuals and businesses right across the country, and we need to be very concerned about that.

Mr. Alistair MacGregor (Cowichan—Malahat—Langford, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am completely astounded by how far the Conservatives, as the self-proclaimed party of law and order, have actually fallen. Some members of that caucus are openly peddling conspiracy theories and turning a blind eye to extremists in their midst.

The Ottawa Police Service said that the Emergencies Act was necessary for it to take action, and Conservative Premier Doug Ford urged that the Emergencies Act be invoked. Does the Conservative Party of Canada disagree with those two institutions?

• (1810)

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Madam Speaker, if Ottawa has an incompetent mayor who could not get the job done, I do not think it is incumbent on the federal government to take a sledgehammer with the Emergencies Act to come in and try to fix that problem. That is a problem for the City of Ottawa. If the City of Ottawa could not handle it, then the province should step in. The laws that were currently in place could have gotten the job done. I think it is completely unnecessary to do this to cover the incompetence of a local city councillor.

Mr. Gary Vidal (Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is without pleasure that I rise today to speak on the government's invocation of the Emergencies Act.

Following my election as the member of Parliament for Desnethé—Missinippi—Churchill River in 2019, we put signs throughout the riding with the slogan “building authentic relationships”. I realize this probably is not the catchiest slogan ever, but it demonstrates how my team and I have operated since.

Throughout the pandemic, my team and I have consistently and strategically attempted to be a voice that brings calm and reason to a very tumultuous environment. Personally, I believe that is what leaders should do. The failure of the Prime Minister to show even a shred of grace or compassion for people who are clearly frustrated is frankly unbecoming.

Some may ask why I start here. I start here because of what I have observed since entering federal politics just over three years ago. The Prime Minister and the federal government have shown absolutely no interest in building relationships with anyone, other than those who vote for them.

It is my belief that the moment the leader of the Liberal Party of Canada became the Prime Minister, he no longer had the option of only representing Liberal voters. It became his job to represent all Canadians. However, not only have the Prime Minister and his government shown no interest in representing all Canadians, but they have time and again shown disdain, contempt and disrespect for Canadians who do not agree with them.

Before I address my opinion on the government's use of the Emergencies Act, it is important that we consider what actions, or inactions, have led to us being here today. As confirmed by our Liberal colleague for Louis-Hébert last week, during the last election campaign, the Liberals saw an opportunity to wedge, divide and stigmatize Canadians over vaccines and vaccine mandates. They did this to get re-elected, and they were successful, but at what cost?

A poll taken just after the election showed that 77% of Canadians felt the country was more fractured than ever. I am fearful of what that number might be today. The politicization of vaccines and vaccine mandates by our Prime Minister has led to deep divisions in our communities, our provinces and across our country.

By treating Canadians with impunity, the Prime Minister laid the foundation for what happened just outside these walls in Ottawa and across our great nation. He called Canadians racists and misogynists. We have even heard Liberal members in the House this weekend call them terrorists. This is not acceptable. Might I add that this was before making any attempt whatsoever to meet or speak with them.

In my past life experience, in any kind of conflict resolution mechanism there was always one thing in common: dialogue. They all require some sort of dialogue and active listening. I was raised to believe that respect begets respect. I am, and will always be, willing to meet with Canadians, especially my constituents, regardless of their political leanings. The only limit I impose on them is that they must be willing to be respectful and have what I call "adult conversations".

I believe that, had the Prime Minister and his government operated in this manner, we would not be having this debate tonight. In fact, I believe that not only would the protesters have left, but they would likely have never come here in the first place. Unfortunately, because of the government's offensive rhetoric, several blocks surrounding Parliament Hill were indeed gridlocked and people had to forcefully be removed.

Statutory Order

I have consistently said that when individuals cross lines of acceptable and legal behaviour, they should be called out and individually held accountable for their actions, but we cannot paint everyone with the same brush.

Let me share something I read from a blog last night. The writer explains that he lives in downtown Ottawa and defines it as "absolute ground zero". The truckers are literally camped out below his bedroom window. He read a lot about what his new neighbours, he calls them, are supposed to be like, mostly from reporters. He decided to go for a walk to find out who these people actually were. He stated the following:

As I finally made my way back home, after talking to dozens of truckers into the night, I realized I met someone from every province except P.E.I. They all have a deep love for this country. They believe in it. They believe in Canadians.... Last night I learned my new neighbours are not a monstrous faceless occupying mob.

He concludes a long blog with the following statement:

...what we should have never forgotten: We are not a country that makes an untouchable class out of our citizens.

● (1815)

This brings me to the second part of my speech, and that is how I believe the current situation in Ottawa does not fit the requirements outlined in the Emergencies Act.

During the introduction of the Emergencies Act in 1988, the minister responsible, the Hon. Perrin Beatty, said this in his remarks:

The legislation for second reading which I am proposing today will provide the necessary flexibility to respond to national crises without invoking the War Measures Act. It applies only to national emergencies and distinguishes between four types.

In broad terms they are these: First, situations affecting public welfare and caused by an accident such as a massive chemical spill or by natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods or tornadoes that are of such magnitude as to exceed the capacity of the affected province to respond and to require special powers for an effective federal response; second, public order disturbances that threaten the security of Canada and which are so serious as to be national emergencies; third, international emergencies requiring Canada to take special preparatory measures in concert with our allies; fourth, and finally, war itself.

The order in council released by the government authorizes the government to impose "other temporary measures authorized under section 19 of the Emergencies Act that are not yet known."

The Prime Minister is essentially asking the House to hand him unlimited authority. We have seen this movie before. Do people remember March 2020, when the Liberals introduced an unprecedented bill to give their government unlimited powers to tax Canadians and spend public money without parliamentary approval for 21 months? Do people remember the documents from the Winnipeg lab, and how the Prime Minister's actions showed he has little or no respect for parliamentary oversight? Let us not forget how the SNC-Lavalin scandal demonstrated that he has little respect for the independence of our justice system.

More recently, on Monday, when the Prime Minister announced he was invoking the Emergencies Act, he said the following:

Statutory Order

I want to be clear. The scope of these measures will be time-limited, geographically targeted, as well as reasonable and proportionate to the threats they are meant to address.

Since then, the Deputy Prime Minister and finance minister has stated that she is looking to make some of these provisions permanent.

The justice minister admitted that the Liberals were looking to use the act to punish political opponents. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice said that the Emergencies Act provisions technically apply to all of Canada. Why should Canadians trust this Prime Minister now and grant this open-ended request to limit the civil liberties of all Canadians?

Today, I join with the premiers of Quebec, Alberta, Manitoba and Prince Edward Island, as well as with Premier Scott Moe from my province of Saskatchewan, along with many legal experts, civil liberties associations and millions of regular Canadians across the country saying that while the situation in Ottawa has been very difficult for many people, and I have a great amount of compassion for them, it did not meet the standard of a national emergency. Thankfully, there was no widespread violence and no loss of life.

The Prime Minister said, in his remarks at the opening of this debate, “the situation could not be dealt with under any other law in Canada.” I do not believe this to be true, and for the Prime Minister to say this in the House of Commons leads to the degradation of our democratic systems and erodes the already low level of trust in government. The precedent that this sets is leaving many people in my riding with grave concerns for the future of our country.

Far be it from me to quote an NDP MP, but tonight I am going to because the Hon. Tommy Douglas was from Saskatchewan. In describing Pierre Elliott Trudeau's use of the War Measures Act during the October Crisis, he said it was “like using a sledgehammer to crack a peanut”. I am sure that my colleagues from all parties would agree that what happened outside these walls pales in comparison with what took place in 1970. I implore my NDP colleagues to consider their roots and consider what the great Tommy Douglas would do if he were here in the House at this moment in time.

In closing, there is no easy way to put this. The division that has resulted from this pandemic has been heartbreaking. I have seen it divide our country, provinces, communities, workplaces, social clubs, churches, friendships and even our families. I am afraid that the Prime Minister's use of these heavy-handed measures will only further divide our country.

Thus, I am asking all members in the House to search very long and very hard when they decide how they are going to vote on this motion tomorrow night. Let us work together to start healing the brokenness that is so evident across this great country.

• (1820)

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I have a great deal of respect for the member opposite, and I have worked with him at the indigenous affairs committee.

At the outset, I want to say that I believe Canadians are united. Over 90% of Canadians have been vaccinated, and many more are continuing to be vaccinated as we speak, with the second and booster doses. We have seen a lot of hate outside over the last several weeks. I personally have found it very difficult to go and engage, and it is pretty obvious why. It is because I am a racialized individual. I have seen symbols of hate that profoundly affect me.

I am just wondering this. What are the member's thoughts about the calls to engage with these blockaders, and what does he think that kind of engagement would have resulted in?

Mr. Gary Vidal: Madam Speaker, I have worked together with my hon. colleague on the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs and we have a mutual respect.

What I and every single Conservative colleague would say is that we are 100% against any white supremacy, bigotry and any kind of racism. The member knows that very well and he knows my record on the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs. If he looked at the work I have done advocating for first nations people and for Métis people in my riding, for indigenous people across this country, he knows that to be true. If he looked at the work I have done coaching minor league hockey in my riding, coaching kids from across the riding and from first nations and Métis communities, he knows the work I have done and he knows my record.

I am happy to stand by that record.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Madam Speaker, we knew that there were extremists within the convoy when we first heard it was coming. We knew there were far-right groups involved. It seems they were allowed to settle in anyway. Once that happened, I think the Prime Minister could have shown more initiative and made sure that the police forces were coordinating their efforts, but nothing was done.

What does my colleague think about that?

[*English*]

Mr. Gary Vidal: Madam Speaker, like I said in my comments, the first step to resolving this was to actually listen to people and to have dialogue with people. That is the root of any conflict resolution mechanism. It was known for weeks that these people were coming to Ottawa, yet no one went to talk to them. The Prime Minister claimed in his comments that he has supported and met with all levels of government and all people involved in this, and that he was very in tune with what was going on, yet the Liberals did nothing until they brought out the Emergencies Act.

I will go back to my “sledgehammer and a peanut” argument. We went from zero to a hundred overnight and this was never necessary, as taking initial steps to dialogue with these people and hearing the concerns of these, very frankly, frustrated people would have gone a long way to resolving this issue a long time ago.

Statutory Order

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, the world has changed a lot from the 1970s and, unfortunately, we are dealing with much larger manifestations of hate. I thank the member for denouncing it and that is a consensus point in the House in these past few days.

How do we, as parliamentarians, deal with the reality, going forward, of this hate and division in our communities?

• (1825)

Mr. Gary Vidal: Madam Speaker, I would go back to my initial comments I made in my speech and the work that my team and I have done in our riding. It is a slogan and everyone will say it is just a slogan, but building authentic relationships with people actually works. It actually works. We have to become active listeners. We have to engage people at the appropriate level, and we have to dialogue with people.

We have to get to the place where we can have what I call adult conversations with people, even though we might not agree with their philosophy. Maybe we do not agree with their ideology. If we have adult conversations, respectful conversations, sometimes it is appropriate for us to agree to disagree, but we can do that respectfully.

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab (Halifax West, Lib.): Madam Speaker, this evening I will be sharing my time with the member for Winnipeg South.

It is an honour and a privilege to represent the residents of Halifax West in the House of Commons. I recall the day of my swearing-in ceremony 15 weeks ago, walking along Wellington Street, taking in the architectural, national and symbolic elements of the buildings and looking at the multitude of people and the joy and excitement of all people, visitors and residents alike.

The events of the last three weeks are heartbreaking. The illegal blockades, sieges and occupations have disrupted the safety, security and lives of individual Canadians, harming our economy, endangering public safety and threatening our democracy. We need to make sure events like this do not happen again.

I have reflected long and hard and have listened to the debates in the House. I have listened to the differing views. I recognize the seriousness of the situation and our role as parliamentarians in representing our constituents and debating and voting on national laws for the collective good of Canadians.

I support wholeheartedly this motion to invoke the Emergencies Act. I listened to the comments of the interim Ottawa police chief Steve Bell on Friday, who confirmed that, yes, the authorities granted by the invocation of this act and those conferred by the provincial and municipal emergency measures taken together were essential in conducting the successful operation that began on Friday.

The use of this act is also supported by the former Ottawa police chief and Conservative Senator Vernon White, who noted it is justified and that “it was the right time to do this”. Charles Bordeleau, another past Ottawa police chief, also confirmed the necessity of the tools this act conferred to police in clearing Ottawa.

Canada has a parliamentary democracy founded on the rule of law and respect for rights and freedoms. I, like everyone here, am

elected by the residents of my constituency. I am here to represent Halifax West. I care about my community and all its people. I care about everyone's freedom. We need to collectively care about each other in our country.

Let us be clear. There is a national emergency. It does pose a risk to personal security, national security and our economy, and it needs to be ended quickly and decisively so Canadians can get their lives back.

I am confident the threshold the act requires has been met. We have all seen the threats to property, to our economy, to our supply chains and to our most important trading relationship, which have been carried out to reach ideological ends.

I want to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all the police services who participated in ending the illegal operations, whether blockades, sieges or occupations. This includes the Ottawa Police Service, the Ontario Provincial Police, the RCMP, la Sûreté du Québec and police forces from across the country. This was a national effort from different jurisdictions, standing out there in the freezing cold and putting their safety and comfort on the line to ensure a resolution. My hat is off to them for their professionalism, dedication and restraint in the face of taunts, insults and abuse from occupiers.

We have heard many times how the vast majority of working truckers are vaccinated. I want to thank them for their essential work ensuring Canadians have food, medicine and so much that we rely on every day on our tables. I also want to thank their association, the CTA, for confirming that vaccine mandates are not in fact interfering with the industry's operations and for applauding the government's use of the Emergencies Act to rightfully end these blockades.

I want to thank the journalists on the streets, braving harassment to bring the truth of the occupation in Ottawa to Canadians. I have listened very closely to my colleagues during this debate and I appreciate the points they raised on the gravity of the situation, on the torment of the people and businesses of Ottawa and on the need for a quick and decisive path forward.

What we have seen is an occupation with leaders that in their stated objectives called for the overthrow of a democratically elected government and the removal of reasonable public health measures that have kept Canadians safe. It is an occupation that has been fuelled in no small part by foreign donations and eager cheerleading from political opportunists.

Statutory Order

● (1830)

The residents of Ottawa, the business owners and their staff, and the hard-working public servants, they all know this surpassed the point of a protest because they have suffered through it. I think of the email I received the other day from a woman advocating on behalf of her niece, who lives in downtown Ottawa and because of an autoimmune disorder could not leave her small apartment during the current occupation. Her niece had endured constant, inescapable, deafening noise and fumes from the occupiers. What about her rights and freedoms? There are so many stories like hers.

We have seen far too much intimidation, violence and hatred. I want to acknowledge the strength and resolve of the people of Ottawa over these difficult few weeks. They have been through hell and I hope they will get some rest and some relief. At this time, it is incumbent on us to act.

Let us clear up both the confusion and the wilful misrepresentation about what this act is and what invoking it entails. This is not the War Measures Act. This act is not calling in the military. It is targeted, temporary, subject to checks and safeguards through Parliament and must be compliant with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Invoking the Emergencies Act provides new authorities to law enforcement to regulate crowds, prohibit blockades and keep essential corridors open. It allows government to mobilize essential services, including services related to removal, towing and storage of vehicles that are being used as part of a blockade. It allows the taking of action against the largely foreign and largely anonymous funding of this occupation, including from crowdfunding platforms and their payment service providers.

Significantly, it allows the removal of the jurisdictional friction that we have seen impede our police forces, allowing police from different jurisdictions to work together to do their job. I want to reiterate what was confirmed by the interim Ottawa police chief. They would not be able to do the job they are doing without the authorities conferred by the Emergencies Act.

I want to thank the constituents of Halifax West for writing me and calling me, expressing their concern.

Like all of my colleagues, my office has received tons of emails. In my case, most of it is from outside my province, containing outrageous false claims and comparisons. This has included anti-vaccine propaganda, conspiracy theories, insistence that the pandemic is over, denial that our hospitals are being pushed past their capacities and disturbing comparisons made between the requirement to get vaccinated before boarding an airplane and the horrors inflicted by the Nazis. The contents of these emails are troubling, concerning and full of disinformation.

The fact is that Canada is one of the most vaccinated countries in the world. The majority of Canadians do not support these illegal protests and the occupation. The overwhelming majority of Canadians understand that facts and science still matter. That reassures me.

This week, we celebrated the 57th anniversary of our Canadian flag, a symbol we all respect and appreciate. I have felt uncomfortable seeing how our flag has been used over the last few weeks. I do not want anyone to ever see our flag flying and feel a twinge of fear or anxiety. I understand the frustration and the pandemic fa-

tigue felt by many. We are all tired and we all want the pandemic to end.

In my province of Nova Scotia, we had a small taste of what it felt like to have a post-pandemic life in the fall, when cases came down and restrictions were lessened. It was a blessing and it was appreciated and deeply needed, but omicron had other plans. I want to say I understand the frustration and empathize with folks. The risks to our communities, families and hospitals do not simply end because we want the pandemic to be over. I wish they did. Recently in Nova Scotia we saw the most deadly week of the pandemic since May 2020. We are still seeing daily test positivity rates over 10% and packed hospitals staffed by overstretched health care workers.

Here I want to thank all health care workers for caring for Nova Scotians and for caring for all Canadians. I have hope that a brighter spring is on its way. I want to encourage everyone to spread hope to their friends, communities and loved ones, while at the same time recommitting themselves to having each other's backs, being cautious, getting vaccinated and showing our solidarity with one another—

● (1835)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): The hon. member's time is up. She will be able to continue during questions and comments.

The hon. member for Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Madam Speaker, I liked the points in the member's speech that focused on section 58 of the Emergencies Act. However, I disagree with the member based on the fact that adequate evidence has not been provided to the chamber to determine that no other law in Canada could deal with this.

I encourage the member to look at the Emergencies Act NOA submitted by the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, especially paragraph 51. It outlines:

...the Government's precipitous invocation of the Emergencies Act appears to have been motivated by its view that the provinces have not gone far enough in addressing intraprovincial protest. However, this does not mean that the provinces lack the capacity or authority to deal with the protests....

The provinces "have all the tools they need", according to the Canadian Civil Liberties Association. It goes on to argue, "The Emergencies Act was not intended to provide the federal government a pathway to arrogate provincial powers to itself in circumstances where the provinces do not exercise those powers in the way the federal government would have."

Can the member provide any form of evidence to the chamber demonstrating that the federal government actually had to go as far as it did?

Statutory Order

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab: Madam Speaker, in my remarks, I specifically said that the Ottawa interim police chief concluded that without the act, the police would not have been able to do what they did. Again, former Ottawa police chief Charles Bordeleau said that invoking the Emergencies Act allowed them to set up a perimeter, allowed police to deny entry to those trying to join the protest, allowed for the banning of bringing children and minors into the designated zone, allowed for the quick seizure of money and assets involved with sustaining the occupation, allowed for vehicles to be towed and allowed for the immediate swearing in of officers from outside Ontario as police officers, among other things.

[Translation]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for her speech. Of course, our opinions differ.

Patrick Taillon, a respected law professor at Université Laval who is well known in Quebec, told Radio-Canada today that it is not enough to argue that a law is useful based on what the Ottawa police chief says. He pointed out that the government also has to show that the use of the act is necessary or essential, saying, “That is where the government is at a disadvantage, because it is difficult to prove that it is necessary or essential when the normal legal tools were not used during the first 14 days of the crisis.”

Why go from doing nothing to the most radical solution? We are not convinced that the government tried everything before getting to this point.

In short, why did the tortoise turn into a hare?

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

Unfortunately, I think it was necessary to invoke this act. The specific measures set out in the Emergencies Act are limited, subject to many checks and balances, and guaranteed by Parliament, hence this debate. The measures also have to be consistent with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The police have all said that they could not have overcome these obstacles without this act.

• (1840)

[English]

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, one of the things the Liberal government has said is that it would bring forward legislation to deal with online hate. We know that many of the people who have been radicalized have been radicalized on social media, and I am just wondering if the government is planning on bringing this legislation forward. If so, when and why not yet?

Ms. Lena Metlege Diab: Madam Speaker, I have listened to my hon. colleague ask questions for the last couple of days and I really appreciate her interjections.

I am part of the governing party, but I am certainly not in government. I definitely value bringing that forward, and I will take it back to my colleagues.

Mr. Terry Duguid (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today to speak in favour of the government's invocation of the Emergencies Act.

I would first like to start by joining my colleagues in thanking the Parliamentary Protective Service for keeping members and all the staff of the House of Commons safe and secure. They have done an exemplary job working under exceptionally trying circumstances. We owe them a great deal of gratitude. I would also like to thank all members of law enforcement, who are working calmly and professionally to help restore law and order to our nation's capital, to the parliamentary precinct and in border communities across Canada.

I have had the honour of serving as the member of Parliament for Winnipeg South for over six years. Serving as a member of Parliament also means that I am a resident of downtown Ottawa when the House is sitting. I have witnessed first-hand the anxiety and hardship this unlawful occupation has caused for local residents and businesses. I have been worried about frightened children unable to sleep or attend school, about people who needed an ambulance or other emergency services, about pedestrians harassed on the street for simply wearing a mask and about frontline workers who do not have a paycheque because their places of employment have been forced to close. Like so many Canadians, I was deeply disturbed to see the war memorial and the Terry Fox statue disrespected and to witness numerous symbols of hate openly displayed in our nation's capital.

I want to be clear that there is a distinction between those who oppose public health measures with respect to COVID-19 and those who are responsible for the hostile occupation of our nation's capital. The vast majority of those who are opposed to public health measures enacted by the various levels of government have expressed themselves through legitimate and peaceful means, as is their right under the charter. Their points of view should not be diminished or confused with the unlawful aims of those who organized the occupation of downtown Ottawa.

We cannot forget that the organizers of this so-called “freedom convoy” made it clear in their MOU that their stated goal was the removal of a federal government that was elected only five months ago. These organizers are clearly using public health measures as a rallying cry and a bid to undermine our valued democratic institutions, with no regard for the rights of their fellow citizens or stability of our economy.

What I find particularly troubling is that this unlawful occupation has been actively encouraged and cheered on by the Conservatives who sit in the House: by the current interim Leader of the Opposition, by the member for Regina—Qu'Appelle, who is a former Conservative leader and Speaker of the House, and by many other Conservative members, including the member for Carleton, who is a candidate for the leadership of his party. He professed loudly that he was proud to stand with the truckers occupying Wellington Street. Well, I am proud to stand with the 90% of truckers who are vaccinated, some of whom have been prevented from doing their jobs because of blockades at our borders.

Statutory Order

During the critical days in January when occupiers first arrived in Ottawa, Canadians witnessed multiple media reports of Conservative members expressing admiration for the occupiers, and sharing meals and taking selfies with them, thus emboldening and encouraging them in their unlawful activities. It is no surprise, then, that the Conservatives now oppose this declaration of an emergency when they have so actively contributed to it.

It has been said many times and it deserves repeating that the declaration we are debating today is not the War Measures Act of the past. Through the modernized Emergencies Act, we are providing expanded authorities to law enforcement to regulate crowds, dismantle blockades and keep essential first responders and trade corridors open. These measures are targeted, temporary and proportionate. The government has invoked it only after all options had proved insufficient. This is about keeping Canadians safe, protecting their jobs and restoring confidence in our institutions. It is about upholding peace, order and good government. The specific measures provided in the Emergencies Act are limited and subject to numerous checks and safeguards, such as the debate we are having right now. All measures must be compliant with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

These measures do not in any way limit Canadians' rights or freedoms of expression. For the overwhelming majority of Canadians, including my constituents, there is no impact on their daily lives or on the rights and freedoms they enjoy.

● (1845)

It is important to note that the acting chief of the Ottawa Police Service, Steve Bell, on Friday clearly stated that law enforcement would not have been able to take the actions they did to end this occupation without the new authorities granted under the Emergencies Act. The former chief of the Ottawa Police Service and the Conservatives' own caucus colleague, Senator Vern White, agrees that invoking the Emergencies Act was the right thing to do at this juncture. The Premier of Ontario and Progressive Conservative leader, Doug Ford, said he supports the federal government's decision to "provide additional tools" to help police "resolve the situation" in the nation's capital.

Amid the high-profile declarations of support from many law enforcement agencies and public officials, I have also received many messages of support for the Emergencies Act from my constituents, the people of Winnipeg South. These constituents reflect the vast majority of Canadians who believe in the rule of law and who support the invocation of the Emergencies Act. Opinion survey after opinion survey confirms this.

The border blockades seen across Canada, including at Emerson in my home province of Manitoba, have cost our economy billions and have strained our international reputation and good relationship with trading partner nations. Canadians are very worried about this. It appears to me that the Prime Minister's announcement that he would invoke the Emergencies Act provided an immediate boost to local law enforcement agencies across Canada, and the illegal blockades at border crossings began to be dismantled. As the member for Windsor West said this morning, the act has prevented a number of attempted blockades from taking place, as several convoys have been intercepted and turned around. The success we

have seen so far by the police in restoring law and order to the streets of Ottawa proves to me that using the Emergencies Act was the right decision. Now is not the time to undercut the women and men in law enforcement, who protect us all, by withdrawing the emergency measures they are now actively using.

I would like to end on a note of optimism. Canadians have just endured two years of pandemic anxiety that has been unprecedented in this century. Many have suffered economic and personal loss. Our citizens are tired. The Conservatives say that Canada has never been more divided, but I say, as our Prime Minister has said, that in many ways we have never been more united. We have worked together to fight COVID-19 and protect our health care systems and our economy. This Liberal government has supported Canadians in doing this and Canadians have risen to the challenge. Our vaccination rates are among the highest in the world. Our economy is rebounding. Our health care workers, teachers, grocery store workers and, yes, our truckers have been there for us.

Today, we as the people's House need to stand up for our fellow citizens. After two years of pandemic hardship, border communities should not now suffer illegal blockades, impacting travellers, public servants and whole sectors of our economy. The people of Ottawa should not need to endure one more day of unlawful occupation. As members of the House, let us help lift the siege for the residents, businesses, employees, seniors and students of Centretown. This House can and should fully support our frontline police officers and let them finish the job. I encourage all my colleagues to support the motion and approve the declaration of an emergency.

● (1850)

Mr. Frank Caputo (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC): Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise on behalf of the citizens of Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo.

I respectfully depart from my colleague's analysis where he says that Canada has never been more united. Frankly, it has been divided, and it has been mostly divided by our Prime Minister and his rhetoric.

I want to zero in on one thing the hon. member said. He mentioned two comments that were really interesting to me. One was about the rule of law and the other was the notion of opinion surveys. He said that opinion survey after opinion survey is behind the government.

When did the rule of law become subordinate to opinion surveys? Something is either right or wrong, so why can he not point to the legislation and say where the threshold is met? With respect, it is not met in these circumstances.

Mr. Terry Duguid: Madam Speaker, we are political creatures and all of us watch opinion polls. They are not the final word, of course, but they certainly show me that my constituents are behind the measures we have implemented, as a majority of Canadians are.

As far as the rule of law goes, we have seen law-breaking with abandon. Speaking of that, there was an abandonment of the citizens of Ottawa. As I mentioned, I am a resident of the downtown here, so I have experienced what they have experienced. The good folks of Ottawa and those dependent on our border communities deserve the rule of law to be implemented, and that is exactly what we are doing.

[Translation]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Speaker, the member accurately described the unjustifiable and unwarranted nature of these blockades. He talked about the need to remove them. I think we can all agree on that.

My question will be very simple. The first blockades, like the one at the Ambassador Bridge, occurred well before the Emergencies Act. Why was the same formula not simply reused in downtown Ottawa?

[English]

Mr. Terry Duguid: Madam Speaker, we all know that invoking the Emergencies Act sent a very strong message to the occupiers who were conducting the blockade. It enabled them to be dispersed. I do not know if the hon. member heard the speech from the member for Windsor West, but subsequently, at a number of our border crossings, those measures really helped to turn away convoys and prevent subsequent blockades.

The legislation is working. It will have to be ratified by the House tomorrow, and I look forward to that vote.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Madam Speaker, it was made clear early on during the occupation that crowdfunding and cryptocurrency were being used to fund illegal activities. This demonstrated a concerning gap in the reporting requirements.

Why did the government not take immediate action to ensure that the proceeds of crime and terrorist financing regulations were updated, so that these companies are not exempt from reporting suspicious transactions to FINTRAC?

Mr. Terry Duguid: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Vancouver East for raising this point, because it is an important one. Our laws need to be updated with some of these modern realities, such as cryptocurrencies, the influence of foreign actors and the impact of social media in driving people to these funding sites.

That's exactly what the finance minister has done. She has filled those gaps, and we will be better prepared for these kinds of illegal acts in the future.

• (1855)

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Madam Speaker, I rise in the House today as a matter of principle and with pride in my past. I began my career as a soldier in the Canadian Armed Forces. All I wanted throughout my mili-

tary career was to defend my country and its values. I can still say today that I am and will always be that soldier, the one who decided that law and order should be a priority for our country, for the safety of Canadians.

I served my country at home and abroad with the Canadian flag proudly on my shoulder. I served with Canadians from coast to coast to coast, soldiers who were proud, well trained and ready to support efforts to uphold the rule of law. I have personally trained and led soldiers in crowd control operations similar to what we have experienced in Ottawa over the last few days. I have been deployed to areas of Canada where the use of force was possible, without the need for the Emergencies Act.

Defending one's country and serving in the military requires unconditional dedication, but I can say that under this Prime Minister, patriotism is taking a beating.

The Prime Minister's legendary irresponsibility and arrogance did nothing to improve matters. That has been our experience for the past 23 days. A situation that should have been a protest became a siege in front of our Parliament because the Prime Minister did nothing to stop things from escalating.

I have also encountered some obstacles since the beginning of this siege. I come here to Ottawa every week to exercise my role as an MP, and I truly understand the people of Ottawa. That is why, on February 4, I personally posted a tweet asking the protesters to leave and clear the streets of Ottawa. They had made their point, and it was very clear to me that this needed to stop. I agreed with that.

Today we are here to debate the Emergencies Act. This shows that the Prime Minister has once again failed to break this impasse. He claims that the only available option to prevent trucks from blockading the streets is to invoke this legislation. However, the measures in this legislation go too far or have simply become obsolete since the day they were invoked on February 14.

I am going to dissect the order that was published on February 14 and on which members will be voting tomorrow. Many members have given speeches over the past two days, but I think we are forgetting to focus on what we will actually be voting on, which is a motion to confirm the invocation of the Emergencies Act, in accordance with section 58, in connection with the order issued by the Prime Minister on February 14, 2022, one week ago tomorrow.

The first part of the order states:

Whereas the Governor in Council believes, on reasonable grounds, that a public order emergency exists and necessitates the taking of special temporary measures for dealing with the emergency;

Whereas the Governor in Council has...consulted the Lieutenant Governor in Council of each province...acting with consent of their respective Executive Councils...

Statutory Order

This includes the governments in power and the premiers. There was already a problem on day one, since Quebec, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Prince Edward Island said no. There was therefore no consent since four provinces were saying no.

The order continues:

Therefore, Her Excellency the Governor General in Council...directs that a proclamation be issued

(a) declaring that a public order emergency exists throughout Canada and necessitates the taking of special temporary measures for dealing with the emergency;

This is how the motion that we must vote on tomorrow describes the state of emergency:

(a) the continuing blockades by both persons and motor vehicles that is occurring at various locations throughout Canada and the continuing threats to oppose measures to remove the blockades, including by force, which blockades are being carried on in conjunction with activities that are directed toward or in support of the threat or use of acts of serious violence against persons or property...

Maybe this is referring to blockades that were set up before February 14 or that ended on the morning of February 14, because what I just read out did not happen, especially not in Ottawa.

The second point reads as follows:

(b) the adverse effects on the Canadian economy...and threats to its economic security resulting from the impacts of blockades of critical infrastructure, including trade corridors and international border crossings,

All of this was over and done with before the Prime Minister even published the order on February 14.

● (1900)

Then there are other points concerning the economic relationship with the U.S. Once again, it is the same story. The Ambassador Bridge was cleared, the supply chain disruption was resolved and so forth.

Further down, there is mention of the potential for an increase in the level of unrest and violence. Violence is mentioned often in the declaration. Yes, it was very inconvenient for the city of Ottawa, especially when the honking did not stop, but I did not see any broken windows or acts of violence, except for what happened to journalists. If we compare this to protests that we see regularly in Montreal or elsewhere in Canada, where property is damaged and police cars are overturned, no such incidents occurred during the events we are discussing today.

The declaration that we will be voting on tomorrow refers to measures to regulate or prohibit any public assembly: "Regulation and prohibition of public assemblies that lead to a breach of the peace other than lawful advocacy, protest or dissent". This excludes basic things that most of the people who were there were asking for. I have a hard time understanding that point.

As for the so-called specified area, it was obvious that areas needed to be specified. I was awaiting a more detailed motion, but we never got any details. In the end, all of Canada is covered by the state of emergency declaration. No specific areas where it applied were ever indicated. Everyone knows it was Ottawa, because only Ottawa was left, but from a legal standpoint, we were not informed.

The next point concerns measures to authorize or direct any person to render essential services, such as removing, towing or stor-

ing vehicles. Under section 129 of the Criminal Code, the police can ask a towing company to tow a vehicle. That law already exists. This specific element was added to the emergency measures, but it already existed. It was not needed.

As for the financial aspect, the way it was handled is a bit odd. The government wanted to know where the money was coming from, and it wanted to freeze the bank accounts of those who made donations to the convoy, among others. We found out that the government got its information from a CBC news story. The government decided to take action under the Emergencies Act based on that story. There was not even a report from a national security agency or from the Department of Finance. The report was from the CBC. The government cannot just go off of that.

The Minister of Finance said that she has everyone's names. It is like a game where the government is trying to find out who made donations, who they made them to and where the money came from. Is it really trying to find out where that money came from in the interest of national security, or simply for partisan reasons? It is unclear.

There is not much we can support in everything I just talked about, but there may be one thing. Someone said that invoking the Emergencies Act would make it possible to impose stiffer fines and prison sentences. In a really urgent case, we would agree with that, but we are not at that point. The last point says, "other temporary measures authorized under section 19 of the Emergencies Act that are not yet known." Here we are, seven days later, and those measures are still not yet known, because nothing has been added. There is no new information.

Out of these 11 paragraphs, 10 do not pass the smell test. We will vote on them tomorrow. If only one paragraph of the declaration was inadequate, we would vote against the motion, but 10 out of 11 are inadequate. How could we support this motion to activate the Emergencies Act?

In closing, the popular perception will be that the Emergencies Act allowed the streets of Ottawa to be cleared. That is what the government wants Canadians to think. However, history with a capital "H" will show that it was all a bluff and that only the Conservative Party and the Bloc Québécois understood that.

● (1905)

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Madam Speaker, yesterday, the Premier of Alberta announced that he would be challenging the use of the Emergencies Act in court. However, on February 5, his own government implored the federal government to intervene and send help.

Can my colleague tell me why the Conservatives keep talking out of both sides of their mouths?

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Madam Speaker, I am only talking out of one side of my mouth.

Statutory Order

When a province asks the federal government for help, as was the case at the Summit of the Americas in 2001, where the RCMP was deployed in large numbers in Quebec City to support the Quebec City police and the Sûreté du Québec, was the Emergencies Act invoked? No, it was not.

It is possible for a province to ask the federal government for help in order to get more officers from the RCMP, for example, or from other police forces, without involving the Emergencies Act. I think that what the Premier of Alberta said was that he wanted help but did not need the Emergencies Act to be invoked.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

I am a little surprised by the position taken by the Conservative Party over the past few weeks. The Conservative Party is the party of law and order, yet several Conservative MPs supported a movement that wanted to use force to overthrow a democratically elected government. It says that right on its Facebook page.

Not only is the party of law and order supporting an illegal occupation, but its members are handing out coffee and pizza to people who are here illegally and are terrorizing and harassing Ottawa residents.

Does my colleague not think that his party is divided and is contradicting itself? Either they are in favour of the convoy, or they are against it.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Madam Speaker, from the very first day, what was the truckers' intent? It was to protest against a rule change brought in on January 15 that prevented unvaccinated truckers from travelling between the United States and Canada, even though this had been allowed for two years. Quebec has 9,000 unvaccinated nurses working in the health system.

Yes, the Conservative Party did believe that it was a laudable request. It was open to discussing it, but the government and the Prime Minister wanted nothing to do with it. That was the problem. Naturally, we were prepared to welcome these people who were coming to Ottawa to say that the rule that went into effect on January 15 was a problem for them.

Four or five days later, I tweeted that the protesters' message had been heard, that they could leave and that we would do something else. I did that, and so did other colleagues. Our position is very clear: We never did anything to encourage the siege of Ottawa.

[English]

Mr. Mark Gerretsen (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons (Senate), Lib.): Madam Speaker, this MP on February 4, referred to what is going on in Ottawa as "the Siege of Ottawa." In the same tweet he said it is an "occupation controlled by radicals and anarchist groups." Those are his words in a tweet from February 4.

However, many of his colleagues, in speech after speech, have referred to this as a protest with peaceful protesters. Will he at least acknowledge that he diverts from his colleagues who are calling this a peaceful protest? Does he still stand by his words that this was an occupation controlled by radicals and anarchist groups?

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Madam Speaker, yes, I did tweet that on February 4. I fully acknowledge that I tweeted that, and I still very much believe in what I said. After six days of the occupation in Ottawa, I decided that enough was enough, for me and for the people of Ottawa. My colleagues then also started saying that enough was enough, that they had gotten the message and that the protesters needed to leave.

My party therefore called on the protesters to leave downtown Ottawa, telling them that we had heard their demands. Was I the first to say so? Perhaps, but my party said so as well.

• (1910)

Mr. Bernard Généreux (Montmagny—L'Islet—Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, CPC): Madam Speaker, we are here on a rare Sunday evening in the House because this is a historic moment for Canada.

We are, of course, talking about the unprecedented invocation of the Emergencies Act, a law that was introduced by Brian Mulroney's Conservative government. It has never been used to this day, because the sponsor of the act made it clear that it was meant to be used only in the event of a threat to "the ability of the Government of Canada to [manage a situation that affects the] security and territorial integrity of Canada". There are four types of emergencies for which the Emergencies Act may be invoked: a public welfare emergency, a public order emergency, a national emergency or a war emergency.

The Mulroney government adopted this new act in the 1980s because it was seeking to limit the powers not only of its own government but also of any future government, to ensure that no individual rights could be violated through the former War Measures Act. Yes, that is the act infamously invoked by Pierre Elliott Trudeau in 1970, in a dramatic move that is still talked about 50 years later.

Clear guidelines have been established to justify invoking a public order emergency. In our opinion, the Liberal government has not met the criteria set out in the act. That is why we will be exercising our right, as parliamentarians, to vote against confirming the proclamation issued last week by the government.

Of course, as one might expect, the government argued that the trucker convoy in Ottawa had forced its hand and that resorting to emergency measures was necessary to remove them. I beg to differ.

Statutory Order

The reality is that the government does not know what it is doing. On February 11, the Prime Minister himself declared that local and provincial law enforcement had all the means necessary to respond to the situation on Wellington Street and neighbouring streets in Ottawa. However, three days later, he suddenly acted as if the house was on fire and whipped out the emergency measures without offering much by way of explanation.

I invite my colleagues to consult Hansard to confirm all the questions we have asked, including calling on the government to provide justification for its decision to invoke the Emergencies Act. The government has had five days to explain itself. However, it has not been able to do so satisfactorily, as my colleague explained a few minutes ago.

The order states that the federal government wants to stop Canadians from entering protest areas. However, the provinces had and still have this power, as we saw during the pandemic. As just one example, the Quebec government even split my riding in two in the spring of 2020, restricting movements from the Montmagny—L'Islet RCM to Kamouraska, with the help of the police. The Ontario government was similarly able to limit movements between certain regions, which it did.

Whether one is for or against it, the fact remains that the provinces already had the power to restrict people's movements for various reasons. Since the municipalities are creatures of the provinces, the Ontario government could exercise its own powers without the federal government using the Emergencies Act.

The House may recall that the Prime Minister pledged the emergency measures would be geographically targeted, but now we know they apply across the entire 5,000-kilometre breadth of this country.

The government also pointed to the threat of foreign political interference to give itself the power, in this order, to deny access to any foreign national entering Canada with the intention of participating in the convoy's demonstrations. Here again, the government already has this power. Our borders have been closed to foreign nationals for almost two years, thereby preventing them from coming to Canada for any reason deemed non-essential.

Even before the pandemic, travellers were required by the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act to justify the purpose of their trip, be it business or tourism. Any non-Canadian entering Canada as a tourist may be questioned by the Canada Border Services Agency to verify the accuracy of such a claim. If the authorities find that the purpose of the trip is other than stated, the traveller may be automatically sent back across the land border or, in the case of arrival by air, may be detained until they board a flight back to their country of origin.

● (1915)

There is a lot of redundancy in the measures invoked in the government's proclamation. We think that they were adopted by a government in panic mode that was desperately trying to appear as though it was doing something after the negative media coverage of the truckers' blockade in Ottawa.

Like all members of the House, we have seen that, over the past three weeks, there were a thousand and one reasons for the Ottawa police to take action and remove the blockade from the main road running east-west in front of the parliamentary precinct. Police could have taken action as of day one of the protest by enforcing the city's noise, idling control and parking bylaws, but nothing was done.

The Ambassador Bridge blockade in Windsor had major economic impacts across the country. However, last weekend, the RCMP and OPP were able to get the situation under control by arresting protesters even before the Prime Minister invoked the Emergencies Act. There were also other protests in other parts of Canada, and all of them were dealt with using laws that were in place at the time and are still in effect.

The Liberal government's argument that the convoy on Wellington Street would not have been cleared if it had not invoked the Emergencies Act simply does not hold water. Practically every protester arrested in Ottawa since Friday is currently facing charges of mischief or counselling to commit mischief, two offences that have been in the Criminal Code for years. To my knowledge, among the hundreds of individuals arrested, not one was charged with an offence under the Emergencies Act. To sum up, the government used a cannon to kill a fly.

I do not want to diminish the importance of what is happening in Ottawa. On the contrary, the repercussions on the residents have been awful, as we can all agree. That being said, as Conservatives, we have serious concerns about the precedent that the government is setting by adopting coercive measures that we are simply not used to seeing in a free and democratic society.

One of them is the measure to direct designated persons to render essential services such as towing. To my knowledge, the only people who can be compelled to render anything are members of the Canadian Armed Forces, under penalty of being charged with desertion. In fact, some professional bodies, such as physicians' associations, might also have their own rules of conduct. However, at no time during the pandemic did we see the federal government invoke a state of emergency or emergency legislation to get people to work overtime.

With the Emergencies Act, who knows if the federal government will one day see fit to order Canadians to render services against their will. The Liberals may well say that these measures are temporary, but once the toothpaste is out of the tube, it is very hard to put it back in.

We also have concerns about the Government of Canada giving itself discretionary powers to block or seize the bank accounts and credit cards of individuals who have supported the protest in recent weeks. Some of the convoy organizers may have broken Canadian laws, and they will have to answer for their actions in court, which is entirely appropriate. A judge could seize their assets and force them to pay fines and penalties to reimburse municipalities or other victims of their actions, such as businesses that were forced to close.

However, this usually happens after the defendants have been through criminal or civil trials, not before. The burden of proof for those affected by these emergency measures will be reversed. The onus will be on them to prove their innocence, whereas under normal circumstances, it is the Crown that must prove their guilt.

I did not donate to the convoy, and I obviously condemn the disruption caused to the residents of Ottawa, to all the businesses, to all the workers adversely affected by the closure of the Windsor-Detroit bridge, and to many others.

I have to wonder whether crowdfunding sites are doing enough to verify the identity of donors, and whether it is too easy for people to donate in someone else's name. This has happened.

One of my colleagues tweeted that a woman in his riding had donated \$50, and now her account is frozen. She is a single mother.

How is the government identifying these people? How will it sort out this mess if it turns out that these people have been falsely accused?

Invoking this legislation was unnecessary. Clearly, the government screwed up and wanted to take an unnecessary step far too quickly.

• (1920)

Mr. René Arseneault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his speech. I have admired him for some time, because we sat for a long time on the Standing Committee on Official Languages.

The hon. member for Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, who is in the same party as my colleague, admitted himself that Ottawa was under siege, that it was being occupied. In his opinion, the official opposition now agrees that Ottawa was under siege. I hear the opposition say that this is the first time the Emergencies Act is being invoked.

An hon. member: That is true.

Mr. René Arseneault: Madam Speaker, as someone across the aisle just said, that is true. I would like to know if my colleague has seen another Canadian city under siege since the law was passed.

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his question. The reality is that Ottawa was under siege. We never said that it was not. The problem is that the Ottawa police and city council did not act promptly, although they had all the legislation at their disposal to undertake the operation to clear the convoy. Other provinces did so in four different places before the Emergencies Act was invoked. Everything was cleared by means of the existing laws.

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, like the Conservatives, we disagree with the motion. However, I must say from the outset that we do not agree with the protesters, either. Unfortunately, I heard a number of Conservatives in the House say that there was a link to be made between the vaccine mandate and the protests outside.

Does my colleague agree with some of the members of his caucus who say that everything we are seeing right now is a result of

Statutory Order

the vaccine mandate and the provincial rules that to some degree limit personal freedoms?

I would like to hear what my colleague has to say.

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Madam Speaker, I was the first to condemn the vaccine mandate for truckers on December 15. I can assure the House that I have not changed my mind. As the hon. member for Louis-Hébert said earlier, the government used the election to sow division between the vaccinated and the unvaccinated in Canada. It is still doing so. The Liberal Party members are doing the same thing now. It was not necessary to impose this requirement on the truckers, since the government tolerated the situation for two years. The government did not present any valid studies to show that the truckers were coming into Canada with COVID. There was absolutely no need to impose this requirement.

[English]

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Madam Speaker, I am wondering if I could get comments from the hon. member. There was a joint column from former Conservative MP Peter MacKay and my dear friend the hon. Senator Vern White. I just want to quote it. It said this:

As a rule, let's affirm that negotiations with those committing illegal acts is a terrible precedent. National security threats, which we are now facing, need to be led by our national security force, the RCMP, through the use of the Emergencies Act, which the federal government invoked Monday. They have the strength, intelligence, methods and capability that no single municipality can muster.

I would like to hear the member's comments.

[Translation]

Mr. Bernard Généreux: Madam Speaker, what I am seeing today, and what I have been seeing from the beginning of the debate two days ago, is that the NDP has lost its bearings concerning this motion. I am putting it politely. The NDP always stood up for all Canadians. It always defended Canadians, but today it is joining forces with the government to vote in favour of this motion. That is totally unacceptable.

• (1925)

[English]

Mr. Brendan Hanley (Yukon, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I speak today from the traditional territory of the Ta'an Kwach'an Council and Kwanlin Dun First Nation, recognizing with honour the trust that the people of Yukon have bestowed on me to represent them in this House and lend my voice to this important debate.

I recognize also what a great privilege we have here to carry out this debate on some of the most fundamental tenets of our democracy in one of the most respected and successful democracies in the world.

As members of Parliament, we all have a responsibility to put partisan ideology aside, look at the best evidence we can find and set the way forward to preserve our democracy from any cracks in its integrity or threats to its survival.

Statutory Order

Today we are debating the invocation of the Emergencies Act, legislation that was passed in 1988 to replace the War Measures Act to ensure that in moments of crisis when existing measures are insufficient, special time-limited measures could be introduced federally to deal with the crisis.

As many have stated, this is the first time these measures have been enacted. I add my voice to those who agree that this action is necessary to put an end to the occupation of Ottawa, address the blockades or threats of blockades by these groups and address the threats to critical infrastructure.

Let me be clear: This is no longer a mandates protest. This is a siege, an occupation and a credible threat to our democracy. I will come back to that, but first I would like to offer some reflections on the pandemic and the many measures that have been put in place to respond to this public health crisis.

Fatigue and pandemic exhaustion simply from the length of this pandemic have fuelled much of the current unrest, unrest due not only to the two-year duration but also the many false endings we have seen. How many lights at the end of the tunnel will be seen before it really is not another train?

Almost a full two years ago, as chief medical officer of health for Yukon, I was involved in the first few weeks as we watched and prepared for the pandemic coming closer to Yukon. I remember fully the tears that were in the eyes of deputy CMOH Dr. Elliott when she had to announce the cancellation of the Arctic Winter Games, the first of many joyous events that fell in the path of COVID.

No long later, even before our first case, we declared a public health emergency, knowing that extraordinary measures would be required to fight this pandemic. When I announced Yukon's first cases and later Yukon's first death from COVID-19, those days are marked with searing clarity in my memory.

When we decided early on and quickly that the only way to protect ourselves from COVID would be to temporarily limit non-essential travel into Yukon and establish a quarantine requirement, we realized how drastic and serious a move that was. There were Yukoners who opposed that move, some vociferously, and we were acutely aware of the hardship and loss that those restrictions imposed.

However, most people supported the move. It gave us protection and allowed us more freedom within our territory. We united as a community and we managed to contain the impact of COVID to a minimum until the arrival of vaccines enabled us to gradually replace border controls with a vaccine strategy, well before most other jurisdictions with similar approaches.

Even before vaccines arrived, we opened borders when we could, even removing quarantine requirements for our B.C. bubble in the summer of 2020 to allow travel back-and-forth between B.C. and Yukon, providing a release valve for people to travel in both directions and for families and friends to reunite.

Largely, our strategy of containment worked. Were there costs? Absolutely there were. We shared the pain of elders in long-term care not having visitors, but we avoided outbreaks of COVID in long-term care and protected many lives. We saw families separat-

ed, families grieving the loss of loved ones in solitude, celebrations of all kinds cancelled or severely cut, workplaces struggling to keep up and tourism devastated, but because we had measures in place that were tied to the risk of COVID, we kept our society open as much as possible.

We had compensation, including substantial federal benefits that were supplemented by territorial government supports and allowed people and businesses to stay afloat despite incredible challenges.

I am telling this story because I wanted to help members understand that painful compromises and infringements on individual freedom had to be made in order to achieve a greater public benefit. We knew there was a cost and we did not hide that. We started early to measure and document the effects not just of the virus but of the consequences of restrictions.

● (1930)

There were mental health effects, including depression and anxiety, addictions and toxic drug deaths. A backlog of surgical health care services and screening was unattended to. There were children suffering from lack of socialization and physical activity.

As CMOH, it had always been my perspective to understand and address resistance and hesitancy. When vaccines arrived, through conversation and consultation, we could help determine what stood between anyone's beliefs and vaccines, work with that person or community and strive for ever-higher vaccination rates.

When we removed vaccine quarantine requirements for fully vaccinated people, the move was received with joy and relief. Of course, not everyone agreed or was pleased, but in allowing fully vaccinated people to have that extra freedom, we were able to achieve more people being able to travel, more families reuniting and more people getting vaccinated to enable our small population to weather oncoming waves of the pandemic.

Do vaccine requirements and mandates restrict individual freedom? To some extent, they do, but so do seat belts, drinking and driving laws, and other vaccine policies. In fact, many everyday laws and regulations keep us safe and allow us to thrive.

A greater public good should always be the aim. In the case of COVID vaccine policies, the public good is found in allowing sectors to reopen or reinvigorate, in allowing people's livelihoods to continue or in advising people to get vaccinated.

As the pandemic once again recedes, we should be well placed to reduce and rescind many of these requirements, especially as our tool box to tackle COVID is growing. These tools include better masks, better knowledge of how masks work, more understanding of the role of ventilation, an increasing panoply of vaccines, the arrival of effective treatments and even increased population immunity with the recent omicron wave.

However, let me be clear: We should not be in a rush to end our restrictions and policies. If we have learned anything, it is that public health responses should be swift in response to a threat and lifted slowly, in accordance with expert analysis of viral activity, including international surveillance and monitoring.

Unfortunately, the pandemic will not be gone overnight. There is a rush toward thinking that we are in an endemic phase, without even fully knowing what "endemic" means.

Let us note, for example, that in Denmark, where restrictions were rapidly dropped in a highly vaccinated population, a country often cited in the House as one whose policies we should adopt, we are already seeing concerning trends in increasing ICU and death rates. There is a cost, and that cost will be borne disproportionately by people at greater risk and susceptibility. They are people with disabilities, people who are immunocompromised and people who, for whatever reason, are not vaccinated.

I am concerned for other parts of the globe or a country where restrictions have precipitately been removed. We need a gradual and thoughtful way out of this phase of the pandemic, and we need to take considerable caution with what might be next.

Let us revisit the Emergencies Act and whether it was called for. As I said, I believe it was necessary, for all of the reasons that we have already heard on this side of the House. I, like anyone, have received emails and correspondence saying "support the convoy". I have even received some from people in Yukon. However, I have received concerned emails and calls from many others. One call from a Yukon resident representing many like-minded friends said to me, "You have to do something. This occupation and these blockades are unacceptable in a democracy. You have to do more."

Our capital city is being occupied. As anguished as Ottawa citizens have been, this call came from citizens of Canada 5,400 kilometres away. Ottawa being occupied is more than a city being under siege. People, including my own family members, are being subjected to fear. The downtown core is shut down like a war zone. This is about a disruptive occupation with a violent underbelly bringing our capital city to its knees.

It has been said many times, but please remember that the Emergencies Act is scalable, so that the response is proportionate to the

Statutory Order

threat. It is limited in time. It is limited in scope. It offers extensive parliamentary oversight, part of which we are engaging in presently, to ensure the measures introduced are not abused. Perhaps most importantly, it must be charter compliant—that is, it must operate within the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The act is designed to support provinces and territories that require additional authorities, but imposes no infringement upon the rights of citizens anywhere.

● (1935)

Some of my colleagues opposite have compared the Emergencies Act, even today, to the invocation of the War Measures Act in October 1970. Not to age myself, but I will. It is a day that, as a 12-year-old child, I remember well. I was not far from the age of my own son, who is 13 years old, and my grandniece Audrey, who celebrates her 12th birthday today in Ottawa. I wish Audrey happy birthday on this singular Sunday.

Back to 1970, when I was 12, I do remember the shock and pall with which the kidnapping of James Cross and Pierre Laporte, and later the murder of Mr. Laporte, rocked the country. That was a tense time and many of us are reflecting on Canada's experience and response in that time of fear, violence and threat.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): Order. Somebody seems to have their mike on, so we will take care of that.

There seem to be a lot of conversations going on in one corner of the chamber, and I would ask members to take the conversations outside instead. I have signalled a couple of times to members to reduce the sound. If people want to meet, the place to go is the lobby.

The mike that was on has been turned off, so the hon. member can continue his speech.

The hon. member for Yukon.

Mr. Brendan Hanley: Madam Speaker, let us be clear that 52 years later, we are invoking an entirely different and substantially refined piece of legislation. The Emergencies Act is not the War Measures Act. Indeed, the accountability mechanisms included in the Emergencies Act are a testament to the strength of Canada's democracy. I salute all those in this House in years gone by who worked to make it so.

Statutory Order

We know the steps that were attempted to reach a solution. For three weeks, Ottawa as a city was held hostage and occupied, forcing businesses that were poised to move on to the next stages of re-opening to stay closed, harassing and disrupting the life of communities, putting lives, homes and businesses at risk.

There has been much discussion, particularly from across the aisle, about how innocent and well behaved people attending the occupation were. Sure. I also walked around and people smiled and said good morning or good evening. I, too, saw the bouncy castle and the barbecues, the sing-songs and children playing, but I reject that these were simply innocent and peaceful protesters. They may have started with intentions to simply state their objections to the mandates, but by being present in the occupied city core, whether friendly or not, they were actively complicit in an occupation that had long ceased being a simple protest.

Others, including the testimony from my colleagues today, have well documented the other elements that led this well beyond a protest to an actual threat to public order: threats from the extremist elements that have brought this from protest to siege, the funding, the foreign influence, the disruption to citizens of Ottawa, the blockades that virtually stopped our trade with the U.S. in its tracks, affecting already strained supplies that have led to shortages all the way to stores in rural Yukon.

All Canadians have the right to protest, and I will always fight for that right. That right is enshrined and protected in our Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Our right to protest, however, should not infringe on the rights of others.

In Ottawa, the city has been occupied and, given the inability of existing levers available at the municipal and provincial authorities alone, greater federal involvement through this act was critically needed to lift the siege. I never thought that the word “freedom” could be co-opted into a threat, or that our beautiful national flag could become a symbol of occupation. The occupation of Ottawa must end, as it has, and we must move on from this. I believe the Emergencies Act was necessary to get us there.

As well as a public health physician, I am also, or at least was until recently, an emergency physician. There are two reflections I have, in closing, that I would like to share. Working in the emergency room, of course, can be very busy, as many will know from either receiving or perhaps providing or supporting the care. People can be mildly sick, critically ill or just worried. Our job is to tell the difference and to make a decision that could affect the rest of that patient's life. Sometimes, the decision can be made in seconds, sometimes hours, but decisions do need to be made, and sometimes many decisions have to be made each hour. Timely decision-making is critical.

Deciding to call a national emergency is similar. Was it necessary? If necessary, was it called too soon or too late? At some point, a decision must be made based on the best evidence available at the time. Similarly, since Ottawa's occupation is over and the blockade has ended, was invoking the act still a necessary decision? I am glad the decision was made. I am glad it was made only after many other efforts were made under normal laws and regulations. Those efforts were not working, certainly not for Ottawa and apparently

not for Surrey, and the risk of further blockades has continued to be acutely present.

Thankfully, we have public scrutiny and all the checks and balances and time-limited nature to help us ensure the intervention is as minimally intrusive as necessary. Perhaps for the next crisis, we will have better mechanisms in place to avoid having to trigger the Emergencies Act. In a similar future scenario, the precedent will be set, and so will experience with implementation of the act, thresholds and interventions that could render another invocation unnecessary.

The second reflection I have is that in the emergency room, every now and then there could be a violent incident in the department, one where prevention may not have worked and where attempts at de-escalation are clearly overwhelmed. In such cases, we would call on the RCMP, and on such occasions I would never be so glad as to see our friends in uniform. I felt a little the same way yesterday, after the previous three weeks, some of which I have spent in Ottawa. I felt grateful and proud of the professional way in which our combined police forces from all around the country, empowered and reinforced under the Emergencies Act, were able to de-escalate and end the occupation without significant violence. I want to thank all those brave men and women who helped resolve this crisis.

● (1940)

I know that many have expressed concern about the way policing failed in the initial weeks of this occupation, and how the response to this particular, mostly white-person, siege differed from police responses to recent indigenous and racialized protests. I want members to know that I share those concerns, and other concerns about how this crisis was initially handled and perhaps even enabled by local police. However, I also appreciate the professionalism and the successful end to this siege without violence, a testament, again, to the ability to act with sufficient numbers and coordination made possible under the provisions of the Emergencies Act.

I also want to thank all of our essential workers: our truckers, who have hauled goods all over the continent throughout this pandemic; our health care workers in both public health and health care who, even while I see another light in the tunnel, are preparing for whatever lies ahead; and indeed, all citizens who have stepped up and contributed to our collective journey through this pandemic. I thank them all.

I look forward to working with all members in this House in standing up for peace, order and good government. We have more than enough ahead of us to accomplish together.

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Madam Speaker, a number of earlier speakers made the point that the measures under the Emergencies Act are temporary in nature, yet the Minister of Finance just the other day said that some of the provisions dealing with financial services organizations, banks, credit unions and perhaps crowdfunding platforms will become permanent. I wonder if the member has a comment about that.

Mr. Brendan Hanley: Madam Speaker, I thank the member opposite from my neighbouring province for the question.

Again, I will come back to the limitations set around this act. It is temporary in nature, limited in scope and under a high degree of parliamentary scrutiny, including this debate, the setting up of a parliamentary committee and a sunset provision. I think there are many checks and balances embedded in this act.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I heard my colleague from Yukon say that the occupation of Ottawa was over. Indeed, we saw excellent work on the part of the police on the weekend. However, if the occupation is over, what is the point of invoking the Emergencies Act?

I would also add that, if the government still thinks it needs to be invoked when a crisis like this one is on the verge of being over, I hope that the country will never go to war under a government like this one.

● (1945)

Mr. Brendan Hanley: Madam Speaker, the situation is under control for the moment, and the use of the Emergencies Act is only temporary. We are waiting to see what happens next in order to determine when it will no longer be necessary. It is certainly not up to me to decide when it will no longer be necessary or how long it will remain in effect. However, I can say with confidence that invoking it provided all of the means and tools needed to act.

[English]

Ms. Elizabeth May (Saanich—Gulf Islands, GP): Madam Speaker, it is truly a privilege and an honour to speak with the member for Yukon. With his background, which he referenced in his speech, I am tempted to ask him questions about where he thinks we are now in the pandemic, but I want to stick to the Emergencies Act.

The member clearly is someone who looks for evidence-based solutions. Looking at the evidence, does he truly believe there was no other way to deal with the so-called “freedom convoy” other than access to the Emergencies Act?

Mr. Brendan Hanley: Madam Speaker, it is an honour for me to have a question from the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands, for whom I have a great admiration.

I am confident in all that I have learned and all that I have read and discussed, and in looking through the steps that were taken, that this was the right move at the right time. I harken back to what I said, that there was a ticking clock. One could wait and one could have many other options on the table that would all have taken time. Timeliness was part of the decision-making here.

It was appropriate and appropriately scaled, and it followed the appropriate steps. I do believe it was the only recourse at this time.

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am also thankful that the appropriate measures are being taken to ensure safety and security.

Before, we were hearing about limited police enforcement capabilities, and now we are hearing from law enforcement that these

Statutory Order

additional supports are helping to bring this matter to a peaceful end. Does the hon. member agree that the Emergencies Act is helping bring this unlawful protest to an end?

Mr. Brendan Hanley: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her dedication to many issues and concerns that we share in common.

I do believe, again, referring back to the fact that this will be scaled, focused and responsive, that the act was appropriate. I believe it was effective in bringing an end to the blockade, and it should be effective in maintaining order until such a time as, under expert advice, it is no longer deemed necessary.

● (1950)

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his intervention today. He spoke about knowing when it would be appropriate for the powers that are part of the Emergencies Act to stop. How will he know that? How will the Liberal Party give information to parliamentarians that it is in fact time for us to end the Emergencies Act powers?

Mr. Brendan Hanley: Madam Speaker, I thank the member for her dedication.

Certainly, if I think of my previous role, decisions depended on input from a variety of experts and from discussion with colleagues, as well as security assessments and briefings from intelligence officials. I would expect the same types of considerations to be put to cabinet to allow a determination of when that would no longer be necessary.

It is important to reflect that the degree of oversight, including the striking of a committee, would allow for transparency in the decision-making process that would allow us, hopefully as soon as possible, to be able to cease the invocation of this act.

Mr. Brad Vis (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, CPC): Madam Speaker, one of the problems I had with the member's speech is that he seemed to assume that the implications we are dealing with in respect to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and its relationship to the Emergencies Act have somehow already been tested.

I would encourage the hon. member to look at the Debates from April 1988, when MP Blackburn, a former NDP member from Brant, stated that Japanese Canadians who had been interned under the War Measures Act were very concerned that the Emergencies Act would not actually protect charter rights. To this day, there has been no reference to the Supreme Court on the application of the Emergencies Act.

To have it on record, is the member okay with that?

Second, I would hope that the member agrees that—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Carol Hughes): We are running out of time, so I will let the member respond to the first question, and if there is another question it can go to a different member.

The hon. member for Yukon with a brief answer.

Statutory Order

Mr. Brendan Hanley: Madam Speaker, I would say that the courts will rule on the threshold issue and on the constitutionality of the act, including any intrusion on provincial jurisdiction, so I think there is accountability written into this act through all the mechanisms I have mentioned. There will be a public inquiry. There are many opportunities to review the implementation of this act.

Mr. Kelly McCauley (Edmonton West, CPC): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to join the debate on the Emergencies Act. I hate to spoil the surprise for those waiting until the end of my speech to understand how I will vote, but I am going to come out early now and spoil it by saying I do not support this overreach by the government.

We have to ask how we got here today. I am sure the Liberals are saying “by Air Canada”, but I mean the crisis we are dealing with right now. Some think it was because of the trucker vaccine mandate brought in by the government about a month ago, and I have to wonder why, now, the government would bring this in.

At the very beginning of the pandemic, two years ago, before we had vaccines and before we knew much about COVID, truckers were able to come and go. They were deemed vital to the continuation of our economy, bringing food exports, so we were not putting any mandates on them then. During the delta wave, we had some vaccines, but not a huge part of the population had been vaccinated. Truckers were able to come into the country without having the mandate.

Here we are, now, where 90% of Canadians are vaxxed or partially vaxxed. We have had omicron wash through the country. Thankfully, due to the high vaccination rate and that it is milder, we have not had the problems and the issues of the first waves. Now, the Liberals decide they are going to hit the truckers with a mandate. There was no data to back it up and no reason, it seems, apart from politicking.

At the point where we are here with the crisis happening in Ottawa, some might think the tipping point was the Prime Minister in September, but it was reported in January, calling the unvaccinated racists, misogynists and extremists. The Prime Minister asked if we should “tolerate” these people, pitting Canadian against Canadian.

However, I think the roots of what is happening across Canada and outside this place, go back to the election. On July 13 the Prime Minister stated there would be no vaccine mandates. Two weeks later, when he called the unnecessary, unneeded election, he found out, through internal polling, that this was a wedge issue and he could wedge Canadian against Canadian and the electorate against Conservatives by flip-flopping and bringing in vaccine mandates and making it the prime election issue. It is quite funny, listening to the other side, especially the finance minister, calling Conservatives the party of flip-flop.

This country has had a number of distinguished finance ministers: Paul Martin, Jim Flaherty and Michael Wilson. Can members imagine any of these distinguished and fine finance ministers reducing themselves to name-calling, such as “the party of flip-flop”, like the current one? That seems to be the *modus operandi* of the government.

During the election, we had never seen protests like we did, caused by the current government. We had never had people out shamefully throwing rocks and pebbles at a prime minister until the government purposely wedged Canadians against Canadians.

We understand vaccines are important. We all know that, but pitting Canadians against unvaccinated Canadians for political gain is wrong, and it has led to what has happened outside. I have been doing this game for a long time. I actually started my political volunteering with a gentleman named Chuck Cook, who was the member of Parliament for North Vancouver and was the whip at one time for the Mulroney government. I helped out as a youth delegate alternate for Joe Clark, losing unfortunately. I campaigned from Victoria to Newfoundland, knocking at doors, and I have never seen such anger or so many Canadians turned against each other as I have because of the government turning one group against the other.

I once even actually door-knocked in the by-election in Davenport after Jack Layton passed away. I had never in my life seen a campaign where every single house had an orange sign throughout the entire riding. The support was amazing, but as a Conservative I was able to door-knock there with none of the vitriol we saw in the last election, again caused by the Prime Minister pitting Canadian against Canadian and wondering if we should tolerate other Canadians who have not been vaccinated.

When the truckers announced they were coming to town, the Prime Minister thought he could just demonize them like he did with other protests. If he called them names, they would simply go away, but they did not. The Prime Minister riled them up. Again, instead of discussing the issue, instead of debating it in the House, he called them names. He created the conditions and the anger and that stuck in Canada.

● (1955)

When we had rail protests a couple of years ago, crippling the economy, the port of Vancouver blockaded, the situation in Quebec with the lack of fuel was so bad that Alberta companies were talking about, heaven forbid, a convoy to bring propane to keep Quebecers heated. What did the Prime Minister do? Did he call them names? These were protesters who were throwing furniture in front of moving trains, hoping to derail them. Did he call them names? Of course not. He actually hurried and sent ministers out to negotiate. This is not a national emergency as much as the other side will claim. This is a political emergency for the Prime Minister.

On the act itself, since 1988, we think of all the crises Canada has faced, and there have been a lot, some major, some not as much. We had Oka. I remember Oka. The army was there against people with AK47s, and it was solved without the Emergencies Act. There was Caledonia, and again the protests two years ago with the rail blockades. The G20 summit protest, where we had over 1,000 arrests, violence in the streets and storefronts destroyed, was not a national emergency.

In 1997, we remember Vancouver during APEC, when the RCMP famously pepper sprayed protesters and then prime minister Chrétien talked about pepper being something to put on his steak. People do not realize that the RCMP feared for protesters' lives, because the government for the first time had allowed eight different nations to have armed security with their leaders. I am not worried about Bush being here and the U.S. being armed, but President Suharto, a strongman and thug from Indonesia at the time had armed security with him. The RCMP stated they were afraid Suharto's thugs would fire into the crowd and kill Canadians, but that was not an emergency under the act.

At the Coastal GasLink protest, we just saw that people broke in and tried to light a car on fire that had workers inside. They broke in with axes; there were millions of dollars' worth of equipment and, when the police were attending, they ambushed the police, throwing burning items at the police cars. Apparently that was not an emergency. I wonder if the government is actually going to try to seize some of the bank accounts of those supporting such things.

Are the Liberals going to investigate that? Of course not, because certain ideological protests are apparently more fair than others. The Liberals will try their best to trot out the various reasons that this is a national emergency. They try to claim, as we heard earlier in one of my interventions, that these people were trying to overthrow the government. Seriously, as if the hot tub time machine guys out there with the ludicrous online demand to overthrow the government are to be taken seriously, or the people calling in saying, "Have the Governor General replace the Prime Minister." That is not a serious issue.

Perhaps bringing out former prime minister Harper to be beheaded on the lawn of this place like the Toronto 18 planned to do could have been considered an emergency, but again, I do not think the bouncy castle people are anything that constitutes an emergency.

Earlier, when this first came up, I was heckled by one of the Liberals when I was asking a question about why they were able to clear Windsor, Surrey and the other border crossings without the Emergencies Act. Why do we need it? The Liberal MP yelled across that they might come back. I have to ask, when will this actually end for the Liberal government? When will the political emergency end if the government is saying secretly maybe they will come back and we will keep it going?

The Liberals have not justified in any way the use of the Emergencies Act. That is why I will not be supporting it.

● (2000)

Mr. Gary Anandasangaree (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.): Mr.

Statutory Order

Speaker, I must profoundly disagree with many of the premises of my colleague from Edmonton West's statement.

I want to probe into one issue that has come forth, which is the financing of these protests. One report says that 1,100 of the donors to this protest were also donors to the January 6 Capitol Hill riot. Of course, there has been a lot written about them and the motivations there. We also see the protesters here with very hateful flags and symbols, reports of shelters being overtaken, and so on.

Can my colleague opposite talk about the funding and, if he is worried about the impact of the funding on Canada's political system, what kind of impact—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Edmonton West.

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Mr. Speaker, it is an honour to get a question from my colleague. I appreciate the comment, and I do not want to be mean back, but I appreciate what he is saying. I am kind of stunned though. The U.S. treasury, its version of our Treasury Board, did an investigation on Tides. It found that money from Russia was being funnelled into Tides in the U.S.A. and that money was getting funnelled into Canada.

We knew about this. The government knew about that, yet did nothing. There were millions of dollars funnelled in through other environmental groups to fight development in Alberta, probably the Coastal GasLink protest. Why are those okay, but bouncy castle donations are not?

● (2005)

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on February 5, the Alberta government addressed an official request to the federal government requesting federal assistance in dealing with border protests invoking a necessity to intervene. It stated, "this complex and dynamic situation continues to impede the free and safe movement of not only Albertans, but also of critical goods and services vital to both the Canadian and American economy".

Is the honourable Ric McIver, Minister of Municipal Affairs of Alberta, completely off the track, or is what is good for Albertans not good for the rest of Canadians?

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Mr. Speaker, the member should know that what is good for Alberta is good for the rest of the country, as he knows from the equalization payments we pay out. He should note this as well, and he should not mislead the House, that Coutts was settled without bringing in the draconian Emergencies Act. It was settled using existing police powers, just like in Surrey, Emerson and Windsor, and just like it could have been done here in Ottawa as well.

Statutory Order

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I really enjoyed my colleague's presentation, in which he gave examples of situations that appeared to be far more serious, but for which we did not invoke the Emergencies Act.

What does he think of the fact that, three days before invoking the Act, the Prime Minister seemed to be saying that the police had all the tools they needed? Are the government and the Prime Minister not using this act to hide their incompetence?

[English]

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Mr. Speaker, it is great to see my colleague in the House. My answer is yes. As I said, this is a political emergency created by the government. It is not a national emergency. We have seen in bigger, more serious issues across the country, both in the past years and the past week. It can be solved with the current powers that the police have.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I have to say I am disappointed to see the dismissive comments made by the member in regard to unlawful activities that have caused a lot of real trauma to Canadians across this country. Using trucks as weapons of intimidation is not something to be dismissed.

Does the member acknowledge that hateful symbols and rhetoric did rear its ugly head during these occupations?

Mr. Kelly McCauley: Mr. Speaker, I have to say I am disappointed with the member's question. Clearly, she continues to politicize this issue. In no way and in no part of my speech was I ever dismissive of what was going on. We treat this issue very seriously. The reality is that the government bungled this situation. The government had ways to fix the situation, but it decided, with the help of its coalition colleagues, to use a sledgehammer to break open a nut.

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will start by taking note of the recent news that Her Majesty the Queen has contracted COVID. Reports tell us she is well and continues to perform light duties, but, of course, Her Majesty is 95 years old and this places her in a high-risk group, even for the relatively mild omicron variant. It goes without saying that every Canadian wishes her a prompt and complete recovery.

Let me now turn to the debate at hand on whether the House should vote to support or negative the government's February 14 proclamation invoking the Emergencies Act. I will frame my remarks by observing that it would be appropriate if the act were named the emergency powers act or the emergency measures act because the act allows the government, in extraordinary times and under a set of narrowly defined circumstances, to implement emergency powers and emergency measures, thereby temporarily acquiring extraordinary powers that intrude upon the rights and freedoms of Canadians in ways that are not permitted in ordinary times. Therefore, it is the powers being exercised by the government, under the authority of this proclamation, on which we are being asked to pass judgment.

I will argue that we should vote to negative the proclamation, not merely because the purported emergency could have been dealt

with by means less drastic than those contained in the Emergencies Act, but also because the most important features of the proclamation, which are designated by the government as the emergency economic measures order and the emergency measures regulations, assert powers that are not actually authorized under the act. Since these claimed powers are ultra vires the act, this part of the proclamation is itself unlawful.

I note that the Canadian Civil Liberties Association has filed a brief in federal court asserting that the order and regulations are also unconstitutional, because they represent a clear breach of section 8 of the charter, which prohibits unreasonable search and seizure. The argument of unconstitutionality is not my focus today, but I will observe here that the CCLA's brief is available online and should be read by everyone.

Let me return to my main argument. The Emergencies Act designates four types of emergencies. The type specified in the February 14 proclamation is called a public order emergency. The extra powers permitted under each kind of emergency are not identical. Those permitted under a public order emergency are listed in section 19 of the act. They include the regulation or prohibition of certain kinds of public assembly or of travel to or within areas the government can designate, and limits on the use of what the act calls "specified property". The act also allows the designation and securing of certain protected places such as Parliament Hill. It allows the government to assume control of public utilities or services, and it allows the government the power to compel any person to provide services that the state deems essential, such as, famously in this case, tow truck drivers.

In its February 14 proclamation, the government asserts its intention to exercise most of these powers and impose the maximum penalties the act permits on citizens who fail to obey. The government also asserts an additional power that does not exist under any reasonable reading of the act. This is the power that is the subject of the emergency economic measures order contained within the proclamation. This order makes it unlawful to make "available any property, including funds or virtual currency, to or for the benefit of a designated person". In other words, it is a person "engaged, directly or indirectly, in an activity prohibited by [the proclamation]", or a person acting on behalf of such a person.

This is a truly extraordinary exercise of power. The order and the regulations are the source of the government's claimed authority to deny access to bank accounts without seeking an injunction or a court order from a judge, and to force crowdsourced fundraisers to make known their donations to the state, the latter of which is apparently a measure the finance minister would like to make permanent.

The explanatory memorandum provided by the Minister of Justice, pursuant to subsection 58(1) of the act, offers the following description of what the regulations do. The regulations "prohibit directly or indirectly using, collecting, providing, making available or soliciting property to facilitate or participate in a prohibited assembly, or to benefit any person who is facilitating or participating in a prohibited assembly."

• (2010)

The first part of this prohibition is perhaps acceptable, since it is the assemblies themselves that are the events claimed to be emergencies: the so-called blockades and occupation. The second part, however, makes it unlawful to engage in any form of commercial or monetary transaction whatever with a person who is involved in any way with these assemblies. It is unlawful to pay their salary or wages. It is unlawful to provide them with food or shelter. Such persons become, in essence, unpersons, stripped of any power to engage in any economic activity whatsoever, and the rest of us can be punished for failing to make sure that this is so. Most obviously, the rest of us, all Canadians, may have our own assets frozen for failure to obey.

This claimed power is the basis for all the detailed regulations that follow, such as the requirement that all financial institutions and crowdfunding platforms must now reveal their transactions to FINTRAC, and that they are under an obligation to proactively comb through the accounts of Canadians, reporting their confidential financial information to the police.

However, none of this is actually authorized by the act. Section 19(1)(a)(iii) of the act does state that, in a public order emergency, “the Governor in Council may make orders with respect to the use of specified property”. The argument that absolutely all property in Canada, including all money, falls into this category is self-evident nonsense. It is like specifying that the entire universe is a subset of the universe. The purpose of this provision is clearly not to bring an end to the issues, the blocking of bridges and so forth, that the government asserts are the source of the purported emergency. The actual and rather obvious purpose of this provision is to destroy these citizens, even if they are ultimately found to be guilty of nothing.

For this reason, even if the measures contained in the emergency economic measures order and regulations were not an unconstitutional violation of section 8 of the charter, and even if they were not ultra vires the act, they would be impermissible simply because they are disproportionate. A disproportionate penalty is normally dismissed by a court. We are all familiar with how the courts have reacted to mandatory minimum sentences, for example, but the genius of this provision is that it destroys its victims in ways that cannot be overturned by the courts, just as they were not authorized by the courts. The prosecution is itself the punishment.

By the time a person is cleared or assigned a nominal fine for what the court determines to be a minor offence, they are financially destroyed. The only way we can prevent this catastrophe for people who are, as far as I can tell, mostly guilty of being naive, is for us to vote down the government's proclamation as fast as possible before citizens start losing their assets, credit ratings, jobs or contracts and livelihoods.

The problem to which I am drawing attention is part of a broader set of concerns, which are brilliantly summed up in a paper released today by Advocates for the Rule of Law. They write:

Maintaining this declaration of emergency will endow the Government of Canada with far-reaching powers and it will set a dangerous precedent. If the Government can declare an emergency based on these facts, then it will also be able to do so the next time there is a railway blockade, a threat to pipelines or any other endangerment of national infrastructure. To be sure, each of these is a serious situation that calls for decisive action. But normalizing the declaration of emergencies,

Statutory Order

especially before other less intrusive (but still significant) measures have been attempted, threatens to render hollow the rights and freedoms guaranteed to all Canadians...

For this reason, along with many others, I ask all members to vote to quash this dreadful and shameful proposition.

• (2015)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the comments made by the member. Both a Conservative, Stephen Harper-appointed senator, who used to be the chief of police for Ottawa, and Peter MacKay, a former strong Conservative leadership candidate, have been very clear in saying that we should in fact be voting in favour of this legislation and passing it.

Does the member have any thoughts as to why he believes those two individuals would have taken that position, given that the entire Conservative caucus has made the decision not to?

Mr. Scott Reid: Mr. Speaker, they are not the only Conservatives who have been in favour of it. Premier Ford has been in favour of it. This is the same Premier Ford who got rid of an entire level of government because of a vindictive desire to keep a rival, predecessor Conservative leader from having a chance at elected office. It is the same Premier Ford who, last year, engaged in shut-downs in which he made it unlawful to buy children's clothes and rain boots but people could buy garden gnomes. It is the same Premier Ford who invoked the notwithstanding clause so he could make a change to Toronto City Council structure.

I do not respect or admire many of the things that he says, and I do not think I am required to pick sides with him or Peter MacKay against the Conservative premiers of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, all of whom think this should not have gone in place, and two of whom, or at least one of whom, is looking at legal action to stop this terrible measure.

• (2020)

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I think there are two positions that should be avoided in this debate. There is the Liberals' position, which is to deflect attention from their contemptible conduct by using an act that is very severe, in fact too severe in this case. Then there is the position of my colleague's party, which tends to justify some of the protesters' resentment.

I would like to know what he thinks. In my opinion, it is important not to legitimize the protesters' disruptive actions.

Is my colleague prepared to condemn the fact that some protesters definitely went too far?

Mr. Scott Reid: Mr. Speaker, some of the protesters' actions, such as blocking bridges and staying in Ottawa too long, caused problems.

Statutory Order

However, it is not necessary to invoke the Emergencies Act to deal with the situation. I believe it would be preferable to use ordinary means.

[English]

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one thing that struck me as I was listening to the member's comments was that it seems to me the Conservative members are not taking any responsibility for their part in escalating the situation.

There is no question that the Prime Minister did not act. He sat on his hands for far too long and let the situation get way out of control, to the point where people's safety was literally put at risk.

There were Conservative members who actually applauded, and in some ways cheered on, the illegal occupation. From that perspective, would the member take a moment now to say to his Conservative colleagues that it was the wrong thing to do?

Mr. Scott Reid: Mr. Speaker, I am not advocating unlawful action. However, let us be clear about this. This was civil disobedience. Most of the people out there, in front of the House of Commons were engaged in an act of civil disobedience. Using martial law to crush civil disobedience is a terrible idea. I do not think I have to explain why that is the case. It is just obvious, quite frankly.

Before I sit down, I will just say that I got my start in politics with a fascination with civil disobedience. The first thing I ever wrote that was published was an essay about Henry David Thoreau's great essay on civil disobedience. Sometimes one has to say that a somewhat unlawful action that is not violent, and that has no danger of being violent, ought to be tolerated. There should be negotiations with folks, and that is the best way to cause them to move on for the benefit of all. That worked just fine with the border blockades, and it would have worked fine here. The use of violence was very much inappropriate.

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with the member for Drummond.

As we all know, the Bloc Québécois is opposed to invoking the Emergencies Act, especially as written in the orders, since the measures would apply to Quebec, even though the Quebec National Assembly, including the provincial Liberals, voted unanimously to oppose the imposition of emergency measures within its borders. As we all know, what Quebec wants, the Bloc wants.

Special legislation must not be used lightly. Its application must be measured and proportionate. The Prime Minister himself said many times that the act would not be used where it was not necessary. Therefore, why did he apply it to the whole country? Seven out of 10 provinces said no to the Prime Minister because they felt they had the necessary tools and resources to manage the crisis. Here is what the Quebec National Assembly said in its motion:

That the National Assembly be concerned about the current disruptions in Ontario and around certain federal border crossings;

That it affirm that no emergency situation currently justifies the use of special legislative measures in Québec;

That it ask the Canadian government to not apply the federal Emergencies Act in Québec;

That, lastly, the National Assembly reiterate the importance of close collaboration between the federal government and the Québec government, in particular to ensure peace of mind and safety for citizens in the Outaouais region who are affected by the ongoing demonstrations in Ottawa and who could have to bear the brunt of any further deterioration of the situation.

During the protests in Quebec City on the weekend of February 4 to 6, the municipal authorities were able to manage the situation very well without any major problems. There were no problematic protests in Quebec. One week before the arrival of the convoy in Quebec City, the City of Quebec published a detailed press release that listed the measures that would be taken. Hundreds of protesters and about 30 trucks moved around the city during that weekend. The Quebec City police service, the SPVQ, tolerated their presence but enforced municipal bylaws. The city diverted traffic from certain streets so that the downtown would not be completely paralyzed.

After the demonstration, the SPVQ held a press conference at which it said:

We believe...that we have fulfilled the commitment we made before the events began, which was primarily to facilitate and protect the right to lawful and peaceful protest, while keeping protesters, road users, users of public spaces, and residents safe, in addition to enforcing...laws and regulations.

The Liberal Prime Minister could have shown this kind of leadership as soon as it became clear, the Monday after the protest started, that the truckers were not leaving. In fact, he could have done it as soon as the convoy was announced, given all of the people who were involved. Some of them were even saying all along that they wanted to overthrow the government. The government could have taken much stronger preventative measures, but the Prime Minister chose to wait and the convoy grew. The protesters set up hot tubs, bouncy castles and a wooden structure in front of city hall, but nothing was done.

Because the Prime Minister refused to take action, the convoy started catching on across the country and even on other continents. The Liberal government seemed to always be one step behind. It did not start focusing on the Ambassador Bridge situation until the White House called.

Back in Ottawa, the government waited for a call from the Ottawa police and did nothing to reclaim the parliamentary precinct. The government dragged its feet, even as the City of Ottawa was asking for reinforcements. The Ottawa Police Service was asking for an additional 1,800 officers, but the federal government sent just a handful. Furthermore, most of the 275 RCMP officers who had been sent were assigned to protect ministers and Parliament. Just 20 of them were assigned to deal with the protests.

● (2025)

Commentators in Quebec are practically unanimous in saying that the Prime Minister was absent and invisible from the beginning of the conflict, when the City of Ottawa was asking for help. The federal government did not even try to speak directly with the organizers, unlike the City of Ottawa, which was successful in getting the trucks out of certain residential areas. The City of Quebec was also able to get protesters to co-operate.

Instead of considering this option, the Prime Minister kept disparaging the protesters, lecturing them and lumping everyone together. The hon. member for Louis-Hébert, himself a Liberal, condemned the lack of dialogue and the politicization of the crisis, which the Liberal government amplified for political gain.

In terms of public safety, there is little evidence that the government took all possible and necessary measures to put an end to the blockades before imposing emergency measures.

The only reason we are here debating this law today is because the Liberal government did not act quickly enough. The situation could be summarized as follows: The government did not try anything, and, not knowing what to do, it invoked the Emergencies Act when almost all of the occupations were over.

Almost all of the blockades had been dismantled or were on the verge of being dismantled when the Liberal government invoked the Emergencies Act. That shows that it might not have been necessary and that the authorities had all the tools they needed. Almost all of the blockades on the Ambassador Bridge and in Sarnia, Fort Erie, Vancouver, Emerson, and Coutts, Alberta, had already been cleared.

The Prime Minister explained to the House and in the documents appended to the motion that he feared that other blockades would go up elsewhere in Canada, given the mobilization happening over social media. An act like this is not meant to be invoked when the government thinks that something might happen. It is invoked to deal with a real or imminent situation. It might even be said that the Liberal government is adding even more fuel to the fire with these emergency measures, allowing extremists to cry dictatorship.

The situation could easily have been resolved without these emergency measures. I salute the excellent work done by all of the police forces involved, including, of course, the Sûreté du Québec. We saw that what was needed was effective police coordination and collaboration. It could have been achieved, and was certainly beginning to be achieved, without the application of emergency measures.

An editorial in *Le Devoir* called the emergency measures “too much, too late”. It called it another blunder by the Prime Minister because, once again, he failed to listen to Quebec or the provinces.

There was no justification for the emergency measures from the beginning. They are even less justified today, now that the blockades in Ottawa have been almost completely cleared. We must therefore vote against the emergency measures.

● (2030)

Mr. Angelo Iacono (Alfred-Pellan, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, my colleagues in the Bloc Québécois claim to be the voice of Quebecers in the House of Commons. However, the surveys published this morning show that 67% of Quebecers support the Emergencies Act, as do 55% of Bloc supporters. Has my colleague forgotten the voice of the people he is representing in the House?

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: Mr. Speaker, we are talking about a poll of about 300 people. In any case, what does my colleague think about the fact that the Quebec National Assembly voted unanimously against the use of emergency measures?

Statutory Order

After seeing what has been happening in Ottawa for the past three weeks, it is only natural that people want it to stop. However, putting an end to this situation does not require emergency measures.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, what I liked about my colleague from La Pointe-de-l'Île's speech was the way he summarized the events leading up to the current situation. He talked about the Prime Minister's lack of leadership and about how the PM hid in his cottage for three or four weeks and made only one public appearance where he insulted the people who had come to Ottawa to protest. It seems as though that is what convinced them to stick around.

I would like my colleague to talk about the consultations that the government says it held. The government told the provincial premiers that it was going to invoke the Emergencies Act. Usually, the purpose of a consultation is to convince people to see things our way.

How is it that seven of the 10 provincial premiers have spoken out against the use of this act?

● (2035)

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: Mr. Speaker, my Liberal colleagues often say in Parliament that they are in talks with the Government of Quebec, but there is a difference between talking and really listening and discussing.

As my colleague said, seven out of 10 provinces are against using the Emergencies Act. The Prime Minister says he consulted everyone and managed to get a consensus, but that is far from the case.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

We agree that the situation deteriorated and got way out of hand because of the Prime Minister's inaction.

As for the act itself, is my colleague not reassured by the fact that its application is limited to 30 days, that fundamental freedoms are upheld and that 20 members can call for its revocation and trigger a vote in the House?

The chief of the Ottawa Police Service said that these measures were necessary because they helped end the illegal occupation, including by increasing the fines, preventing people from being inside the perimeter without good reason, and forcing certain tow truck operators to remove the trucks from the streets. The chief of the Ottawa Police Service seems to think it was useful.

Does my colleague not agree with him?

Mr. Mario Beaulieu: Mr. Speaker, the chief of the Ottawa Police Service said that the Emergencies Act was useful. However, as constitutional expert Patrick Taillon said, the act must not only be useful, it must be essential.

Statutory Order

I think that everything we saw could have been done differently. For the past two weeks, we constantly asked the Prime Minister to meet with all stakeholders, to set up an all-party committee with all stakeholders in order take effective action on the ground.

I think we could very well have done that without the emergency measures. The government must not make a habit of resorting to these extreme measures for situations that can be resolved by other means.

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague from La Pointe-de-l'Île for his excellent speech and pertinent answers. I also thank him for agreeing to share his time with me, which he did reluctantly but in a spirit of fairness.

I would like to start by joining other colleagues before me in applauding the outstanding work of all the police services, which demonstrated extraordinary professionalism in this weekend's operations. I salute in particular the Parliamentary Protective Service, which we can all agree took very good care of us despite the high levels of stress right now.

Like my colleague who spoke earlier, I, too, want to commend the interpreters, who have had to deal with the House's changing schedule these past few days and who are doing a terrific job. I know that we are placing a heavy burden on the interpreters who interpret from French to English. I do not know how things are going for those interpreting the other way, from English to French, but I can say that we are extremely grateful for the work they do.

I think that anyone who goes into politics does so in order to effect change, whether big or small. We try to make our mark. Some will achieve this through local actions on behalf of their constituents. Others will achieve this by passing laws that will change our way of life or change the world more significantly.

Consider, for example, the bill to be introduced by my colleague from Salaberry—Suroît. It will make Émilie Sansfaçon's dream come true by extending eligibility for employment insurance benefits for people with serious illnesses to 50 weeks, rather than the meagre 26 weeks the Liberals have proposed.

Sometimes politicians' actions will have international significance, as is the case for my colleague from Lac-Saint-Jean and his efforts on behalf of Raif Badawi and the Uighurs.

I imagine that the desire and the need to leave one's mark are even greater when one is Prime Minister. I have to say, the current Prime Minister has his work cut out for him.

What will this Prime Minister be remembered for?

The question is all the more relevant now, when we are obviously at a historical crossroads. Quebec and Canada are experiencing a health crisis the likes of which has not been seen since the Spanish flu more than 100 years ago. This is the type of crisis that requires the kind of leadership we cannot find just anywhere.

Has the Prime Minister shown leadership?

I think this has been a recurring theme in this debate. I think the Prime Minister acted as if nothing were wrong. He buried his head in the sand, hoping in vain that the storm would pass.

By refusing to support this law, the Bloc Québécois is in no way minimizing the crisis we are in. It has been ongoing for weeks. It is real and historic, although it seems to be clearing up on Parliament Hill.

Could the crisis have been avoided?

Yes, of course, if the government had, from the very beginning, shown the type of leadership we keep talking about and if it had assumed its responsibilities. It had and still has a range of perfectly suitable measures at its disposal. It could have applied various measures from the very beginning. It could, for example, have sent more RCMP officers, as the Ottawa police requested. We would not be here now if these measures had been taken from the very beginning.

I particularly want to stress the incongruity and pointlessness of this government invoking the Emergencies Act. In the current context, the way this situation developed, the act is being used more as a distraction, so we forget the government's inaction and lack of leadership. It did nothing for weeks, but then, all of a sudden, it is an emergency and we must act immediately. Now it is telling us anything goes, do not ask questions, watch it go, it is taking care of it.

With this government, every crisis is the same bad movie. The storyline is easy. First, it ignores the problem, closes its eyes and says the problem will resolve itself, as if by magic. Then it blames someone else, like a city, a province or a nation. Eventually, it takes its head out of the sand, usually too late, and improvises something, a solution that could have been implemented long before everything escalated.

In my opinion, invoking the Emergencies Act today shows that the government does not have the backbone needed to manage a crisis. It does not see them coming. When they happen, it is incapable of managing them. There is proof enough of that.

On another level, we can look at what is going on in several departments right now, in particular immigration and employment insurance. Fires have broken out in many places, but no one in this government seems to be able to put them out. That is rather worrisome.

● (2040)

Instead of stepping up and showing leadership in a time of crisis, the Prime Minister opted for a disproportionate show of force with the Emergencies Act. We, as members of Parliament, cannot be complicit in this dog-and-pony show.

Could the government not recognize that there is currently no real need to apply this exceptional act? This is not a preventative act. It is meant to be applied to resolve an imminent or current crisis. The situation is essentially resolved, though. The siege and the occupation have been ended.

Applying the act under the current circumstances would create what I would definitely call a dangerous precedent. Furthermore, provincial governments and, in this case, the City of Ottawa, have other options to resolve the crisis. The blockade at the Ambassador Bridge was removed before the order came into effect. The border at Coutts has been reopened. The siege in Ottawa is over, fortunately.

Our police forces are capable and united, and all they want is to get the appropriate request, equipment and mandate. We saw what they were capable of when they joined forces to deal with a crisis. They were superbly effective this weekend.

I think the government wanted to beat its chest and make an impression so people would forget how low it has sunk and how it failed to show any initiative in the past few weeks. The deed is done. The government cannot maintain such an act by citing preventative reasons. There is no “just in case” in the act.

Earlier, I heard the argument that the chief of police and the mayor of Ottawa said the act had given them useful tools that they were thankful for. No doubt that is the case. I have a nine-and-a-half-year-old son. If he asks me for a calculator to do his math homework, that will help him, but I do not think that is the point.

Rather than stubbornly trying to invoke an act with a disproportionate impact and scope, which creates a precedent that neither Quebec nor the majority of stakeholders would want or approve of, is there any hope that the government will finally assume its responsibilities and show some common sense by choosing the path of dialogue, at the risk of coming up against differing opinions?

We can see the light at the end of the tunnel, and the time is fast approaching when we must let old wounds heal. We will have to make every effort to rebuild the bridges between us. Too many friends have drifted apart. Brothers, sisters, cousins no longer speak to each other because of the divisions caused by this crisis. Fixing that will take a lot of work.

I think that what we need to do now is look forward and examine the deeper root causes of the problems we have seen over the last few weeks. They need to be addressed without delay to avoid the turmoil of a possible future crisis.

Earlier, I asked what kind of legacy this Prime Minister will leave to history. I only have one answer: The ball is in his court because, for now, we might remember him the same way we remember other prime ministers who have let Quebec down over the years. I will spare members from having to hear the examples because there are many that come to mind.

There is still time for the Prime Minister to do something different. He could be in the same league as the great leaders who led this country through world wars and other crises we have faced in the past. He could be a great leader, a unifying force, a reassuring presence to those who agree with him as well as those who will take a little convincing that he knows what he is doing.

One way for him to leave a legacy would be to increase health transfers and give the provincial and Quebec health care systems a chance to recover. My Bloc Québécois colleagues have said this ad nauseam, and the premiers of Quebec and the provinces have been

Statutory Order

unanimous in calling for it. A better-funded system will mean fewer deaths the next time there is a public health crisis. It will protect our health care systems from becoming overburdened and give us a chance to make it through crises. It might even put a little shine back on the Prime Minister's reputation and leadership.

● (2045)

[*English*]

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am sure I will get another opportunity at a future time to talk about the type of legacy that this government and the Prime Minister will be able to leave, but for now, with regard to the Emergencies Act, it is important for us to recognize that by enacting it, we have enabled people like the interim chief of police here in Ottawa and other law enforcement agencies to access laws that will assist them in dealing with things such as the illegal blockade. We know that for a fact, and there are many individuals out there who support this initiative.

My question for my friend is this: Does he not see the benefit of having targeted actions taken, such as not being able to use children as a form of blockade and having additional fines in place to protect our borders for international trade and downtowns from being blockaded in the future, if in fact that were—

The Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Drummond.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Martin Champoux: Mr. Speaker, obviously an excessive law will provide effective tools, but does that mean they are justified? Does it take a baseball bat to smash a mosquito, or would a fly swatter or even a hand do the trick?

This calls for a measured, predictable, proactive response. It is best to let people do their jobs and give them the tools they need when they need them.

We saw this crisis coming. It took weeks to plan the convoy. We knew days in advance that it was coming to Parliament Hill. It was predictable and could have been stopped. We have had protests in Quebec and Canada before. This is not the first. It could have been handled just fine without this law, which I feel is excessive.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, to continue the logic of the Liberal member who just asked a question, I have to say that never in my life have I had a police force or an acting chief of police turn down more powers for their officers. I have never heard a police chief or a police force say that they would like to carry out searches without a warrant. I think that this is true for everyone. The police will never say no to more powers.

I would like to hear my Bloc colleague's views on that.

● (2050)

Mr. Martin Champoux: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Calgary Shepard for his question.

Statutory Order

I must say that I completely agree. There are things that may take longer, but they lead to the same outcome. Bank accounts can also be frozen by applying for a court order if there is good reason to do so.

I spoke earlier about predictability and about having a little bit of foresight on events that are going to happen. This one was very predictable, by the way. Again, I think that this law is excessive. I always find it a little odd to agree so fully with my Conservative colleagues, but it is a good thing from time to time.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for his speech. I consider him to be a fair and thoughtful member of the House of Commons.

I would like to ask him if he believes that the government could bring in legislation to combat money laundering quickly enough to deal with the current situation.

Mr. Martin Champoux: Mr. Speaker, I must thank my colleague from Edmonton Strathcona and tell her that I am extremely impressed by her question in French. I congratulate her.

Yes, I think that we are currently reaching what I would dare call an end to the crisis. It is not the time to turn the page and close the books. I think that tools need to be put in place in order to deal more effectively with future situations such as the one we have just gone through.

I completely agree with the idea of bringing in legislation to address money laundering, particularly the financing and the sites of this type of activity. We could certainly debate it in the next few weeks.

Mr. René Arseneault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague from Drummond for his speech and especially for his masterful use of the French language in this place.

I would like to ask him how he can state that the city of Ottawa has been under siege and then, in the same breath, suggest that the Emergencies Act is being trivialized.

Mr. Martin Champoux: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

I do not know where he heard me say that the use of the Emergencies Act is being trivialized. That is not what I said, but I do think that it is excessive. The act is far too powerful a tool for what we needed at the time.

I am not saying that the use of the Act is being trivialized, but I do condemn it for the overreach that it represents.

[English]

Mr. Patrick Weiler (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I want to start by noting I will be sharing my time with the member for Halifax.

I appreciate the opportunity to take part in today's critically important debate at a difficult time for our country. It is difficult because it pains me to see the lengths that those who descended upon Ottawa and our border crossings across the country, and those who sympathized with them, felt they needed to go just to have their

voices heard. It pains me to see the response that was necessary to restore order in our country.

For three weeks the occupation of Ottawa's downtown core has forced businesses to close, putting thousands out of work. It has restricted the movement of essential workers and goods and has threatened the health and safety of the city's residents. Since the blockades began at the Ambassador Bridge in Windsor, over \$390 million in daily trade with Canada's largest and most important trading partner has been adversely affected.

Border blockades have stretched as far away as the Pacific truck crossing here in B.C., causing significant damage to our supply chains and our economy, and even reconstituted yesterday. As the Deputy Prime Minister has made clear, these costs are real. They threaten businesses big and small, and they threaten the livelihoods of Canadian workers just as they are working hard to recover from the economic damage caused by COVID. They also threaten our reputation as a reliable trading partner. Clearly, this is unacceptable.

These illegal blockades and occupations are not just a threat to our economy. The leaders of these activities are not just calling for their voices to be heard. They are calling for Canada's recently democratically elected government to be overthrown through threats of violence and coercion and by holding our cities and our supply chains hostage through illegal activities that rob fellow citizens of their rights.

The leaders of these protests are supported by a vast, coordinated and well-financed international network of disinformation that is seeking to sow doubt in our country's institutions, in independent media and in science. It is a network involving the alt-right that promotes xenophobic and racist views that, despite our hopes that Canada was immune from it, presents a real and present threat to our democratic institutions.

It is a coordinated effort to use mistruths and half-truths to misrepresent constantly evolving scientific evidence as a reason to attack and discredit expert opinion. It pains me to think that in Canada we are talking about fake news, yet here we are. This coordinated effort has exploited the very real frustration that we all feel having lived through this pandemic for two whole years. It has exploited people's legitimate desires to gather, let loose and enjoy the company of others by using conspiracy theories that scapegoat the Prime Minister, governments, experts, the media and shadow elites, rather than recognizing that we all face one common enemy: the virus.

I do not want to paint all the people who have attended these protests or those who sympathize with them with the same brush. I have spoken to many who have legitimate concerns and see this as an opportunity to express the frustration that we all feel. Coming to Parliament to make our voices heard in peaceful protest is a sacred right that we all must protect. I want to assure the folks that have reached out to me by phone, email and social media that they have been heard. What we are debating here today is not about silencing their voices, but rather re-establishing order and restoring freedoms to those who have had them taken away.

To the measure at hand, on February 14, the Government of Canada appropriately declared a public order emergency. This order is effectively and peacefully putting an end to these illegal acts. Make no mistake. This is an extraordinary and unprecedented measure that was invoked in the context of ongoing border blockades, which became necessary after weeks of impasse with the occupation in Ottawa and after all other measures had been exhausted. It comes after occupiers had been directed to leave for weeks, after additional resources were provided to the police of local jurisdiction and after coordinated efforts of law enforcement were not able to rectify a solution nor remove the illegal blockade in Ottawa.

This is not the first resort and it has not been used lightly. Contrary to what many believe, it does not suspend the application of our rights and freedoms. This act is replete with checks and balances to ensure it is not abused. This is an, at most, 30-day time-limited measure overseen by a committee of parliamentarians that is proportional, targeted and will be followed by an inquiry. It can also be revoked by Parliament at any time, and it is our duty to ensure that these powers are used prudently and only so long as they are needed.

The measures being implemented allow the temporary designation of secure areas to prevent blockades, allow for the freezing of accounts of those financing illegal activities and other assets used in the furtherance of these illegal activities, allow the RCMP to enforce local bylaws, bring law enforcement capabilities from across the country to bear and importantly enable the government to commandeer tow trucks to finally move the blockade. This is precisely what we have seen happen in the last week.

● (2055)

We have heard from the opposition that these powers are not necessary, so I want to quote the interim Ottawa police chief. He said, on Friday, "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." I want to thank law enforcement for their professional work to carry out this operation, largely safely, and the vast majority of the protesters who eschewed violence and went home peacefully. I also want to thank members of the media for putting themselves in harm's way to cover the events of the past few days in the face of so much abuse.

I have had constituents question whether there was, in fact, a public order emergency, as the act requires to trigger this measure, so I want to touch on that briefly. The Emergencies Act states that the threshold that must be met is a reasonable belief that a public order emergency exists. Public order emergencies are defined as se-

rious threats to the security of Canada, and such threats are defined by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act as including:

foreign influenced activities...that are detrimental to the interests of Canada and are clandestine or deceptive or involve a threat to any person

threat or use of acts of serious violence against persons or property for the purpose of achieving a political, religious or ideological objective within Canada

activities directed toward undermining by covert unlawful acts...to lead to the destruction or overthrow by violence of, the constitutionally established system of government in Canada

We know that over half the donations made in furtherance of these illegal blockades came from international sources, thousands of which funded the January 6 insurrection in Washington. Also, there have been serious threats and destructive acts to individuals and businesses in Ottawa, and the stated purpose of this enterprise was to overthrow the government. Therefore, from my reading, this threshold is clearly met.

Many have raised concerns about the precedent that using this act presents, and while this act must always be used sparingly, I believe it is warranted in this situation for the reasons I mentioned before. I would also counter that we need to be similarly concerned with the precedent that would be set if we did not act. The precedent would be allowing an openly seditious movement to be legitimized, and to legitimize the methods of blockading critical infrastructure and of seeking to hold cities hostage for weeks on end with the goal of forcing a change in government policy or of the government itself.

I would agree we should never have ended up at this point. We should not have had to resort to the Emergencies Act, but here we are. The last few weeks have revealed vulnerabilities in our law enforcement system, and it is incumbent upon us as parliamentarians to learn from these illegal blockades, and who and what was behind them, to take remedial action and to take seriously the threat that misinformation and foreign influence pose to our democracy. If we can do that, we will ensure that tools, systems and protocols are in place to prevent similar situations from occurring without the need to invoke the Emergencies Act, as we must do now.

I also want to clarify a distinction and misinterpretation that sits at the heart of these illegal activities, and that is the idea of freedom. Freedom cannot be absolute in a free and democratic society. Freedom is not a form of unbridled licence to do whatever we want regardless of how it harms others. Personal freedoms must be limited when they take away the freedoms of others. The flip side of personal rights and freedoms is societal obligations and responsibilities. They must be balanced with the rights and freedoms of others. That is how a democratic society functions, and that is why these blockades must end.

Statutory Order

Political protest is protected by our charter right to freedom of expression, but there is no right in this country to block critical infrastructure, to harass fellow Canadians, to vandalize businesses and homes, to defecate in the streets, to saddle others with the cost of policing these actions or to saddle our country with billions of dollars in economic losses from illegal blockades. None of these aforementioned acts can ever be considered a legitimate form of expression.

I have to say that I have been embarrassed by what I have seen in Canada over the last month, from the hateful symbols we have seen in public and hateful political rhetoric to the horrible messages my staff, many of my hon. colleagues and I have been receiving. We need to be civil. We need to be better. We need to be able to truly listen to the ideas that differ from our own without pointing fingers and calling each other names. As elected representatives of Canadians, that starts in this House.

With that, I look forward to questions from my hon. friends.

• (2100)

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Mr. Speaker, I will ask the member a question. He said that the point of all the protesters was to overthrow the government. I have been closely following the Ottawa Police Service and they are now laying out charges against people they detained and arrested. I have noticed that nobody has been charged with treason, conspiracy to commit sedition, seditious intentions or rioting.

I wonder if the member can please explain to me how the government can claim something rhetorically and amp up the language in this chamber, as we talk about civil debate, when the charges being laid by police services and prosecutors do not match what the government is claiming these protests were about.

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Mr. Speaker, I do not want to comment on the ongoing investigations right now, but what I will say is that the freedom convoy's stated purpose was to do just that, to overthrow the democratically elected government that we are all honoured to sit in today. Those ideas and that intent were made very clear from the beginning, but I will not comment on the ongoing investigations that may be taking place right now.

Ms. Rachel Blaney (North Island—Powell River, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member, who is also my neighbour, for his intervention today.

When we look outside and see what has happened and talk about extremism, one thing I heard during this time from some members in the House is that there are "a few bad apples", and this is very concerning to me. We all know that there are a few bad apples in every group, but the point is not the bad apples: It is the people who stand with the bad apples. If we look at our history on this planet, it is when people were quiet, when they minimized what was happening, that really terrible things were the outcome.

I wonder if the member could speak to how important it is to stand against things that are extreme and make sure that we are not complicit in things that put us and our democracy in huge trouble.

• (2105)

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. neighbour, the member for North Island—Powell River, for her

very important question, which is also to point of the member opposite who asked the previous question.

Certainly not all those who are involved in these debates hold those views, but we need to be very careful that those views are not normalized within Canada, that seeing swastikas and Confederate flags is not normalized and kind of swept under the rug as being just the acts of a few folks. We need to be very vigilant on this point, as I mentioned in my speech earlier, and the real threat that it could pose to our society if it becomes normalized. I completely agree with the comments and suggestions of the member.

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, what does my colleague think that it would take to revoke the emergency measures?

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the question.

I do not want us to have to use these measures for long. In fact, we cannot use them for more than 30 days. However, we have already seen the impact they had on downtown Ottawa and elsewhere in the country. Investigations are already under way.

I look forward to seeing the response from the Minister of Public Safety. We must not put these measures in place if they are not necessary.

[English]

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.

I take this member's remarks to be that in his view, the temperature really has to be dialed down and that we have to really watch that things do not become normalized. I wonder if he can comment, when it comes to normalizing things, on the Prime Minister's lack of apology to the member for Thornhill for the comments he made in the House last week.

Mr. Patrick Weiler: Mr. Speaker, I think we all need to be very careful about what we say in this House and what we say in public. I mentioned in my speech that we do not want to be calling people names and we do not want to be pointing fingers, and that is the responsibility that we all need to take to heart to make sure that we are doing better, because we are setting an example for Canadians. We are here to represent Canadians, and that is a responsibility we need to take very seriously.

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, when historians write this chapter of the Canadian story, what will they say about the protest? I do not question that for some it was about vaccine requirements for truckers crossing the U.S.-Canada border, nor do I question that others came here earnestly to protest pandemic restrictions and the disruption these public health measures brought on all of us. Although I do not share their views, vigorous debate and peaceful protest make Canada's democracy stronger. However, for more than a few and for many of those making up the core of organizers themselves, who sat atop a chain of command throughout this three-week occupation, the purpose was something far more sinister and one that betrayed the earnest initial intent of the others. These individuals came to upend the democracy upon which our country is founded. They had their demands and soon resorted to intimidation, lawlessness, force and even sedition to see them met, regardless of whether those demands were wise or even fell within the jurisdiction of the federal government at all. Thwarted by the incoherence of their own demands and frustrated by our resolve, they laid siege to our capital with the stated intent to overthrow the democratically elected government and install themselves in our place.

Today, it is evident that they have failed. With the powers of the Emergencies Act, law and order have returned to the streets of Ottawa. Our democratic system, as well as the rights and freedoms that it provides, carries on. Members of Parliament, duly elected, continue debate on the Emergencies Act, invoked in the spirit of peace, order and good government.

Today, it is evident that this measure was necessary, so let me speak to why I will be voting in support of invoking the Emergencies Act. I have the benefit of addressing the chamber following this week's police operation that finally brought the occupation to an end. What we saw was a methodical, orderly and restrained operation by professional police from across the country working as one.

We know now just how integral the powers of the Emergencies Act were to the success of that operation. When asked if the Emergencies Act was necessary, the interim chief of the Ottawa police, Steve Bell, could not have been more clear: Police could not have done the job they did the way they did it without the powers provided by the act. That comes from the senior commanding officer for the operation.

He is not alone. Many more academic, legal and security professionals have come to the same conclusion, including a Harper-appointed senator, Vernon White, a former Ottawa police chief himself, and security expert Wesley Wark, a senior fellow at the Centre for International Governance Innovation, whom I know to be a respected voice by many in the chamber, including my Conservative colleagues. It is, of course, worth noting that a recent poll indicated that two-thirds of Canadians support this measure as well.

Specifically, the Emergencies Act provided these key powers that were absolutely critical. One, it allowed police to establish a secure perimeter around the downtown core, preventing additional trucks or groups from joining the occupations. Two, it allowed Canadian financial service providers to immediately freeze or suspend accounts of an individual or a business affiliated with these illegal

Statutory Order

blockades until such time as that illegal activity was ceased. Three, it compelled private companies to provide towing services, fully compensated, to remove trucks and other vehicles from the occupation zone. It also allowed for the RCMP to enforce municipal by-laws, among other important measures.

Some have asked, which is responsible, whether the Emergencies Act is an overreach. In fact, that is the essential question before Parliament today. It is a minority Parliament that will make a determination on the matter and revoke the measure if it is not agreed to by the House. It is an excellent example of the oversight built into the legislation written by the Mulroney government. With due credit to the Progressive Conservative Party at that time, other accountability measures include a special joint committee of both the House of Commons and the Senate to review the government's actions under the act on an ongoing basis, a 30-day sunset clause to make sure that these powers do not extend longer than necessary and an inquiry after one year.

Importantly, the Emergencies Act does not limit charter rights; rather, it is subordinate to those rights. Still, a common refrain from the occupiers is that the Emergencies Act and the police operation to end the lawlessness in our capital trampled on their charter rights to peaceful assembly. That is simply false. The charter protections extend only to assembly that is peaceful. The charter does not protect one's right to seriously disturb the peace, as the occupation of Ottawa has done over the past three weeks. It also does not provide cover for illegal activities carried out during a protest, like the flagrant disregard for the law that has been well documented in the streets of our capital throughout the occupation, with hate crimes, misogyny, arson, vandalism and intimidation. The list is long.

● (2110)

Importantly, the Emergencies Act is democratic. It is an act of Parliament already debated and passed by both Houses, given royal assent, proclaimed and gazetted some 30 years ago. Its application is now being democratically debated in the House of Commons.

Did the time-limited, targeted and proportionate powers of the act work? For the first time in 23 days, quiet has descended upon Ottawa. The streets of the city have finally been returned to its residents, law and order have been restored and the Emergencies Act has performed its function as intended by the Progressive Conservative government that enacted it in 1988.

Statutory Order

Three decades later, we find ourselves in the unexpected situation in which the party of Mulroney opposed invoking the measure, while the Liberals and the NDP support it. Our parliamentary system requires Her Majesty's loyal opposition. It is an essential part of the checks and balances that keep our country on a stable footing and ensures that the diverse voices of Canadians are heard in this place. However, when crisis strikes, as leaders we are called to rise above our political divides, for we all take an oath as members of Parliament to act in the best interests of our country.

Sadly, that is not what we have seen from the Conservatives throughout this occupation. Through their actions in the last three weeks, it is all too clear that the Conservative Party has strayed from its origins as a party of principle and accountability. Its proud tradition as the party of law and order lies shattered in the dirty snow on Wellington Street. The Conservatives have put their own political gain ahead of the country's security, prosperity and democracy. As their party clamours for an ever-smaller and more extreme faction of the far right, they abandon the hard-working conservatives who look to them for a credible potential government. Instead, the Canadians they have left behind watch in horror as our police and media are spat on and assaulted in the throes of a lawless occupation that today's Conservative Party has chosen to defend.

With the help of the powers of the Emergencies Act, the occupation has come to an end. The trucks and the protesters have gone home, the people of Ottawa are breathing a sigh of relief and Parliament has resumed its important democratic function. However, something has changed in Canada or has perhaps been uncovered these past three weeks. Some will say the divide has grown wider. As political columnist John Ivison wrote yesterday, "It feels like Canada is splintering into two tribes—the intolerant, authoritarian woke lunatics on the left and the spittle-flecked, hateful lunatics on the far-right." The optimist in me wants to deny it, but I cannot. At times, that is how it feels. Perhaps that is how it feels to a growing number of Canadians as well after these last two years or after these last 23 days.

We need to log out of social media, put down our phones, stop doom-scrolling and ask why it is that, despite a pretty strong consensus on the effectiveness of the broad pandemic response from all parties and all orders of government, it still feels at times like we are more divided than ever. The answer may lie in the palm of our hands in the devices we carry with us day and night. Our political beliefs and grievances are being fed to us by opaque algorithms that serve a singular function: profit for the massive tech giants that dominate our online realm. These platforms prey on our psyche, weaponizing our emotions to keep us all online all the time and garnering untold fortunes in ad revenue. Disinformation, a tool of foreign influence in the cyber-era, goes unchecked. Division, it turns out, is a money-maker. The scene was set as the pandemic locked us inside, and the very same screens they told us would keep us together served instead to push us further apart.

It is my hope that the joint committee and inquiry required in the Emergencies Act will take a hard look at the fundamental role that online platforms played in stoking the flames of division, anger and disinformation, making it harder for any of us to see the other side, as though we live in two entirely different and separate universes, unrecognizable to one another, with incompatible ideas of truth,

media and science. Until we address this, I fear we risk repeating the crisis, and who knows in what terrifying form next time. We must act before a generation of children, our children, online as they are, grow up never knowing that there was a better way to be.

● (2115)

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.

I find it rather disheartening that we have an ode to hope here, but partisan rhetoric really couches it. One thing the hon. member said in his speech is that public opinion is on his side. I would like to ask him when the rule of law became subordinate to public opinion. He cited those two principles and sometimes they are incompatible, but if the rule of law is superlative, why is he not abiding by the rule of law?

Mr. Andy Fillmore: Mr. Speaker, I cannot discern a sensible question, but the member did mention political rhetoric. I note that the interim leader of the member's party stated recently, "It's time for MPs to return to the House and restore unity, wholeness and hope back to our nation." I would suggest that perhaps the member and his interim leader should focus on restoring unity, wholeness and hope back to their party as we watch it self-immolate in real time day by day.

● (2120)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mario Beaulieu (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Mr. Speaker, for operations that call for multiple police forces to intervene, emergency measures are not needed.

Why were such operations not carried out sooner?

[*English*]

Mr. Andy Fillmore: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned in my remarks, the interim chief of police in Ottawa was very clear in stating that he was unable to do his job without the act. We have seen the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police underscore that same truth: that this act was a required action to have been taken by the government to help police forces across the country deal with the blockades.

I would further say that there are checks built into this act. The special committee that will be set up to review the actions under the act will shed more light on the question the member asked, but for now I am very satisfied that we are well within the confines of the law.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Mr. Speaker, with the urgency I am hearing today, why did it take the Prime Minister so long to take this seriously?

Statutory Order

Mr. Andy Fillmore: Mr. Speaker, I would remind the member that multiple premiers across the country reached out and asked for help. When that happened, the government got busy invoking the act. It was very important to give the provincial governments the required time and space to act under their own laws and rules, but when it became clear to some of the premiers, and to the federal government, that the additional powers of the act were required, the Prime Minister and the cabinet acted very swiftly. The results, as we saw, were delivered very swiftly as well.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I think of the impact this has had on people, communities and jobs, whether in Alberta, Manitoba or Ontario. Blockades prevented half a billion dollars in trade between two countries. It had a horrendous impact. Ottawa was shut down by illegal blockades. There were written requests from the Province of Alberta and the Province of Manitoba to the Prime Minister and the Government of Canada asking for support. This is one of the tools that we provided, and it has been effective.

Could the member provide his thoughts on the importance of the tool?

Mr. Andy Fillmore: Mr. Speaker, we all have stories about how the lockdown here and the blockades elsewhere have had a personal impact, but I want to address the part of the question about the interruption of trade, the job losses, the shuttering of automobile factories in Canada and the loss of wages that resulted from these blockades.

I was privileged to be part of a call two days ago with the Canadian American Business Council. I found it necessary to reassure our American trade partners that the government had acted at a national level to ensure that such disruptions would not happen again. It was important for them to hear that, and they were edified by it. We must never let it happen again.

Mr. Philip Lawrence (Northumberland—Peterborough South, CPC): Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart I rise today. This is a solemn day that will no doubt be remembered by Canadians for decades to come. Given the gravity of today's debate, I believe it is incumbent on all members to speak candidly, earnestly and sincerely.

Today we are debating the Emergencies Act, but before I outline why the invocation of this act is capricious and completely unnecessary, it is best to provide some context to how our country got to where it is right now.

Unfortunately, it is truly clear that Canada is a highly fragmented country facing significant economic problems that put our entire prosperity at risk. Our economy has just experienced significant job losses. We are experiencing an inflation crisis, with inflation at a 30-year high of 5.1%. That has real consequences.

There are people, many Canadians, who cannot afford the bare necessities of life. We have over \$1 trillion in debt that will doubtlessly be pushed onto future generations as they pay for our expenditures. Our country is divided. It is divided between west versus east, rural versus urban, freedom versus security and vaccinated versus unvaccinated.

Now our Prime Minister has invoked the Emergencies Act. It is an act that suspends the civil liberties of Canadians such as section 2 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, including the right to freedom of assembly and freedom of association, and section 8, freedom from unreasonable search and seizure. The police can, literally without warrant or warning, seize one's property. They can arrest Canadians for simply assembling.

Never in my life or in my wildest dreams did I ever expect to have five police checks just to get to my office. Never did I expect that in Canada.

The invocation of the Emergencies Act has also given the government the right to freeze bank accounts without judicial oversight. This can create financial ruin by putting an asterisk beside someone's financial credit rating for life. This might mean that a mortgage never happens, or that a son or daughter never goes to university, because of this asterisk.

Why was this done? According to the Minister of Justice, when he was talking to the media, he said that the grounds could be for as little as supporting causes the government disagrees with. This is shameful. When someone's bank account is frozen, they are effectively being removed from society. They may not have money to pay for food to feed their children, for gasoline for their cars to get to work, or for electricity to heat their homes. The government may literally starve and freeze Canadians into submission.

I watched this weekend as protesters were arrested at gunpoint. They were pepper sprayed. Several protesters were trampled by 2,000-pound horses. How could the Prime Minister ever let the situation get this bad? This is not our Canada.

Let us go back and look at what led us to these circumstances. It makes sense to start with the change in tone from the Prime Minister heading into his unnecessary \$600-million election. The Prime Minister, based no doubt on polling numbers, made a calculated effort to demonize unvaccinated Canadians and to capitalize on the growing frustration of vaccinated Canadians with the unvaccinated. The choice led the Prime Minister to demean and stigmatize, as the member for Louis-Hébert so eloquently said.

The Prime Minister said they are extremists “who do not believe in science, they're often misogynists and often racists. It is a small group that muscles in, and we have to make a decision in terms of leaders, in terms of the country. Do we tolerate these people?”

That is repugnant. I have sat here listening to Liberal member after Liberal member saying that we needed to de-escalate and bring down the heat. They should start by talking to the Prime Minister.

Statutory Order

Also, it was no doubt a part of the Prime Minister's strategy to demonize and exploit cleavages in our society when he decided to implement a 14-day quarantine period on truckers: our heroes who, throughout COVID for two years, when there were no vaccines, went across. They braved the delta variant. They braved the omicron variant.

● (2125)

They were our heroes, and now they are demonized. All we have asked, and all the media and the opposition members have asked, is for the government to show us its math. Instead, we get outdated, irrelevant talking points. We have cost thousands of Canadians their livelihoods for purely partisan politics. This is disgusting.

We presented the most utterly reasonable motion. Our party simply asked for a plan to end the mandate. It was just a plan. The Prime Minister remained defiant, refusing to support the plan. While the rest of the world opens up borders, while the rest of the world eases restrictions, our Prime Minister will not even give Canadians, who deserve hope, a plan for that hope or a plan to return to normality. Once again, the Prime Minister has chosen politics over science and petulance over leadership. This crisis could have been avoided with strong and compassionate leadership. Instead, the Prime Minister chose partisanship over statesmanship and division over unity. This has led us to the current crisis.

The Prime Minister's unnecessary mandate and divisive rhetoric have caused frustrations to boil over. Canadians from across the country began to spontaneously demonstrate and show their dissatisfaction to the Liberal government. Unfortunately, some of the movement splintered into illegal activities, including the blockades at the border crossings at Coutts and the Ambassador Bridge. Fortunately, the provinces were able to resolve these matters peacefully, and they ended with hugs instead of violence.

Here in Ottawa, while many of the protesters were salt-of-the-earth Canadians who wanted to express their grievances, unfortunately there were some who expressed hate. They should all be individually accountable for those expressions. In addition, there were approximately 150 vehicles parked in front of Parliament for over three weeks. Those vehicles disrupted lives. They made it impossible for individuals to go to school or to go to work. They needed to be moved, and that cannot be doubted.

To end this, though, the Prime Minister overreached. He invoked the Emergencies Act. The Emergencies Act is fairly clear and fairly prescriptive. It requires that three tests be met: first, that the public disorder created a threat to the security of Canada; second, that it was national in scope; and third, that the public disorder could not be resolved by other means.

Let us review those criteria, one by one. Was there a security threat to Canada? A security threat would presumably be something extremely significant. A clear example would be the potential use of a nuclear or chemical weapon. Those are security threats to Canada. Another would be a paramilitary force threatening to overthrow the Canadian government.

What we had here were 150 illegally parked vehicles and a mass of disorganized people, some of them who had repugnant views, including the overthrow of the government, but there is no actual in-

telligence I have seen or any evidence that there was actually the ability to threaten our government. I walked through there for three weeks, and if in fact the government allowed all MPs to walk through these protests and there was an imminent threat to our government, that is the most malfeasance and insecurity our government has ever had.

Second, it is national in scope. Three weeks ago, we may have had an argument about this. When the Coutts and Ambassador Bridge blockades were happening, we might have had an argument, but they are gone. Do members know what? So is the protest in Ottawa. Why has this not been revoked by now? Where is the threat? Where is it? It is clear. It is done.

Third, it cannot be resolved by other legislation. Clearly, it could be and it has been, at the Ambassador Bridge and otherwise. It is true that it would be helpful. A sledgehammer would be helpful to crack a walnut, but it would not be necessary. That is the case here.

Ultimately, this is not about truckers or one's vaccination status. This is about the future of Canada. Do we want a country that is free to dissent? A government that controls the discourse, controls our lives. Do we want a country where environmentalists fear that we are not doing enough on climate change? Do we want a country where Quebecers can share their request for greater autonomy? Do we want a government where a Conservative can share his contempt for the government? I believe all of these voices should be heard.

● (2130)

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, that was an impassioned speech. I have to admit that I am struck by much of what the member said. In the spirit of thinking through some facts, he mentioned that many people were trampled.

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, I did not. I said two.

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed: Mr. Speaker, two people were trampled. News reports say the reporter actually admitted that there was, in fact, no trampling. I just want to make sure we clarify the facts in the House.

I would ask the following question. The other side does not trust the government. Would the members trust the national security adviser to Stephen Harper, and the former director of CSIS, Richard Fadden? He said that it was appropriate to invoke the Emergencies Act, particularly as it related to the federal banking measures, which were not covered under other legislation.

Statutory Order

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, I will be kind and generous and just say that the individual misheard. I clearly said two, and if you check the records you will hear that. If you want to watch the video, it is available. Just watch it, because it is on film. There are two individuals, including one lady who has a scooter or walker, who get trampled by a 2,000-pound horse. I have horses. Let me tell you, that is going to hurt a whole lot, and that happened. You can shake your head all you want, but just look at the video.

I went through it blow by blow. There is not a national security threat that cannot be resolved by other legislation. It is clear. I do not know how else to say it.

• (2135)

The Deputy Speaker: I just want to remind the member that when we are answering questions, to put them through the Chair and make sure we are not taking this so personally. I know it is late in the day, and we all have lots to say and lots to comment on and question.

The hon. member for Jonquière.

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, in my speech, my colleague said that the government put political interests, partisanship, ahead of science.

He said that by making reference to the motion the Conservatives moved, citing Dr. Theresa Tam. Personally, I have heard many Conservative colleagues say that vaccination is annoying, but the science tells us that we have to get vaccinated.

Is my colleague in favour of vaccination? Does he agree that the best way out of this crisis is vaccination?

I would like his opinion on that.

[English]

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, I am sorry. It must be the end of the day, because I am a little passionate. My apologies to the member if I got a little passionate.

I am definitely pro-vaccine. I am proudly vaxxed and I believe everyone should be vaccinated. However, we also need to not demonize people who think differently from us. We live in a free country, and when we demonize people, calling them misogynist and racist, that is not Canadian. That is not our Canada.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his intervention in the House. I have worked closely with him on the direction and control bill that he brought forward, and I am quite pleased with some of the work he has done in the House.

As we look for solutions to the crisis facing Canadians, one of my questions is how we deal with foreign funding or illegal funding of domestic terrorist groups. Would he support urgent legislation being put in place to prevent domestic terrorist groups from being funded?

Mr. Philip Lawrence: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her comment. I have enjoyed working with her on Bill S-216 and, if I am not being too bold, walking with her to the House earlier.

I would say that this is an area of study and it is an area where we need to look at these new technologies. Unfortunately, the government has been behind on many things, including reviewing how cryptocurrency works in this context. We need to look at crowd-funding. We need to review all of these topics.

Mr. Rob Morrison (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC): Mr. Speaker, the government has cited a public order emergency throughout Canada as its justification to invoke the Emergencies Act. It is wrong.

In this chamber, the Prime Minister said he invoked the Emergencies Act because the situation could not be dealt with under any other law in Canada. That is false. The leader of the NDP talks about tools available, should the government abuse the power provided within this act. However, he has missed a critical point, which is that the abuse has already happened. Neither of them is listening to Canadians; they are instead choosing a path of divisive policies, distinctly separate from democracy and the voice of Canadians.

Freedom is at the heart of democracy, and the right to choose is at the heart of freedom. Let me say that again: The right to choose is at the heart of freedom. Freedom is what so many hundreds of thousands of Canadian women and men have paid the ultimate sacrifice to defend.

A Métis man in my riding of Kootenay—Columbia wrote me this week to tell me a story of his family's commitment to preserving and securing democracy, and his concern about the current government actions. He told me the story of his great-grandfather, who was wounded in the First World War. He holds tightly, as a reminder of how he came to be free, the very bullet that tore through his great-grandfather's leg. He also told me that his grandfather fought in the Canadian First Infantry Division, which made its way through Ortona, Italy to stop Hitler's advances through Europe.

These are but two examples of hundreds of thousands of Canadians who have sacrificed for our freedoms, the very freedoms the Liberal government has restricted.

Why did the Prime Minister go directly to invoking the Emergencies Act? He had numerous opportunities to address the situation peacefully over the past few weeks, yet he chose to do nothing. I can think of four reasonable actions that would have allowed us to avoid the difficulties we have faced. The Prime Minister could have sent a delegation. The Prime Minister could have sent the public safety minister or the emergency preparedness minister. The Prime Minister could have met with opposition leaders, like the Conservative leader requested. Finally, the Prime Minister could have met and listened to these Canadians himself. Of course, the government could have removed COVID restrictions and vaccine passports at our border crossings and airports.

Statutory Order

However, listening, the one thing that would have helped de-escalate, is the very thing he did not do. Having a significant background in law enforcement, I know that the basic rule of law is to listen to concerns and work towards a peaceful resolution, not to enter into a fight first. I cannot imagine what would happen if every police officer went to a call and did not listen to the issues first. Dialogue is significantly more productive than the Emergencies Act.

Instead, what the Prime Minister decided to do was further ratchet up, escalate and divide Canadians with hurtful rhetoric. Canadians are not buying divisive rhetoric. The Prime Minister no longer has footing rooted in democracy, and all members of the House have a simple choice to make. Do they side with freedom and the institutions of democracy, or do they side with the Prime Minister and the leader of the NDP, who want to seize the bank accounts of Canadians with whom they disagree? Apparently, accounts have already been frozen. This sets a precedent that for all illegal blockades of roads, logging sites, pipelines or railroads, the future funding is subject to this process.

Going back to the Emergencies Act, I choose freedom. Let us not be so foolish as to water down the significance of this moment, our obligations to those we serve and the impacts this will have on generations that follow. The decisions we make in this chamber on this issue will reverberate through the halls of history, and we will be held to account. The choice is simple: Protect and defend democracy or tear it down. I will be voting to defend it.

We must not accept a situation where it is up to a prime minister or any member of the government to decide, outside the laws created in this chamber, which protests are legal and which are not. We surely must not tolerate a scenario where families are separated because their ideas or beliefs are different from those of the prime minister or the government of the day.

Kootenay—Columbians see this as being about a Prime Minister's ego, about a lack of leadership and weakening precedents. I would like to take this moment to speak to those members of the Liberal caucus who are feeling uneasy about being whipped to a vote they know to be wrong. Their country needs them to uphold the values of democracy and freedom. Our country will be strong and free long after we leave this place, and it is our responsibility to ensure it is so.

The Emergencies Act was not invoked during fears and protest around the Spanish flu, which took 50 million lives around the world. It was not invoked during the Great Depression and the workers strikes in the 1930s. It was not invoked during the crises of Oka or Ipperwash, or in the aftermath of 9/11.

• (2140)

During my time in law enforcement in British Columbia, the act was not invoked to solve the riots in Penticton and Kelowna, where downtown storefronts were destroyed. It was not invoked to address a month-long illegal standoff at Gustafsen Lake, one of the largest in the history of the province. There were RCMP members shot, helicopters taking rifle fire and landowners unable to go home. I was at this event and can say with certainty that it was much like a war zone, in British Columbia, Canada, and there was no Emergencies Act invoked.

Currently, there is an illegal blockade and protest at the Coastal GasLink drill site on the Marten Forest Road near Houston, B.C. On February 17, there was an attack on a number of CGL employees and RCMP, and a member was physically injured in the attack. Initial damage to equipment and buildings is estimated at over \$10 million. RCMP are investigating mischief, assault, criminal harassment and man traps set purposely to injure police. This appears to be a violent, illegal action that the Emergencies Act would support law enforcement in, especially given that its financial support, from GoFundMe.com, has financing from outside Canada.

Where other methods and authorities exist to deal with disagreements, governments should use these methods and authorities. Governments should not subject free people to abuse of wide-ranging, freedom-altering overreach. I stand before members today on behalf of the people I represent and the thousands of phone calls and emails from individuals concerned about their charter rights and freedoms. I stand in this chamber, after a lifetime of experience within the RCMP, to explain to the Prime Minister and his colleagues in this House that he is wrong in his actions. Police agencies have the tools they need, but it starts with dialogue.

The government had numerous other legislative options it could have considered before going to the extreme of invoking the Emergencies Act. The act makes it clear it is only meant to address urgent and critical situations that cannot effectively be dealt with under any other law in Canada. The government wants the public to believe otherwise, but in fact it does have the power to direct the RCMP under section 5 of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act.

The government did nothing for weeks and is now taking unprecedented steps that are not necessary. Regardless of the talking points being used by the government and what it would like Canadians to believe, the fact remains that the Prime Minister's actions represent real limits on our charter rights.

Civil liberties, the rule of law and democratic norms are all principles that require constant vigilance to defend. The measures under the Emergencies Act raise serious questions with respect to the rights of Canadians. Section 2 guarantees our freedom of association and assembly. Section 7 guarantees our right to life, liberty and security of the person. Section 8 guarantees our protection against unreasonable search and seizure. How and why can Canadians be assured the government is protecting our rights with this extraordinary and unprecedented invoking of the Emergencies Act?

The following organizations have now come out publicly against the Prime Minister's overreach: the World Sikh Organization of Canada, the British Columbia Civil Liberties Association and the Canadian Constitution Foundation. This is in addition to opposition from the governments of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta.

Who wholeheartedly agrees with the Prime Minister and the Liberals? The NDP, that is who. Twenty-five votes in this 338-vote House separate the will of Canadians from democracy. As Canadians learn about the Emergencies Act and the NDP support for it, they are sounding alarm bells. The silent majority is awake. Canadians are watching and will not forget the decision we make in this chamber on this issue. Freedom will prevail on Monday, or it will prevail when the government falls. Make no mistake: Freedom will prevail.

However, the current leader of the NDP is supporting the Prime Minister at any cost. We arrive at this unfortunate moment as the direct result of failed leadership by the Prime Minister and his government.

I implore all colleagues to take note: Future generations will read and learn about their actions and their support and abuse of power. It will be recorded in history, written in textbooks and taught in classrooms. This wayward Prime Minister lost control long ago. Opposition to the NDP-supported Liberal overreach is growing. Invoking the Emergencies Act is clear government overreach, and the Conservatives will oppose it.

I want to add that I really appreciate the thousands of individuals in Kootenay—Columbia who have reached out to me, hoping common sense prevails. It is difficult to understand the federal government when so many provinces have eliminated most COVID restrictions. For example, I was in Calgary and there was no vaccine passport. Therefore, why does the federal government continue with vaccine restrictions at federal-regulated locations, border crossings and airports? We would not be here if the government followed common sense and science as its provincial partners are doing. I hope the government starts to listen. We need Canada united and proud. It is time.

• (2145)

Mr. Andy Fillmore (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I have not had the pleasure of meeting the member yet, but I look forward to meeting him and working with him productively in the House.

I thank him for his invitation to vote against the motion confirming the declaration of emergency, but I must assure him that I will be voting in favour of it. I must also remind him that, in fact, two-thirds of Canadians support it, including 75% of Canadians in his own province of British Columbia, 72% of Canadians in Quebec and the Atlantic provinces, 65% in Ontario, 57% in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and 51% of Canadians in Alberta. In fact, a majority of Canadians in every province support the invocation. By the way, 82% of Canadians believe that premiers who lifted restrictions lifted them too quickly. That is 82% of Canadians.

The member mentioned that one of the actions he wished the Prime Minister would have taken was speaking to the protesters. I

remember a press conference in the early days of the protest and it looked like it was a small, confined basement room somewhere. The Conservatives were asking the Prime Minister to speak with this group.

Why would the Prime Minister of any country empower illegal occupiers with a conversation? What message would that send to future occupiers?

Mr. Rob Morrison: Mr. Speaker, the question really is why the Prime Minister or members of the government did not go talk to the individuals who were here and organizing those events to see what they wanted and what they were going to do, rather than sit in here and do nothing. I said that is an option the Prime Minister had. He also could have sent the public safety minister or the emergency preparedness minister. He could have just opened the dialogue and that is what is missing here. There was no dialogue.

• (2150)

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I do not want to be a wet blanket; far from it. I am being a little cheeky now, but I have to say, I find it rather surprising that we actually agree with the Conservative Party on the issue of freedom.

I wonder if they will stop there. If I think of conversion therapy, medical assistance in dying, and the right of women to control their bodies, the Conservatives have generally been a little more reserved when it comes to talking about freedom.

Does this signify a new beginning for the Conservative Party? Are the New Democrats not becoming more like the Conservatives? I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on that.

[English]

Mr. Rob Morrison: Mr. Speaker, I can say it depends, but on a serious note, I have always been that way for rights and freedoms. That is where I have been and, since I have been elected, that is where I will stand.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): Mr. Speaker, one of the issues the member did not touch on was the impact of this illegal occupation on the residents. It took a private citizen to bring the matter to court. In fact, it was reported in the media that she was threatened and attacked.

Do the members have any comments for the residents who suffered through all of this, who received threats and harassment? What are his comments? Do they not have rights and should their safety not be protected?

Mr. Rob Morrison: Mr. Speaker, it is really up to the police to respond to those issues and they could have responded. I believe they have already talked with the government and they responded as they felt appropriate.

Statutory Order

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the mayor supports the Emergencies Act. The local police force supports the Emergencies Act.

Why does my colleague not think this is necessary when people's lives have been impacted and business supply chains have been impacted? Why does he not think it is important?

Mr. Rob Morrison: Mr. Speaker, I never said it was not important. For example, just before COVID we had the railway blockade where \$6 billion was lost for our economy and we did not react to that. When she asks that question, I will say I do care and I think we should be doing something. I do believe we do not need the Emergencies Act to keep our streets safe.

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I will be sharing my time with my hon. colleague from Newmarket—Aurora.

[Translation]

The right to protest is a fundamental right in this country. It has been used repeatedly in Canada for causes that have helped us grow as a society. Think of women's suffrage, the end of racial segregation, the rights of LGBTQ2+ people, and the process of reconciliation with first nations, Métis and Inuit people.

Unfortunately, we are seeing this right to protest being hijacked by far-right populist movements, jeopardizing the common interest of Canadians, the public order, democracy, the parliamentary process and the people who are duly elected to represent Canadians. This is extremely troubling.

As the media has reported from the beginning of what has become an occupation of Parliament Hill, symbols of hate and conspiracy theories have been unabashedly displayed by protesters in downtown Ottawa for three weeks. The use of these symbols reminds us that freedom of opinion does not allow people to spread hate under the guise of freedom of expression. The individuals promoting this movement still do not seem to understand that. As we speak, downtown Ottawa has been cleared out, but protesters are relocating to other rally points.

The pandemic has been and still is the biggest challenge many Canadians have ever faced. Everyone has experienced different hardships, but the vast majority of us have faced these difficulties with the understanding that following the measures implemented by provincial and federal governments is important. We are all exhausted by this pandemic, which has been dragging on for almost two years. We have all made sacrifices for the good of our families, our friends, our communities and those most in need.

The pandemic has triggered mental health challenges for Canadians, in the form of stress, anxiety, excessive consumption behaviours and violence. There is no question that we want to be done with this deplorable virus, but it is tenacious. Last week, the official opposition cited Denmark as an example of a country that had lifted all of its health restrictions. In recent days, this small country has seen the number of COVID-19 cases skyrocket and the number of deaths increase drastically. This is why it is important to do things properly for all of us, for our health care workers, our economy and our business owners who do not want to see more shutdowns.

Furthermore, the fact that ideological opposition to the health measures has been expressed by a vocal minority manipulated by external influences in no way justifies tolerating intimidation. It does not give anyone the right to intimidate Ottawa residents, to scare seniors into staying home and not running errands, to forcefully pull masks off people passing by, and to force restaurant owners to stay closed even longer. This occupation even employed techniques that threatened the public order, like flooding the 911 line with calls, depriving Ottawans of their right to safety. All of this is not to mention the economic consequences and the proof of foreign interference in the orchestration of this illegal protest.

I would like to remind all members that the pandemic is unfortunately not over, that the enemy is the virus, and that the best ways to beat it are to get vaccinated, to listen to science and to stand together, as we have done since the beginning, instead of encouraging divisive elements.

● (2155)

For two years, our government has provided unprecedented financial assistance, which helped support Canadians, our businesses and our organizations and get them through these difficult times. However, due to the occupation in Ottawa and elsewhere in Canada, businesses remained closed, people lost their jobs, all sectors were affected and the economic cost has been calculated to be in the millions of dollars. It would be deplorable if the efforts made by the government and the opposition parties to fight the consequences of COVID-19 were to be trampled by a group of protesters wanting to disrupt the democratic process in the House.

When I was in university, our professors constantly reminded us that the legislator does not speak in vain. The Emergencies Act, sponsored by a Conservative minister, was passed in order to be used. The fact that it was never invoked for 34 years is a good thing. Canada is a peaceful country. Its people are resilient and united. This act provides for a rigorous implementation process, which includes consultations with the provinces and territories, orders, several hours of debate, a vote and a review by an all-party committee. It is very different than the War Measures Act. It protects the right to protest within well-defined bounds. The decision to invoke it is not taken lightly and is not up to one person. Before the decision was made, calls were made, consultations were held, and there were meetings with the mayor of Ottawa, the Ottawa police, and the premiers of the provinces and territories.

Over the past few weeks, we have sensed a movement, the rise of something that does not represent who we are. The Emergencies Act gives tools to those on the ground who are experiencing the situation in real time, dealing up close with viciousness, confrontation and vilification. It allows the government to mobilize essential services, it gives the RCMP the ability to act more quickly to enforce local laws, and it provides more power to stop the flow of money. These measures are targeted and temporary.

In fact, the interim Ottawa police chief said that this weekend's operation would not have been possible without the powers of the act. The best example is the tow trucks. When the Ottawa police first requested them, they would not come to tow the parked trucks. With the Emergencies Act in place, they were compelled to comply with the request and join the dismantling operation, for which we are very grateful.

We were very patient. Reasonable and proportionate measures have been taken in co-operation with the provinces and territories to clear the occupation and get the economy moving again. We are sending a clear message to protect our democracy, ensure everyone's safety, and restore confidence in our institutions. At 4 p.m. today, the interim Ottawa police chief said that even though the operation over the last few days has been successful, the city has not returned to normal, and the police measures need to be kept in place in order to prevent protesters from returning.

We respect the right to protest and the rule of law, but we condemn violence and lawlessness. The protesters held their protest, and we heard them. It is now time for them to leave downtown Ottawa.

• (2200)

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, the government may have heard the protesters who came here full of energy, but it did not listen to them. It is important to admit that.

I have a question for the member. I held consultations when I worked in the private sector. Usually, when we hold consultations, it is to convince the people being consulted that we are right or to present an argument we want them to take seriously. One of the rules in the Emergencies Act says that the Prime Minister and the government must consult the provinces.

If the government consulted the premiers of the 10 provinces, how come seven of them, after being consulted, explicitly said that they did not want the Emergencies Act to be used in our country?

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for asking that question in French, and I congratulate him for it.

Canada is a big country, and the situations are different from one place to another. The Emergencies Act contains a rigorous implementation process, as I was saying in my speech, including consultations, which took place.

Another benefit of the act is that it applies on demand, based on need. Some provinces made the request and wanted the act to be invoked. That is the beauty of it, that it can be used where it is needed.

• (2205)

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Speaker, one of the tools in the arsenal of the Emergencies Act is the seizure of bank accounts. This was announced with great fanfare.

To our understanding, it would be up to a bank or financial institution to play the enforcer, to self-regulate, to determine who took part in the occupation of Ottawa, and to investigate whether a protester has left Ottawa and can therefore have their account restored.

Statutory Order

Of course, banks frequently conduct credit checks to determine the creditworthiness of clients. However, playing the enforcer to determine who has taken part in the Ottawa siege seems complicated, and I wonder how that will work.

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière: Madam Speaker, these are obviously extraordinary measures that are allowed under the legislation and give financial institutions the power to conduct investigations, in collaboration with the RCMP.

At this time, 76 personal or business accounts have been blocked. Clearly, the act is being applied within a very limited scope. The most worrisome accounts are being targeted. It is disturbing to know that most of the money paid into the fund to support the protesters came from outside Canada, which is why it is important to investigate.

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to thank and congratulate the Parliamentary Protective Service, the interpreters, who enable us to have this debate, as well as all law enforcement agencies over the past few days.

I have a question for my colleague from Sherbrooke. Why wait three weeks?

People drove thousands of kilometres. We knew they were coming. They wanted to overthrow a democratically elected government if they did not get what they wanted. They even threatened the Prime Minister. They were receiving foreign funding.

Nevertheless, the Liberal government dragged its feet and did nothing, letting the situation escalate before deciding to invoke the Emergencies Act. Is that not an admission of failure by the Liberal government?

Mrs. Élisabeth Brière: Madam Speaker, we have heard that question a number of times in the last few hours of debate.

What I know is that there were attempts. There were meetings, calls and discussions. All kinds of efforts were made to try to make progress. Demands were made, and we responded to those demands. Additional police officers were deployed on three occasions before it got to this point.

I think this is an exceptional situation, and we are responding to it.

[English]

Mr. Tony Van Bynen (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to acknowledge that I am speaking on the traditional territories of the Wendat, Haudenosaunee and Anishinabe peoples. I also acknowledge that my constituency is on the treaty lands of the Williams Treaties first nations and recognize the Chippewas of Georgina Island as the closest first nations community.

Statutory Order

It is an honour and privilege for me to speak in this House to represent the constituents of Newmarket—Aurora. Is this not the fundamental value we are here to defend? That value is democracy, which so many people have died to defend. It is the reason my parents became part of an underground escape route in Holland to help escaped prisoners of war return home, and the reason that my parents came to Canada.

I acknowledge that some of the people who joined the protest did so to express their opposition to vaccine mandates and with the intent to protest peacefully, but it also needs to be explicitly stated that here in Ottawa, within our country and at our border crossings, our democracy was at risk from a dangerous extreme minority that had declared its intent to overthrow the government with its MOU. For the organizers of the blockades and the occupation of Ottawa, this was not about vaccine mandates. That was just a ruse. They intended to damage our economy, with no regard for the impact to our communities, and disrupt and shut down businesses, which only revealed their contempt for Canada and the rule of law.

For three weeks, blockades have been illegally disrupting the lives of Canadians, harming our economy and endangering public safety. Canadians have seen their work hours reduced, or in many cases their jobs put on hold. Factories have been put on hold, and retailers and restaurants have been forced to close. Let us be unwavering in our condemnation of those who set out to create an economic crisis by further disrupting supply chains to create a climate of fear and uncertainty. The occupation by this illegal blockade has resulted in serious harm to our economy and to Canada's international standing.

The world's confidence in Canada as a place to invest and do business was being undermined. The blockade at the Ambassador Bridge has affected about \$390 million in trade each day, and this bridge supports about 30% of all trade by road between Canada and the United States, which is our most important trading partner.

In Coutts, Alberta, about \$48 million in trade has been affected by these blockades, and in Emerson, Manitoba, about \$73 million in daily trade has been affected. Those impacts are real. They threaten businesses, big and small, and the livelihoods of Canadian workers. Recognizing all the provisions in place to safeguard our country, I support invoking the Emergencies Act to supplement the provincial and territorial authorities to address the blockades and the occupation. This is to keep Canadians safe, protect people's jobs and ensure our economy continues on the path of recovery while restoring confidence in our institutions.

Through the Emergencies Act, we are broadening the scope of Canada's anti-money laundering and terrorist financing rules so they can cover crowdfunding platforms and their payment service providers, including digital assets such as cryptocurrency. This is particularly significant in an era where social media makes it possible to broadly distribute disinformation and raise funds on that basis. Over 55% of the funds raised on these platforms came from the United States.

Through the Emergencies Act, we are providing new authorities to law enforcement to regulate crowds, prohibit blockades and keep essential corridors open. The Emergencies Act allows the government to mobilize essential services, such as tow trucks; allows the

RCMP to act more swiftly to enforce local laws; and provides enhanced powers to stop the flow of money. These measures are targeted, temporary and proportionate.

● (2210)

Canada is a rule of law country and, when we declared the public order emergency under the Emergencies Act, we followed the law. We continue to act within it. There are clear conditions set out in the Emergencies Act for a public emergency order to be declared, and our government believes those conditions have been met, and that they require the Government of Canada to act.

The scope of these measures will be time limited and geographically targeted, as well as reasonable and proportionate to the threats they are meant to address. The Emergencies Act is intended to strengthen and support law enforcement agencies at all levels across the country. This is about keeping Canadians safe and allowing residents to go into their communities with the security and freedom to do so, while protecting people's jobs and restoring confidence in our institutions.

The Emergencies Act also contains a number of significant limits, checks and safeguards. As required by the act, on several occasions over the past week the Prime Minister and members of the cabinet consulted with the premiers and members of their respective governments. In the coming days, a parliamentary committee will be established to provide oversight while the emergency is in effect. The declaration only lasts 30 days, unless renewed. However, we can and sincerely hope to revoke the emergency much sooner.

I agree with the member for Saanich—Gulf Islands when she said that it is not helpful to trivialize the gravity of this situation with references about bouncy castles, nor is it helpful to polarize this debate with antagonistic, inflammatory rhetoric and personal attacks.

These are challenging times. The pandemic has impacted all of us, and for some the impact has been one of great loss economically and personally. Over the course of this pandemic, 36,000 Canadian lives have been lost and more than 3.2 million Canadians have been diagnosed with COVID. We should also remember the 2,000 Canadians who have silently lost their lives over the last three weeks because of COVID.

Pandemic restrictions, the majority of which are imposed provincially, are starting to be lifted. Our country has 30.7 million people, or about 80% of its population, vaccinated. Efforts continue to expand the number of those who have been triple vaccinated.

It is due to the efforts of so many Canadians that we stand on the threshold of a recovery, a threshold that cannot be derailed or trampled on by a minority whose intent was seditious, an economic sabotage with a disregard for the neighbours and residents whose streets they occupied.

This was a crisis in need of the Emergencies Act. In a letter addressed to the Minister of Public Safety and the Minister of Emergency Preparedness, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, or CACP, wrote:

the national coordination of the Freedom Convoy 2022 has presented unique challenges.

The CACP supports the fundamental objectives of the invocation of the Emergencies Act that is intended to regulate and prohibit illegal public assemblies that lead to the breach of peace, and to restrict the funding of such illegal assemblies.

I also agree with the member for Edmonton Strathcona who stated that our constituents expect us to work together and find solutions to resolve this crisis.

In the weeks and months ahead, we need to restore faith in the institutions Canadians rely on. We need to come to a full understanding of how these blockades and the occupation were able to happen and what can be done to prevent them from happening in the future. In doing so, we must safeguard the right to protest peacefully, and we must remember the House we stand in belongs to all Canadians. We stand here at their will with the expectation to work in the best interests of Canadians.

• (2215)

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 have noticed a trend as a sit here in the House of Commons on behalf of my constituents, and it is as though the speeches coming from the government benches are pretty much exactly the same. They cite the exact same rationale in just about the exact same order.

In fact, section 21 of the Comprehensive Ontario Police Services Act flies in direct contravention to what the member said. One thing the member talked about that caught my ear was having to dial down the rhetoric. Leadership starts from the top, so has he delivered that message to the Prime Minister?

Mr. Tony Van Bynen: Madam Speaker, we have been actively engaged in ongoing dialogue. I have, for two sittings of this House now, seen the behaviour of both sides of the House. I believe that both sides of the House own the responsibility to speak responsibly, to be open-minded and to be supportive of finding solutions. That is why Canadians sent us to this House, and that is how we should all behave.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

The Emergencies Act is only meant to be applied in the event of an existing or imminent crisis. The situation taking place on Parliament Hill for the past three weeks appears to have been cleared or is well on the way to being cleared.

Does my colleague still think it is necessary to enforce the Emergencies Act?

Statutory Order

• (2220)

[English]

Mr. Tony Van Bynen: Madam Speaker, we are not sure that this is over yet. There have been people who have vacated the precinct that is currently being protected, but there is also dialogue and discussion about coming back, returning. There is also dialogue about regrouping.

I think it is important for us to maintain vigilance, to monitor the process as it goes forward and to be ready to respond when it is appropriate.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, one of the things I am very concerned about, which we are seeing across the country right now, is attacks on the media. I was just reading an article about attacks that have been happening in British Columbia against media. Obviously, we have seen some horrific assaults happen in Ottawa against members of the media.

I am just wondering what the government's plans are. What steps will it be taking to ensure that we are protecting journalists, that we are protecting those who are working so hard to tell their stories and share information with Canadians?

Mr. Tony Van Bynen: Madam Speaker, protecting a free press is critically important for any democracy. It is the press that shines a light on the issues.

What I am particularly proud of is the independent ability for the media in Canada to present the facts as we go forward. I agree with the member. It is very critical that we should be going forward and making sure that we do have a free press that is protected and that has the same rights as anyone else who is seeking to report the facts to our communities.

Mr. Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for Newmarket—Aurora for his comments earlier. It was a great speech, as always. The member has a lot of experience.

I want to speak to the question that was posed by the member for Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo when he talked about looking at leadership from the top. We have consulted with the Premier of Ontario, who has supported the act being presented here this evening. We have consulted with the mayor of Ottawa, who has supported the act being presented here this evening. We have consulted with the mayor of Windsor, who declared an emergency and who supports what we are doing here this evening.

Could the member comment on consultation with municipalities and the Premier of Ontario as it relates to the act that is being presented here tonight in the House?

Mr. Tony Van Bynen: Madam Speaker, I appreciate working with the member on the HUMA committee.

Both of us have some municipal background, and both of us understand the need to consult at the municipal, regional, provincial and federal levels. I believe those consultations have been undertaken. The decisions that were made were as a result of the consultations that were undertaken.

Statutory Order

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, I will begin my comments by highlighting what we are all agreeing on in this House. In the past few days of debate, I have heard agreement that we must denounce hate and hate symbols. Let us build on that consensus, because it has been exposed this past month that there was a far-right, sinister element that had infiltrated the convoys at the highest levels. It is organized and well funded, and it has the stated goal of overthrowing our elected government. I take that threat very seriously. I heard most members of this House denounce these bad actors and recognize that their actions and intentions do not represent the Canada we want to pass on to the next generation.

These are serious times that call for serious debate and action that is appropriate and proportionate to the severity of this dangerous situation we find ourselves in. Let me be clear. These occupations are dangerous. They are not peaceful. They are unlawful. They never should have been allowed to become entrenched in our communities.

Governments did have the resources to halt the occupation of Ottawa early on, but failed to respond with the urgency required. Why do I say that? On social media, convoy organizers were openly sharing their intent, including their plans for when they got to Ottawa. There was endless coverage of the convoy as it moved across Canada, and it was known from the beginning that factions of the convoy—

• (2225)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I have to interrupt the hon. member. We have a point of order from the hon. member for North Island—Powell River.

Ms. Rachel Blaney: Madam Speaker, I apologize for interrupting my colleague, but I wanted to make sure that she remembers to share her time with the member for Vancouver Kingsway.

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Madam Speaker, I did forget that. I will be sharing my time.

There were factions of the convoy that were displaying symbols of hate, hate that was not taken seriously by governments and has not been taken seriously for years. What has become clear through these last several weeks is that Canada does not have the tools to deal with the hate or disinformation that is growing across our communities. The fear, intimidation and lawlessness that have evolved on the streets of Ottawa and at borders across the country have shone a magnifying glass on how the government systems are not equipped to uphold even the most basic laws when hate and disinformation rear their ugly head and when white privilege underpins it.

It has become glaringly obvious to Canadians that government let them down and left them on their own to deal with the consequences of unlawful occupations in their communities. This reality is threatening the safety of—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Can I ask the hon. member for Don Valley East to please put himself on mute?

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Madam Speaker, can I have my time back from that?

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Of course. We stopped counting the time. I apologize for the interruption.

The hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam may start again.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Madam Speaker, this reality is threatening the safety of citizens and institutions, and the very sovereignty of this country. We know that this threat is real, and that the online environment is amplifying it. The power of online disinformation can be exemplified by the varied reports of a protester being trampled by a police horse this weekend. A phone call to my office that I picked up on Friday from a distraught constituent, as well as emails, reported that one victim was a woman, or it was a senior woman, or it was a senior woman with a walker, or it was an indigenous elder; that they suffered a shoulder injury; or maybe a horse stepped on their face and throat; or maybe they lost a limb or died. The only consistencies were inconsistencies in those stories.

It is time to get serious about the very dangerous consequences of the spread of disinformation, which gave rise to the length and size of the unlawful occupation in Ottawa, along with occupations and blockades across Canada. Again, I will say that it should not have come to this, but it did.

Let us stop looking backwards in this House and start looking forward and acknowledging the facts we are dealing with. When Ottawa called a state of emergency, it did not stop the lawlessness on our streets. When Ontario called a state of emergency, it did not stop the lawlessness. When indigenous leaders called for the occupiers to go home, they did not. It was only when the Emergencies Act was invoked that finally there was some initial resolution to this unlawful attack on the rights and freedoms of the citizens of Ottawa. The interim chief of the Ottawa police has been clear that without these additional powers, they would not have been able to achieve the outcomes so far.

Many members have spoken about how the threats are now over, but I want to share with this House what is happening in B.C. Protests are building here, and the agitators are increasingly aggressive. The RCMP had to pre-emptively close down the border yesterday and 16 were arrested. Other unlawful activity could not be addressed on the spot, due to a lack of resources.

Here is another really sad security threat. Private citizens are now feeling compelled to stand up against these aggressors. In Vancouver yesterday, convoy supporters and counterprotesters were facing off in the streets. In B.C., at YVR, police presence has been increased, and the cost of maintaining public safety at our borders in these times is mounting. I have to share that in the riding next to mine, the home of the provincial minister of public safety was affronted yesterday by protesters. In B.C., this is far from over.

The NDP takes the invocation of the Emergencies Act under public disorder very seriously. We have said over and over again that we will not give a blank cheque to the government. The government will have to stay within the established powers or we will withdraw any support. We will continue to protect peaceful protesters, including land defenders, and will protect the Charter of Rights for all Canadians.

Going forward, the federal government and all levels of government need to take responsibility for their failures, for not taking seriously the very real safety threats and infringements on rights and freedoms that the majority of Canadians have endured these past weeks. Going forward, they must accept and address the very real threats of intolerance, hate, discrimination and disinformation happening online and manifesting physically in our communities across Canada. These are real threats to the safety and security of every person and the institutions in this country, as well as our democracy and sovereignty.

The NDP has consistently shown leadership during these occupations and has used the tools available as the progressive opposition to act. We have moved motions to investigate and expose weaknesses in crowdfunding platforms, brought forward an emergency debate on the occupation of Ottawa, and tabled bills in this House to address hate and hate symbols. The NDP has shown leadership in standing up for health care workers, frontline and essential workers, and all workers who have gotten us through these two years of difficult, difficult times. We continue to stand up for them.

While the NDP has been focused on solutions, there has been a lack of forward thinking and leadership by the government.

● (2230)

The Liberals have failed in so many ways. They have failed to take seriously the declining standard of living for Canadians. They are no longer in touch with what is really happening in our communities. The years of neglect for the need for affordable housing, of not addressing the climate crisis with urgency, of declining to introduce pharmacare, of not addressing Canadians' high cellphone bills are just a few examples. I could go on.

The government has created an environment in which too many Canadians are hurting, and when people are hurting, when things are desperate, people can easily find themselves being taken advantage of by sinister actors who exploit those vulnerabilities for their personal gain. It is the job of all parliamentarians to protect Canadians from that.

It is late, and in this eleventh hour there is still work to be done to protect Canadians from the very real threat of hate and disinformation that fed off the vulnerabilities of exhausted, scared and anxious Canadians who live in every riding of this country. What manifested in Ottawa, in Coutts, in Windsor, in Surrey and in Winnipeg is no accident. It is well funded and well organized. It is an exploitation of the weaknesses in our government and our government systems that has led to the spread of hate and disinformation, and it is not over yet.

In closing, I must look to the future too, so I call on all my colleagues to support the NDP's private member's bill, Bill C-229,

Statutory Order

which would prevent anyone from selling and displaying symbols that promote hatred and violence in this country in the future.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is nice to see that the New Democratic Party recognizes the true value of the Emergencies Act. It is legislation that is actually required. We have seen that expressed by the interim chief here in Ottawa and we have been asked by the Province of Ontario as well as the trading corridors that she made reference to. We can talk about that, but for me, it is all about the people and the freedom of people to be able to live in peace, to have jobs and to not feel threatened.

She made reference to the issue of racism we saw raise its ugly head during the blockades. Could the member provide her thoughts on why it was important for Ottawa to work with the Province of Ontario and the municipality of Ottawa and others to be able to resolve this issue?

● (2235)

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Madam Speaker, I do value protecting innocent Canadians who are just trying to pay their mortgages and keep their livelihoods during these very difficult times. I will say that in B.C., we heard yesterday that many arrests could not be made because there were not enough resources and that the RCMP had had to commit to following up on those unlawful acts at a separate time and place because they did not have the resources to keep everyone safe.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, one of the provisions in the Emergencies Act is warrantless search and seizure. This provision is especially relevant to the freezing of bank accounts of those known to be connected to the protesters outside or of people who are related to them, which could happen further down.

I would like to hear the member comment on the fact that the government no longer needs to go to a judge to obtain a warrant to freeze a bank account or financial assets. Does she have any concerns whatsoever that the government could abuse this power because there is no longer judicial oversight?

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Madam Speaker, I will just remind the member that it was the NDP that first identified the fact that online platforms and crowdfunding platforms were being used outside of the country to fuel and to pay for these illegal occupations.

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, like my colleague, I call myself a progressive.

We know that freedom movements often involve protests. I do not agree with the protesters' arguments, which, in my view are not valid. However, what worries me is that the government is using a law that in future could limit the actions of people who have valid arguments and are trying to effect social change.

Does my colleague not believe that invoking the Emergencies Act will create a terrible precedent?

Statutory Order

[English]

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Madam Speaker, the NDP has been very clear that we fully support peaceful protesting and exercising the right to gather together and fight for ideas and for change in the government. We absolutely protect the right of land defenders, environmentalists and those who take part in peaceful protests. What we saw over these last few weeks was unlawful occupation.

Mr. Mike Morrice (Kitchener Centre, GP): Madam Speaker, I thank the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam both for the tone and the substance of her advocacy in this place.

I am curious hear more from her with respect to the scope of the regulation. We have heard some members of the governing party share that it is meant to be a very targeted approach, but we also see in the regulations “critical infrastructure” being used quite broadly to include bus stations, ferry terminals and lighthouses, for example. I am curious to hear the member's perspective on ensuring that it is appropriate in scale and does not set a precedent for those that were mentioned previously, such as indigenous land defenders and climate activists, for example.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo: Madam Speaker, I will go back to what I was saying on the first response to one of the members who asked me a question in the House.

I and the NDP value protecting the rights of Canadians. Right now, the rights of Canadians widely feel to be at risk, and we are looking to restore confidence and security in our institutions in Canada.

Mr. Don Davies (Vancouver Kingsway, NDP): Madam Speaker, we come together today at a precarious moment in our nation's history. Over the last month a cascading series of intelligence, policing and governance failures have resulted in an unprecedented situation that no Canadian of any persuasion is contented with or approves. We have all witnessed a siege of our nation's capital, an economic blockade of our international borders and threats to the political stability of our society.

Ironically, Canadians on all sides of the issues feel abandoned. Public confidence has been shaken and communities are divided. The institutions citizens expect to protect them have proved unresponsive. They have looked for leadership from their governments that has not been delivered.

After speaking to many constituents in Vancouver Kingsway, two things are crystal clear to me. First, the current crisis has been badly mismanaged by the Prime Minister, who was virtually absent as it developed. Second, this situation should never have progressed this far, so it disappoints me profoundly to see that our Parliament has to debate the application of measures that are by design intended for the most serious situations of turmoil and danger.

Nonetheless, we indeed find our nation in crisis. As such, it is for us to determine the best course of action to restore public confidence, stability and security to our society.

I would like to state that this is also a time of great sensitivity and emotion. The issues engaged cherished principles that are equally valued and difficult to reconcile. I think that thoughtful people of good faith can rationally differ with views that deserve

respect and careful consideration. I believe our nation could use a generous application of compassion and understanding.

At the outset, I think it is important to delineate what the present situation is and, just as importantly, what it is not.

First, we are not dealing with a peaceful protest. We are dealing with an economic blockade, accompanied by both threats and actual violence, with an attempt to force political change by mob behaviour and, in substance, hostage diplomacy. A review of the facts bears this out.

We saw a serious border closure at the Ambassador Bridge, interrupting some \$350 million in trade every day and threatening Canada-U.S. trade relations. Canada's crucial auto industry and manufacturing sector in the Golden Horseshoe were affected at a time of already constrained supply chains.

A cache of weapons and murder conspiracy charges emerged in Coutts, Alberta. We witnessed a blockade for nearly a month in our nation's capital, with citizens threatened, workers intimidated and hundreds of businesses shut down.

Undercover intelligence revealed plans to expand the border blockade to other essential Canadian infrastructure, including airports and ports. An openly publicized manifesto calling for government change was released. We have seen foreign interference and funding in our domestic political affairs. There is far-right involvement, with clear connections to the same forces that led the charge on Washington last January.

We have seen threats to towing companies and drivers to intimidate them into not doing their jobs. We have seen the use of heavy equipment, tractors and trailers as weapons of blockade.

The events of the last two days further bear this out. Blockade participants refused to leave the parliamentary precinct when ordered to do so, assaulted police officers and tried to seize their weapons, threw bicycles at mounted officers, and spat upon and assaulted journalists. These are not the acts of peaceful protesters.

Second, this was never really about truckers.

This fact is rendered nakedly bare by the fact that not a single demand was ever made to address the very real issues truckers face, like low wages, long hours, fatigue, occupational safety, inadequate rest stops, poor road conditions and high expenses.

It was never truly about truckers' vaccine policies either. This is also easily seen by the fact that it is the United States that set a requirement that all Canadian truckers must be vaccinated in order to enter the country, and that nothing done in Canada could alter that fact.

Third, the legislation before us is not the War Measures Act. As a New Democrat, I have always taken tremendous pride in the moral courage that Tommy Douglas demonstrated in opposing Pierre Trudeau's invocation of the War Measures Act, despite strong public support for the move.

In 1970, civil liberties were suspended, the military was deployed, and hundreds of innocent people were arbitrarily rounded up and held without charge. Habeas corpus was suspended by cabinet fiat, with no recourse to democratic institutions or the courts. None of that is occurring here.

● (2240)

Unlike the War Measures Act, the Emergencies Act does not suspend Canadians' civil rights. Emergency orders are subject to judicial review and must be charter-compliant. Indeed, in 1970, Canada did not even have a charter of rights with constitutional force. Unlike the War Measures Act, the Emergencies Act is subject to extensive parliamentary oversight and democratic protections. For example, this very debate we are having was triggered by the declaration of a public order emergency. Parliament will have the opportunity to affirm or revoke the declaration tomorrow. A parliamentary committee will be able to amend or revoke all emergency orders, and a motion signed by 20 MPs can trigger a vote on revoking the declaration. The truth is that the Emergencies Act has many legal and parliamentary protections, as it was expressly designed to have.

I also think it is important to note that the six measures applied under the act are targeted in scope, duration and purpose. It is critical to remember that they provide powers to address the current crisis that would not otherwise be possible, such as ensuring that towing equipment can be marshalled to clear heavy machinery used to block public roads, criminalizing the supply of goods to blockades that were crippling our nation's capital and interrupting the flow of foreign funding to interfere in our domestic political affairs.

On this latter point, I note that over 50% of the funds used to support the blockade came from outside of Canada. Hundreds of donors were Americans who have been linked to far-right groups or those involved in the attempted insurrection at the U.S. capitol last January. This constitutes direct foreign interference in Canadian domestic affairs that cannot be tolerated.

To my Conservative and Bloc colleagues who oppose the emergency measures used to intercept and freeze these funds, I ask this: If we substituted Russian for American donors sending money to try to change Canadian government policy, would they still have no problem with this? I know the answer. To me, it is imperative for the sovereignty and territorial and security interests of Canada that we act strongly and resolutely to address foreign interference in our internal political affairs.

Some have argued that invoking the Emergencies Act will set a dangerous precedent that could be applied in the future to disruptive protests that are otherwise peaceful. They say Parliament

should not act lest it start down a slippery slope to irresponsible behaviour. Somewhat ironically, this is said by members of the Bloc Québécois and Conservative Party, whose provincial cousins have invoked the notwithstanding clause of the Charter of Rights to actually violate the rights of their own citizens, something the Emergencies Act does not do. Apparently, their concern for slippery slopes does not extend to their own sectarian interests.

I fundamentally agree that the right to peaceful protest is indispensable in a free and democratic society and must never be subject to unreasonable limitations. However, I categorically reject the assertion that we cannot act in appropriate circumstances because future parliamentarians may not do so. I also believe that every single parliamentarian today and in the future well knows that this legislation is extraordinarily targeted and reserved for the rarest of circumstances. I trust in their judgment, in the Canadian public and in institutions to ensure that happens.

Finally, others have argued that this crisis does not meet the threshold set out in the Emergencies Act for the declaration of a public order emergency. I have carefully read the act and agree that reasonable people may disagree on this point. While I respect those who feel otherwise, it is my view that, given the facts that have emerged over the last four weeks, the act is properly engaged. Further, I believe that the invocation of the act is already proving to be effective in resolving the crisis, paralysis and threats that so clearly have gripped our nation. I strongly agree with those who argue that the invocation of public order emergencies should never be normalized. Instead, it should be reserved only for rare circumstances such as this, where decisive action is needed to address urgent threats to the security of Canada.

If we hope to emerge from this pandemic as a strong and united country, then every member of the House must put aside their partisan political interests and work together to regain the public's confidence. Rather than wedge politics and polarization, Canadians need honesty, accountability and responsible leadership from their elected representatives. I believe it is time for all parliamentarians to provide just that.

● (2245)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I will pick up on what the member just stated. At this time we are talking about the Emergencies Act, but think of how much better it would have been to be talking about the heroes of the pandemic. Here we are pushing the three-year mark, and at the end of the day, so much good has taken place.

Statutory Order

Moving to his speech, there are a couple of points I would like to highlight. One is the importance and supremacy of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We have heard the word “freedom” a lot during this debate, and the Emergencies Act does not override any aspect of the charter. Second, as the member made reference to, at any point in time there are four political entities in the House that have more than 20 members. All it takes is 20 members to require a vote on the revocation of the act at any point in time.

If the member could pick up on those points, I would appreciate it.

• (2250)

Mr. Don Davies: Madam Speaker, I hear two main points. The first one gives us an opportunity to again thank all of the frontline workers and health care workers in this country who, while we debate this legislation, are tasked with the critical job of dealing with vulnerable people, helping patients and getting us through what is still a pandemic. I think that is always important to keep in mind as our attention is taken elsewhere.

Second of all, it was a major part of my research and speech to note that the Emergencies Act was carefully crafted in response to the excesses of the War Measures Act and contains within it many parliamentary oversights, restrictions and careful parameters to ensure that the excesses of the War Measures Act are not repeated. I think that is also a very vital point to make to Canadians to assure them that their rights remain paramount, even with the invocation of the Emergencies Act.

Mr. Rick Perkins (South Shore—St. Margarets, CPC): Madam Speaker, I appreciate the respectful tone the member for Vancouver Kingsway has taken in his presentation tonight, and I offer my observations and comments in the same light.

I have often heard the word “sedition”, not from the member's presentation directly, but from members of the NDP and the Liberal Party throughout today and the debates on Saturday and Thursday. It is a very powerful word that I think is often being abused in the discussion around this.

My observation is that there are very strong tools for the government, under section 46 of the Criminal Code, to deal with treason and sedition. If the government believes that this is treason and sedition, perhaps it should have used that tool. If that is the case, why has nobody been charged under it?

Mr. Don Davies: Madam Speaker, my hon. colleague raises a very important point, which is that the Emergencies Act is only supposed to be triggered when the current laws in Canada have proven ineffective in dealing with the current situation. I think the word “ineffective” is very important, and I will note two examples.

The current laws, for instance, have proven ineffective in stopping the flow of funds, money and supplies into the blockade in Ottawa. It is not a crime to walk down the street carrying a gas can full of gasoline. There is no law in Canada that would prevent that. However, by invoking the Emergencies Act and saying that anybody who is supplying the blockades is acting illegally, that now becomes a criminal act. That is an example where the Emergencies Act was necessary.

Another one is towing. I do not think it was an accident that this very well-organized blockade used heavy equipment and machinery to block public roadways in this country. When towing companies and their trucks were being intimidated, there was no way to commandeer those companies to get them working to clear the roadways, except by the invocation of the Emergencies Act.

These are a couple of examples that I think make it is necessary to have that special power.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, in his speech, my colleague from Vancouver Kingsway was a bit impertinent towards Quebec.

In fact, he stated that Quebec invoked the notwithstanding clause to violate the rights of its own citizens. My colleague has shown either his ignorance or his contempt. Either way, that is unacceptable.

I will nevertheless ask him a question.

What is happening at this time could create a dangerous precedent. Will the NDP be able to oppose this act if, in 10 years, a more right-leaning federal government is in power, and we again go through, in Quebec or elsewhere in Canada, events such as those of 10 years ago, in the spring of 2012, when large numbers of students were protesting and slightly more radical groups infiltrated the protests?

• (2255)

[English]

Mr. Don Davies: Madam Speaker, I think the Emergencies Act is relegated to specific circumstances, and every time it is possibly invoked, it needs to be carefully studied.

I wonder if my hon. colleague is worried that the provinces might use the notwithstanding clause more often. Is he worried about a slippery slope? Of course, the notwithstanding clause is only engaged when there is an acknowledgement that the charter rights of citizens have been violated. Otherwise, we do not need to use the notwithstanding clause. That was my point, and I just wonder if he should have a conversation with his provincial colleagues in Quebec to warn them that using the notwithstanding clause may lead to a slippery slope if they are tempted to do it again. I do not think that is a valid—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Resuming debate, the hon. member for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek.

Mr. Chad Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I appreciate your time today in the chair. You have been here since early morning, and I appreciate the service you provide to the House. Please note that I will be sharing my time this evening with the member for Acadie—Bathurst.

It is important for us to put into context what has transpired over the last number of weeks as it relates to events here in the city of Ottawa and at various other locations in Canada. The vast majority of us in the chamber are visitors in the city of Ottawa. We reside here on a temporary basis, with our principal residences back home in our respective ridings. For me, that is Hamilton East—Stoney Creek.

In the past three weeks, I have spent many days here in the nation's capital watching the occupation grow in size and spread through the downtown, well beyond the parliamentary precinct and into residential neighbourhoods surrounding where we meet here today. During that time, the downtown descended into chaos, offending the lives of those people who reside here in the city centre.

I have had the opportunity to speak to many people here in the downtown who have been impacted by the occupation and they have made it clear to me that they are accustomed to visitors in the city. On any day of the year, it is not uncommon to witness protests, demonstrations, vigils or ceremonial activities in and around the parliamentary precinct. Peaceful activities are not only welcomed but encouraged by the people who live here in Ottawa.

Unfortunately, what we have witnessed over the past three weeks was at times neither peaceful nor lawful. What started as a protest quickly turned into an occupation. For those of us in the chamber who have served at the municipal level as city or town councillors or possibly as a mayor, we know it is not uncommon to receive calls for service related to municipal bylaws. We know that municipal bylaws are important, as they keep the city moving and provide an element of protection for law-abiding citizens.

I was not surprised, to be honest, to hear that over 3,700 notices of violation have been issued to date here in the city of Ottawa. However, thousands of violations occurred without enforcement, and these violations significantly impacted the quality of life for everyone who resides in the downtown area. As reported in the media, residents have been subjected to illegal and tortuous behaviour. I try to picture what has occurred here in Ottawa and think about how the occupation would be received by my own constituents in Hamilton East—Stoney Creek or other communities across the country.

I want to be clear that those of us residing here temporarily have witnessed, over the last three weeks, fireworks displays at 1 a.m. and 2 a.m. on a regular basis. We witnessed, even through the period of the injunction, the constant honking of horns and the use of whistles, bells and other noisemakers, again sometimes well into the early morning hours. We witnessed the illegal confiscation of public property and the blockade of public streets, which led to the detour and cancellation of public transit routes and prohibited first responders, including police, fire and ambulatory services, from accessing people in downtown Ottawa. We witnessed trucks and vehicles parked on public sidewalks and many of them illegally parked throughout the core of the city, preventing access to businesses. Sadly, many of those businesses had to close.

We read with horror and disgust about a report from local police that there was a concerted effort to tie up the 911 lines here in Ottawa, a campaign planned to prevent the people of Ottawa from accessing emergency services provided by police, fire and ambulatory

staff. We witnessed the illegal erection of cranes, stages, tents and other permanent structures in the middle of residential streets. On the hour, we witnessed people haphazardly transporting fuel on city sidewalks to encampment areas as part of the occupation that occurred here in the downtown. We witnessed illegal fires and barbecues on city sidewalks and in city parking lots. I am sure everyone in the House is aware that a fire was started in the lobby of an Ottawa apartment building here in the city centre.

• (2300)

We witnessed the harassment of local residents who, in their daily travels, were mocked and chastised for wearing masks as they went about their lives, minding their own business. This is just a brief description of what has transpired here over the past three weeks. I know very well how my residents would react to these illegal actions. They would not be tolerated. There would be an expectation that those responsible for upholding the law would attend and restore the peace and ensure people's rights were upheld as tenants and property owners.

Ottawa residents want their lives back. They want a peaceful night's sleep. They want their public transit back. They want access to roads and sidewalks. They want to see businesses reopen. People want to go back to work. They want their city back. The only way to restore peace and some sense of normalcy is with all three levels of government working together.

At this point in time in the House, I want to publicly commend the premier of Ontario for his support. Instead of handing out coffee and doughnuts, as members of the opposition did, he declared a state of emergency in the province. Instead of taking selfies with those who illegally occupied downtown Ottawa and blocked the Ambassador Bridge in Windsor, he signed an order that sought to assist the City of Ottawa and complement the actions of the federal government. He appropriately described the situation as a "siege", and these illegal actions as holding millions of people "hostage".

Compare and contrast the premier's comments with those of the interim Leader of the Opposition, who stated, "I don't think we should be asking them to go home", if members can believe that. Then, as has been the trademark of the official opposition, the flip-flop statement soon followed from the same member. Just over a week ago, the interim leader finally recognized that the extent of the damage inflicted upon the city of Ottawa, its citizens and the Canadian economy had reached a breaking point. By the time she issued her uninvited speech, the damage was already done. The hollow words that it was time to take down the barricades, stop the disruptive actions and come together were delivered. It was too little, too late.

Statutory Order

I think it is imperative that we recognize the joint forces that have come together here over the past number of days. It is, as Ottawa's interim police chief described it, a real "Canadian effort." I come from a police family and, as a city councillor for 26 years, I served for many years on the city's police services board. I am a strong supporter of the police, so I was pleased to hear that 28 members of the Hamilton Police Service are here in Ottawa to assist with efforts to restore peace and return the city to its citizens. Members of the Hamilton Police Service have joined officers from Toronto, Sudbury, York, Kingston, Peel, Durham, London, Calgary, Edmonton and other jurisdictions.

The ugly side of the occupation has continued to be laid bare on television over the past couple of days, with extraordinary scenes of people spitting on officers, berating law enforcement officials, throwing objects at police and their horses, and engaging in other disruptive activities with the sole objective of standing in the way of reclaiming the city and upholding the rule of law.

We heard here in Ottawa that the local police needed additional support, additional resources and tools to confront a national event in an area that falls under the jurisdiction of local police services. To date, the police have shown great restraint, even while under attack. As has been reported, the police have been the target of protesters not just here in Ottawa, but at other locations across Canada, including southern Alberta. The domestic terrorist plot in Alberta highlights and emphasizes the need for all levels of government to provide the police with the appropriate level of support and necessary tools to keep their members and the public safe, and we are doing that here tonight.

I look forward to the studies and inquiry that will follow, and the reviews that will help us plan for future events that will occur, whether in Windsor, Coutts, Ottawa or elsewhere.

We cannot sit on our hands and hope the problems will go away on their own, as the official opposition has suggested. We need to fully understand how the illegal blockades and occupations were planned and funded. The recommendations—

• (2305)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member can complete his thoughts in questions and comments.

The hon. member for Calgary Shepard.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Madam Speaker, if this was an honest attempt by the government to include the official opposition and convince us that the use of the Emergencies Act was warranted and met the threshold, I would have thought the government would have given us all the briefing materials, the evidence and the facts. It would have released them and made the judicial opinions from Justice Canada officials public. It did not do any of those things.

In fact, I distinctly remember that on Wednesday morning, before our national caucus meeting even began, we went to reporters, and the House Leader of the Opposition told them very clearly that we were not provided any documentation in order for our caucus to make a decision based on what evidence the government had in its hands. This is not a good-faith attempt to work across both sides of

the aisle. This is a politically driven use of the Emergencies Act to save the leadership of the Prime Minister, and nothing else.

I do not have a question for the member. I just wanted to put that on the record.

Mr. Chad Collins: Madam Speaker, it is ironic that the member does not have a question. Millions of Canadians, over the last couple of days, have watched what transpired in Ottawa. What he and his party have ignored is the impact it has had on Ottawa's citizens. The member for Carleton today stood and talked about what is happening in Canada. As an Ottawa representative, not once did he reference what was happening in this city. Conservatives are ignoring what is happening to people in Ottawa and the impact it is having on people's daily lives.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Madam Speaker, it is a very odd day in the House of Commons when the Conservatives are choosing to negatively attack the premier of Ontario and the Liberals are standing for him. It is a unique moment in time for us today.

My question has to do with Conservative premiers in this country. On February 4, the premier of my province, Premier Kenney, asked the federal government for help: There was a need to stop the blockades in Coutts. The provincial government was unable to manage the blockade there. On February 18, Premier Kenney decided he was going to sue the federal government.

I would like some information. How does the member feel about this sort of flip-flopping between requiring help and then wanting to take to court the same people he asked for help?

Mr. Chad Collins: Madam Speaker, as the member noted, there has been a flip-flop of events in Alberta, in terms of asking for help and then criticizing the government when it acted upon the request from that province. As she mentioned, here in Ontario, the premier has declared a state of emergency. That is what the act does. It declares a state of emergency and gives provinces the ability to deal with protesters, whether they are in blockades or in occupations such as we saw in Ottawa.

[Translation]

Mr. Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

To sum up the situation, the crowdfunding platforms that are the main reason for the use of the Emergencies Act are already governed by the provinces. There are already laws in place that make it possible to arrest people for a crime or an offence. Thank goodness. Everyone is saying that the siege is illegal. The law already provides for sanctions in that regard, as well as for uttering threats, possession of unauthorized weapons and calls for insurrection.

I have a question for my colleague. What is the point of invoking the Emergencies Act if there are already conventional legal tools and institutions that could have been used over the past two weeks but were not?

• (2310)

[*English*]

Mr. Chad Collins: Madam Speaker, what the member has ignored in his question is that provinces are asking for additional tools to deal with the occupation and the blockades. We know very well that the act has allowed provinces, specifically Ontario, to bring in law enforcement from other provinces without swearing the members in. The act has allowed us to crack down on investments and donations that have been made from outside the country.

The act has helped us over the past seven days. There has been a lot of praise over the last couple of days for what the City of Ottawa and its police force have done to clear the parliamentary precinct in downtown Ottawa. That has been done with the help of the act.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serge Cormier (Acadie—Bathurst, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I want to thank my newly elected colleague, the member for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, for sharing his time with me this evening.

I am pleased to rise in the House this evening.

My riding of Acadie—Bathurst is one of the most beautiful places in our country. The people there are extremely welcoming and generous. My riding is home to many generations of families from different cultures who stuck together in good times and bad. My community would simply not exist were it not for a long history of families helping each other.

I am very sad to see what has been happening in our country over the past few weeks where people are turning their backs on each other. That is not the Canada I know and love.

I understand that many Canadians are frustrated and angry. I, too, am tired of this pandemic. I also understand that, as an MP, it is my responsibility to listen to people and find ways to help them. Unfortunately, some people who want to make their voices heard also chose to draw the country's attention by behaving in an extremely worrisome way.

I have some personal experience with protests because the people in my riding of Acadie—Bathurst have always made themselves heard loud and clear, and they are not afraid to protest. In particular, they protested in support of civil rights and language rights. In 2013, they protested reforms the Conservatives made to employment insurance. Protests are a fundamental and important part of a democratic country. I always supported the right of people to protest peacefully, even in front of my office, and I have participated in several protests before and since I was elected.

That said, I will never support bullying, threats, physical altercations, damage to private property, theft, hate symbols or desecration of our cherished monuments. There also seems to be a misunderstanding going around that citizens have the right to bring semi

trucks to a protest and to block streets for three weeks. Nowhere in the charter does it say that is a right.

Statutory Order

When the goal of a group is no longer to make its voice heard but rather to intentionally hurt people or damage infrastructure, it is no longer a protest: it is an occupation and an attack on our democracy. It makes me so sad to see these blockades happening in front of children, and even more so when I see children being used strategically to advance causes they cannot understand at their age. I sincerely hope that people taking part in these blockades will reconsider their behaviour and strive to set better and more positive examples for our younger generation, for the sake of our democracy.

Being a law-abiding citizen is the most fundamental responsibility of Canadians. We know that many of the people who are protesting have legitimate concerns, that they are worried about their future and their livelihoods. However, what is frustrating is that their concerns would be alleviated if they could simply trust the science.

In Canada we have been lucky to have world-class doctors and scientists guiding us through this pandemic. Thousands of scientists all around the world have devoted their lives to protecting and saving the lives of others. Never before have human beings been so scientifically advanced. Let me say clearly, slowly and surely for all Canadians to hear that vaccines work. It has been nearly two years since we were plunged into this COVID-19 pandemic and I will be eternally grateful to those who developed these miraculous and effective vaccines. Thanks to them, countless lives have been saved, as will countless more in the future.

I will get back to the subject at hand. Some of the protesters are indeed worried about the vaccine mandates, masks and lockdowns. However, other elements of these protests are deeply rooted in far-right ideologies and have dangerous ties to organized crime. What is more, the foreign presence that is evident through donations is very worrisome. Whatever the motivations of the people participating in these protests, we cannot allow them to continue disrupting the peace and the lives of peaceful citizens. Every Canadian deserves to live in peace.

For three weeks, we have seen municipal and provincial leaders raising their hands and asking for help. I am proud that our government has been working in partnership with them from the early days the protest, and I believe that we were taken up on our offer of assistance with all of these measures.

One thing is clear: These blockades need to be removed. Canadians are worried and they need us to show strong leadership. Over the past few days, other Canadians and I have listened to many speeches. We have all watched the news and participated in thorough discussions about the invocation of the Emergencies Act.

Statutory Order

● (2315)

Many members of our party talked at length about why using the Emergencies Act is justified and presented solid arguments in support. Some opposition members and other Canadians have severely criticized that decision. They are saying that the decision to invoke the act is extremely excessive.

Personally, I find it difficult to accept the argument that this is an unnecessary use or blatant misuse of government powers. As the Prime Minister and the Minister of Justice have said many times, these measures will be used with great restraint and they are both time limited and geographically targeted. The fact is that we have exhausted all of the other options. I am convinced, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that the current circumstances meet the threshold required by the act to declare a national emergency.

Let us focus for a moment on what is happening in Ottawa.

From the first day that the convoy arrived on Parliament Hill, the Ottawa police service was unprepared to deal with the situation. I am not levelling an accusation, and I cannot speak to the resources that the police did or did not have. I can only speak to what I saw and what everyone saw, namely, that the Ottawa police was not going to be able to resolve this situation without support.

This evening, I had the opportunity to rise in the House knowing what had unfolded in recent days, while a major police operation was under way.

I believe that most of my colleagues will agree with me that the police operation in downtown Ottawa on the weekend was a success. There are fewer trucks, fewer protesters, fewer blocked streets and fewer reports of intimidation and violence.

We now have tangible evidence that the powers conferred by the Emergencies Act have had a considerable impact. These measures led to action that would not have been possible otherwise. The interim chief of the Ottawa Police Service, Mr. Bell, stated that the scale and scope of this weekend's operation would not have been possible without the declaration of emergency.

In conclusion, the Emergencies Act has enabled the federal government to provide tools to the Ottawa Police Service, when and where they were needed. It has also provided the Ottawa Police Service with the necessary tools to stop the flow of money that is supporting illegal activities. It has enabled municipalities to fill gaps, such as using tow trucks to remove illegally parked vehicles. It has also helped put an end to grey areas around jurisdictions and to clarify responsibilities at complex but important sites such as border crossings.

I want to be clear that while our government had to make this choice; it should not be seen as a celebration. However, I feel much more at peace knowing that many people are feeling some relief from the decision to use these measures.

We saw how Canadians reacted to the police operations that took place in Ottawa over the weekend. In my opinion, Canadians very clearly support the decision to invoke the Emergencies Act.

I would like to address everyone who is listening to us by saying that although we may not all share the same values, we can have empathy for each other.

The pandemic has taken its toll, and we are all very much looking forward to putting it behind us. Unfortunately, the events of the past few weeks were not the right way to end it. The protests have taken up valuable resources and time that were badly needed elsewhere to deal with the pandemic.

I will close with this. Some joined the convoy with the goal of promoting peace and freedom. Unfortunately, the target was not the right one, and their actions had the opposite effect. The convoy was pointless and caused a disturbance in the freest of countries, our Canada.

● (2320)

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have heard a few times this evening that the Ottawa police and the Province of Ontario were somewhat slow to respond. The member for Kingston and the Islands said it, and my colleague from Acadie—Bathurst just did as well.

To me, that sounds like an attempt to conceal the Prime Minister's turpitude. I am not looking to dump on my colleague, but I do want to ask him a question. Will the government invoke the Emergencies Act every time a police force is slow to respond? That would be completely ridiculous and unimaginable.

The crisis has subsided and things are starting to more or less get under control. Why does this act still need to be used? It kind of seems like using a bazooka to kill a mosquito.

I would like to hear my colleague's thoughts on that. I would also ask that he refrain from giving me the usual talking points.

Mr. Serge Cormier: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question.

The Bloc Québécois is always the one talking about respecting provincial, municipal or other jurisdictions.

Since this convoy began, some municipalities and even the police forces in Ottawa have unfortunately been unable to carry out certain operations and deal with the situation. That is why, as a last resort, we want to move forward with applying the Emergencies Act.

We gave the Ottawa Police Service and the other police forces the resources they needed to put an end to the convoy, remove all of the trucks, restore peace in downtown Ottawa and give some relief to the residents who endured three long weeks of noise and unnecessary turbulence in downtown Ottawa.

Statutory Order

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, we know that the Emergencies Act is reasonable and moderate. It gives parliamentarians the tools they need to do checks. The use of this act is time limited. It will be in effect for 30 days and can be revoked in three days by a vote in the House.

I would like my hon. Liberal colleague to explain why it took so long for the government to act. The people of Ottawa are the ones who have paid the price. This convoy was organized by members of the far right, who were openly declaring that they wanted to overthrow a democratically elected government. This convoy is funded by Donald Trump supporters in the United States.

What were the Liberals doing for three weeks?

Mr. Serge Cormier: Madam Speaker, we were keeping a close eye on the situation.

After three weeks, during which many protests took place on Parliament Hill, it was time for the government to intervene. We gave all police forces the tools they needed to put an end to this convoy once and for all.

I am pleased that my colleague is saying that the charter provisions will be respected and that the act will be used with great restraint. It will be time limited and target the geographic areas where it is needed.

I think that people are tired of these protests, and we want to provide law enforcement with all of the tools and powers needed to put an end to these protests.

• (2325)

[English]

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Madam Speaker, it is sad to see protesters spitting on police officers and harassing journalists. I am concerned about the spread of misinformation generally around the act as well. We have heard some of the protesters, and even members of the opposition, refer to the measures we are discussing as if this is the War Measures Act, which it is not.

Could my hon. colleague explain how this is not the case and assure Canadians that the Emergencies Act maintains their charter rights, as well as restore their confidence in our institutions?

[Translation]

Mr. Serge Cormier: Madam Speaker, I will say it again so that all Canadians can hear me. The charter provisions will be respected and the act will be used with great restraint. Its use will be time limited and will target the geographic areas—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): Order. Resuming debate.

The hon. member for Langley—Aldergrove.

[English]

Mr. Tako Van Popta (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): Madam Speaker, I will be sharing my time with the member for Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek.

We are here this whole weekend debating the merits of the Liberal government motion to invoke the Emergencies Act.

Before I get into that, I want to take the opportunity to thank the many people in my riding of Langley—Aldergrove who have reached out to me to encourage me and to plead with me to vote against this motion. I can assure them that I and my Conservative colleagues will definitely vote against it, and I will explain why that is. I also want to thank those people who told me they were praying for the peace, security and healing of this nation. I am praying for that as well in what hopefully soon is going to be a post-pandemic world.

On February 14, the Liberal government issued a declaration invoking the Emergencies Act based on their finding that there was a public welfare emergency existing in Canada at the moment. To understand what that means, we need to take a look at the definition section of the act. It states that:

For the purposes of this Act, a national emergency is an urgent and critical situation of a temporary nature that

(a) seriously endangers the lives, health or safety of Canadians and is of such proportions or nature as to exceed the capacity or authority of a province to deal with it.

It concludes, “and that cannot be effectively dealt with under any other law of Canada.”

It is a very high burden of proof and that is exactly what the drafters of this legislation intended back in the 1980s. It was supposed to be a tool of last resort, not a tool of first resort. What is the situation that is alarming the government to the extent that it now feels it has to invoke this very drastic step?

What we have is trucks parked in Ottawa, big trucks, rigs clogging up the streets in downtown Ottawa. It is a real nuisance along Wellington Street and some of the side streets. It is a real problem for local businesses and people who live in the downtown core. I and other members of the House who come into the House every day had to negotiate our way across Wellington Street and that is the same for all the employees as well in the House and in our parliamentary offices.

It is a nuisance, an inconvenience and an irritant, yes, but a national emergency, no. It fails that test. This does not attain the very high level that was set by the drafters of this emergency legislation.

The order in council also makes reference to blockages at border crossings in Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta and in my home province of British Columbia. The Liberals have a better argument here, because that is going to be very devastating to our economy and also to our international reputation.

However, here is the challenge that we have. Before this declaration was made, a week ago, all those blockages had already been cleared up. How? It was done by provincial forces, by municipal forces, by the RCMP that came under provincial jurisdiction. The police forces were doing exactly what they were supposed to do and the fact that they were successful proved that the situation did not exceed the capacity or the authority of the province to deal with it. I submit that it fails the test.

Statutory Order

We come back to what was going on in Ottawa. We have heard members on the Liberal side of the House quote the interim chief of the city of Ottawa Police Service, saying that the Emergencies Act was a very helpful tool for him, for them, to solve the problem. We do not dispute that at all. Of course the nuclear option is going to be successful. We know that and there is no argument with that, but that is not the test.

The test is not whether it would be successful, but whether it was necessary. I submit that it was not necessary. The proof is that provincial police forces and municipal police forces were able to solve the problem at the borders and also control other protests that were going on in other cities across the country. It fails the threshold.

• (2330)

I now want to turn my attention to a constitutional analysis of what is going on. It has been pointed out on a number of occasions that the Emergencies Act requires that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Canadian Bill of Rights be honoured, respected and maintained.

It is interesting that the Bill of Rights is included in that. It is an older piece of legislation and people sometimes assume that it was subsumed in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, but that is not the case. It is still a good law in Canada today. It is very useful for our analysis today, because it talks about property rights for individuals. What property are we talking about? We are talking about bank accounts, bank accounts that have been frozen under the regulations.

Shortly after the announcement was made on Monday, my office started getting phone calls. I started getting text messages. People were asking, "Is my bank account going to be frozen? I made a donation to the convoy through GoFundMe." I assured them, "No, no, no. This is Canada in the 21st century. We are a modern, free and democratic society. There is no way that your federal government is interested in donations that you might make to a cause that is important to you."

Then I picked up the regulation and started to read it. I was wrong. I was hoping that I was misreading it, so I checked with some lawyer friends of mine who said, "No, absolutely that is exactly what it says." Then I was hoping that maybe it was just a drafting error. All doubt was set aside the other day when our Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada was interviewed on national television.

This is how the conversation went. The interviewer asked, "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 said in reply, "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."

There it is, straight out of the mouth of the Minister of Justice. If someone has made a donation to the freedom convoy, then the Minister of Justice thinks they are part of a Trump movement and that they ought to be worried. The Liberal Party is no longer the party of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It has become the party of cor-

rect political thought. People now have to think like the Minister of Justice does or they ought to be worried.

I plead with members of this House to vote against this motion. It is incumbent upon us to do this. This is wrong legislation. We must defend Canadian rights and civil liberties. We must vote against this. I plead with members of the NDP. They can make the difference. Members should please vote with the Conservative Party on this one.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Parliamentary Secretary to the Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I wanted to quote the Premier of Manitoba, but I kind of changed my mind based on what the member just finished saying about seniors.

I wonder if colleagues have been listening to some of the speeches from the Conservatives. One said they had a call from a senior who went down and took out all of his money because they were told that the government wants to get their money. We are starting to hear Conservative right wingers with conspiracy theories through email blasts, no doubt, telling people to go and drain their bank accounts because the government is after their money. We are talking about less than 100 people who were directly affected in terms of their accounts, yet the Conservative Party is warning people, our poor seniors, to go out and be concerned, that the government wants their money.

I wonder if the member feels that is a responsible thing for the official opposition to do, to get seniors and others concerned that the government is after their money. The Conservatives know full well that that is not the case. I suggest that is borderline elder abuse.

• (2335)

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Madam Speaker, that is completely absurd. To quote what the Minister of Justice said, "If you're donating to the freedom convoy, to a Trump-like movement, you ought to be worried." Those are not my words, those are his words. If he mis-spoke, he should correct himself. He should also take a look at the legislation and correct it if there was a drafting error.

I cannot believe, like the member, that the Canadian government would take these kinds of actions, but that is what the wording of the legislation says. It needs to be corrected.

[Translation]

Mr. Martin Champoux (Drummond, BQ): Madam Speaker, we are hearing a lot of discussion about the Emergencies Act, which I hope will rally enough opponents to overturn its invocation by tomorrow night's vote.

There is obviously a lot of criticism, and I believe that people are divided as to what the government should have done. These differences of opinion are quite normal.

What does my colleague think would have been the ideal course of action to deal with this crisis on Parliament Hill over the last three weeks? What would have been a good plan? Would the protesters still be here today, or would they have been asked to leave in some other way?

[English]

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Madam Speaker, that's a great question. What could have been done? Let us take a look at where it was done successfully in other provinces and other cities. The problem is in Ottawa. Far be it from me to criticize the police forces of the nation's capital, but they could have subpoenaed tow trucks or asked the provincial government for more help. They could have asked for police forces from across the country to come help. All of this could have been done without the Emergencies Act and without suspending people's civil rights and liberties.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexandre Boulerice (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, NDP): Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for his speech.

I want to clarify one thing. No one's rights and freedoms have been suspended. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms continues to apply while the Emergencies Act is in force.

That said, I would like to know the state of mind of the members of his political party. There is a convoy that came from far away, that announced that it wants to disturb and disrupt our democratic institutions, and that is funded by supporters of Donald Trump. At the same time, his party's interim leader and his party's former finance critic are openly supporting these people organized by the far right. They give these people coffee and pizza while they make life miserable for the residents of Ottawa.

How can my colleague explain the actions of some of the key figures in his caucus?

[English]

Mr. Tako Van Popta: Madam Speaker, there were two questions. The first was about the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Indeed, the Emergencies Act says that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Canadian Bill of Rights must still apply, but it is not good enough just to say that. The regulations coming out of the order in council actually have to honour that, and I am submitting that did not happen.

Mrs. Kelly Block (Carlton Trail—Eagle Creek, CPC): Madam Speaker, while it is a privilege to have the opportunity to rise and speak in this place to the motion put forward by the government, the absolute seriousness of these days and how we chart a path forward as a nation cannot be overstated. There is so much at stake. I am grateful for the insightful interventions that have already been put forward by my caucus colleagues.

From the outset, I want to assure my constituents that I have heard them and I want them to know that I will be voting against this motion. I believe this action taken by the government is unnecessary, divisive and a dramatic overreaction given the circumstances. At a time when provincial governments and other countries have ended COVID-19 restrictions or announced plans to end them, the Prime Minister is an exception to the trend and is out of step.

When Conservatives brought forward a reasonable motion calling on the federal government to table a plan outlining the steps and dates as to when federal COVID-19 mandates and restrictions would be rolled back, a plan that would reduce the temperature and address the concerns of Canadians across the entire country, the

Statutory Order

Prime Minister refused, and the Liberals, together with the NDP, defeated our motion.

This crisis was entirely preventable and is the result of the Prime Minister's unwillingness to use common sense. Instead of taking action to help lower the temperature, he insulted and disrespected Canadians. Instead of respecting Canadians, he doubled down on his efforts to wedge, divide and stigmatize. Instead of apologizing and listening to what Canadians had to say, he jumped straight to the most extreme measures to deal with the protests and invoked the Emergencies Act.

I want to thank the hundreds of constituents who emailed and called my office over the past week regarding the matter we are discussing tonight. Less than 1% support the government's actions. Almost everyone is shocked and disappointed by the Prime Minister's invocation of the Emergencies Act. They understand that imposing the powers of the Emergencies Act sets a dangerous precedent, especially when the Prime Minister has made no other efforts to de-escalate the situation.

I would like to read an email from a constituent, which is representative of the hundreds of messages I have received. Kathy wrote the following: "I am emailing you in regard to the Prime Minister's irrational invoking of the emergency measures act. I have read that the Emergencies Act can only be invoked if the situation cannot be dealt with through any other lawful manner in Canada. Considering the fact that the Prime Minister has not even sat down with the freedom convoy organizers to discuss removing all mandates, there is no need to invoke such an act. It has become very clear that the Prime Minister does not care about Canadians or our rights and freedoms. Many other countries have removed all mandates and restrictions and have come to realize that COVID has run its course. We need to get back to our lives and begin the massive job of rebuilding not only our economy, but mending all the division that the Prime Minister has created over the past two years. It breaks my heart to see all the families and friends being driven apart by this. As your constituent, I ask that when the Prime Minister goes before Parliament to seek approval of the Emergencies Act that you do not approve this. Please help us in our fight to make Canada free again."

To be clear, while I have heard from hundreds of my constituents, there have also been messages from hundreds of Canadians from across the country. They are worried about the future for their children and their grandchildren. Ultimately, they are concerned for the future of their beloved Canada.

● (2340)

Many legal experts also oppose this action on the grounds that the test for invoking the Emergencies Act has not been met. A Twitter thread on February 14 by the Canadian Civil Liberties Association was damning of the government's decision:

The federal government has not met the threshold necessary to invoke the Emergencies Act. This law creates a high and clear standard for good reason: the Act allows government to bypass ordinary democratic processes. This standard has not been met.

Statutory Order

The Emergencies Act can only be invoked when a situation "seriously threatens the ability of the Government of Canada to preserve the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of Canada" & when the situation "cannot be effectively dealt with under any other law of Canada."

Governments regularly deal with difficult situations, and do so using powers granted to them by democratically elected representatives. Emergency legislation should not be normalized. It threatens our democracy and our civil liberties.

Many legal experts and organizations across Canada echo these concerns and believe that invoking this act is unnecessary and sets a dangerous precedent.

Let us compare events in our not so distant past with the current situation. Two years ago there were a series of blockades on major rail lines and at the port of Vancouver. From January to March of 2020, protesters and their supporters across Canada who were opposed to the Coastal GasLink pipeline caused much economic hardship to the Canadian economy.

What is strikingly different about that protest two years ago and the one we are experiencing today is not the response of law enforcement but rather the response of the government. Two years ago, ministers of the Crown met with the protesters, listened to their issues and sought a peaceful resolution through dialogue. Granted, the police eventually moved in to clear the blockades, but it was obvious that all other avenues seeking a resolution had been exhausted.

Did that happen this time? Certainly not. What have these protesters received from the Liberal government? Insults, divisiveness and stigmatization. The Prime Minister's rhetoric during and since the election has poured fuel on the embers of distrust and division that were already smouldering. What we are seeing from this Prime Minister, his cabinet and his backbench is shocking. Their willingness to exploit the pandemic and divide Canadians, together with their overreach, is driving fear and concern for our future among my constituents and Canadians at large. This motion imposing the powers of the Emergencies Act will only exacerbate these feelings.

Furthermore, the Government of Canada should not have the power to close the bank accounts of hard-working Canadians simply on the suspicion that they support causes of which the government does not approve. This is a slippery slope and not how the government should operate in a free and democratic society.

Perhaps that is the whole point of this exercise, given the Deputy Prime Minister's comments yesterday when she stated, "For some of those tools, we will be putting forward measures to put those tools permanently in place. The authorities of FINTRAC, I believe, do need to be expanded to cover crowdsourcing platforms and payment platforms."

The minister used her inside voice and revealed the true Liberal agenda.

Canada must not be defined by any one government, any one Parliament or any one person, but rather by our shared values of freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. These values guide our institutions, through which are realized peace, order and good government. The pandemic has taken its toll on many of these institutions, largely because there was so much confusion and uncertainty in the beginning, planting the seeds of doubt and mis-

trust, but as we fast-forward two years, now the science and health experts are telling us that we have come through the worst of it and we need to re-evaluate and get back to normal.

Sadly, the Prime Minister's decision to invoke the Emergencies Act is another huge blow to the already crumbling trust many Canadians have in our institutions. Parliament has an opportunity to repair some of the damage and defeat this motion.

● (2345)

I implore my colleagues to seize this opportunity and vote "nay".

Mr. Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, Lib.): Madam Speaker, we have heard a lot from the hon. member about common sense and doing what is best for Canadians, and I would love her comment on whether it was common sense for the interim leader of the Conservative Party to be photographed wearing MAGA hats, to talk about making the convoy the Prime Minister's problem and to say we should not be asking them go home. I wonder if she thinks that is common sense.

Speaking of common sense, I will ask the same question I asked earlier. Given that she does not trust the government, would she trust the national security adviser to Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper, who said that it was not only appropriate but necessary for the government to invoke the Emergencies Act, particularly as it relates to the very concerns around financing of this convoy that she seems to want us not to consider?

● (2350)

Mrs. Kelly Block: Madam Speaker, I think I made it pretty clear why I am deeply concerned about the measures that are in this act that are going to seize and freeze the bank accounts of individuals who do not agree with the government, but to be equally clear, there is only one person who I believe bears the responsibility for what is happening in Ottawa, and that is the Prime Minister. What should we expect, when he calls those who do not agree with him misogynists, racists and science deniers, and wonders if such people should even be tolerated?

[Translation]

Mr. Mario Simard (Jonquière, BQ): Madam Speaker, I have been listening to the member, who said that the Prime Minister was the sole person responsible for what happened in the streets of Ottawa. I have no particular affection for him, but I am still able to say that there are some Conservative members who made some rather concerning speeches when it came to vaccination. Some of them even enjoyed a few photo ops with the protesters, and encouraged them at the same time.

Does the member not believe that some of the responsibility lies with some of her colleagues, who were complacent toward the protesters?

[English]

Mrs. Kelly Block: Madam Speaker, I would have to say that I believe this is exactly what the Prime Minister would like parliamentarians to be doing here in the House. Instead of focusing on the overreach of invoking the Emergencies Act, he wants us to be arguing about whose fault it is that the protests lasted for as long as they did in the city of Ottawa.

To be very clear, I firmly support the right to peaceful protest and the freedom of peaceful assembly, and I agree with the premier of my province, who called on the people of Saskatchewan to exercise their rights without impeding the rights of others. However, I will reiterate that I believe there is only one person who bears the responsibility—

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): The hon. member for Port Moody—Coquitlam.

Ms. Bonita Zarrillo (Port Moody—Coquitlam, NDP): Madam Speaker, the member was speaking about overreach and democracy, and I had a question for the member. The Conservative caucus, has twice thrown out leaders who were democratically elected by the delegates at their party conventions. I am wondering if the member agrees with that overreach.

Mrs. Kelly Block: Madam Speaker, I would tell my hon. colleague that I absolutely disagree with the premise of that question.

First we had a leader who resigned back in 2019, and in this most recent case we had adopted the Reform Act, which is a law of Parliament that provides members of Parliament with the tools they need to hold their leader accountable, so that is exactly what happened within the Conservative caucus. I would say that rather than discussing the overreach of the government and the current Prime Minister in invoking the Emergencies Act to deal with something that could have been dealt with using the law and authorities in the City of Ottawa and in the Province of Ontario, the member is asking me about internal caucus issues.

Mr. Kevin Vuong (Spadina—Fort York, Ind.): Mr. Speaker, I am not pleased to be rising in the House tonight. The reason for my disappointment is due to subject matter that I wish the House did not have to be debating. Nonetheless, tonight's debate is on a very serious subject, the implementation of the Emergencies Act. I would like to believe that all hon. members of this place, irrespective of their political party, would also wish not to be here debating this subject. Unfortunately, we are.

I believe that the events that have transpired at various Canadian border crossings and in our nation's capital over the last three weeks converge to provide few alternatives. Some may not see it that way, and I encourage them to take a hard, long second look.

I appreciate that emotions remain high. I would like to do an objective, factual level-set. To do that, I want to take the location out of it and take the city where the protest has occurred out of the debate. Let us put aside that the protest was in Ottawa and ask ourselves how we would feel if it was a hon. member's city and their community that had its main streets and downtown core barricaded by trucks and crowds. Imagine if it was an hon. member's constituents and their neighbourhoods effectively held hostage in their own city, their own community and their own homes. Imagine if people from their community were being harassed and intimidated,

Statutory Order

with some actually fearing for their own personal safety. What about their right to protection and their right to freedom of movement?

In our community of Spadina—Fort York, we are no stranger to protests. Toronto City Hall is in our riding. The provincial legislature at Queen's Park is just outside of it. In fact, the route people take to these places to exercise their democratic rights often means they would literally be driving by my home. When they do, they would often be honking. My girlfriend and I would look out, see who they were and even look up and see what they were advocating.

However, my rights to freedom of expression and assembly should not, must not, include the oppression of others.

As the son of refugees, I know that my family knew terror and injustice. They endured two years in a refugee camp to find a new home that shared their values, a place that valued democracy and the rule of law. I am sad to say that I did not see those values when I looked at the streets of Ottawa or at the Ambassador Bridge.

What we did see was our national monument to Canada's fallen disgraced and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier being jumped on and urinated upon. It is tragically ironic that the soldier inside the tomb was once a person who knew well what fighting for freedom was all about. The same applies to the statue of a remarkable young man. Terry Fox raised more money than anyone in this country for those fighting an insidious disease, including those who are immunocompromised. The monument and the statue are precious symbols of the best of who we are as a country. That they were defiled is a disgrace.

Some of the most impactful symbols are flags. Sadly, we saw protesters walk around with the flags of evil and racism. Even in the country where Nazism started, anyone who parades around with that flag today gets arrested.

Then there was the Confederate flag, which some protesters chose to fly, a flag that continues to conjure up hatred and intolerance and celebrates a time when people were placed in chains and human slavery. My colleague, the hon. member for Hull—Aylmer, recently eloquently reminded the House of what that flag represents. It does not mean freedom. It does not mean inclusion. It represents intolerance and human slavery.

Flags matter and symbols matter. Our Canadian flag is a beacon of hope for so many people here at home and abroad. I was distraught, as a person who had also proudly worn the flag and the uniform of our country, to see people wrap themselves in our flag and use it as a shield for behaviour that was often anything but honourable.

What I have commented upon thus far is described in revolting detail and I think lies at the heart, the very foundation, of those who came to Ottawa. They did not—

● (2355)

The Assistant Deputy Speaker (Mrs. Alexandra Mendès): I must interrupt the hon. member, who will be able to continue tomorrow.

Statutory Order

It being 11:59 p.m., pursuant to order made on 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.

(The House adjourned at 12 a.m.)

● (2400)

[*Translation*]

Accordingly the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 7 a.m., pursuant to order made on Thursday, February 17.

CONTENTS

Sunday, February 20, 2022

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Emergencies Act

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------|--|------|
| Motion | 2621 | Mr. Lake | 2649 |
| Mr. Brock | 2621 | Ms. Bendayan | 2651 |
| Mr. Arya | 2623 | Ms. Michaud | 2651 |
| Ms. Pauzé | 2623 | Mr. Green | 2652 |
| Mr. Masse | 2623 | Mr. Fast | 2652 |
| Ms. Gazan | 2624 | Mr. Maloney | 2653 |
| Mr. Gerretsen | 2625 | Mr. Beaulieu | 2653 |
| Ms. Gladu | 2625 | Ms. Idlout | 2654 |
| Ms. Michaud | 2625 | Mr. Fragiskatos | 2654 |
| Mr. Masse | 2626 | Ms. Gladu | 2655 |
| Mr. Brassard | 2627 | Ms. Chabot | 2656 |
| Mrs. Atwin | 2628 | Ms. Mathysen | 2656 |
| Ms. Gaudreau | 2628 | Mr. Maloney | 2656 |
| Ms. Chabot | 2628 | Mr. Steinley | 2658 |
| Ms. Bendayan | 2629 | Ms. Pauzé | 2658 |
| Mr. Berthold | 2630 | Ms. Idlout | 2658 |
| Mr. Green | 2630 | Ms. Dabrusin | 2658 |
| Ms. Pauzé | 2630 | Ms. Rood | 2658 |
| Mr. Blois | 2632 | Mr. Gerretsen | 2660 |
| Ms. Gladu | 2632 | Ms. Gaudreau | 2660 |
| Mr. Beaulieu | 2632 | Ms. Gazan | 2660 |
| Mr. Kram | 2632 | Mr. Steinley | 2661 |
| Mr. Kusmierczyk | 2633 | Mr. Garneau | 2662 |
| Ms. Pauzé | 2634 | Ms. Michaud | 2663 |
| Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands) | 2634 | Ms. Mathysen | 2663 |
| Mr. Williamson | 2634 | Mr. Kelloway | 2663 |
| Ms. Dabrusin | 2636 | Mrs. Gray | 2665 |
| Mr. Beaulieu | 2636 | Ms. Idlout | 2665 |
| Ms. Idlout | 2636 | Ms. Khalid | 2666 |
| Mr. Williams | 2636 | Mr. Bains | 2666 |
| Ms. Khalid | 2638 | Mr. Perkins | 2667 |
| Ms. Chabot | 2638 | Mr. Villemure | 2667 |
| Ms. Mathysen | 2638 | Mr. Green | 2668 |
| Mr. Barlow | 2639 | Ms. Sinclair-Desgagné | 2668 |
| Mr. Garneau | 2640 | Mr. Garneau | 2669 |
| Ms. Michaud | 2640 | Mr. Cooper | 2669 |
| Mr. Green | 2641 | Ms. Gazan | 2670 |
| Ms. Khalid | 2641 | Mr. Fortin | 2670 |
| Ms. McPherson | 2641 | Mr. Lamoureux | 2672 |
| Ms. Dabrusin | 2644 | Ms. Gladu | 2672 |
| Mr. Williamson | 2644 | Ms. Collins (Victoria) | 2672 |
| Ms. Gaudreau | 2644 | Mr. Kusmierczyk | 2672 |
| Mr. Gerretsen | 2645 | Mr. Dowdall | 2674 |
| Mr. Barlow | 2645 | Mrs. Vignola | 2674 |
| Mr. Turnbull | 2645 | Ms. Idlout | 2675 |
| Ms. Rood | 2648 | Mrs. Sudds | 2675 |
| Ms. Pauzé | 2648 | Mr. Ellis | 2676 |
| Ms. Gazan | 2649 | Mr. Villemure | 2677 |
| Ms. Khalid | 2649 | Mr. Green | 2677 |
| Mr. Davidson | 2649 | Mr. Poilievre | 2677 |
| | | Mr. Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek) | 2679 |
| | | Mr. Fortin | 2679 |
| | | Ms. Gazan | 2679 |

| | |
|---|------|
| Mr. Arnold..... | 2679 |
| Ms. Dabrusin | 2681 |
| Ms. Idlout | 2681 |
| Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)..... | 2681 |
| Mr. Drouin | 2681 |
| Mrs. Vignola | 2682 |
| Mr. Ellis | 2683 |
| Ms. Mathysen..... | 2683 |
| Mr. Noormohamed | 2683 |
| Mrs. Roberts..... | 2685 |
| Mrs. DeBellefeuille..... | 2685 |
| Ms. Collins (Victoria) | 2685 |
| Ms. Kwan..... | 2685 |
| Mr. Lamoureux | 2687 |
| Mr. Kmiec | 2687 |
| Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)..... | 2687 |
| Ms. Idlout | 2688 |
| Ms. Collins (Victoria) | 2688 |
| Mr. Blois | 2690 |
| Mr. Kram | 2690 |
| Mrs. DeBellefeuille..... | 2690 |
| Ms. Gazan | 2690 |
| Ms. Martinez Ferrada | 2690 |
| Mr. Kmiec | 2692 |
| Mr. Green | 2692 |
| Mr. Anandasangaree..... | 2692 |
| Ms. Duncan (Etobicoke North)..... | 2692 |
| Mr. Brassard | 2694 |
| Ms. Sinclair-Desgagné | 2694 |
| Ms. Mathysen..... | 2694 |
| Mr. Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)..... | 2694 |
| Mr. Mazier | 2694 |
| Mr. Anandasangaree..... | 2696 |
| Mr. Brassard | 2696 |
| Mr. Fortin | 2696 |
| Ms. Lantsman | 2696 |
| Mr. Fragiskatos | 2698 |
| Ms. Sinclair-Desgagné | 2698 |
| Ms. Idlout | 2698 |
| Mr. Perkins | 2699 |
| Mr. Naqvi | 2699 |
| Mrs. Gray | 2701 |
| Mr. Green | 2701 |
| Mr. Fortin | 2701 |
| Mr. Arseneault | 2701 |
| Mr. Vis | 2702 |
| Ms. Khalid | 2702 |
| Mr. Kmiec | 2703 |
| Mrs. Vignola | 2704 |
| Mr. MacGregor | 2704 |
| Mrs. Atwin | 2704 |
| Mr. Kram | 2706 |
| Mr. Fortin | 2706 |
| Ms. Zarrillo | 2706 |
| Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)..... | 2706 |
| Mrs. Stubbs | 2707 |
| Mr. Lamoureux | 2709 |

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------|
| Ms. McPherson..... | 2709 |
| Mr. Iacono | 2709 |
| Mr. Waugh..... | 2710 |
| Mr. Anandasangaree..... | 2711 |
| Ms. Kwan..... | 2711 |
| Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)..... | 2712 |
| Mrs. Gill | 2712 |
| Mr. Gerretsen | 2713 |
| Mr. Boulerice | 2713 |
| Mr. Perkins | 2714 |
| Mrs. DeBellefeuille..... | 2714 |
| Ms. Blaney..... | 2715 |
| Mr. Gerretsen | 2716 |
| Mr. Redekopp..... | 2716 |
| Mr. El-Khoury | 2718 |
| Mr. Beaulieu | 2718 |
| Mr. MacGregor | 2718 |
| Mr. Vidal | 2718 |
| Mr. Anandasangaree..... | 2720 |
| Mr. Beaulieu | 2720 |
| Ms. Zarrillo | 2721 |
| Ms. Diab | 2721 |
| Mr. Vis | 2722 |
| Mr. Savard-Tremblay..... | 2723 |
| Ms. McPherson..... | 2723 |
| Mr. Duguid | 2723 |
| Mr. Caputo..... | 2724 |
| Mr. Savard-Tremblay..... | 2725 |
| Ms. Kwan | 2725 |
| Mr. Paul-Hus | 2725 |
| Mr. Iacono | 2726 |
| Mr. Boulerice | 2727 |
| Mr. Gerretsen | 2727 |
| Mr. Génereux | 2727 |
| Mr. Arseneault | 2729 |
| Mr. Simard..... | 2729 |
| Ms. Blaney..... | 2729 |
| Mr. Hanley | 2729 |
| Mr. Van Popta | 2732 |
| Mr. Champoux | 2733 |
| Ms. May (Saanich—Gulf Islands)..... | 2733 |
| Ms. Sidhu (Brampton South)..... | 2733 |
| Ms. McPherson..... | 2733 |
| Mr. Vis | 2733 |
| Mr. McCauley | 2734 |
| Mr. Anandasangaree..... | 2735 |
| Mr. Iacono | 2735 |
| Mr. Beaulieu | 2736 |
| Ms. Zarrillo | 2736 |
| Mr. Reid | 2736 |
| Mr. Lamoureux | 2737 |
| Mr. Simard..... | 2737 |
| Ms. Kwan..... | 2738 |
| Mr. Beaulieu | 2738 |
| Mr. Iacono | 2739 |
| Mr. Kmiec | 2739 |
| Mr. Boulerice | 2739 |

| | |
|---------------------------------|------|
| Mr. Champoux..... | 2740 |
| Mr. Lamoureux..... | 2741 |
| Mr. Kmiec..... | 2741 |
| Ms. McPherson..... | 2742 |
| Mr. Arseneault..... | 2742 |
| Mr. Weiler..... | 2742 |
| Mr. Kmiec..... | 2744 |
| Ms. Blaney..... | 2744 |
| Mr. Beaulieu..... | 2744 |
| Mr. Caputo..... | 2744 |
| Mr. Fillmore..... | 2745 |
| Mr. Caputo..... | 2746 |
| Mr. Beaulieu..... | 2746 |
| Ms. Zarrillo..... | 2746 |
| Mr. Lamoureux..... | 2747 |
| Mr. Lawrence..... | 2747 |
| Mr. Noormohamed..... | 2748 |
| Mr. Simard..... | 2749 |
| Ms. McPherson..... | 2749 |
| Mr. Morrison..... | 2749 |
| Mr. Fillmore..... | 2751 |
| Mr. Simard..... | 2751 |
| Ms. Kwan..... | 2751 |
| Ms. Sidhu (Brampton South)..... | 2752 |
| Mrs. Brière..... | 2752 |
| Mr. Kmiec..... | 2753 |
| Mr. Savard-Tremblay..... | 2753 |
| Mr. Boulerice..... | 2753 |
| Mr. Van Bynen..... | 2753 |
| Mr. Caputo..... | 2755 |

| | |
|---|------|
| Mr. Champoux..... | 2755 |
| Ms. McPherson..... | 2755 |
| Mr. Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)..... | 2755 |
| Ms. Zarrillo..... | 2756 |
| Mr. Lamoureux..... | 2757 |
| Mr. Kmiec..... | 2757 |
| Mr. Simard..... | 2757 |
| Mr. Morrice..... | 2758 |
| Mr. Davies..... | 2758 |
| Mr. Lamoureux..... | 2759 |
| Mr. Perkins..... | 2760 |
| Mr. Champoux..... | 2760 |
| Mr. Collins (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek)..... | 2760 |
| Mr. Kmiec..... | 2762 |
| Ms. McPherson..... | 2762 |
| Mr. Savard-Tremblay..... | 2762 |
| Mr. Cormier..... | 2763 |
| Mr. Simard..... | 2764 |
| Mr. Boulerice..... | 2765 |
| Ms. Sidhu (Brampton South)..... | 2765 |
| Mr. Van Popta..... | 2765 |
| Mr. Lamoureux..... | 2766 |
| Mr. Champoux..... | 2766 |
| Mr. Boulerice..... | 2767 |
| Mrs. Block..... | 2767 |
| Mr. Noormohamed..... | 2768 |
| Mr. Simard..... | 2768 |
| Ms. Zarrillo..... | 2769 |
| Mr. Vuong..... | 2769 |

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